

The

SCAM

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INSIDE: Being terrorized by BULLIES is a problem confronting many of us: *How do we deal with it?* This issue was featured in the July *Bulletin*. This month, one of our regular columnists tackles this often difficult issue and suggests a unique "outside-the-box" solution. See Page 12.





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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

One of the things I have learned over the years is that long-term relationships definitely have their benefits. In many cases, we do not understand this until the relationship has ended.

One very recent example I can point to is here at *The SCAM*. For longer than I can remember (and certainly long before I became Editor), this newsletter has been printed every month by Banana River Printing. The greatest benefit of our relationship with our printer was a good reliable print job at a very reasonable price.

Banana River Printing has been operated for years by a husband-and-wife team. Just before the August issue was sent to press, the husband suffered a stroke. As a result the printers had to close their business permanently. I will miss them.

As a result, we needed to seek out a new printer. This brings other challenges as well. One is the prospect that future newsletters may well become more expensive to print. Despite these developments, I have been assured by our LocSec not to worry about the possibility of price increases impacting the newsletter. This is reflected in the minutes of the August ExComm meeting.

Even so, as Editor, I do have the responsibility to make these best, most efficient use of the pages of *The SCAM*, without sacrificing quality. As a result, beginning with this issue, I have instituted a few changes. For starters, the center calendar is gone. The listing of

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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.

Of all the countries in the world, The U.S. displays the most variety in what is eaten for breakfast. From nothing through coffee and doughnuts, to ham and eggs, fading into an unlimited Sunday brunch of fifty to 100 items, only the Chinese come close.

Many Americans skip breakfast completely, not because of necessity, although unfortunately that is the problem in many undeveloped countries, but out of laziness or an attempt to get a few more minutes of sleep. Some of those Americans that skip breakfast do so in anticipation of getting coffee and doughnuts or bagel later at work.

A quick breakfast at home often consists of cold cereal and milk. It is quick and easy to prepare and eat. It is one of our most standard breakfasts, especially if a glass of orange juice is included, and so American. There is so much variety of cold cereals to choose from. Adam Platt in an article in New York compares 100 dry cereals generally available, not including the standards like corn flakes shredded wheat, Cheerios, Rice Krispies, and Froot Loops.

Hot cereals, such as oatmeal farina, and grits are another category, do take some time to prepare even those “instant” varieties where you just pour hot water over them, you do have to boil the water. Grits deserve a special mention as they form an indispensable part of a standard Southern U. S. breakfast.

Added to the above are the other grain based breakfasts, doughnuts, pancakes, waffles, bagels, muffins, and toasts. My favorite breakfast is also a cold one - bagels, cream cheese, and lox with sliced onions and capers. Actually I relish fish for breakfast - kippers and fried fish for example. There’s something about the punch that you get from protein for breakfast that you can’t get from the carbohydrates in cereals alone, which accounts for the popularity of eggs for breakfast and the addition of breakfast meats, ham, bacon, and sausage, to pancakes and waffles.

Eggs are the American breakfast par excellence. They go with everything, meats, fish, pancakes, but not cold cereal. Fried, poached, Benedict, scrambled, and especially omelets. Omelets can have almost anything incorporated in them. Have you tried an omelet made with chicken livers or lox?

Of course, a Frenchman or an Italian wouldn’t touch an egg be-

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fore dinner, but that is their loss. For breakfast, a café au lait with a croissant or brioche or a caffè con latte with a cornetto is sufficient. The British have a standard breakfast in their hotels and B&B's called a "full English breakfast". I found exactly the same thing in every class of lodging that I stayed at. The breakfast consists of orange juice, a fried egg, sunny-side up, a half of a grilled tomato, fried potatoes, baked beans, toast, and a bit of fried ham or sausage. You can often get something out of the ordinary, like kippers, if you ask for it.

A traditional Japanese breakfast consists of rice, miso soup, seafood, and pickles, which does not differ substantially from dishes eaten at other meals in Japanese cuisine. The breakfast may be elaborated by the addition of nattō (a type of fermented soybeans), nori or other garnishes, rice porridge (congee), grilled fish, and raw egg.

The ordinary Chinese breakfast is a soup or thin porridge called congee. It is made by boiling rice. Although often eaten plain, various seasonings, meat or vegetable ingredients can be added to it. Accompanying the congee, a fried dough is often served. For a more elaborate breakfast, any of the multitude of Chinese dishes served at dinner may be served.

An Israeli breakfast in most hotels consists of coffee, milk, orange juice, fresh vegetable salad, fresh bread or toast, olives, butter, fried or boiled eggs, and some small cookies or slices of cake. The centerpiece of the breakfast is the many types of cultured milk and cream (clabber, yogurt), and fresh cheeses (cottage, ricotta, cream) that are offered.



Everyone wants to beat it.

Not necessary, sez I. You don't have to beat it; you just have to use it to your advantage. And, to do that, you have to know all the rules since, in most cases, The System is so convoluted that there is almost always a loophole or a contradiction that you can use to your advantage.

To wit: a recent experience.

(Oh, c'mon! Don't act so surprised. Like you didn't know there was going to be a story coming? Like you think I write these articles to reduce global warming or to promote better dental care for llamas?)

Driving to work at ghodawful-thirty in the morning, still dark, half asleep, spilt some coffee into the cup holder. Mid-morning-ish, it occurs to me that if I don't clean up the spill, will be all that much harder to do later. So I grab a convenient sprayer of industrial strength disinfectant / cleaner / sanitizer / fungicide / mildewstat / virucide / deodorizer (s'truth: I copied this right off the label) that I have sitting on my desk plus a box of 3-ply Tech Wipes (oversize, heavy-duty tissues that are stocked in the supply cabinet) and head out to the parking lot. Cleaned up my mess from earlier in the morning and took the opportunity to also wipe off the dash.

About 10 minutes later, I receive a telephonic summons from my manager to report to her office. I am suspecting that I am not about to receive a reward. I am right. Seems *her* manager, whose office is adjacent, saw me outside "cleaning" my car and became irate at my inappropriate private activities during nominal work hours. I was directed to: a) make up the time I spent performing non work-related functions (alleged to have taken 20 minutes) and, b) to mark my time card with the annotation A/P.

A digression is called for at this juncture to explain the functionality of the A/P notation on my time card. But, before I digress, a further digression (*sub-digression?*) is necessary to explain why a highly-trained, professional rokkit scientist has to fill out a time card in the first place.

Normally, someone classified as a "professional" is paid an annual salary to perform his or her duties and is expected to do whatever is necessary to accomplish the tasks required irrespective of the

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amount of time required to do so. If that means putting in a few extra hours or a few extra days to meet a milestone or a deadline, then so be it. That's what professionalism is all about. In the world of government contracting; however, that is not the case.

My employer has a contract with NASA and receives compensation based on the number of labor hours expended in support of that contract. Thus, accurately accounting for those labor hours is of paramount importance. Thus are we laborers required to record our labor hours whether we be "professionals" or the guy that scoops alligator poop off the Shuttle Landing Strip. As a concession to profession; however, we are given certain latitude with the granting of flex time, comp time, and even – on rare occasions – overtime.

A sub-sub-digression here to explain to those who may have never heard of new-fangled stuff like telephones and indoor plumbing, what flex, comp, and overtime are. Flex time means that as long as you put in your 40 hours, as long as it's okay with your boss, you don't necessarily have to do five eights. F'rinstance, if you've got a dentist appointment to get your teeth curled and you don't want to take a day off to accommodate it, you can still go in the morning or the late afternoon, put in a short day, and make up the missing hours another day. Comp time is like banking your work hours. You put in more than your forty. You get credit for it. Again, with approval of your manager, you can use that credit at a later date in lieu of actually working. Overtime (more mythical than actual) is extra hours that you have been mandated to work in order to accomplish a specific goal by a specific time for which you are then compensated at more than your nominal honorarium.

[/Time sub-sub-digression END]

[/Timecard sub-digression END]

[/A/P digression continues]

So, the A/P (*which, by the way, stands for Away/Personal*) notation on the time card indicates that we have not worked some portion of our nominal work schedule due to some personal distraction. If one's duty hours are, say, from 0730-1600 (in Americanese, that means 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. [The more astute amongst you have no doubt done the ciphering and calculated the 8 ½ hour work day. In the words of Robert Heinlein *<if you don't know who Robert Heinlein is {although that would make me wonder how you managed to get into MENSA}, I suggest you Google him>*: TANSTAAFL [*There Ain't No*

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Such Thing As A Free Lunch]. Appropriate here since we are allocated one-half hour for lunch *on our own time.*], but on the way into work you were delayed for half an hour (watching the Mother Ship neatly excise the town of Bithlo and beam it into its cargo hold for transport to Aldebaran IV because the High Council is very much enamored of the School Bus Figure 8 Race), then you would be required to work the missed half-hour at the end of your nominal shift and mark your card with A/P to indicate that you weren't there for some portion of your designated shift.

{/A/P digression END}

Where were we? Oh! Yeah. Wiped the spill, got busted, was told to make up the time and note the discrepancy.

Now a couple months earlier, this manager (*who doesn't particularly like me [although I can't imagine why: I am, after all, singularly charming and devilishly handsome]*) sent out an email to the unwashed masses stating that smokers need to partake of their activities *on their own time* and make up any non-business related expenditure of temporal units.. However, as a direct consequence of my housekeeping misdemeanor, this selfsame manager sent out a follow-up email reminding us time abusers not only to make up the time, but also specifically to indicate A/P on our cards to show that some portion of our nominal workday was not part of our nominal work day.

So, it had been my practice to come in a half-hour early to compensate for the time I spent on the loading dock supporting my habit. But it had never occurred to me that I would have to mark my time card A/P, since I was there for the duration and was only absent my desk for moments at a time. Hereafter, I was now required to confess that I had deserted my post by branding myself with the dreaded A/P. It was then that the epiphany hit.

As it turns out, my little dog (*no, not Toto: Walter*) had had some doggy discomfort the night before and had awakened me before my alarm. Thus, not only was I my usual half-hour early, but yet additionally too was I an extra 15 minutes to the green. My original intention was to just eat the extra 15 since otherwise I would have had to put the freaking A/P on my card and it's sort of a pain, not part of the standard process. However, I had now been *directed* to A/P myself!

So I hie myself hither to yon manager's office and inform her thusly: "Ms. Boss, since your boss has directed me to A/P my time

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card and make up the time I expended blotting a coffee spill, please note that: 1) I come in a half-hour early to compensate for the time I spend poisoning myself with nicotine, 2) This particular morning, I arrived at this venerable place of employment an additional one-quarter hour yet even earlier due to a canine conniption, 3) The 20 minutes alleged to my ablutionary activity was, in actuality, only 1/12 of an hour (in truth, even that was rounded up; couldn't have been more than 3 minutes, tops), and 4) Doing the requisite ciphering, we arrive at the solution $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours in situ - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour lunch - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour puffing + $\frac{1}{2}$ hour early to cover nicotine breaks + 15 minutes earlier than usual - 5 minutes in the penalty box = 10 minutes to the good. Thus, it is my intention to depart the workplace $\frac{1}{6}$ th of an hour earlier than is my usual wont."

And she sez: "Okay."

Now, if you've been following closely, sports fans, and managed to wend your way through all the digressions to the exciting conclusion, you will come to the realization that whereas my boss's boss was trying to screw me, she screwed herself instead. On this fateful day, I had intended to donate an extra 15 minutes to my beloved employer, yet ended up shortening my workday by 10 minutes because of the evil machinations of my superior.

It's all in knowing how to play the game...

The George

<i>Inside the Pocket Protector</i>

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events, of course, remains.

Currently, The SCAM has been running two series, *Notes of a Korean War Surgeon* and *Shanghai 2009*. These will no longer be in print, but are available for your reading as .pdf files in the "Newsletter" section of the SCAM Website. The first series is available in its entirety, the second, written as a diary, is available up to the current installment. Future installments will be posted as they become available. Our Web address is <http://scam.mensa.org>. You are invited to visit.

As always, I am still looking for contributors to The SCAM; there will always be room for your work. If ever we have more good articles than we are able to print, they will likewise become available on our Website.

SCAM Calendar of Events for September 2009

5th - 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.*

22nd - Saturday 7:00 PM

SOCIAL

George and Barbara host an evening of socializing to which our recent prospective members are also invited. There will also be a round table discussion for ideas to improve our social calendar, so bring some ideas with you. With any luck, the evening will degenerate into a games night. Light refreshments will be provided. No kitty.

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

25th - Tuesday 7:00 PM

BASEBALL GAME

Join us at Space Coast Stadium in Viera for a night of baseball. Find us along the aisle just to the right of Home Plate. Admission is \$7, Parking is free.

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

29th - 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, 777-3721.*

Of CABBAGES and Coffee:

(Our Regular Events)

C.A.B.A.G.E.: *Every Monday at Books-A-Million, Merritt Square Mall 6 p.m. Host: Karen Freiberg, 633-1636*

SCRABBLE: *Every Tues. at Books-A-Million, Post Commons, Melbourne, at 12 noon.*

GO!: *Every Sunday at Books-A-Million, Post Commons, Melbourne. Host: George Lebovitz, 259-3070, rokkitsci@cfl.rr.com*

Membership Notes for September 2009

WELCOME TO SCAM AND MENSA

Marlette Berry
Ava Watson
Nancy Dgetluck

WELCOME TO SCAM

Scott Pritchett

WELCOME BACK!

Sean Freeman
James Dace

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>2nd</i>	George Patterson	<i>17th</i>	Michael Fuller
<i>7th</i>	Leah Simpson	<i>20th</i>	Wilmer Kimberly
<i>10th</i>	R. Kent Buchanan	<i>22nd</i>	Paul Siefert
<i>10th</i>	Douglas Dieruff	<i>27th</i>	Alan Ferguson
<i>13th</i>	Eric Swiechowski	<i>27th</i>	A.M. Gehringer
<i>15th</i>	Joseph Cittadini	<i>30th</i>	William Corey

The "Fine Print" for Calendar Events:

Membership in American Mensa, Ltd. makes you eligible to attend SCAM social functions. Escorted and invited guests of a member or host are welcome. Adult family members of Mensans are encouraged to participate in SCAM activities, as are well behaved children. However, attendance at any social function in a **private home** is subject to the hospitality of the host. Compliance with published house rules is required, and "Kitty" payment is **not optional**. As a courtesy, notify the host if you plan to attend. Announced hosts should attend their events or arrange for a stand-in if unable. When reservations are required, you may not be able to participate if you fail to call.

S-Smoking; **NS**- No **Smoking**; **SS**-Separate **S**Smoking Area; **P**-**P**ets in the home; **NP**-No **P**ets present; **BYO**_ -Bring Your Own: _**S**nacks, _**D**rinks, _**E**verything.

Over the last month or so, I have come across some rather interesting reading. One of the items was the July Mensa *Bulletin*, featuring an article on how one might fend off a physical attack brought on by a bully. Regardless of how one might react to the substance of that article, it is heartening to know that Mensa recognizes that bullying is a notable concern to more than just a few of us.

I'm sure I am not alone in having been the constant target of schoolyard bullies for being "different" while growing up. I'm sure that at least a few of you reading these words can readily relate to this often difficult problem. Here, I wish to address the seemingly age-old question: "What do we do about it?" Like any other problem, we first need to define it.

It seems nearly all kids, in the normal process of growing up, will encounter the occasional bully. These are brief episodes and are not typical of the overall school experience. This, then, is not the problem I refer to here. Instead, I refer to the one or two kids in just about every school of every size, who just, for whatever reason, never seem to "fit in". You know who they are; one of them might have been you. As a result, these unfortunate souls are the targets of constant harassment, the scars from which they never completely heal. It might even be your child who faces this problem each day. *What, then, do we do?* Before tackling this nagging question, I shall digress for a moment.

Another of the interesting items I have had occasion to read was a copy of an appeals court decision, *Tate vs. State* (Fla. 4th DCA 2003). The appellant, Lionel Tate, was challenging his conviction of first degree murder. The murder conviction was arrived at because his victim's death was brought about by the commission of another felony, in this case, aggravated child abuse. Tate was 12 years old at the time of the offense; his victim was six years old.

Essentially, the argument on appeal was that the child abuse statute did not apply to children that are not in a "caretaker" role (such as that of a 16-year-old mother). To apply this statute (Chapter 827, Florida Statutes*) in Tate's case could expose just about any child who has ever engaged in a physical confrontation with any other child to possible criminal sanctions. Surely, the argument went, it would not even *approach* reasonable to interpret Chapter 827 in that light...*or would it?*

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To make a long story short, the 4th District Court of Appeals ruled against Tate, citing yet another case as legal precedent. In the prior case, *K.B.S. vs. State*, 725 So. 2d 448 (Fla. 2d DCA 1999), that court ruled that “K.B.S., a juvenile, violated section 827.03(1) by knowingly or willfully abusing a child by intentionally burning the nine-year-old victim with a cigarette.” The Tate decision also affirmed that children can be prosecuted as adults: “*Florida courts have long recognized that there is no absolute right requiring children to be treated in a special system for juvenile offenders...*” So, there you have it: children can be prosecuted as adults for child abuse if they harm another child or otherwise violate Chapter 827.

Returning now to my original point: What to do about the constant terrorism brought on by schoolyard bullies: *Prosecute them under the Florida child abuse statute!* For starters, what does the statute say? Here are a couple of excerpts:

827.01(2)(Definitions): “*Child* means any person under the age of 18 years.”

827.03(1): “*Child abuse*’ means:

(a) *Intentional infliction of physical or mental injury upon a child;*

(b) *An intentional act that could reasonably be expected to result in physical or mental injury to a child...*

827.03(2): “*Aggravated child abuse*’ occurs when a person:

(a) *Commits aggravated battery on a child;*

(b) *Willfully tortures, maliciously punishes, or willfully and unlawfully cages a child ...*”

Child abuse is a third degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, while aggravated child abuse is a first degree felony (up to 30 years imprisonment). From my own experience, when one is a target of constant bullying, it would not be difficult to identify one or more of the actions committed by the bully to be “child abuse” or “aggravated child abuse” within the meaning of Florida law.

What steps should be taken? If you are a child:

1. BE HONEST. I cannot emphasize this strongly enough. Tell the truth.
2. BE REASONABLE. This is not for isolated cases, or for times when you are simply angry with a classmate.

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3. If you are being constantly bullied at school, let your teacher, principal or resource officer know what's going on. What's being done? Who is doing it? When? Where? Be sure you know the names of everyone, including the person you are reporting the bullying to.
4. Let your parent(s) know. Tell them everything, including the name(s) of all people involved.
5. If this does not help, call the Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE). Give all the facts.

If you are the parent:

1. Review the steps above with your child and listen to what he or she says. Document everything. Participate in these steps as appropriate.
2. Contact the school to investigate the ongoing incident; hold conferences as needed with the relevant school authorities.
3. If the matter is an emergency (or if the first two steps do not resolve the matter), report the matter to the police. Tell the officer your child your child may be the victim of abuse at the hands of a bully, and that you intend to press charges.
4. Follow up as needed with the local State Attorney's office. Do NOT drop the issue.

For many, this may seem a bit extreme. But, having been there, I think not. When I was in school, I went through constant bullying that went on literally for years. Nearly half a century later, I am *still* feeling the effects of that experience. I assure you this must never be taken lightly.

Sources:

1. Chapter 827, Florida Statutes: www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes, Click "Crimes", then click "Chapter 827".
2. Lionel Tate v. State of Florida (Case No. 4D01-1306): www.4dca.org/Dec2003/12-10-03/4D01-1306.pdf.

As a 30-year resident here in Brevard County, I have never experienced a shortage of fellow residents who are conservatives and quite expressive of their views. One viewpoint I commonly come across is the assertion that wealth is the result of hard work and, conversely, poverty is the result of laziness. This is a core value often used to justify policies that favor the rich at the expense of the rest of us.

This, in turn, seems to be derived from the Horatio Alger (“Rags to Riches”) myth, which itself has been somewhat exaggerated. Yes, if you are not wealthy, it is your own fault. If you are poor, you need to get off your lazy butt and get to work (and presumably get rich)! America, to them, is truly a meritocracy. Yet, is this really the case? I decided to take a look.

My first step was to identify the richest (and presumably hardest-working) Americans. *Infoplease.com* provided me with the top ten richest Americans, along with their net worth (2008). Then, I looked up their names on Wikipedia to get a short synopsis of the lives of these role models. I do not present this as a scientific study, but merely to illustrate a point.

So, what sort of hard work did they engage in to make such amazing accomplishments? Below, let us take a brief look at our Top Ten.

David Koch has a degree in chemical engineering. Since he has been active in Koch Industries, founded by father Fred C. Koch, one could argue that David plied his talents for the betterment of the business. The median annual income for chemical engineers is \$88,760. Koch’s assets of \$19 billion are enough to pay for nearly 4300 such engineers for life.

Older brother Charles Koch, also of Koch industries, came up with a scheme known as Market Based Management, which presumably has contributed to the greater success of his business. His assets (also \$19 billion) are the lifetime income equivalent of nearly 5000 management consultants, whose median annual income is \$76,600.

Michael Bloomberg is best known as the founder and 88% owner of a financial software services company. Essentially, he is a software engineer who had both the good fortune and the smarts to take advantage of being at the right place and the right time. For this, his fortune of \$20 billion is the lifetime equivalent of the earnings of about 4700

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software engineers (\$84,560/yr.).

Now, let's look at the Waltons of Wal-Mart. Christy Walton is the widow of the late John T. Walton (son of Sam). I have no information on her occupation or education/training. Presumably, her fortune is strictly an inheritance; one might say in her case, marrying the right person is worth \$23.2 billion.

Alice Walton, daughter of Sam, has a background as a money manager. Her fortune of \$23.2 billion is the lifetime equivalent income of some 3500 money managers (\$131,760/yr.).

Rob Walton was a partner in the law firm that represented Wal-Mart, until father Sam died. He is now chairman of the Board of Directors. Essentially, he's a corporate attorney whose fortune of \$23.3 billion is the lifetime earnings equivalent of about 3600 corporate attorneys (\$128,610/yr.).

Jim Walton was named as chairman of Arvest Bank, but nothing is known whether this is an honorary position or he brings any background to that position. Essentially, his fortune of \$23.4 billion is the direct result of correct genetics.

Larry Ellison is co-founder and CEO of Oracle. His title is "entrepreneur" (literal meaning is "risk-taker"). He brings to the world his expertise as a software engineer. His fortune of \$27 billion is the lifetime equivalent of some 6400 software engineers.

Warren Buffett is an investor and a businessman. In 1999, he was named top money manager of the 20th century by the Carson Group. His fortune of \$50 billion is the lifetime earnings equivalent of nearly 7600 money managers.

Bill Gates, our Number One, the founder of Microsoft, made his fortune of \$57 billion through the development of some astoundingly successful computer programs. So successful was he that he has the lifetime earnings equivalent of nearly 13,500 software engineers.

This is not to say these 10 wealthiest Americans do not deserve their fortunes. It is not my point at all; rather I attempt to answer the question: In each case, is each one's wealth simply a result of hard work? If we have not likewise achieved the wealth these billionaires enjoy, is it truly "our own fault"?

Would it be fair to say, for example that Bill Gates gained his fortune by working more than 13,000 times harder than the average

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software engineer? Conversely, if that lazy software engineer would simply get off his butt and work 13,000 times harder, would he be another Bill Gates? I believe we know the answer to this one.

Moreover, in six of the ten cases (the Waltons and the Koches), their great wealth has come from family inheritances. So, was it bad decision-making on our part that we didn't choose the right parents? The remaining four are best characterized as entrepreneurs; essentially, they are gamblers who beat the odds.

In any case, what is evident here in all cases is that their great wealth is not based on merit as it is defined for the rest of us. We can conclude that the Horatio Alger myth is just that: a myth. So, to my conservative brethren who justify stacking the deck in favor of the rich, I say this: Spare me the lectures blaming me for not being among the privileged.

Yet, is there something to the oft-heard advice that to be successful, we should emulate the rich? In one sense, I believe so: *Buy a lottery ticket*. The odds of becoming rich are better than that offered for working.

SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 7/31/2009:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$561.71
Post Office Acct.	169.03
Reserve Fund	2116.36
RG Fund	50.00

Total Funds Available:

\$2897.10

Deposits

Mensa Funding:	\$195.54
Interest Income	0.09

Withdrawals

Postage	51.24
Printing	210.94

Transfers

General Acct to PO Acct	\$200.00
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—Bud Long, Treasurer

This month's column is about housekeeping matters.

In last month's column, I said that our Region 10 Web site was not well publicized. Somebody took that as a slap at the former RVC, Maggie Truelove, and I want to clarify that that was not my intention at all. In point of fact, Maggie mentioned the Web site numerous times in her column. Despite Maggie's mentioning of it, for some reason the Web site didn't seem to take off, and that's all I meant to convey. My apologies to Maggie and to anyone who thought my comments were directed at Maggie; the Web site's failure to take off was in spite of her efforts and not because she was derelict in her duty. Nor was it directed to the Webmaster, Eddie Truelove, who spent a great deal of time and effort on the Web site, for which I thank him.

Second, one of my campaign promises was to give all LocSecs in Region 10 the opportunity to cross-pollinate by talking to each other (and to me) via monthly conference call. I would like to set up the first one for the week after Labor Day (which, incidentally, is also the week after Broward County's not-to-be-missed Suite Tooth RG). I am publicly asking all LocSecs, as well as the two assistant RVCs, to email me and let me know when that week would be most convenient for us to chat by phone for 30 minutes or so – evenings, weekends, graveyard shift, during church, let me know what works for you and I'll try to find a time that works for everyone.

Finally, as many of you are aware, Mensa recently settled litigation against the drug firm Inpharmatica for wrongful use of our trademark. It is with some dismay that I have heard rumors flying around that Mensa is in dire financial straits (with bankruptcy possible) as a result of that litigation. That rumor is industrial-strength bullshit. Mensa's finances are just fine. We've made a few trims at the national office (for example, the American Mensa Committee will only be having three face-to-face meetings a year instead of four until further notice), and there are some new initiatives and programs that are being postponed, but I don't expect anyone at the individual or local group level to even notice. If anyone has any questions about that, feel free to ask.

I hope to meet many of you in Fort Lauderdale over Labor Day Weekend at the Broward County RG. Until next month,

Mel Dahl, RVC-10

Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, August 5, 2009. Called to order at 6:07 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Members present: George Patterson, Terry Valek, Joe Smith, Karen Freiberg and Bud Long. Welcome Guests: None

Minutes for the July 1, 2009 meeting were approved as published in the August 2009 SCAM.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: Bud submitted the Treasurer's Report for July which showed a final balance of \$2897.10. The Audit committee performed the annual audit, following last month's ExComm meeting. The results were satisfactory and were submitted to the SCAM editor for publication.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported that no candidates were tested in July. Six prospects were contacted for the 1st time, 13 other prospects for 2nd or 3rd time. A test session was scheduled for August 15, at the Central Brevard Library.

Old Business: There was no old business. But in that vein, there was some discussion of the need to find a new printer for the newsletter, and it was agreed that there was, as yet, no need for the editor to minimize the size of the newsletter as an economy measure.

New Business: George observed that we had been without a Publicity Chair long enough, and volunteered for the position. Terry moved and Karen seconded that George Patterson be appointed Publicity Chair. Approved 4-0 with George abstaining; for no particularly pressing reason. George said he would try for a report next month on the sort of work a publicity chair should be doing.

It was moved, seconded and approved that the treasurer open an account for the 2010 RG and move \$300.00 from the reserve account to the RG account as seed money.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33. Next meeting will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, September 9, 2009 at 5:30 pm. Note that this is the second Wednesday of the month, a departure from our usual custom.