

*The*

# SCAM

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**25th Anniversary Issue**

**WAR IS PEACE  
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY  
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH**

—George Orwell, *1984*



# SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



Website: [www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org](http://www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org)

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)

## Executive Committee

Local Secretary

**GEORGE PATTERSON**

301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic, FL 32903  
777-3721 [george3141@cfl.rr.com](mailto:george3141@cfl.rr.com)

Assistant Local Secretary

**THOMAS WHEAT**

350 Las Olas Dr., Melbourne Bch, FL 32951  
728-9891 [temw@infionline.net](mailto:temw@infionline.net)

Treasurer

**BUD LONG**

660 Alaska Rd., Merritt Island, FL 32953  
455-9749 [budlong@bellsouth.net](mailto:budlong@bellsouth.net)

Recording Secretary

**THERESA VALEK**

626-8523  
[wb4zuz@amsat.org](mailto:wb4zuz@amsat.org)

Member-at-Large

**JOE SMITH**

4317 Sherwood Blvd., Melbourne, FL 32935  
259-4966 [Member@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:Member@scam.us.mensa.org)

## SCAM Appointees

Proctor Coordinator

**HELEN LEE MOORE**

632-1831 [moorehelenlee@cs.com](mailto:moorehelenlee@cs.com)

Membership

**JOE SMITH**

[Membership@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:Membership@scam.us.mensa.org)

S.I.G.H.T.

**KAREN FREIBERG**

[Sight@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:Sight@scam.us.mensa.org)

RG Committee Chair

**BUD LONG**

SCAM Bylaws Committee

**MICHAEL MOAKLEY**

952-8400

Gifted Children Coordinator

**Volunteer Needed!**

Mediator

**MICHAEL MOAKLEY**

952-8400

## The SCAM Editorial Staff

Editor

**MICHAEL MOAKLEY**

808 Wisteria Dr., Melbourne, FL  
32901 952-8400

[editor@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:editor@scam.us.mensa.org)

Webmaster

**KAREN FREIBERG**

633-1636

[Karen@Freiberg.com](mailto:Karen@Freiberg.com)

Assembly/Circulation

**Volunteer Needed!**

Calendar

**DOUG STARKE**

633-1636

[Doug@Starke.com](mailto:Doug@Starke.com)

## American Mensa Ltd.

**MAGGIE TRUELOVE,  
RVC10**

3333 Honeysuckle Lane  
Belle Isle, FL 32812  
407-855-9078 [RVC10@cfl.rr.com](mailto:RVC10@cfl.rr.com)

**AMERICAN MENSA, LTD.**

1229 Corporate Drive West  
Arlington, TX 76006-6103  
(817) 607-0060  
[AmericanMensa@mensa.org](mailto:AmericanMensa@mensa.org)



All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 10th of the month preceding publication. Please allow extra time for mailed submissions, which may be **typed** or **legibly handwritten**. Whenever possible, we prefer submissions via e-mail. They may be in e-mail text or any of most **word processing** formats. All submissions should be sent to the **Editor**, whose contact information appears on Page 2.

## Inside the Pocket Protector

Mike Moakley, Editor

**C**ould this be the very last month you receive *The SCAM*? I'm sure by now you have had numerous reminders from American Mensa for you to renew your membership. Our membership year ended March 31st. Is *your* membership current? One sure way to tell is by looking at your mailing label for the year - it is above and to the immediate right of your name. If the year is 2009 or later (or states "life"), you are current; if it says 2008, you are not.

If you have not yet renewed, one question you may wish to ask yourself is: "Do I *really* want to miss *The SCAM* each month?" I hope this is not the case. Every effort is made to make *The SCAM* a newsletter that is worthy of a Mensa readership. While many local newsletters carry little more than the calendar of events and the group's official proceedings, the main mission of *The SCAM* has always been to be thought-provoking and, at times, controversial.

Too often, in the "average" world, we are utterly discouraged from engaging in any sort of independent thought. In order to "get along", we are told we need to "go along". Conformity and "sameness" are the watchwords of the "average" culture around us. Do we, as Mensans, *really* want to be caught up in this? Do we really wish to deny our gift simply to "fit in". If so, in my mind, our lives would be a terrible waste. It is with this in mind that I chose this month's cover design.

Admittedly, it is too easy to confuse intelligence (*as measured by an IQ test*) with intellect. It is true that one does not guarantee the other. Even so, with our higher potential, I must believe that Men-

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***Subscriptions:*** SCAM members, included in dues; others, **\$10** for 12 issues.

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sans, as a group, would more likely have a greater percentage of intellectuals than the general population as a whole. Sadly, our culture actively discourages the development of intellectuals in its quest for “getting with the program”.

Unfortunately, Mensa is not immune from this phenomenon. Last year, AML Chairman Russ Bakke, in his column in the *Mensa Bulletin* called for changing our image from that of “nerds” to more of the “average Joe” who just happens to have a high IQ score. He feels this is necessary to attract more members to Mensa. I disagree. If there is any group where we should feel comfortable in being “different” it certainly is Mensa!

In the final analysis, Mensa (and SCAM) is whatever you, the member, want it to be. Would you like to see our group run differently? ExComm elections are next month; it is not too late to run for office. Do you have an idea for the ultimate social activity? Why not host it? Would you like to see different content in *The SCAM*? Remember, your submissions are always welcome here.

Some “official” matters, the Bylaws are progressing slower than anticipated, due in part to some health issues I am recently experiencing. As these issues get resolved, we shall move forward.

The Audit Committee still needs a volunteer. If interested, call George Patterson. Plans for our RG are still under way - if interested in helping out, contact Bud Long, RG Chair.

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### **SCAM Treasurer’s Report**

***As of 2/29/2008:***

| <u>Account</u>    | <u>Balance</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|
| General Fund      | \$838.88       |
| Post Office Acct. | 156.72         |
| Reserve Fund      | 2111.62        |
| RG Fund           | 980.00         |

**Total Funds Available:**  
**\$4087.22**

| <u>Deposits</u> |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Mensa Funding:  | \$192.12 |
| Interest Income | 0.00     |
| RG Income       | 450.00   |

| <u>Withdrawals</u> |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Printing Costs     | \$150.31 |
| Postage            | 60.10    |

—Bud Long, Treasurer

### Part Four: Captured!

**A**s I started toward the road waddling in the mud I managed to ask Ted if we all got out. His answer cheered me considerably. He said that they were all moving under their own power. The soft goeey mud piled up on my sheepskin lined flying boots. With each step they became onerously heavy. The extra weight made me realize that there was pain in the region of my right hip. I dismissed it in my anxiety to put some distance between the plane and myself. I jogged along until I fell exhausted on the paved road. About that time a member of the Wehrmacht home guard came riding up on a bike. We were too tired to move or say anything for a few moments.

Ted noticed that I was favoring my right leg and asked about it. "My right hip hurts a little." I mumbled. "Is everyone else all right?" "Walton sprained an ankle and Bier got his face cut up a bit. He wasn't on intercom when I announced that we were going to crash land. The fire in the bomb bay drove Bier back into the waist. The rest haven't reported any problems." "Ted, that was a sweet landing you made. I hardly felt any jarring at all."

The German soldier (I guess he was military) was off his bike and waving his old rifle ordering us to line up, five on each side of the road and no talking. On second thought he must have been a member of the home guard. I think he was too old to be in the Wehrmacht.

The machine gun bullets were beginning to explode due to the fire. Our poor old GOIN' DAWG was burning furiously. The old guy asked with his few words of English if the bombs were still in the plane. We made him understand that we had dropped them. He asked. "Where?" We told him that we released them into a body of water. He thought for a fleeting moment, then with a nod of his head and a knowing grin he echoed. "In the water." He couldn't have been more eloquent in explaining that he 'heard that one before' if he had been able to understand and converse in our language.

Next he wanted to know if we carried side arms on us. We promptly assured him that we didn't. By this time a soldier appeared and starting shouting orders to us to starting marching. We soon got used to having German soldiers shout at us especially when they had an audience of civilians about them. In Germany the military was the authority and they kept the civilian populace well regimented to take orders and jump when they were told to do so. He was proud to be

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able to issue orders to American officers with little fear of rebuttal. He told us to maintain a meter interval between us. With five of us in one lane and five in the other lane, he shouted. "Forward march!"

The pace was too much for me so Ted came up to give me a hand. Walton needed help too. In a few moments our formation was ended. This riled the Pvt. of the Wehrmacht and he started to upbraid us. He derived a sadistic pleasure in shouting at us. Ted told the two men at the head of the columns to slow the pace to a crawl. This helped considerably. Ted then turned to the German soldier, "Why you pinhead, German soldiers who were prisoners of war of the Americans were being treated in a manner that we as American officers expected to be treated." This had little effect on him but he permitted a slower pace and the aid in helping the injured.

After a lull in shouting orders, he asked in broken English. "Do any of you come from Milwaukee?" after a pause he added, "I have a cousin who lives there." We got a laugh from that statement. Ted told him that his cousin was a helluva lot better off than he was.

We marched for about fifteen minutes and finally came into view of the flak tower that set us on fire. Local residents lined the road to watch the spectacle of the vanquished flyers. As we drew near the tower four big guns went off in rapid succession.

"BANGBANG!! BANG! .. BANG!!!" My sore hip notwithstanding, I must have jumped afoot in the air. "BANG!! ... BANGBANG!! .. BANG!!" Four more explosions shattered the quiet of the countryside. We were stunned by the deafening noise. If I heard it hundreds of times I think that I could never accept it without a sense of panic! The vibration and din was unbearable! I glanced upward into the clouds and wondered if this could be our bombers returning from Berlin. A glance at my watch told me that it was too soon for their return. It might have been our fighter escort returning home after the battle.

The German officer in charge lined us up in front of one of the concrete flak emplacements and had us searched. They relieved us of all our possessions including our few cigarettes. At this point I realized I had forgotten my knapsack, which had been my constant companion on each mission. It contained a carton of cigarettes, shaving equipment, extra warm socks, small compasses to aid in escaping and other small articles that might come in handy. I grinned to myself in ironic disgust. After a few moments of mulling it over in my mind I

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***From The Local Secretary***

**A** mother of a gifted child called me concerning Mensa qualifications and activities available for children. I had to explain that at the present time, little was available short of joining mail SIGs. I have given some thought to adding an occasional activity to our calendar for Young Mensans and children of Mensans. Association with their peers at social functions such as a Pizza SIG or skating party could make membership more fun. I do foresee the need for adults to provide transportation and to act as chaperones. Please call me if you think your child would be interested and/or if you could help.

Speaking of getting the most out of your membership, now is the time when many of us faced with another year of dues question its value. In many areas of the country Mensa offers little as far as social involvement, but I am proud to say this is not the case in Brevard. We do have an active viable group of interesting and diversified people available and willing to enjoy each other's company. What are you missing? The next time you have a free night check our calendar and see if you can join us. You may find that you will not want to miss out again.

—*Judy Peabody*

**20TH MISSION***Continued*

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concluded that it was just as well because the enemy would have taken them.

We were herded into the flak tower up a flight of stairs and into a small windowless room. It must have been used for the storage of useless materiel. There were no chairs. The room was only large enough to contain us in a standing position with two or three of us seated on the dusty floor. Walton had priority on the seating space because of our injuries. We looked at each other without saying anything for a few moments in frustration and consternation. Then Reed burst out. "There's no window for ventilation. *What the hell are they trying to do to us?*"

***...To be continued in next month's issue.***

## Game Theory

**B**elieve it or not, there are games other than the SCRABBLE® crossword game. Some are even mentioned in *The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, Fourth Edition* (OSPD4). Each of the following words is defined in OSPD4 simply as “a card game”: BACCARAT, BEZIQUE, BOSTON, CANASTA, CANFIELD, CASSINO, CONQUIAN, CRIBBAGE, ECARTE, FARO, KLONDIKE, MONTE, MUGGINS, OMBRE, PEDRO, PINOCHLE, PIQUET, PRIMERO, SKAT, TAROK.

OMBRE: even accounts for three more words in OSPD4:

MANILLE: the second highest trump in certain card games

PAM: the jack of clubs in certain card games

SPADILLE: the highest trump in certain card games

Several sources state that the ace of spades is SPADILLE in OMBRE (which can also be spelled OMBER) and quadrille, but according to *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)* the definition of SPADILLE is “the highest trump in certain card games [so far so good, but...], as the queen of clubs in omber” [*emphasis added*].

The United States Playing Card Company’s website contains a glossary that defines MANILLE as “[t]he lowest card of a trump suit in games where it ranks as the second-best trump,” and several sources seem to indicate that in OMBRE this is the two of spades. Apparently, however, *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)* differs by defining MANILLE as “the second highest trump in certain card games [again, so far so good], as the seven of trumps in omber or nine of trumps in klaberjass.”

Regardless of the definitions, MANILLE and SPADILLE are nice words to know when playing the SCRABBLE® crossword game since a fresh bag of tiles contains twelve Es, nine As, nine Is, six Ns, four Ds, and four Ls. You can see that the chance to play one of these card-related words is fairly good, and you might use all your tiles to score a fifty-point bonus.

A little knowledge can be dangerous. The third highest trump in certain card games is BASTO\*, but it earns an asterisk since it is not in OSPD4 (or the *Official Tournament and Club Word List, Second Edition*).

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Happily, sources seem to be consistent with respect to the definition of PAM (not that you need to know a word's meaning to play it); if you are looking to go out and cannot play AMP or MAP, do not be afraid to play PAM. It is not just a trademarked non-stick cooking spray.

Sometimes the name of a card game is also a verb denoting an action that can happen during the game. EUCHRE is defined as "to prevent from winning three tricks in euchre (a card game)" and LOO is defined as "to subject to a forfeit at loo (a card game)." On the other hand, there does not seem to be a card game called VOLE; it is a verb meaning "to win all the tricks in a card game."

OSPD4 defines TENACE as "a combination of two high cards in some card games," and I was sure it was derived from "ten" and "ace"; the ace is the highest card in many games, and a ten is also high (face cards are higher, but they often count as ten). Imagine my surprise to learn that the term comes from the Spanish *tenazas*, meaning "tongs"; it also seems to derive from "tenacious."

While cards are central to several games, other games require a ball:

BOCCIE: an Italian bowling game

BOWLING: a game in which balls are rolled at objects

TENNIS: an outdoor ball game

LACROSSE, PUSHBALL, SOCCER, and TRAPBALL are defined in OSPD4 as "a type of ball game."

For verbs related to ball games, you have CRICKET, "to play cricket (a ball game)," and CROQUET, "to drive a ball away in a certain game."

That's enough for now. Let's go play!

*Next month: An Embarrassment of Riches*

**T**o all Female Ms in Florida who are doubly blessed – planning to attend ARRR-RG! In Tampa on Memorial Day Weekend, and also members of the so-fun Red Hat Society:

We will have a Red Hatters’ “Scarlet Swashbucklers Crewe” – if you’d like to ‘play’, I suggest before you register for ARRRG, you log on to **www.piratequiz.com**, and get your pirate name for your badge - the site will ask a few questions about your personality, and give you a great Pirate Name.

Because we Red Hatters know how to have fun, we’re not planning any special events or programs – but those of us who are fun-loving will be wearing purple with red hats all weekend - of course - and we may even show up with sparkly eye-patches – who knows....

Any questions or suggestions? E-mail me at **seagoer33@verizon.net** - and do plan to join our fun weekend!

“Queen Mum”

Ann Flynn (Bloody Anne Rackham),  
*Central Florida Mensa*

Anyone with a 401(k) or any other managed retirement portfolio has seen its value drop significantly in the past few weeks. Calls to the manager almost always have the same reply. "This is only a correction." "Don't worry. The market always comes back." or some other ilk.

And your money continues to disappear. Almost without exception all mutual funds are required by their charter to be fully invested at all times. Unfortunately, there are times when there is nothing to buy and the fund manager's hands are tied because he is not allowed to sell losing stocks.

That doesn't apply to you. Or does it? As the investor you may direct the fund manager to sell and put your money in a money market account. For the past almost four and a half years the market has continued erratically, but steadily up. There has been no reason to sell.

Things have changed.

Now it is time to move out of stocks and into cash. Cash is a position. No broker or fund manager will agree with that as he can't make any money unless your account is invested in stocks or mutual funds.

As far back in stock market as anyone may care to search during any 10 year period there has always been a major correction. Some of those "corrections" have wiped investors out. The 1929 "correction" took 25 years to come back. Do you have that long?

How do investors know when to sell? Brokers and financial planners won't tell you as most of them don't know. Yet it is relatively easy so it is up to you to protect your money.

There is an excellent indicator that is published every day in the newspaper *Investors Business Daily*. You don't have to buy the paper. You can look at it in the local library.

In the second section you will find a chart called the Investors Business Daily Mutual Fund Index. The chart shows an index of 24 major mutual funds. There is a dotted line called the 200-day mutual fund average. For the last almost 5 years this line has been going up. It turned up in April of 2003 to give a BUY signal. It has recently turned down. That is the SELL signal for the entire stock market..

Any investor can check the major indexes such as the S&P500 or the DOW using these figures on [www.bigcharts.com](http://www.bigcharts.com). Smart investors to

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**T**he Executive Committee elections will be occurring in May, and the Nominations Committee is seeking persons willing to serve SCAM as ExComm members.

The duties of the Executive Committee are not onerous; they are simply to conduct the business of SCAM within the Bylaws. This involves such things as making timely appointments, keeping verifiable records of finances, insuring continuity, and the like.

If you are interested in running for election to the Executive Committee, please contact any member of the NomElCom. Or if you have any questions about eligibility or the requirements of the job, please ask a NomElCom member listed below.

Michael Moakley

[moakleymj@bellsouth.net](mailto:moakleymj@bellsouth.net), or 952-8400

Helen Lee Moore

[moorehelenlee@cs.com](mailto:moorehelenlee@cs.com), or 632-1831

Wynn Rostek

[wb4zuy@amsat.org](mailto:wb4zuy@amsat.org)

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protect their savings will now instruct their fund managers to sell everything and put it in a money market account. Sure, it won't make a lot, but your money will not disappear at the rate of 20, 30, 40% or more as it did in 2000. Smart investors wait for that moving average line to turn up before buying back in.

All 401Ks are in danger of dropping 50% from here. The prudent investor must have a plan to protect his money.

Protect yourself. Sell now.

*Al Thomas' best selling book, "If It Doesn't Go Up, Don't Buy It!" has helped thousands of people make money and keep their profits with his simple 2-step method. Read the first chapter and receive his market letter at [www.mutualfundmagic.com](http://www.mutualfundmagic.com) to discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know. Copyright Williamsburg Investment Co. 2008 All rights reserved.*

## SCAM Calendar of Events for April 2008

**5th - Wednesday 5:30 PM**

### EXCOMM MEETING

.This is our monthly business meeting. All members are always welcome to attend.

**Contact:** *George, 777-3721, for details.*

**26th - Saturday 6:00 PM**

### S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1411 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

**Contact:** *George Patterson, 777-3721.*

### Calendar Updates

### ATTENTION SCAM MEMBERS!

Every effort is made to bring to you an accurate up-to-date Calendar of Events. However, last minute changes can and do occur past newsletter deadline. For up-to-date info, visit [spacecoast.us.mensa.org](http://spacecoast.us.mensa.org) and click on "Calendar".

### *MEMBERSHIP NOTES*

#### Welcome to SCAM:

Chari Fry

#### Welcome Back:

Barbara Crawford

#### Welcome to SCAM and Mensa:

Emma Smith

Douglas Dieruff

### *APRIL BIRTHDAY GREETINGS*

|             |                  |             |                    |
|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <i>1st</i>  | Richard Hussey   | <i>18th</i> | Patricia Thornton  |
| <i>3rd</i>  | George Lebovitz  | <i>21st</i> | Carol Lane         |
| <i>3rd</i>  | Beth Rutenber    | <i>23rd</i> | Mary Ellen Donahue |
| <i>5th</i>  | Douglas Solomon. | <i>23rd</i> | LaVerne Lasobeck   |
| <i>10th</i> | Henry Kolligan   | <i>24th</i> | Boyd Smart         |
| <i>11th</i> | Debra Saltzberg  | <i>25th</i> | Mary Erdmann       |
| <i>16th</i> | Sandra Morgan    | <i>28th</i> | Clifford Miller    |

*Note: If your birthday is not listed, and you want it to be, please let us know.*

I have been a judge at the various Space Coast Science Fairs for about twenty years now. The overall quality of the exhibits has been in steady and rapid decline over the years. It's not only that the experiments are becoming more and more simplistic, but that the students don't even seem to understand what they did. And, with the exception of some few of them who have to participate in order to remediate a grade, these kids are there because they want to be! These are our future scientists, engineers, doctors, and -ologists and they can't even run a speel chekkur on their synopses! I have read some of these epistles wondering what language they were written in. Then you interview the enfant terrible about the experimental methods he used to research his subject: "What Weighs More? A Pound of Bricks or a Pound of Feathers?" Forget any discussion about mass or gravity. The kid is willy-nilly into his spiel about how they wouldn't let him use the electron microscope at FIT and why he could only run one trial on accounta because a freak sandstorm in his base-ment blew away all his feathers and his mom wouldn't let him buy another parakeet.

I have observed the precipitous decline in the knowledge level of the youth of today. They are barely literate, mathematically inept, and generally ignorant of the world or events around them (save the latest foibles of the current batch of Hollywood celebutantes).

Now, I don't claim that my long ago learned ability to diagram a sentence has made me a better person; however, things like being forced to learn basic math (sans calculator, I might add) has served me in good stead throughout the years. So I observe with horror as the teacher gives her darlings a work sheet of the week's studies the day before a quiz. The work sheet is, in fact, the very same quiz they will be taking the following day with a few of the key words or numbers changed to protect the innocent. Alls (gadzooks, that word grates!) the urchins have to do is pay a modicum of attention to the worksheet and they practically have the answers to the quiz. Yet, with unfailing (a little play on words here) reliability, they will flunk the test miserably. And we're not talking rocket science here, folks. The curriculum appears to have been dumbed down at least two grade levels. Yet these imperturbable scholars seem to unerringly (more wordplay), and with singular determination, find a way to successfully fail.

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In the original Star Trek series, there was an episode entitled "The Apple" in which the intrepid crew of the Enterprise beams down to the idyllic paradise of Gamma Trianguli VI. They notice the absence of children, and while questioning the handsome, big-haired native, Akula, Kirk finds that the Feeders of Vaal (as the lissome and lovely big-haired inhabitants are known) are unfamiliar with the concept. Finally, Kirk manages to convey his meaning and the Eureka! moment arrives for Akula as he announces: "Ahh! Replacements."

And there you have it! (This is the response Grover, the Muppet, gave to the little girl who so ably described to him how Santa gets down the chimney: "He pushes da button... and then it open, and he goes in... and he step on da big step... and then he goes in!")

So, folks, consider: The children, teenagers, and young adults of today are, in fact, our replacements. They're the ones who will soon be running the whole shebang, the big enchilada, the whole nine yards. And frankly, that terrifies me. The "replacements" I see out there are virtually and physically connected to their iPods, self owns, and Wii's but seem to be more or less isolated from what we affectionately know as The Real World. They know more about sex at age twelve than I did when I was twenty-one, yet they are hard-pressed to find France on a map or differentiate the proper useage of "to" and "too."

Not that we were a bunch of Norman Einsteins ("Nobody in the game of football should be called a genius. A genius is somebody like Norman Einstein." - Joe Theismann, former NFL quarterback). But it seems that in the absence of "modern" teaching methods, making us memorize our multiplication tables, learn new vocabulary words, read and report on books, and then actually FAILING us when we didn't learn these things, somehow worked! We are able to balance our checkbooks even if our calculator is on the fritz. We can write a reasonably coherent letter to the customer service department explaining why our recently acquired tooth curler (with a built-in secret decoder ring) is being returned after failing to satisfactorily extract the souvenir Eiffel Tower that your neighbor's child took off your coffee table and jammed up his nose. Most of us can even pronounce nuclear correctly.

Hold on! Hold on! No need to shout. I can hear you. I'm sure your brilliant child/granchild/niece/nephew/whatever was able to recite the entire Magna Carta word-for-word at age three. I'm well aware that

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## A Mensan in the family?

**A**re you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, The SCAM is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?

**BE VERY AFRAID!**

*Continued*

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there are exceptions out there (my own brilliant and beautiful dotters among them). However, in the main, by and large, for the most part, generally speaking, and to a frighteningly large extent, most kids today are idiots.

Scares the hell out of me.

Of course, temper this opinion with the observation that Hesiod (Greek poet who lived around 700 BC) is attributed as saying "I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today." Yet we seem to have survived his dire prediction. We may just survive mine.

*the george*

*You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred.*

*- Woody Allen*

**W**hat happened on September 11, 2001 was a crime, not an act of war as drummed up by the corporate media. According to the pre-21<sup>st</sup> century definition, act of war are committed by nation-states, while crimes are committed by individuals. The precedent used in investigating unsolved crimes in courts of law represent the legal standard of eyewitness testimony and probable cause.

Many high profile crimes such as the O.J. Simpson and JFK cases remain unsolved. The same can be said of 9-11. The many suspicious irregularities and omissions by the 9-11 Commission ignore the element of probable cause. For example, the identity of the alleged hijackers remain in question due to evidence that up to seven of them are alive and well living in various Middle-Eastern countries. Also, according to eyewitness testimony many explosions were heard in the World Trade Center Towers before they collapsed. There remains sufficient evidence for probable cause.

Why did President Bush just continue to sit in an elementary school during an evident national emergency thereby endangering the children? Why did his brother Jeb Bush fly off in a military plane with records of Mohammad Atta stolen from Huffman Aviation, where Atta and his colleagues trained on Cessna planes? Why did General Montague Winfield, Deputy Director for Operations at the National Military Command Center (NMCC) excuse himself from precisely the time of the attacks on the morning of 9-11 during war game exercises being conducted on the Eastern Seaboard? Why did WTC owner Larry Silverstein receive a pre-arranged 7 billion dollar private insurance settlement courtesy of the NYC Port Authority? Think about it.

## *A Better Way to Vote*

**N**ow that the elections are with us again, it is apparent that our present electoral system, particularly in presidential elections, is flawed.

In the August 1992 issue of SCAM and the March 1993 issue of *Mensa Bulletin* I proposed a change to our electoral system to better reflect the desires of the electorate. Of course, my proposal was not adopted, nor did I expect it to be. Since the 2002 election I have noted several proposals to improve our electoral process other than my own. Although most of them, if instituted, would provide for a more representative election, none of them addresses a major failure in the electoral process.

The most common proposed alteration of our electoral system is the direct popular election. Unfortunately, that proposition, if enacted, will not necessarily put a candidate in office who is the most preferred by the electorate.

Given a choice of candidates, some voters will vote for one of the candidates because they believe that that candidate is better than the others. That is a straight-forward, direct selection about which no one could argue.

Yet many voters opt for one candidate over the others because he is the “least of evils”. Although this type of choice is direct, it is not straight-forward. The voter would rather not have any of the candidates, but he is limited to voting “for” only one candidate on the ballot. When, as in this year’s presidential election, there may be three viable candidates, the voting choices become more complex, especially for those that dislike some or all of the candidates. Should the elector vote for a third candidate to evidence his dislike of the other two candidates? Would that be a “wasted vote” or would his vote negate a vote for a secondarily but acceptable candidate?

Another proposal is for the elector to vote for all approved candidates. In an article in *Mensa Bulletin* of July /August 1992, Mr. Geoffrey A. Landis proposes Approval Voting. The article lists five ways in which a single ballot selection by a voter could be used to get his most preferred candidate the maximum return on his vote. Mr. Landis’ analysis is enlightening and correct. That would be fine if the voter did approve of one or more of the candidates. The candidate with the most approvals is then the winner. What, then, if the voter

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doesn't approve of any of the candidates. Mr. Landis doesn't say. But by not voting approval of any of the candidates, his vote is not counted. This is a truly wasted vote.

This does happen in our current electoral situation. I know of several registered voters who would not vote in some campaigns where they did not like any of the candidates. Perhaps this is why we have a generally lower turnout for voting than many other countries, the voters just prefer not to vote rather than vote for any of the ballot candidates. Truly wasted votes.

A suggestion of how to see a voter's dislike of a candidate or candidates be expressed is to allow the voter to vote for "none of the above". That option would not solve the problem. It would effectively eliminate the ballot of any elector who chose that option. It is the same as not voting at all.

Another popular suggestion is to allow the voter to rank the candidates. How this ranking would be utilized has many possible variations. Would second ranking give that candidate a half of a vote? Would raking be applied only if there was no clear winner of the first ranking?

A major defect of the present system of selecting among candidates and all the proposals that I have reviewed is that a candidate who is undesirable to the majority of voters could still be elected if he received more votes than the other candidate(s).

The fault of all of the proposed voting systems is that each voter must want at least one of the candidates for his vote to be counted. The way out of that problem is to ask each voter to vote for or against each candidate, just as is done with initiatives and referenda. The same election rules would apply; in order to be elected the candidate must receive more positive than negative votes. This voting scheme would allow those voters that object to a candidate to have a voice equal to those who desire that candidate, thus making the process more democratic, and more nearly representative of the wishes of the electorate.

No vote would be "wasted" even if the elector voted against all candidates. His "against" votes would add to the total negatives of each candidate and would counter an equal number of "for" votes. Two situations may arise that would require special rules.

1. Two or more candidates receive more positive than negative

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**O**ne of the signs of fascism is a government that fears its subjects. While we might not yet be a fascist state, there are signs of a fearful power elite. As I recounted earlier this year, a yoga instructor, by merely raising her voice upon being unjustly accused of a credit card theft, frightened the local police department so badly that the officer found it necessary to employ a taser. Moreover, the police chief went on record of supporting the officer's actions.

One might be tempted to write this off as an isolated incident, perhaps justifiably so. But is this really the case? Consider a piece of legislation by our current Congress, H.R. 1955, better known as the "Homegrown Terrorism Act of 2007". This bill has passed the House, and is awaiting passage of companion legislation in the Senate (S. 1959). To understand just how fearful our leaders are, let's look at "Sec. 899A. Definitions":

"(1) **HOMEGROWN TERRORISM**- The term 'homegrown terrorism' means the use, planned use, or threatened use, of force or violence by a group or individual born, raised, or based and operating primarily within the United States or any possession of the United States to intimidate or coerce the United States government, the civilian population of the United States, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

"(2) **RADICALIZATION**- The term 'radicalization' means the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically-based violence to advance political, religious, or social change."

"(3) **IDEOLOGICALLY-BASED VIOLENCE**- The term 'ideologically-based violence' means the use, planned use, or threatened use of force of violence by a group or individual to promote the group or individual's political, religious, or social beliefs."

Now, let's include two more definitions:

One of the definitions of violent is: "*emotionally agitated to the point of loss of self-control*" (Merriam-Webster Online).

One of the definitions of extreme is: "*situated at the farthest possible point from a center*" (Merriam-Webster Online).

I will grant that the definitions for the above two words are not the ones most commonly used, especially in political rhetoric. These are definitions that can, however, be used to justify a position or ac-

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tion. Given the above definition of violence, is it possible to convince the authorities that our Ormond Beach yoga instructor was, indeed, a “home-grown terrorist”?

With a wider acceptance, since 9/11, of a police state to where our freedoms are routinely sacrificed in order to “protect our freedoms”, is the idea of a person being incensed over being falsely accused of credit card theft now considered “extreme”?

On a larger scale, would the “New Deal” policies of the FDR Era, in light of the shift to the far-Right, again since 9/11, now be characterized as extreme-leftist? According to the definitions included in H. R. 1955, could anyone other than right-wing Republicans be considered terrorists? In short, is the ruling elite of this country in terror of its citizens? I believe the introduction of H.R. 1955 certainly indicates this is so.

This being the case, is fascism far behind...or is it already here?

**VOTING 2008**

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votes. In that case the candidate with the higher score (positive votes minus negative votes) would be the winner. This situation occurs now when two propositions on a ballot directly contradict each other.

2. No candidate receives more positive than negative votes. Then a second election would be held with the original candidates barred from participating.

The effect on candidates could be immense. There would an immediate indication of how every candidate stood with the electorate. A candidate who received barely more positive votes than negative votes would be hard pressed to claim overwhelming support, and he would be aware that any slim majority could slip away by the next election.

The whole tenor of elections, and particularly the selection of candidates, would change because, and this is most important, under positive/negative voting a candidate could lose to himself regardless of how the other candidates do. What would that do to political campaign strategies? Until positive/negative voting is instituted, if you don't like any of the candidates, I suggest that you follow the suggestion on a bumper sticker that I saw during a previous election.

*“Don't vote - it only encourages them!”*

**A**s I write this column, the hot item in the news is the sudden resignation of New York’s Governor Eliot Spitzer stemming from allegations that the Governor used the services of a call girl. The alleged events are no longer rare or even shocking; it is simply the latest in a rash of such events involving politicians, including our own Bob Allen, of “restroom tryst” fame.

Somehow, this time it’s different. The news media is now focusing on issues involving prostitution itself. The local ABC News characterizes the World’s Oldest Profession also as being the most hazardous. An Op-Ed piece in the New York Times\* opines that prostitution is not a “victimless crime”. To support this conclusion, the article notes; *“...most women in prostitution, including those who work for escort services, have been sexually abused as children, studies show.”* Who, then, is the victim? According to the same piece, the prostitute: *“Whether the woman is in a hotel room or on a side street in someone’s car ... the experience of being prostituted causes her immense psychological and physical harm.”*

Yet, according to the law, the prostitute is the criminal. Is she then her own victim? This does not make sense. In the instance that most such women were sexually abused as children, these women are victims of that abuse, not the act of prostitution they might subsequently engage in.

As tragic as the lot of a prostitute is, there is no premise that supports the conclusion that prostitution itself is not a victimless crime, since the prostitute victimizes no one. The argument presented, besides not being logically valid, can actually serve to further victimize these unfortunate women. To prosecute these women serves only to compound the lifelong abuse they have already been subjected to. Perhaps all concerned would be better served if, instead of seeking a twisted form of legal revenge, we as a society reach out and give a helping hand to these often-helpless victims.

\*Melissa Farley and Victor Malarek, “The Myth of the Victimless Crime”, *New York Times*, March 12, 2008.

*New Business:*

After some discussion of the lack of many email addresses and telephone numbers in the membership roster we receive from national, Terry volunteered to attempt to enhance our listings thereof.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m. Next meeting will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at 5:30 pm.

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of hearings. You can register for the Denver AG there. You can contact the folks at the national office there. I could go on for pages listing all the things you can find and do on the website, but the editors wouldn't like that, so take the time to go and check it out yourself. It is there for you!

Maggie Truelove, RVC 10  
3333 Honeysuckle Lane  
Orlando, FL 32812  
407-855-9078  
[rvc10@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rvc10@cfl.rr.com)

**T**o some folks, April signifies spring and gardens and related

things. Well, the first thing that is coming to my mind is that it is RENEWAL TIME! If you are receiving this after April 1, and you haven't yet sent in your renewal for Mensa membership, you need to put this down and do it right now! Otherwise, you will be missing out on everything Mensa! *April 1 is the beginning of Mensa's new fiscal year, so don't delay.*

If you took the Mensa test, I would bet you can remember the proctor who administered that test. What kind of impression did that proctor make on you? For many people, the proctor is the person who determines how friendly a new person considers Mensa to be. I guess that makes the proctor pretty important. Maybe we should call them the PROCTOR instead of proctor. The PROCTOR is pretty much an unsung hero in many groups. Perhaps we can change that lack of recognition.

Right now, until April 18, is the time for LocSecs - or members - to nominate really good proctors for the national Abbie Award, for outstanding proctors. That is something else to do right now while you are thinking about it.

I have made the decision not to run next year for reelection to the position of RVC 10. When this term ends, I will have been in this post for 4 years. Now it should be someone else's turn! We have many highly qualified people in Florida. I hope a few of you will consider stepping up and running for Regional Vice Chair.

If you haven't been to the national Mensa website (us.mensa.org) for a while, you are missing some really good things. You can look up any member of American Mensa in the member directory.

The forum is now in the "Online Community." It is better organized and structured than it used to be. Participants can even have their picture that shows when they post. I go to the "Games" page every day to get my daily sudoku and jigsaw puzzle fix.

You can find archived records of AMC meetings or records

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**Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:**

**T**he ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, March 5, 2008. Called to order at 6:28 pm by LocSec George Patterson. Members present: George Patterson, Terry Valek, and Bud Long. Thomas Wheat and Joe Smith were unable to attend.

Minutes for the February 6, 2008 meeting were approved as published in the March 2008 SCAM. It was later noted that 2007 appearing several times instead of 2008 had been overlooked by all.

**Reports:**

LocSec: George reported on a number of items. First, he noted that the social calendar seemed particularly weak and that special effort should be made to improve things in April. An inquiry was made regarding Tom Wheat's health. Tom responded that he was well, but was having difficulty getting around and suggested that we appoint someone to replace him. Two volunteers are available for the audit committee (see below).

Treasurer: Bud reported that a new account had been opened to handle the RG funds. He handed out the Treasurers Report which showed total funds at the end of February of \$4,087.22.

Testing: Helen Lee Moore (proctor coordinator) reported that no candidates were tested in February. She also reported, "Space Coast Area Mensa will no longer be allowed to use the Brevard County Library system as a site for testing. This is because we collect a fee for the tests, and the Libraries only offer free meeting space to 'nonprofit community groups.' We will have to find another locus for the tests." She asked the ExComm whether we were willing to pay for a location or did we want to try to find a free site.

RG Committee: Bud, who is also the RG committee chairman, reported that he was scheduling an April meeting of all committee members.

**Old Business:**

George moved that Helen Lee Moore and Art Belefant be appointed to the Audit Committee. Seconded by Terry, approved unanimously. George will continue to seek a third member.

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