

The

SCAM

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We should be asking AML:

**The
\$1,000,000
Question...**

The \$20 Question...

(Both have the same answer-See Page 3)



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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

Don't you just *love* riddles? Well, here are the questions: (1) How do Mensans spend \$1,000,000? (2) How does each Mensan spend nearly \$20? *Answer*: Suing a company to protect the Mensa trademark.

That's right. The AML has seen fit to spend approximately \$1 million of American Mensa funds to pursue this lawsuit. Put another way, this is \$1 million of *our* money! This represents nearly \$20 per member—that's 1/3 of our dues for one year! It also represents more than double the amount spent supporting our Local Groups, where we as members are likely to benefit the most.

Should we have sued the company in question? Was the danger to our name and logo so imminent so as to justify this action? Should the suit have cost us the \$1 million? If we "won" such as the communications from AML suggest, should we not have pressed for reimbursement for our legal expenses? The truth is, I don't know these answers.

What I take issue with is this: For a major undertaking such as this suit, where all of us are significantly affected, shouldn't the AML have *asked us* prior to spending our money? I have stated in prior issues that Mensa exists for us; not the other way around.

I have long criticized AML for operating as a "top down" large corporation seeming to have little or no regard for us as members.

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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.

A new factor has entered into the design of toilets. Data collected through the Center for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Surveillance System show that in 2005, only 4 states had obesity prevalence rates less than 20%, 17 states had prevalence rates greater than or equal to 25%, of which three states had prevalence rates of 30% or more. Among adult men, the prevalence of obesity in 2005—2006 was 33.3%. Among adult women, the prevalence of obesity in 2005—2006 was 35.3%,

The number of people classified as overweight and obese has reached an all-time record high in the United States, with 64% of adults considered overweight, and as many as 30% of these individuals classified as obese.

“Overweight” is defined as excess body weight characterized by a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 29.9 kg/m². The terms “extremely obese” or “morbidly obese” are used to describe individuals with a BMI greater than or equal to 40 kg/m², or 35 kg/m². “Extremely obese” persons can range in weight from 250 to 1,000 lbs or more, depending on their height.

Heretofore the standard water closet and its supports were designed to support a load of 300 pounds. For wall mounted units that meant that they should not deflect more than 0.125” away from the finished wall and more than 0.375” downward from the front of the toilet bowl towards the finished floor when loaded. Wall mounted units are the most common in public areas because they are easier to clean around than floor mounted units. There are commercially available Heavy Duty units rated for 500 pounds, Extra Heavy Duty at 750 pounds, and Bariatric units rated for 1000 pounds.

A visit to a shopping mall, restaurant, or theater would reveal to an observer that there are many more people these days that appear to be over 300 pounds and even over 500 pounds. What do these people do when they have to go to the bathroom when away from home? Can they use a standard commode without harming themselves or the facility? Obviously not.

There are plumbing codes in force in most of the United States and other countries that define how many toilets, male and female, that must be provided in any public facility. Even the

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number of handicapped toilets are circumscribed. For all these toilets no regulation requires them to be stronger than the 300 pound standard. I can visualize a person weighing over 300 pounds sitting on a commode and having it collapse under him/her. Was he/she forewarned that the capacity of the toilet is only 300 pounds? How many ordinary people know of the weight limitation? If the person using the toilet is hurt by the collapsing commode, who is responsible?

The obvious immediate solution is to post signs in all public toilets notifying patrons of the weight limits. This may avert suits for liability, but then raises other issues. Can a public facility restrict the use of its public toilets to those who weigh less than 300 pounds, or must it, under the requirement to provide toilets for its patrons, provide toilets for those patrons weighing more than 300 pounds? If so, to what weight?

To change one toilet from a 300-pound unit to a 500- or 750-pound unit would not be too costly for a large facility, but for a small restaurant or convenience store, where there is only one or two toilets, the cost would be significant. Also, would hotels and cruise ships have to rebuild the toilets in all its rooms to accommodate the obese, or only some rooms?

Another aspect of the provision of toilets for the obese is the need for additional space around water closets, urinals, and wash basins. To redesign or design facilities for the obese is not only a plumbing problem, but also an architectural and structural problem.

New codes and standards are required to protect the health and safety of the users and to provide legal liability coverage for manufacturers, contractors, and designers.

Part One: Civilian to Marine

In August, 1950, I was in the fourth year of training following graduation from medical school. I was a second year Surgical resident at Touro Infirmary in New Orleans, but the training in Surgery was actually far beyond that level. I knew early on that I wanted to study Surgery, so that during the year of rotating internship, and during a year of Pathology residency, I read surgical literature, attended the surgical conferences and made special study of unusual surgical problems. In Pathology, I did extra study of surgical specimens. And in doing autopsies, I studied the surgical anatomy and did careful dissection to mimic approaches I would use later in live patients. All this extra preparation was to serve me well in the experience which was shortly to follow.

In 1948, in order to continue training, I had to have financial help, and I discovered that the Navy offered a commission and pay for such training in a civilian hospital in exchange for later obligated service. In my initial orders to active duty under instruction at Touro Infirmary, in New Orleans, no length of assignment was specified. Even though I was in desperate financial straits, I declined to take the oath, delayed a month until new orders were received assigning me to duty under instruction at Touro Infirmary and adding "to remain in such assignment until 1 July 1952."

Thus, it was a matter of great concern when, on 16 August 1950, I received dispatch orders detaching me from such duty, to travel to Camp Pendleton (California) and to report to the Commanding General of the Fleet Marine Force (Marines). For those who may not know about such things, dispatch orders are to be carried out within 24 hours; in other words, within 24 hours I should be gone from Touro Infirmary!

I dug out a copy of my initial orders and, thru the local Naval facility, sent a dispatch to BuPers objecting to the orders and citing the language that I was to remain at Touro until 1 July 1952. Within a few hours, I had a telephone reading of the reply (I never did receive a written copy; it probably arrived after I was gone.) The reply was terse and to the point, "Do not occupy Naval channels with unnecessary dispatches. Carry out your orders. "

Now I was in a panic! I had no choice but to go. But I had not yet even bought a uniform. So I headed for the Naval Station in Algiers,

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found enough uniforms to fit, but slight mods and applying Lt(jg) gold stripes and insignia would take an extra day. But I was in a hurry!! And I almost made a colossal blunder. The nice lady who did most of my order sold me the gold insignia of an oak leaf on a stem, said this was the new medical insignia. I still wasn't sure, so after I got back to Touro, I talked with a couple of Navy veterans and made some phone calls, discovered that what she suggested was the Medical Service Corps insignia. The proper one for a physician was still the oak leaf with an acorn on it. So I called in a panic, just in time to keep the wrong insignia from being applied.

Fortunately, the 250 miles per day travel allowance gave me eight days to make it to Camp Pendleton. I knew I could make it easily in the '49 Pontiac. But there still were many things that had to be done! I tossed a few things in the car, put most of my belongings in a couple of boxes to be stored somewhere. Nothing of much value to anyone else; I was still a rather poor country boy.

As I left the city limits of New Orleans, heading west, I was apprehensive, and disappointed to have my surgical training so abruptly brought to a halt. Little did I suspect that I was headed to the "Police Action" in Korea, and that I would be hitting the beach at Inchon in four weeks.

It was a long, lonely drive. There was an awareness that the lush, moist swampland of Louisiana gradually became drier and more barren. Somewhere along a lonely, flat, straight highway in Texas, I welcomed the sight of an isolated filling station. I wasn't low on gas, but decided to stop and fill up, to pause for a bit and interact with humans again. As the man filled the tank, I heard the faint sounds of a fiddle being tuned in the back room. I ventured to the back and found the man doing the tuning. Waiting beside him, another man held an acoustic guitar. I apologized for the intrusion but mentioned that I had played a little fiddle in the past. The older fellow politely held the fiddle toward me and said, "Here, give it a try." I declined, using the excuse that it had been a while, but if they didn't mind, I would like to listen. I was doubly glad of my response when he first pulled the bow across the strings. Obviously a professional! To a Shamblin style guitar accompaniment he blew my mind with some of the best fiddlin' I have ever heard. I can still hear his rendition of "Beaumont Rag" played as only a native Texan could do it. It was two hours in paradise for me, and I left reluctantly on my way to uncertainty.

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In west Texas and New Mexico, the heat was almost unbearable with temperatures up to 111 degrees. I carried a gallon jug of water and regularly soaked my handkerchief, put it across my face to counter the searing dry heat. Between cities there were few cars on the highway and miles of sandy expanse without any sign of life. I wondered about how long I would be able to survive if my car quit in such desolate isolation.

I stopped in Phoenix and spent the night with a med school classmate, Lewis Claypool and his wife, Vivian. What great delight to be with friends and cool again! I was intrigued by the air-conditioning system. Looked like a burlap curtain, kept moist by a trickle of water and blown by a fan - simple but quite effective. And their lawn watering system was also interesting. Their yard had a solid perimeter fence about six inches high and sloped down to a central drain. In late afternoon, water rose up thru the drain until it covered the yard for a few minutes, then rapidly drained away.

They explained to me that almost no one travels over the desert during the day. It's much better at night. And so it was! A delightful breeze filled the car. Obviously a lot of others had the same idea - traffic was very heavy going toward California.

At about 0600 hours, I pulled into the entrance of Camp Pendleton near Oceanside, California. I asked the guard where I could find the Commanding General (my orders said to report to him). Following the guard's directions, I drove along the main road and spotted the large ranch-style residence about a quarter mile off to the left. I parked beside the road for a while considering options, then drove on to a cluster of buildings, the main part of the base. I asked about the office of the Commanding General, figuring I would wait for him there. I entered the office, showed my orders to a clerk and asked when he expected the General. He laughed at my ignorance of military matters, then assured me that he could handle the matter for the General. In short order, I was checked in and assigned barracks, told to report to another office for duty assignment.

It was soon apparent that Pendleton was only a site for transient processing, and I was ordered to proceed to Travis Air Force Base "for further assignment." No doubt about it, I was headed overseas. So I called Vivian Claypool and asked her about keeping my automobile while I was out of the country. Next day I drove up to Los Angeles. and turned it over to her brother, who would later take it to her.

Next Month: Off to War.

Made it to Shanghai! It was a little easier getting here this time because Delta now has a flight from Atlanta to Shanghai so I could depart from Melbourne rather than Orlando. On the other hand, the flight from Atlanta to Shanghai is 16 l-l-o-o-n-n-n-g-g-g-g hours. That's a LOT of time to spend on an airplane. The flight goes over the North Pole so most of the time is spent flying over Canada and Russia.

On the positive side, the flight was only about 2/3 full so every middle seat was empty and it looked like there were a few entirely empty rows at the back of the plane. I usually don't have the patience to sit through movies, but I caught up on 5 recent films during the flight – "Nights in Rodanthe," "Slum Dog Millionaire," "Doubt," "Eagle Eyes" and "Changeling." Also polished off two magazines during the flight and watched a documentary on the history of money. The Chinese guy in the window seat slept most of the flight but I just couldn't fall asleep. Worked out fine, though, because I think it helped me adjust better at this end. Slept from about 7 p. m. till 1 a.m., then 2:00 till 6 a.m. Now I feel like I'm on China time.

The Chinese could certainly give us and most other countries some lessons on processing incoming passengers. It felt like I just kept walking without standing in long lines anywhere. The plane got to the gate at 1:30 p.m. Everyone was still seated at that time. I got off the plane, from row 37, through immigration, got my bags and cleared customs, all in 22 minutes. Met the taxi driver waiting for me at 1:52. That's efficient processing! In most airports you're just making it to the end of the long processing line for immigration by that time. Shanghai just opened a new international terminal and it makes a big difference.

Although it's 180 degrees different from Melbourne, China just feels like home. As you drive into town all you see is an ocean of 30+ story apartment buildings. My apartment is on the 27th floor of one of them. There are some older, shorter buildings but those are being quickly demolished to make room for the tall new ones. It's noisy with buses, trucks, motorcycle horns and bicycle bells, but it somehow seems welcoming rather than noisy. The smog, though, is just as bad as Chengdu. I can only see about ½ mile from my apartment because of the smog. It always amazes me that many Chinese people live their entire lives and never see stars, rarely see the moon

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through the smog, and only occasionally see the sun in its full splendor. The smog here makes one appreciate the clear skies of Florida that much more.

My first day has been busy already. Went for my morning walk but only stayed out for about 1 hour since I don't yet have a Shanghai map or one of the cards with the apartment address to give to taxi drivers. Bought breakfast from one of the people on the street with a hot griddle. They spread out a thin crepe of pancake-like substance, then add an egg on top, then add extra ingredients and spices that you pick. I don't know what they are so I just ask for a little of everything. They then fold it up like a crepe, add a crunchy thing in the middle and serve it to you for 3 Yuan (about 45 cents). Pretty tasty and filling. Part of the experience here is experimenting with the food and hoping for the best.

There are people with little griddles and others selling dumplings and pastries all over the busy streets in the morning. I also saw a couple guys who set up a little stand on the side of the road to repair bicycles.

A woman from the university came at 9:30 to hook up the wireless internet connection, DVD player and satellite TV. Yea!!! Satellite TV! Haven't checked all the stations yet but have BBC on now. They get CNN and CNBC live so the morning shows here are the same live evening shows that people get in the U.S. It sure beats the 4-6 hours of daily programming available on the one English language station from China Central TV (CCTV). Something must have changed in the last 3 years because when I was here in 2006 the director of the program told me they were threatening to fine everyone in his building with satellite TV dishes. Now they can be seen on many apartments.

The woman then took me to the police station to register my residency here. Everyone staying anywhere but a hotel has to register with the police. The police gather passport information daily from the hotels.

Just got back from that and the director of the program called to say he was just finishing a meeting nearby and wanted to go to lunch. I'm always up for a free lunch. He offered to take me to a western restaurant but I told him the only time I eat at western restaurants in China was when he came to visit in Chengdu or when I had company visiting in Chengdu. He picked a nice casual noodle

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place nearby that's part of a chain. Apparently most of the visiting faculty prefer western food when they visit. It's good to get some input on nearby places. I usually pick the small mom & pop shops when out walking but it's nice to know some hopefully safer places. One thing I notice is that the chain restaurants emulate U.S. eateries with very large servings.

After we finished lunch I stopped at the supermarket to stock up on groceries and supplies. I know I read that China quit allowing plastic bags for customers but it didn't hit home until I went to check out and there was just a pile of my stuff, kind of like shopping at Sam's Club but without the available boxes. Finally determined that I could purchase bags for about 5 cents each so I got a couple and finally got my stuff home. They seem to have more western looking vegetables in the stores here (as opposed to Chengdu where nothing looked recognizable) so I got some apples, broccoli and zucchini (I think) to nuke later.

One thing about the government control in China is that they can quickly implement something like outlawing the plastic bags at stores. They make the rule and put it into effect and that's the end of thin plastic bags. When I returned to the apartment it also made sense why I didn't see any plastic bags lining the trash cans in the apartment. Made me wonder how much life would change in the U. S. if we didn't have those ubiquitous WalMart and Publix bags that are re-used for everything.

(I don't have Winn Dixie bags because I just don't like the shopper's card used there. There must be a bonus card for customers at the store where I shopped today because the woman behind me shouted something to the clerk before she started ringing up my order, then slid her card through the machine at the cash register. She kept telling me something which I presume was an explanation of the card benefits. I smiled, nodded and kept saying yes in Chinese. The more I did that, the more she talked and smiled even though I didn't understand a word she was saying.)

Tomorrow will be a busy day. They apparently have 11 students in from countries around the world for this class. Seems odd to refer to "international students" when one is in China. Who knew people would fly in from around the world for me or anyone to teach Management Accounting? The classes here will be big with 35 students in each of two sections on Saturday and at least that many all day

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Welcome to SCAM:

Emily Morris

Welcome Back:

Katrina Waite

JUNE BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

8th	Robert Ruhge	24th	Sam Kirschten
17th	Art Belefant	25th	Eric Rantanen
18th	Donald Paauw Jr.		

Inside the Pocket Protector

Continued

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The AML seems to forget that it exists for *our* benefit. What I see here is just another example of this very disturbing behavior.

Shifting gears, on the local front, our ExComm elections are concluded. Everyone on the ExComm has once again been reelected. No surprises here. That said, I will reassure you that our “new” ExComm extends a warm welcome to any volunteers who wish to help make SCAM a better group for all of us.

Finally, some news involving *The SCAM*. Last year, you may remember, we featured a series, *The 20th Mission*, the story of a WWII fighter pilot who was captured when his plane was shot down by Germans. Well, beginning this month, there are two series.

One is the story of a Korean War Surgeon during his tour of duty. The other is a running narrative of a teacher who, as you read these words, is in Shanghai teaching the citizens there. In both cases this should prove to be some interesting reading. Enjoy!

SCAM Calendar of Events for June 2009

3rd - Wednesday 5:30 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

This is our monthly business meeting. All members are always welcome to attend. This month, it will be held at the home of George Patterson in Indialantic.

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

9th - Tuesday 7:00 PM

BASEBALL GAME

Join us at Space Coast Stadium in Viera for a night of baseball. Admission is \$7, Parking is \$3.

Contact: *George Patterson, 777-3721 for more info.*

23rd - Tuesday 7:00 PM

BASEBALL GAME

Join us at Space Coast Stadium in Viera for a night of baseball. Admission is \$7, Parking is \$3.

Contact: *George Patterson, 777-3721 for more info.*

24th - Wednesday 5:30 PM

ITALIAN NIGHT AT BIZARRO'S

Sam Kirschten is hosting an Italian Night at **Bizarro's Pizza**, 325 E. Merritt Island Causeway (SR 520). (*Editor's Note: Bizarro's is reputed to serve the best pizza in this area.*)

Contact: *Sam, 632-5147, for details.*

27th - 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 and click on "Calendar".

I don't get this tipping thing with servers (formerly, waiters and waitresses [non-sexist: waitrons]). Rule-of-thumb says a reasonable remuneration is 15% of your bill, more if you were pleased with your service. But that doesn't make sense.

Before I begin my rant – errr, I mean, learned discourse – let me say that all three of my delightful femchildren have served in the capacity of server at some point in their formative years, so I know wherefrom I speak. Also, contrary to popular belief, there is no documented evidence to support the notion that the word tip derives from the acronym for *To Insure Promptness*.

Having dispensed with my credentials and debunked the Urban Legend, we can now proceed.

As I understand it, the whole notion of tipping is to reward your server for performing his or her duties efficiently, effectively, and pleasantly (we will disregard the fact that virtually all servers are paid a despicable pittance and rely on their tips for sustenance). That being said, why should the amount of the bill reflect upon the tip? Good service is good service, whether it be for a cup of coffee and a slice of apple pie at the diner or a seven course feast at a five star restaurant or even a five course feast at a seven star restaurant.

It's not like the server cooked your food, or even bought the ingredients for it. All he/she did was bring it to your table from the kitchen. As long as it was deposited in front of you in a reasonable amount of time and about the right temperature, what difference bacon, eggs, & grits or Beef Wellington as far as gratuity is concerned?

If your server is polite, attentive, and responsive, your tip should reflect the fact that you appreciated their service.

So, I propose a new standard for tipping servers:

Adequate service is good for 5 bucks*. Period. Maxim's or McDonald's (if McDonald's had servers). Five bucks.

Good service is a tenner*.

Really outstanding service – and this one is purely a judgment call – is however much you are willing and able to part with to signify that you were very pleased.

Lousy service? The only specific direction here is that you should never, ever leave no tip at all. The absence of tip can be easily attrib-

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uted to simple forgetfulness and the server will continue on his/her merry way, providing substandard service without a clue. However, if you leave two pennies, or a nickel, or a dime... then the message is clear: *YOU SUCKED!*

With a standard rate schedule, the server can determine whether or not he/she is performing adequately. With a standard rate schedule, there's no longer that uncomfortable percentage calculation. With a standard rate schedule, the worry of being thought either a piker or a fool is removed.

And while we're on the subject, I would like to discourse about my number one Server Pet Peeve: *"You guys!"*

When my lovely wife and I embark upon a pleasant dining experience, it should be readily apparent to even the most simple-minded of servers that one of us is definitely *not* a guy. We are; however, invariably greeted with *"How are you guys tonight?"*

How simple just to elide *"guys,"* thus leaving the perfectly acceptable *"How are you tonight,"* appropriate for any number and combination of sexes.

But no: *"Do you guys need anything else right now?"* or *"Have you guys been here before?"* and *"Will you guys be having desert?"* When the hell did everyone become a guy?! Hate it; just hate it.

Okay, I feel better now.

The George

* *Per person/pair. Three or four folks, double the rate, etc.*

Let us first understand that global warming has not been proven and the cause of is not known. There are hundreds of scientists worldwide who claim they know the answer as well as an equal number who say they don't know what the "experts" are talking about.

No one has yet proven that it is carbon gases are the reason most of the "experts" claim. Pseudoscience at work. Others say it is a reduction in sunspots with the sun giving off more heat and all the planets in our solar system gaining the same amount of temperature rise as our Earth (even though they don't have any SUVs). And there are various other reasons advanced almost daily that do not agree with the majority. The arguments will not be settled by what is written here.

What is written here is irrefutable.

The mad scientists maintain the earth is warming because we are burning more fossil fuels causing a CO2 layer to form that radiates back the heat from the sun.

SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 3/31/2009:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$842.79
Post Office Acct.	138.21
Reserve Fund	2116.10
RG Fund	50.00

Total Funds Available:
\$3147.10

<u>Deposits</u>	
Mensa Funding:	\$202.50
Interest Income	0.09

<u>Withdrawals</u>	
Postage	61.79
Printing	158.44

—Bud Long, Treasurer

In order to stop this, according to this theory (and it is still theory), is to burn less fuel and create less carbon gases. Sounds good if everyone would do it. If everyone alive on the planet today agreed it would not help.

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Why?

Back to the basics. Today we have a world population of approximately 6.3 billion. It is projected by 2050 the population will increase about 50% to 9.5 billion. If those extra 3 billion don't even light a match each time they take a breath they will be giving off carbon gas.

These new souls will need food and shelter both of which require energy. By 2050 do you think it is possible to have the world running on solar and nuclear energy? Not if the politicians are in charge.

The solution is to halt the increase in world population. Nationalism will not allow that – or the church. A country must maintain a birthrate of 2.5 or it will be taken over by its immigrants or break into geographic entities.

We might get lucky and get hit by a large meteor that might kill off 50% or more of the entire world population. How about a nice friendly plague?

There is no logical solution. Studies have been done with mice showing the outcome of overpopulation. As I recall they all eventually die. Not pleasant.

Our fearless (wrong word) self-centered leaders in Washington only care for themselves and refuse to act intelligently to produce energy with nuclear and solar methods.

The fight is just beginning and will not become frenzy for another 20 years.

Global warming, if there is such a thing, cannot be stopped unless the world population can cease to expand.

You may receive Al Thomas' investment letter that profited 10% in 2008 at no charge for 3 months on the web site www.mutualfundmagic.com Never lose money in the stock market again. His book "IF IT DOESN'T GO UP, DON'T BUY IT!" has become a classic. Copyright 2009. Williamsburg Investment Co. All rights reserved.

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Sunday in Shenzhen (compared to typical classes of 25 students). Anyway, there is a meeting for the international students tomorrow and then a lunch so I will attend those (never one to pass up a free lunch), then go to the university in the afternoon to check out the facilities. Have class all day Saturday and then they will have a taxi waiting to rush me to the airport to catch a 6:30 flight to Shenzhen where I will teach all day Sunday. I was thinking that I didn't have to go to Shenzhen until week 2 so that means I have a lot more preparing to do tomorrow (Friday) after the meetings.

A Mensan in the family?

Are 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?

ANNOUNCING A NEW SIG!

C# Java C#

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 compcisig@yahoogroups.com.

Ever since the idea of economic stimulus has taken hold, one cannot escape the gross overuse of the term, “stimulus”. It seems any TV commercial selling an item worth more than \$100 appeals to our “patriotic duty” to do our part in getting the economy back on track. Not only do I find such ads in extremely poor taste, but to follow the “advice” of such ads will, for the most part, help to deepen the recession currently upon us. Perhaps a word of explanation is needed here.

In addressing the recession, President Obama has identified a root cause to be the lack of available credit to consumers, thus not allowing large purchases to be made as readily as in the past. While credit is necessary in any economy, I respectfully part company with the President on this point. Until late last year, credit was too readily available, often without consideration for the consumer’s ability to repay the debt. This is one of the major reasons this recession has occurred.

I saw this coming nearly two years ago. I am by no means clairvoyant, nor am I an economics expert, so certainly the experts must have seen this as well. For this, I call your attention to my concluding installment of *The Great Bank Robbery* (November 2007 issue of *The SCAM*), where I stated the following:

“One issue that was not covered is that these (credit) practices as a whole have created a vast, permanent underclass while, at the same time masking the problem. By issuing ‘easy credit’, even those living in poverty can buy ‘big ticket’ items, even though they cannot afford health insurance (no ‘easy financing’ there). It seems not only are these people denied a living wage, but also the business community sees the need to steal what little that has been paid to them.”

Of course, it was only a matter of time until many in the working class would default on their debts. The problem is that our wages have not caught up to our living expenses; it is worse now that the “easy credit” is virtually gone. In my March 2009 column, “*Stimulus?*,” I stressed the importance of meeting the needs of the American worker, whether or not currently employed, as necessary for the success of any economic stimulus package.

I have read with interest the ongoing stories about the bailout proposals of General Motors and Chrysler Corporation. What I have

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not heard so much is how many “American” vehicles are produced in places such as Mexico and China. It was during the “better” times, American jobs were lost NOT due to declining demand, but to take advantage of cheaper foreign labor through outsourcing.

My first recommendation is, then, if the automakers must close any factories, let’s start with the ones outside the U.S. and Canada. We should take this one step further: all American companies must eliminate their foreign manufacturing until we once again have reached full employment. This is not “protectionism”; we are still free to trade with other countries. Labor arbitrage (what outsourcing really is), on the other hand, is not “free trade”.

My second recommendation is this: Learn from the mess that we are in. Too little wages and too much credit is what got us here. American workers can no longer afford to pay their bills. Moreover, how much of what each worker paid out went to finance charges instead of the goods and services purchased? This arrangement benefits no one except the financial community – until the worker can no longer pay.

In this vein, a few things can help. First, let’s get serious about “living wage” legislation. If one works full time, he should be able to earn a living. Second, pass the Employee Free Choice Act. It should be our national policy that forming or joining a union should be the choice of the employee, not the employer. When our country had its highest period of prosperity, about 1 in 3 workers were in a union – the highest proportion ever. Finally we need national health care. Our companies that currently offer health benefits today will be better able to compete as a result.

I can hear the conservatives scream now. “Redistribution of the wealth!”, “Impending socialism!”, and so on. “Free market” is the best (or only) solution! We have now seen the results of their policies. *Now it’s time to try something else.*

I just returned from MindGames, which was enjoyable, but marred. For those of you unfamiliar with MindGames, this is how it works:

1. During the approximately one year period before MindGames, game publishers provide six copies of a game for evaluation, extra instructions, and a \$200 entry fee.

2. Mensans and their guests pay the same fee to register. Registration is capped. 2009's event was capped at 230 (increased shortly before the event to 240).

3. Everyone (Mensans and non-Mensans) attending has thirty games that person is required to play and judge. In the past, the total games submitted has approached and sometimes exceeded sixty games. For 2009, forty-five games were submitted. Attendees may optionally play the remaining games.

4. After playing a game, both Mensans and non-Mensans fill out a comment card for the publisher, judging the game with numerical grades on several criteria, and if they wish, commenting in a free form area on the card. The cards are anonymous, and identified by age group, sex, and Mensan/non-Mensan status.

5. Before the end of the event, only Mensans vote for their favorite games, and the five highest vote getters are awarded the Mensa Select Seal, which the publishers are permitted to place on the game boxes.

6. The local, host Mensa group, keeps one copy of every game submitted.

7. The remaining five copies of all the games are given away at the end of the event.

8. At all of the past MindGames, the give-away was done this way:

a. The names of all registrants (Mensans and non-Mensans) were randomized into a list.

b. The names were called in order and the person called (if present in person or by proxy) chose a game from the remaining available copies. Obviously, the better games went first.

c. When the end of the list was reached (and it was reached every year for the last six years at least), the list was read from bottom to

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top. So, many attendees went home with two (mediocre) games.

9. This year, because there were fewer game submissions and ten extra registrations were accepted shortly before MindGames began, there was a shortfall of games. Here is how it was handled:

a. About one week before MindGames began a “mommy letter” was emailed to the registrants disclosing that non-Mensan guests would be excluded from the game give-away.

b. During MindGames, Jack Woodhead, the chief judge, apologized for the shortfall.

c. He said that American Mensa had decided to change its policy; and that from now forward, non-Mensan registrants would be excluded from the game give-away. However, for 2009 only, any non-Mensan guests would be permitted to participate in the give-away, to the extent that games remained, after the Mensans had received their games.

d. Jack then apologized again for not posting this change in position on the Mensa MindGames website, or in the promotional materials.

Anyone coming to MindGames from any substantial distance spent hundreds of dollars to attend, so the \$20-\$40 game is not a real issue.

Here is the problem:

1. Based on past actions, everyone involved expected non-Mensan guests and Mensans to be treated similarly, as they had been in the past, and as they are at all other Mensa events.

2. Accepting ten additional registrations and then changing the rules at the last minute showed a lack of consideration for the non-Mensan guests. These guests paid to register, rearranged their schedules, and probably spent a lot of money for lodging and transportation costs. Each guest was probably also expecting to be treated with respect and courtesy, as one would treat a guest in one’s home, not as a second-class hanger-on. Treating people with disrespect, arrogance and disdain, as Mensa did to its MindGames guests, generally drives people away. The reactions of some of the victims to this lack of consideration are predictable.

So why do it? Do we want to drive non-Mensans away from events? Do we want to perpetuate the stereotype of the gifted but so-

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cially impaired Mensan? Do we want people to leave Mensa, or just to not join, because of this arrogance? I suppose there are people who join Mensa to feel superior or to be validated, and if Mensa shrinks, they couldn't care less.

However, I suggest that the main value of Mensa should be the social interaction it allows us, not bragging that that one is a Mensan.

3. Non-Mensans currently help as volunteers. (I personally know of non-Mensans who ran hospitality at RGs, and other non-Mensans who helped organize Mensan events). When one attends these events, one cannot tell who is a Mensan, or a non-Mensan. Do we want to discourage this assistance? Do we want to distance ourselves from all other non-Mensans?

So, what was the appropriate solution to the lack of games to be distributed? Whatever it was, it should have been applied equally to Mensans and non-Mensan guests. Perhaps the solution should have been that anyone who didn't get a game would have received an apology and a small refund, or a voucher for part of the registration fee for the next MindGames.

The solution which Mensa has adopted going forward, to exclude non-Mensans entirely from the game give-aways may be fair as a matter of contract; because the new registration forms will make this new policy clear (I hope). But only a rigid, socially impaired mind would think that that is the real issue.

Compare this solution to attending a Mensa party and (even with advance warning) being told, "*The M&Ms are running out; the Mensans get to gorge before the guests get any!*" or, "*There isn't enough seating, Mensans get to sit first.*" or, "*Please be quiet, a Real Mensan is speaking!*" The solution going forward shows an unfeeling arrogance and elitism, it is contra-productive to the continued viability of MindGames and Mensa. Instead, I propose that at any Mensa event which allows guests to attend, all attendees should be treated as equally as possible; and in the future, if we run out of games, M&Ms, chairs, or the like, all attendees will have to equally share the available resources.

A topic of current interest in American Mensa is the protracted period of negotiation and finally federal trial, in which Mensa was challenging the right of Inpharmatica and Bio-Focus DPI to use "Mensa" as part of the name for a software package they were marketing. Many of you received a "newsflash" about this in early May, but I know that not all of our members have email, so I am suggesting here that if you are interested in more detailed information on this situation, go to us.mensa.org/legalissues for said information.

This is my final newsletter as your Regional Vice Chair, so I would like to spend this column expressing my feelings and farewells. I have greatly enjoyed working with and for all of you. Region 10 has an excellent cadre of local group officers. They have been terrific to work with for the past 4 years, especially the LocSecs and Editors. From my observation, these are all fine hard-working people who are putting forth their very best efforts for their local groups.

Special thanks also to Lisa Kelly, who served this past term as my Assistant RVC. She is a dynamic member of Mensa GenX and a neat young lady.

I have no concerns about leaving the position of RVC, as I know that you will be in capable hands, no matter which of the candidates wins the election. Either Mel or Thomas will be an excellent and worthy successor. Region 10 will continue to thrive!

I will still be here. We aren't going anywhere. I just won't be the person to turn to for help or answers anymore. Hmm. I will kind of miss that! <g>

Maggie Truelove
(last time to write this) RVC 10
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Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson, May 6, 2009. Called to order at 5:48 p.m. by LocSec George Patterson.

Members present: George Patterson, Terry Valek, Bud Long, and Karen Freiberg. Joe Smith was unable to attend

Minutes for the April 1, 2009 meeting were approved as published in the May 2009 SCAM.

Officer Reports:

LocSec: George reported that the April 11 picnic was a success, with 22 attendees, including a couple of new faces. Regarding an audit committee, Art Belefant has agreed to serve. (see New Business) An attempt would be made to schedule the audit the evening of the June ExComm meeting. We were reminded that May 15 is the deadline for voting for the ExComm, with a games night and vote counting event scheduled for Saturday, the 16th.

Treasurer: Bud Long submitted the April Treasurers Report which showed total funds of \$3,147.10.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) and Helen Lee Moore (proctor) reported by email that one candidate was tested in April.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Terry moved that George Patterson, Joe Smith, and Art Belefant be appointed as the Audit Committee. Seconded by Karen, passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m. Next meeting will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic (321-777-3721) on *Wednesday, June 3, 2009* at 5:30 p.m.