

The

SCAM

page coast area ensa

25th Anniversary Issue





SPACE COAST AREA MENSA

Website: www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)



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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

In some ways, this has been a somewhat quiet month for *The SCAM*. For the first time, since I became Editor, I did not receive a column from Al Thomas, who normally writes on a weekly basis on investment topics. Also, Charles Knight has been on vacation, but he promises me a September column.

In last month's *SCAM*, "The George" Lebovitz, in his column, "Is There Anybody Out There?", laments the overall lack of response to his regular columns. Lament no more, George; check out the letters on the next page of this issue.

This brings us to another point. Each month, several opinion pieces are published on a variety of topics. Not only are you encouraged to write an opinion on a topic of your choice, but you are also encouraged to respond to any article that has been published on these pages.

Just a reminder, the time is drawing near for our "*Back in Business RG*" - October will be here before you know it! Why not register for the RG today! Since this event will be in our own backyard, even with gasoline at \$4 a gallon, travel should not be overly expensive.

In the last couple of issues, I made the suggestion of carpooling to some of our SCAM events. If you wish to set up a carpool, or wish to join one, please contact our Calendar Coordinator.

***The SCAM* sells classified ad space.** SCAM members, non-commercial, no charge. Others: \$20 full page; \$10 half-page; \$5 quarter-page per month, we offer discounts for multiple insertions, and we can help with layout and design.

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

"Mensa['s] . . . main purpose is to serve as a means of communication and assembly for its members." So it says on the inside of the front cover of *MENSA BULLETIN*.

We have one contributor to our SCAM magazine who does not show a by-line for his articles. As communication is the "main purpose" of MENSA, I believe that that is wrong. We can not properly communicate with someone who hides behind anonymity any more than could we converse comfortably with someone in assembly who was wearing a mask.

You said, in private communication with me, that you know who the author of the articles is and that you divulged his name once in SCAM. That is not sufficient. Each article is separate and even if you divulged his name once, how can you be sure that the hundreds of your readers read that and that the information was retained?

I believe that your editorial policy should follow that of every gazette that I am aware of, that you publish nothing anonymously, unless such disclosure puts the author in danger. Desire to remain unknown or fear of embarrassment is not sufficient.

As an author myself, I feel that any author who does not put his name on his work is not qualified to be published.

I welcome comments from other members of SCAM on this matter, in messages to me or to our editor, but please give your name.

Arthur Belefant.

a.belefant@ieee.org

I **work with George** "The George" Lebovitz, and I want to assure everyone that he is as annoying in person as he is in print. However, what does "The George" expect his readers to protest? His right to express his opinions? The First Amendment? NOT A CHANCE!!

Rattle on, George. I don't expect you to be right, or even rational -- just interesting.

Stephen M. Schneider, Ph.D.



Part Eight: Leaving Sagan Enroute to Spremberg

It was dark and the soft wet snow was falling in earnest. The night darkness was not intense because of the whiteness of the snow. For the first few miles we had company slinking along the side of the road in the small trees and bushes. The townspeople were gathering the discards of the kriegies who found that they were carrying too much and were forced to lighten their loads. Cans of margarine were the first to be dropped. Later other canned foods were tossed along the side of the road.

The night was not severely cold and the exertion kept our bodies warm. The ten-minute rest breaks became too frequent after two hours of marching. The stops were welcome but to get our muscles going after the breaks was becoming more difficult.

We were still marching at daybreak. About ten thirty A.M we entered the small town of Freiwaldau. We were told that we would take a four-hour break. It was cold enough for the snow to have crusted over. Blankets were unrolled on the snow which had stopped falling sometime during the night. As tired as I was I could not sleep. The town's people were kind enough to bring hot water to us so we could have some coffee and a bite to eat. At four thirty in the afternoon we were ordered to get ready to move on. We rolled our blankets which were damp from the snow. I was weary and feeling not quite up to going on. Nevertheless we marched on into the darkening day. About two ten minute stops later, I guess it was about nine P.M; we were moving through a forested area. Trees on both sides of the road. The snow that had fallen was planked down and a bit icy. The cold and the fatigue added distance to the few miles we had covered. Suddenly out of the darkness a terrible clatter and din struck terror into our senses. As I lay in the deep snow near a large tree about thirty feet from the road my heart was beating wildly. There was mass confusion. Some of the kriegies thought we were under a tank attack. Some thought that a low flying aircraft was in the act of strafing our lines. It all happened in a very short minute. The shouts of 'camarada!!' 'Americanisha!!', 'prisoners of war!' were being heard from the kriegies laying in the snow forty or fifty feet off both sides of the narrow road. The clatter became louder then ceased when the cause was in our midst. The guards who had joined us in flight were back on the road urging us to get back on the road. The

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guards had stopped a horse-driven farm wagon and was upbraiding the boy who had lost control of his horse.

The boxcar that my friends and I were squeezed into left no room for anything but a guard, his rifle and a oversize bucket. We had some men that were weak from illness and dysentery. There was not enough room in the car for all the sick to sit on the floor. We were packed in so tightly that a person needing to use the bucket could not make his way to it through the crowd. The bucket was passed from hand to hand over the heads of the standing men to the unfortunate guy who needed it. I can't recall how we managed to sleep or if indeed we did sleep. Nature, fortunately, has a way of blotting out many of our most unpleasant memories. I do remember that late in the afternoon the train was pulled into a siding and we were allowed about ten minutes to stretch our legs and seek a solitary moment to relieve our burdened excretory organs in the field along side the track. On third day we might have been given another 'siding' break but my memory fails me on this item. I do remember that on one occasion the excrement bucket being passed was near enough to me to see that it was very close to being full and in danger of slopping over the sides. Each time it was passed, angry growls came from the kriegies cursing the pitiful Germans and their stinking freight car. We were worse off in this car than any pig in a confined pigpen that I had ever seen. I don't recall if we had any fluid to drink during this journey. Perhaps it was better not to eat or drink which would increase the need for elimination. When we finally arrived at the freight yards of Nürnberg we had been truly baptized in hell. After we were settled in Stalag XIII-D, a broken down filthy, vermin infested prison camp. I asked some of the kriegies who had made the trip with us but in one of the other boxcars and learned that some of the cars carried fifty kriegies and a guard. I am positive that we had at least eighty in ours. C'est la guerre! Or as William Tecumseh Sherman stated in an address at Michigan Military Academy in 1879:

"I am tired and sick of war. It is only those have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell!"

It is the fat cats who send the brave youths out to die in order to protect their money and power.

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

We're Baaack!!



Announcing The 2008 SCAM “Back in Business” RG



After six long years of waiting, the Space Coast
Area Mensa is proud to present a
special Halloween themed RG tentatively
scheduled for the weekend of
October 24-26th, 2008 in
Cocoa Beach, Florida

Costume Party!!

To be held Saturday Oct 25th
Prizes awarded for most creative costumes
Games, programs, and of course, our famous
hospitality suites! Don't miss it!
More details to follow in upcoming
SCAM newsletters

Oh, Really?

The introduction to *The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, Fourth Edition* (OSPD4) states: “Words that are not permissible in SCRABBLE® crossword games have not been included in this dictionary.” It then continues with specifics.

“Proper names ... have been omitted.” **Oh, really?** *Abigail* is a proper name; you’ll recall Abigail Adams, the second First Lady (and first Second Lady) of the United States. *Brazil* is a proper name; it is the largest country in South America. *Xerox* is a proper name; in fact, the Xerox Corporation protects its trademark diligently. However, there is more to the story. *ABIGAIL* is defined in OSPD4 as “a lady’s maid”; *BRAZIL* is defined as “a dyewood” (although a Wikipedia search for “dyewood” redirects to “brazilwood”); and, despite the best efforts of the aforementioned global document management company’s legal department, *XEROX* is defined as “to copy on a xerographic copier.” Prior to studying OSPD4 I would have considered *JOSEPH* and *VERONICA* to be proper names (also called proper nouns), but *JOSEPH* is defined as “a woman’s long cloak” and *VERONICA* is defined as “a handkerchief bearing the image of Christ’s face.” Also, *TED* is a verb meaning “to spread for drying.” Some OSPD4 entries that would seem to be proper names related to nationality are *EGYPTIAN* (a typeface with squared serifs), *GREEK* (something unintelligible), *GERMAN* (an elaborate dance), *JAPAN* (to coat with a glossy, black lacquer), and *SWISS* (a cotton fabric). You’ll find states in OSPD4: *ALASKA* is defined as “a heavy fabric,” *COLORADO* is defined as “of medium strength and color -- used of cigars,” and *TEXAS* is defined as “the uppermost structure on a steamboat.”

“Words requiring hyphens or apostrophes ... have been omitted.” **Oh, really?** The majority of results of a Google search on *NONRIGID* (defined in OSPD4 as “not rigid”) seem to insert a hyphen to form the word “non-rigid.” Likewise, the majority of results of a Google search on *ANTI-AIR* (directed against attacking aircraft) seem to insert a hyphen to form the word “anti-air” with several results breaking it into the two-word term “anti air.” Does writing a word without a hyphen prove that the hyphen was not required? Of course, *ITS* is “the possessive form of the pronoun it” and not a contraction of “it is,” so the part about apostrophes is accurate.

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“Words considered foreign ... have been omitted.” Oh, really? OSPD4 defines DACHA as “a Russian cottage,” MONSIEUR as “a French title of courtesy for a man,” SIGNORA as “an Italian title of courtesy for a married woman,” ZAIBATSU as “a powerful family combine in Japan,” etc. OSPD4 allows ESPANOL (a native of Spain), MANANA (tomorrow), and PINATA (a pottery jar used in a Mexican game) despite the lack of any “Ñ” tiles. Am I so wrong to consider these words foreign? Maybe I should learn more about loan-words. FRAULEIN is defined in OSPD4 as “a German governess,” but there is no entry for FRAU* (hence the asterisk to show that it is not permissible in SCRABBLE® crossword games).

“Abbreviations have been omitted.” Oh, really? Amit Chakrabarti maintains an online list of acronyms and portmanteaux that can be played. One of the entries is SCUBA (to swim underwater using a breathing device with compressed air), which is the acronym of “self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.” The portmanteau BINIT (a unit of computer information) is formed from the first three letters of “binary” and the last two letters of “digit.” At least SCUBA and BINIT are pronounced as they are spelled. SINH (a hyperbolic function of an angle) is often pronounced *sinch* or *shine*. I have had no luck in finding the pronunciation of KBAR (defined in OSPD4 as “a kilobar”), but I suspect it would be *kay-bar* rather than as if you were saying the name “Akbar” without the initial vowel sound.

If I really want to get worked up, I can think about LAOGAI (the system of forced-labor camps in China) which comes from the Chinese “laodong gaizao” (reform through labor), or even TOKAMAK (a doughnut-shaped nuclear reactor) which comes from the Russian “toroidal’naya kamera s aksial’nym magnitnym polem” (toroidal chamber with an axial magnetic field). No foreign words -- **oh, really?** No abbreviations -- **OH, REALLY??**

Next month: ROCK and/or ROLL

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Welcome to SCAM and Mensa:

William Calderon
Melissa Ingram
Nicholas Hope

Welcome Back:

Robert Petrie

AUGUST BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>2nd</i>	James Vanaman	<i>15th</i>	William Lamoureaux
<i>4th</i>	William Armstrong	<i>19th</i>	Ryan Gilmore
<i>5th</i>	Michael Lawley	<i>22nd</i>	Shirley Jones
<i>11th</i>	Cypryan Klish III	<i>26th</i>	Ronald Wallace
<i>13th</i>	Ronald Gaynor	<i>29th</i>	Chester Young
<i>15th</i>	Jeffrey Engel	<i>30th</i>	David MacMakin

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



SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 5/31/2008:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$733.23
Post Office Acct.	172.40
Reserve Fund	2113.37
RG Fund	1640.00

Total Funds Available:

\$4659.00

Deposits

Mensa Funding:	\$172.48
Interest Income	0.45
RG Income:	700.00
NL Subscription:	10.00

Withdrawals

Printing Costs	\$150.31
Postage	54.80
RG Refund	40.00

—Bud Long, Treasurer

SCAM Calendar of Events for August 2008

1st - Friday 7:00 PM

"APRIL FOOL'S" GAMES NIGHT

Come join us for your favorite games at Terry's home in Rockledge.
Kitty is \$3.

Contact: Terry, 626-8523, for more details.

3rd - Sunday 11:00 AM

POOL BRUNCH

Come join us for brunch and swimming at Terry's home in Rockledge.
Kitty is \$3.

Contact: Terry, 626-8523, for more details.

5th - Tuesday 6:00 PM

DINNER AT EL CHARRO

Tonight we are having dinner out at El Charro, located in Cocoa Village.

Contact: Val, 626-8523, for details.

6th - Wednesday 6:30 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

.This is our monthly business meeting. All members are always welcome to attend. Please note the change in the meeting time.

Contact: George, 777-3721, for details.

9th - Saturday 7:00 PM

GAMES NIGHT

Come join us for your favorite games at Terry's home in Rockledge.
Kitty is \$3.

Contact: Terry, 626-8523, for more details.

30th - 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.

I've been getting a spate of emails lately regarding our escalating oil crisis. My Democratic, tree-hugging friends are all wailing about the extinction of the caribou if we open up the ANWR (for those of you who have been living in a cave, that's the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska, which purportedly contains enough oil to supply the world's needs for the next 12 billion light years).

My right wing, conservative, oil company loving Republican friends extol the myriad blessings of offshore drilling off the coasts of Florida and California and how it would provide jobs for all the displaced Caribou from the ANWR.

I don't dispute anything on either side of the debate. Sure, the ANWR could provide us with more oil and we could drill away off the coasts of Florida and California to get even more. And I'm equally certain that drilling in the ANWR and offshore would not be without its environmental impact.

But either view is very short-sighted.

The simple fact of the matter is that petroleum is a finite resource. There's just so much of it to be had, regardless of where it is or isn't found.

In the not-too-distant future, we will reach the point where demand will far exceed production capability. Then, our current \$4 or \$5 a gallon for gasoline will seem like a joke as we're paying mortgage rates for our fuel. Eventually, however, it won't matter how much money anyone has because there simply won't be any petroleum to make gasoline from.

The problem is that we're not talking about events billions of years in the future. We're talking about a situation which will affect our children and profoundly affect our grandchildren.

Alarmist estimates predict that demand will outpace production in as little as 10 years. Reasonable estimates still place that disturbing milestone at 20 years.

Alarmist estimates predict that we will run out of oil completely in as little as 20 years. Reasonable estimates vary from 50 to 80 years.

FIFTY to EIGHTY YEARS! Geologically speaking, that's a heartbeat!

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We don't need to find new oil. We need to replace oil. NOW!
(*Actually, we should have started years ago.*)

Besides which, it seems to me that everyone on both sides of this ridiculous oil controversy is missing the essential problem with depleting petroleum supplies. We'll invariably find alternate methods for fueling our vehicles (hydrogen, electric, jojoba beans). The issue that seems to be the elephant hiding in the cherry tree is that when we run out of oil, we run out of plastic.

Plastics are made from petroleum and the world is made out of plastic. Look around you. Virtually everything is made from, with, or contains plastic. What are we going to package our consumer goods in? Ceramics? Our cell phones, having shrunk from luggables in suitcases to Star Trek communicator size, will once again grow to Princess Phone proportions.

So, I suggest everyone quit getting their panties in a twist over who are the good guys and who are the bad guys in the oil drilling controversy. There are no good guys or bad guys, just greedy power hungry politicians who are busily ensuring they get re-elected. These folks don't give the proverbial rodent's behind about anything else. They'll say anything to anyone anytime if they believe it will get them a vote. They don't care if an issue is right, wrong, good, bad, useful, helpful, fair, or anything else.

The problem is not the Democrats or the Republicans. The problem is the Democrats AND the Republicans. Both sides of the aisle are equally bereft of concern for the country or the populace. They're so caught up in the game of "Point The Finger," that they're too busy to take care of business. If the "Other Team," proposes it, it's bad. Doesn't matter what's best for the people and the country, just make sure our side wins and the other side gets the blame. The founding fathers are rolling in their graves.

About the time our original thirteen states adopted their new constitution in 1787, Alexander Tyler, a Scottish history professor at the University of Edinburgh, had this to say about the fall of the Athenian Republic some 2,000 years earlier:

'A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government.'

'A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury.'

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'From that moment on, the majority always vote for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.'

'The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history, has been about 200 years'

'During those 200 years, those nations always progressed through the following sequence:

- 1. From bondage to spiritual faith;*
- 2. From spiritual faith to great courage;*
- 3. From courage to liberty;*
- 4. From liberty to abundance;*
- 5. From abundance to complacency;*
- 6. From complacency to apathy;*
- 7. From apathy to dependence;*
- 8. From dependence back into bondage'"*

Seems to me we're somewhere between 6 and 7 right about now. Sure hope Tyler isn't right. And just to spice up my oil crisis emails, I also get:

"Ooh, ooh! if Obama gets elected, we'll be giving the Muslims free reign!"

"Ooh, ooh! if McCain gets elected, we'll be going to war with Iran!"

"Ooh, ooh! if Hillary had gotten the nomination and been elected..."

This upcoming election has produced a level of vituperation unprecedented in American history. There are daily letters to the editor published, extolling the virtues of one party while enumerating the plethora of sins attributable to the other. Predictions of gloom and doom should "the other guy" get his way.

I don't understand all this animosity. Don't people realize IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO WINS? Whether Obama or McCain, NOTHING WILL CHANGE! The world won't come to an end (we survived Dubya, after all) and big business will continue to run this country the same way it has for a very long time.

(ASIDE: I believe the crucial element in this year's election is going to be the choice of veep. Although personally, I like the fellow and

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think he'd do a swell job, I don't believe this country is mature or ready enough to elect a black man president. And, on the off chance that Obama does win, I greatly fear that he will never survive to take the oath of office. We just have too many skinheads, rednecks, bigots, and loonies who would be more than happy to take him out.

[ASIDE TO THE ASIDE: "Ladies and gentlemen, I present the President of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama" sounds more like the president of Sandy Arabica than the USA.] On the other foot, I'm not entirely sure that McCain would survive the rigors of the office for an entire term. Yeah, sure, he's in relatively good health and decent physical condition, but I've seen the effect that being POTUS has had on 11 presidents now, and (Kennedy excepted) each of them has aged significantly more than the passing of time would warrant.)

So (back to the issue at hand), what will inevitably happen is that the do-goody-good environmentalists will stave off the nasty ecolociders for a time until we reach the petroleum-demand-exceeds-production-capability point of desperation. Then no one will much care about the poor Yukon yaks, Florida flounders, or California cod. They'll all be frantically in search of MORE OIL! The Petroleum Barons will have to hire more drones to count their money whilst the unwashed masses feverishly convert to pedal power.

Soon, the whole shebang comes crashing down on everyone's head as the last drop of Black Gold is painstakingly extracted from a discarded tuna can behind a barn in West Virginia. Politicians will blame it all on "the other side," declaring that had we only followed their energy policy, we'd all be happily driving Hummers at 25¢ a gallon gas.

Meanwhile, it will painfully dawn on the petroleum challenged world that although we should have started reducing our reliance on oil quite some time ago, we have finally achieved the state where petroleum alternative energy solutions are economically feasible (especially in view of the fact that there won't be any oil to be had at *any* price) and life will go on.

But without plastic.

The george

I have often heard it stated, “*Timing is everything.*” Whether this statement always holds true is another argument for another day. The example here is such a case where timing is, indeed, everything. I am referring, of course, to the recent Supreme Court decision finally declaring that the Second Amendment right “to keep and bear arms” is an *individual* right. In appreciating the timing of this decision, one must place it in its proper setting.

The current state of our society, particularly our economy, can best be described by another old saw, “The pigeons have come home to roost.” Let’s take a quick look around. For starters, gasoline is \$4 a gallon; its price is expected to continue to increase. Much media attention has been given to this fact, especially as it relates to other parts of our economy (like rising prices and fewer purchases causing yet other economic woes).

There is some media speculation about possibly developing viable alternatives to our current dependence on oil, especially from the Middle East. What I have not heard mentioned, however, is that we were put on notice nearly 35 years ago when OPEC flexed its muscle creating the first “energy crisis”. Had we been serious from that point on about addressing these same energy issues, I’m sure today’s economic and political landscape would have been radically different.

Another issue is that of “fast credit” that, for years, masked the fact the average wage earner was no longer earning enough to pay his living expenses. Last year, I ran a series of articles detailing some of the creditor abuses perpetrated on the working class. The common denominator in this mess is the shift in the use of a consumer’s credit history from a screening device in the decision to grant credit to its current use as a money-making enterprise by charging people for their products according to their ever-elusive “credit score”. Of course, this year, we have witnessed this “house of cards” collapse as defaults, especially home foreclosures, are at an unprecedented high.

A third issue is the trend over the last several years to bar access to civil justice to the working class with such gems as “tort reform”, “bankruptcy reform”, and the overall deregulation of big business in the name of the “market economy”. Of course, there is

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another term for our deregulated, market-based state of affairs: *lawlessness*.

Today, we are now witnessing the results of the systematic screwing of the working class at the hands of the powerful, while at the same time we have been distracted with “wedge issues” such as “protection of marriage” amendments, practicing of religion in public schools, and, of course, posting the Ten Commandments at courthouses where they will both be seen and ignored by the powers that be. Are we so distracted now? Somehow, I do not believe so.

As a result, those of us who must live off our efforts have become increasingly frustrated, as hope continues to diminish. To add insult to injury, our complaints are usually met with a response to the effect, “You are just too lazy to become rich” (as if all that was needed to become wealthy is just a good dose of good ol’ fashioned hard work). I could go on, as our frustrations continue to build.

All of this, of course, brings us back to timing, which, in this case, could not have been better. Thanks to the Supreme Court, my coworkers and I can now use our debit cards (it might no longer matter if the bank assesses their overdraft fees) to go and get guns and ammo. It might be wise to get the best guns and the most ammo one can, as they may well be needed. It does seem to me like the concept of defending our home might be somewhat expanded from merely keeping the “criminal element” at bay to include defending our home from the lenders’ agents as they foreclose upon our castles.

...And now, for a couple of postscripts:

While I was writing this article, a new law went into effect here in Florida. Handgun owners who have a concealed weapons permit now have the right to take their guns to work, so long as the guns are locked up in the owner’s vehicle. Two groups, the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Retail Federation are challenging the new law on the basis of the employers’ private property rights. Both groups are notorious for lobbying the state legislature for anti-employee policies and have often been quite successful in their endeavors. Could it be these groups’ real reason for concern is the increased possibility of retribution at the hands of a disgruntled minimum wage employee?

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Another news item that has surfaced at this time is the execution of Mark Dean Schwab for the rape and murder of an 11-year old child. As with most executions, Florida Today features the procedures the state uses in executing someone by lethal injection. One little tidbit of interest is that the technicians who administer the lethal drugs wear hoods, so no one knows their identity. To me, it seems rather odd that in a state where most of its citizens support the death penalty, that the state deems such a cowardly practice necessary. One would think, given the popular sentiment, these executioners would be regarded as heroes who should be in the limelight. Go figure!

IN SEARCH OF A VILLAGE

The Village Idiot

For several years, you have heard from me each month on these pages. Now I want to hear from *you*. Last year, I ran a six-month series, *The Great Bank Robbery*, which was created because I believe that few people are left untouched by abuses at the hands of unscrupulous lenders. Of course, this year, as chronicled in the mass media, we as a country are bearing the fruits of these practices.

One of the biggest challenges of writing a series like these is the sensitive nature of the topics. In the near future, I would like to tackle the insurance mess that we as Florida homeowners experience in the face of policy cancellations and having less coverage available for a premium that is often double that of the previous year. If you have any experiences you'd like to share on this topic (or any other), please feel free to contact me.

In future issues, I plan to tackle still other topics in a serial fashion. If you have any ideas for a topic you'd like to see discussed, please let me know.

I urge you to share your experiences and ideas. Be assured, should you choose to do so, I will use the utmost discretion to protect your privacy. Please contact me at mensanidiot@yahoo.com. Thank you.

—Mike Moakley

A Mensan in the Workplace?

Are you the **Mensan at work**? Do you work with other Mensans...or...are you the only one? If the latter is true, do your coworkers know you're in Mensa? What about your boss? What are your impressions and experiences at work? Do you have a leadership position? Do you serve in any kind of "support" (formal or informal) role? Does your status as a Mensan have a positive or negative impact on your work relationships? Finally, if preparing a resume, would you include your Mensa membership as an item (or would you state that you qualified to join Mensa)? Why or why not? Let's hear from *you*.

The Tenth Story

Continued

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On a lighter note, also from the AG, Ohio Mensan Alan Baltis broke a Guinness World Record for the most hugs given by one person in an hour. The old record was 765 hugs. Alan hugged 833 within the hour for a new record. Yours Truly was about #620 of the attempt. What fun!

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GREETINGS FROM DENVER!

Today is Sunday, July 6, and the Annual Gathering in Denver has ended literally moments ago. What a terrific gathering! I wish you all could have been here. The attendance topped 2000, which is the largest American gathering except for the 2006 World Gathering in Orlando. Considering the distance from Florida to Colorado, I was quite impressed with just how many Florida Mensans were here in attendance. Next year's Annual Gathering will be back in the east, in Pittsburgh. Time to start thinking ahead and planning to attend.

Of course, what you probably most want to hear is which awards were won by Region 10 groups, so here you go:

Group of the Year Award (GOTYA) Class III - Palm Beach Mensa (WAY TO GO!!)

PRP WEBSITE AWARD - for member recruitment - Tampa Bay Mensa - James Heffernan

SPECIAL MENTION - Outstanding Young Mensa Website - Central Florida Mensa - Keri M. Guilbault

CAP AWARD - Central Florida Mensa - judging the Seminole County Regional Science Fair - Keri M. Guilbault

There were also some items of note and interest from the AMC meeting, as well:

First, this was the final vote on the dues increase which goes into effect next dues year, bringing annual dues to \$59. I mentioned in a recent column about considering doing a 3 year, 5 year, or life-time membership, finances permitting, before the dues increase takes effect. If you wish to do so, December 31, 2008 is the last day to get a break on those rates, as the dues increase goes into effect on January 1, 2009.

Second, 2008 was the first year that IRS required that local groups file Form 990 with National, who then filed for the entire national group with IRS. Not all local groups did so, so the filing was an estimate for many groups. In 2009, it will **REQUIRED** that groups do so. Before it is needed for 2009 filing, there will be an electronic form to fill out on the national website, making it as simple as possible.

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NOT The Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:

The ExComm was scheduled to meet at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, July 2, 2008. Unfortunately, with one member out of town and two detained at work we could not muster a quorum so the meeting was called off.

Perhaps this was some sort of minutes karma. The minutes for the June meeting, as emailed to all ExComm members and several others, said the meeting was scheduled for July 2, 2007. This apparently went unnoticed by all but our eagle-eyed editor who corrected it for publication.

Had we had a meeting it would have been duly reported that the treasury held the requisite amount of money, no candidate testing took place, and we continue to be in need of a publicity person. We have a possible sighting of a Gifted Child Coordinator, and are considering renaming the position to Young Mensan Coordinator. The next meeting, which will definitely take place, will be followed by a meeting of the RG Committee and will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2008 at 6:30 pm.

ANNOUNCING A NEW SIG!



Join the Computer Science SIG. Any Computer Science topics from work or school are welcome. To join email Michael Zielinski at mikez23@aol.com or compscisig@yahoogroups.com.