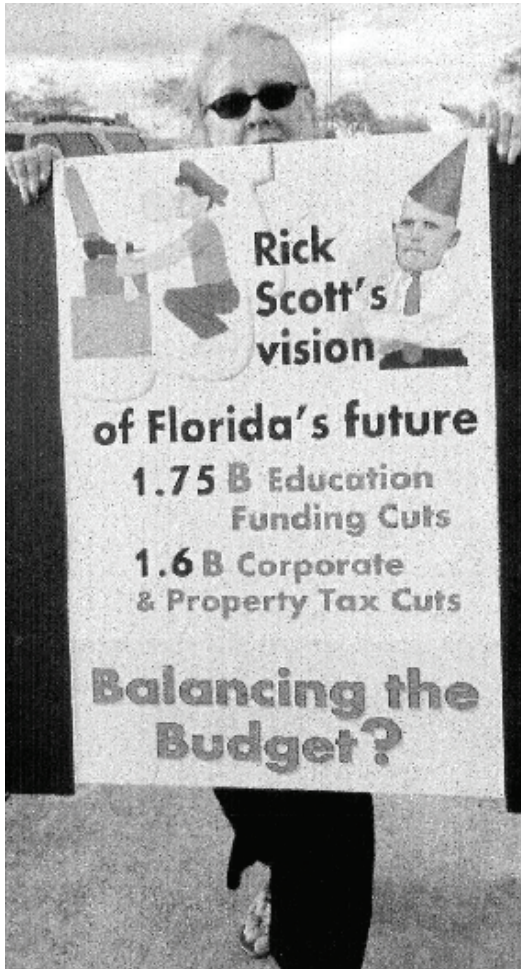


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The Next "Wisconsin"?





SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



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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

April...What can we say about April? Spring is here or, more accurately, it is the first phase of Summer here on the Space Coast. It also reflects the end of Tax Season, together with the dreaded April 15th (actually, this year, it is the 18th).

In keeping with that theme, we are treated with a column on that very subject from our very own The George. Whether or not you agree with him, it is well worth the read. Speaking of opinions, I would like to remind you that the opinions expressed in all of the content of *The SCAM* are strictly the opinion of the author.

This includes our cover photo for this month's issue, which comes to us courtesy of my good friend Bill Lundell who took the photograph at a protest held on March 8th at Viera. Mensa itself, including Space Coast Area Mensa, holds no opinions.

If you believe, as a member, that we do not publish a wide enough range of opinions, as Editor, I would invite you to e-mail me your own views on the topic of your choice. If you wish to submit a photo for possible use on our cover, just scan it and attach the file in an e-mail to me. As in written material, please make sure it is not copyrighted (unless it's your copyright) and it is not a personal attack on another Mensa member.

In any case, please be assured that a seeming lack of diversity of opinions is not because I control what opinions are published. Rather, I would very much like to see differing opinions

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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.

Many of our food likes, dislike, aversions, and abhorrence's, and what we consider palatable or disgusting we learn early on, not quite at our mother's breast, but soon afterward.

After WWII, before sushi became popular in the U. S., I came back from a five-year tour in Japan. I had become acculturated to Japanese cuisine and had become fond of sushi. On my return, I visited my brother in New York. I met him for lunch in midtown Manhattan near his office.

In discussing where to eat, I suggested a Japanese restaurant, at the time of my return there was only one Japanese restaurant in Midtown. He had never eaten Japanese food. His experience was with foreign food was German, but not the best, certainly the worst, he had been a POW.

At the restaurant I ordered sushi. When he saw the raw fish, he displayed a strong aversion. Neither of us had ever eaten raw fish before the war, it was never served in our home. Japanese restaurants were a rarity in the States, but my five years in Japan made me accustomed to the cuisine and ardently in favor of it.

It took some doing for me to have him try it. He had, at that time, the common American aversion to eating raw fish, although raw oysters and clams were acceptable. Now, after that first introduction, he is a fan of sushi.

As a corollary, when we were children, my mother often would prepare meatloaf for dinner, and she would give me some of the uncooked mixture (essentially ground beef, raw egg, chopped onion, salt, and bread crumbs) which I delighted in eating. It wasn't until years later that I found out that my mother was an excellent French cook. What she served me was steak tartare.

While living in Japan we had a young Japanese maid. Rita would cook our meals, but the maid would serve us. There was never problem until, one evening, Rita prepared one of my favorite dishes, the above-mentioned steak tartare.

After Rita prepared the main course, we sat at the table and waited for the main course to be served after the appetizer and soup. As it did not appear in the expected course of time, Rita went into the kitchen to see what was the matter. She soon reported to me that the maid was ashen-faced and being sick in the sink. She could not stomach the thought of us eating raw meat.

Those of you who may be regular readers of this column (and I have this sinking feeling that it is the two of you behind that tree wearing the flamingo costumes and doing I-don't-want-to-know what with that three-legged llama poorly disguised as a rutabaga) may remember that last month I wrote about death. So, my beloved editor, the lovely and talented Moak Mikeley, responds to my submission with: "Will the April article be 'taxes?'" Thinking he is being a smart-ass, I formulate an even smart-assier reply when it suddenly occurs to me that Moakster Mistley mayhap has provided me the germ of a Pulitzer-worthy idea. It just so happens that I do have a problem or three with our tax system (surprise, surprise) and I see by my biorhythmic sundial that I'm due for a rant, so...

I'm a pretty smart fellow. After all, I'm a member of MENSA, right? But I just don't get this income tax thingie. Back in the day, I just saved all my end-of-the-year tax statements and paid someone to do them for me, even when it was just a simple 1040 form. The way I saw it, it just wasn't worth it for me to sit and try to figure the damn thing out. Not that I couldn't have if I'd wanted to, just that was it really worth my time when the tax guy would do it for me for 20 bucks (then 30, then more)? Well, eventually, the tax guy turned into the tax program and all I had to do was to click my way through all the windows and answer the questions, copy the stuff from the end-of-the-year statements, and – Viola! – my taxes she was done!

But I could never understand why it's all so damn complicated? What with all the worksheets, schedules, losses, gains, taxable income, tax-exempt income, ordinary dividends, extraordinary dividends, unordinary dividends, inordinacy dividends, expenses, exceptions, exemptions, deductions, reductions, inductions, credits, debits, capital gains, lower case gains, capital losses, gross income, slender income, slander income... I mean, the list goes on and on. And what's this about the claim that rich folks and corporations don't pay any taxes at all because they have clever accountants that use the myriad rules to get their clients out of doling out their fair share? Any truth to that?

I read somewhere that the IRS employs more than 80,000 people. Eighty thousand people! That's more than the population of my beloved hometown, Melbourne. A whole freakin' city just to collect taxes from the rest of us! (Well, I guess from themselves, too.). What a

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colossal waste!

I'm all about this flat tax thingie. Seems to me there couldn't be any fairer (more fair?) way than to take the same proportion in taxes from everyone. Whole lot easier, too. Here's the deal: Everybody pays the same percentage. On everything! And by "everybody" I mean every moneymaking entity. Individuals, corporations, non-profits, even religious and charity organizations. EVERYONE! And it's sooooo easy, because the money comes off the top when it's earned. A flat percentage goes to Uncle on every payout.

Now, I've worked a few numbers and come up with the interesting conclusion that if the Federal Flat Income Tax Rate were 15%, not only would virtually everyone pay less (well, everyone who actually pays), but Uncle would get more! Take out your abaci and follow along as I 'splain this, Lucy.

In 2008 the U.S. government took in about 1.08 trillion dollars in individual income tax. In 2008 the GNP (Gross National Product, defined as total market value of goods and services produced by all citizens and capital) was 14.4 trillion dollars. So 15% of the GNP would have been 2.16 trillion dollars.

In 2009 the U.S. government took in about 2.11 trillion dollars in individual income tax. In 2009 the GNP was 14.6 trillion dollars. 15% of the GNP would have been 2.19 trillion dollars.

The numbers tell the story. All the law-abiding taxpayers will be happier and Uncle will be richer. Pretty sweet deal wouldn'tcha say? And simplicity itself on accounta it completely does away with stuff like income tax forms. The 15% is deducted from earnings automatically, so you're always paid up on your taxes. No more April 15th trauma.

And no more IRS! The IRS could be reduced to about nine people who spend most of their time playing Freecell.

Of course, folks are going to grouse about things:

"Howscum I don't get a break for having eleven kidz, eh?"

Welp, having children is a wonderful part of life. It perpetuates the species and fulfills the commandment to be fruitful and multiply. Just make sure that you're well prepared to handle the situation, 'cause Uncle ain't gonna subsidize you for it no more.

Corporate accountants are going to grouse about not being able

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to deduct business lunches.

Hey, business lunches are a good idea. They make your potential customer happy (especially if you provide them with large quantities of alcohol) and feel like they are important to you. Good business investment. But no reason for Uncle to front the tab.

“What about the interest I paid on my mortgage?”

What about it? Didn't you read the contract when you bought the house? The bit about you paying the bank back its money plus? Uncle hopes you live a long and prosperous life in your new home. Next.

“Hey, howscum I don't get nothin' for donating to charity no more?”

And well you may ask, my friend. The fact is that donating money to charities is a very good thing to do. It makes you a better person and it makes the charity able to char whatever it is that they char. But the giving should provide all the gratitude that you need. Not a “bye” from Uncle on your donation. Nope. Sorry. Not gonna do that no more.

Simplicity, efficiency, profitability, fairness. What more could a citizen want from their country?

The George

SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 2/28/2011:

| <u>Account</u> | <u>Balance</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| General Fund | \$1126.00 |
| Post Office Acct. | 100.54 |
| Reserve Fund | 2654.93 |
| RG Fund | 200.00 |
| <u>Total Funds Available:</u> | \$4081.47 |

Deposits

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Mensa Funding: | \$190.43 |
| Interest Income | 0.20 |
| RG Food Purchase | \$146.00 |

Withdrawals

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| Postage | 59.00 |
| Printing | 120.52 |
| Bank Fees | 25.00 |

—Bud Long, Treasurer

SCAM Calendar of Events for April 2011

1st - Friday 5:30 PM

"HOOT LIKE AN OWL"

Come join us for drinks, open discussion and food (latter two optional) at the Melbourne Hooter's, 877 S. Babcock Street.

Hosted by: *Dennis Logan, 501-7547.*

6th - Wednesday 5:30 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

This is our monthly business meeting. See back page for location.

19th - Tuesday 6:30 PM

DINNER AT DAVID'S

Join us at David's Restaurant, 2480 S Washington Ave (US1) in Titusville for just about any kind of dinner, ranging from steak to sushi.

Contact: *Mike Zielinski, 747-0097.*

30th - Saturday 5:45 PM

SNORT

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1511 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

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

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 news-letter deadline. For up-to-date info, visit spacecoast.us.mensa.org and click on "Calendar". Also, we are putting together a current e-mail notification list of all members who wish to be kept up-to-date on our activities. If you wish to be included, please contact George Patterson at 777-3721 or George3141@cfl.rr.com.

Of CABAGEs 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*

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

Membership Notes for April 2011

WELCOME TO SCAM

Gene Mackey
Herbert Feingold

WELCOME BACK!

Travis Elmore
Karen Todd

APRIL BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| <i>1st</i> | Richard Hussey | <i>16th</i> | Sandra Morgan |
| <i>3rd</i> | George Lebovitz | <i>18th</i> | Patricia Thornton |
| <i>3rd</i> | Beth Rutenber | <i>19th</i> | James Dace |
| <i>3rd</i> | Gregory Ashburn | <i>20th</i> | Paula Fields- Beckner |
| <i>5th</i> | Douglas Solomon | | |
| <i>6th</i> | Maribeth Salge | <i>21st</i> | Carol Lane |
| <i>8th</i> | Stephen Dumolt | <i>23rd</i> | Mary Ellen Donahue |
| <i>11th</i> | Debra Saltzberg | <i>28th</i> | Clifford Miller |

MENSA TESTING

April 16 at Central Brevard Library, 308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa.
Please arrive by 9:45 am, as testing begins at 10 am. \$40 fee and photo ID required. Reservations encouraged but not required. Candidates must be age 14 or older. Testing next month May 21.

Contact: Hank Rhodes, mensatest@cfl.rr.com, for details.

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 Smoking Area; **P**-Pets in the home; **NP**-No Pets present; **BYO**-Bring Your Own: **_**Snacks, **_**Drinks, **_**Everything.

It has often been said that desperate times call for desperate measures. In the not-too-distant past, it was certainly true for me. A few months ago, I had the occasion to visit a loved one who was hospitalized for a period of time. Often, during the visit, I would need to excuse myself while a hospital staffer would attend to the patient's personal needs. This particular hospital provides a small waiting room for just that purpose.

Other than the requisite TV, which was always tuned to either a sporting event or the *Lifetime* channel, there was little else in the room to fill the waiting time. On this particular day, there were two or three romance novels, as well as a couple of back issues of *Glamour* magazine. In an act that can best be described as pure desperation, I chose one of the magazines – and that's where the trouble began.

I settled on an article bearing some title along the lines of “How to Drive Your Man Insane In Bed”, wondering if the female writer, writing for an equally female audience, would even have a clue as to what might please us Neanderthal men. Reading the article, I came across the following gem, which read something like this: “It is not your job to satisfy every erection your man has.” Huh?

Given that I was taught early on that sexual activity in a relationship was supposed to be mutually satisfying to both partners, why this reference to a “job”? While it is true that not every erection should lead to sexual activity, that is beside the point. If two people engage in activity intended to be pleasurable for both partners, why is one characterized as “doing her job”?

In past issues of *The SCAM*, I have written on this topic before. In one such article, “*Probation?!?*” (May 2009), I examined comedian Steve Harvey's advice, “*At Ford, you don't get the benefits until you first pass the 90-day probation period, (thus) you should wait at least 90 days before you give your man the cookies (sex).*” Apparently, he must “earn” the privilege of having sex with her, so why, then, is everything about *her* pleasure?

If, for a woman, sexual activity is a “job” she performs for her man, isn't there another name for it? Interestingly enough, the Florida Statutes defines prostitution as: “the giving or receiving

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of the body for sexual activity for hire but excludes sexual activity between spouses.” Well, that would certainly explain the reference to “job” found in the issue of *Glamour*. It would also give some context to Steve Harvey’s advice to women in new relationships. Yes, it would seem to me that all heterosexual sex would fall under the definition of prostitution – and would explain why the legislature wrote in the “marriage exception”.

That being the case, why should both partners come away from sex satisfied? If someone sells you a box of chocolates, must he (or she) also enjoy the chocolates you have eaten (and paid for)? I don’t think so, since he has gotten the money in exchange. Why should sex be any different?

If, on the other hand, this is not the case, why is the law written as it is? Why do many women refer to sex as a job or some obligation to her partner? Why does our culture seem to support this? From a Neanderthal viewpoint, I would say that you cannot have it both ways.

Inside the Pocket Protector

Continued

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submitted to *The SCAM*. However, it cannot happen unless you send your views in.

As always, SCAM is looking for volunteers. Our NomElCom is currently in place. So, if you want to lead our Local Group for the next year, please consider accepting a nomination to serve on our ExComm. Our current members have served for several years, and would certainly appreciate the break. In next month’s issue, an official ballot will be enclosed for you to choose your new Ex-Comm.

This is your organization. Like any other volunteer-run organization, the future of Space Coast Area Mensa is entirely in your hands.

Anyone reading this who is over 50 years of age cannot help but remember some of the battles of what has since become known as the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement was actually many such movements occurring over an extended period of time, much of which was well before the lifetimes of anyone alive today.

Many of us may, through reading or by memory, have come to know of some of the sacrifices that were made to achieve most of the rights we take for granted today. However, being the 21st Century citizens we now are, I have often wondered how these various civil rights movements would have turned out if, instead of occurring when they did, occurred today in 2011.

For example, consider the women's suffrage movement – the one that resulted in a Constitutional amendment ratified in 1920 guaranteeing women the right to vote. If women protested not having the right to vote in 2011, how would the protestors approach this inequity? If some of today's events are any indication, here is a likely scenario. Here is a possible conversation between two women on the issue:

"You know, it really is unfair that men get to vote and we don't. What makes them better than us?"

"You know, you've got a point. We really ought to do something about this...it's really unfair!"

"Why should men get to vote? After all, we don't. Let's start a movement to abolish male suffrage."

"You're right. With men voting, they're taking away the freedoms our Founding Fathers fought for! We ought to make sure men don't have any more rights than we do. Every right a man has is costing us."

I can just see it now: "*Down with male suffrage!*"

For another example, we can go back a little further in time. What about the anti-slavery movement. How would that work in 2011? Let's consider a conversation between two slaves:

"I don't know about you, but I think it really sucks that we aren't really considered people. The boss owns us, and we don't even get paid for our work. If Master is angry, he can have us whipped. Edu-

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cation, forget about it. If I learn to read, I will be sold.”

“Yeah, and get a load of those white workers. They get paid for their work and can come and go as they please when the work is done. Why, many of them even go to school!”

“What gives, are they better than we are? The whites should be slaves just like us.”

Impossible, you say? Let’s look at what we do have. Over the last fifty years, the average American worker has indeed lost ground. Those among us in the private sector have unquestionably lost the most. Gone are the days when one could expect to work at the same job for thirty years or more and then count on getting a reasonable pension.

It seems the sole exception to this is our public employees, who have lost ground as well, albeit not as much as their private sector counterparts. Part of the reason for the disparity is that, while less than 10% of the total workforce is represented by unions, more than 40% of public employees are. If this disparity existed 50 or 60 years ago, one obvious answer would have been for private sector workers to demand a better lot in life, possibly through organizing a union.

Yet we know, now in 2011, how this is handled. “Take away their benefits and their bargaining rights! We don’t have them, why should they?” I have a question, how would impoverishing one group of people improve the lot of all other poor people? Wouldn’t it be better if we instead demanded that those in the private sector have rights and benefits that are more in line with those in the public sector, instead of vice versa?

First, I am pleased to announce that Dan Tobias of the West Palm Beach local group has graciously agreed to serve as Webmaster of the Region 10 Web site. Most of you probably don't know there is a Region 10 Web site and that is partly my fault for allowing other things to be higher priorities.

The URL is <http://www.region10.us.mensa.org/> and I am asking all calendar editors and all newsletter editors to immediately add Dan to their distribution list so he can get calendars and newsletters on the Web site. His email address is dan@tobias.name and he has been doing a fantastic job as Webmaster for the West Palm local group. Please contact Dan with any ideas, suggestions or contributions for the Web site. My goal is to have a one-stop Web site that will allow anyone in Region 10 to quickly find events, find other Mensans, chat, read great articles, and otherwise be glad they joined.

Second, in last month's column I asked for your input on whether the default for mailings should be changed from hard copy to electronic. I heard from you and the overwhelming majority of those who contacted me are against changing the default. So, as your representative, I will oppose it too.

Third and finally for this month, the AMC will meet March 26 in Atlanta, which date will already have come and gone by the time most of you read this. The primary subject for discussion will be the budget for the next fiscal year. I sent the proposed budget to all newsletter editors and locsec and any member who wants to see it is welcome to contact me or any of them; the budget that actually passes will be on the national Web site shortly after the AMC meeting.

Overall, I think we are in pretty good shape, although as with other organizations we were hit by the recession. There had been fears that we would lose large numbers of members because of the recession, and we didn't. Testing and new membership mostly held steady. There are some projections in the proposed budget that strike me as perhaps too optimistic and I'm not sure the budget will pass in its current form, though if the treasurer is able to allay concerns about the projections it may.

We've made some cosmetic cuts here and there to reflect a tighter cash flow, but member services are mostly still intact and the same or even higher levels than before. Once the economy picks up again we should be just fine.

Thanks for listening, everyone.

Minutes of the March ExComm Meeting.

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, March 2, 2011. Called to order at 5:30 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Attendees: ExComm members George Patterson, Karen Freiberg, and Terry Valek. Joe Smith and Bud Long were unable to attend.

Welcome Guests: None

Minutes for the January 5, 2011 meeting were approved as published in the February 2011 SCAM. There was no February meeting. It was noted during the writing of these minutes that the minutes for the January meeting reported the meeting as being held on the 6th. This was not the case.

LocSec Report: George reported that Joe Smith has asked to be relieved of his duties due to the press of various personal matters. George pointed out that while we could easily continue to operate with four members, we could also take advantage Bylaws Article V, to appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term, which ends with the June meeting. Further, there were three volunteers for the NomElCom.

Treasurer: Bud submitted the Treasurer's Reports via email for February. It showed a final balance of \$4081.47.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported via email that no individuals were tested in February. Five candidates were contacted for the first time, and 7 candidates for the 2nd or 3rd time. A test was scheduled for March 19 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa.

New Business: George moved that we appoint Wynn Rostek, Art Belefant, and Suzanne Leichtling as the Nominations and Elections Committee (NomElCom.) Seconded by Terry, passed 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:34. The next meeting will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, April 6, 2011 at 5:30 pm.