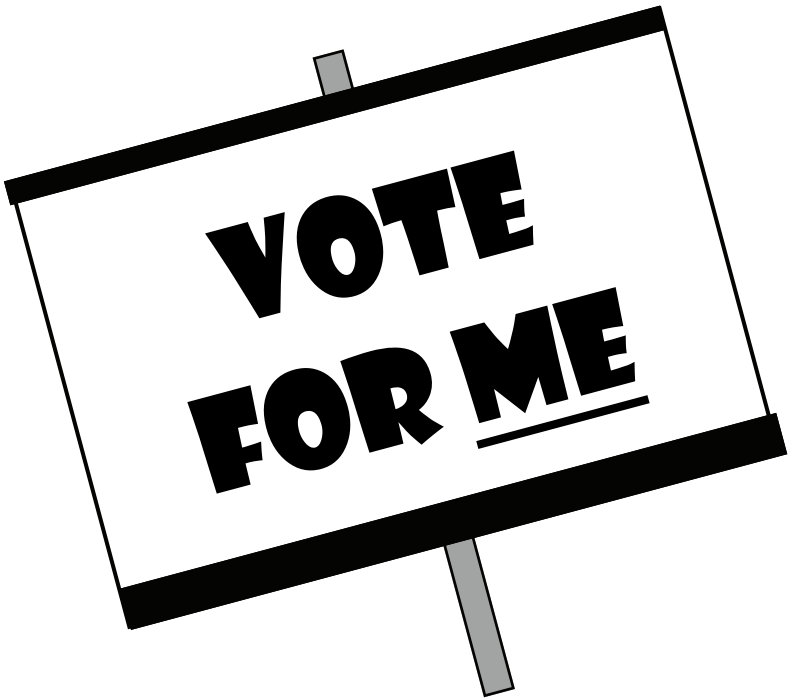


The

SCAM

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Special Election Issue!





SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



Website: www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)

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

Inside the Pocket Protector

Mike Moakley, Editor

Have you heard? We at Space Coast Area Mensa are in the middle of an extremely contentious campaign to determine who will lead SCAM for the next year. The question is, who will ultimately win?

On one slate of candidates are five rather familiar names. In fact, since we do not have term limits, I believe most reading this column will experience little, if any, difficulty recognizing these brave souls. Ironically, their campaign statement (if I heard it correctly) is: "We need new blood."

There is, however, another slate. As there are no names of individuals, they could not be listed on the ballot. There is, however, a group name (Sorry, we cannot use group names on ballots) of sorts: it is "Apathy".

On a more serious note, I would be amazed if, after the vote is counted, our new ExComm does not have all the same members as before. It's not like this has never happened...

There is, however, a glimmer of hope. In responding to one of my many editorial prods, one member has indeed spoken out. In his article (published in this issue), he has outlined several ideas, some having to do with newsletter content. Perhaps I have another contributor? As I've stated repeatedly, new contributions are always most welcome.

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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.

The job of an editor is difficult, and never is it more difficult than when he is given little to edit. Perhaps this circumstance lies behind the invitation that those who "believe ... that we do not publish a wide enough range of opinions ... e-mail your own views on the topic of your choice." The editor is correct to appeal for articles, yet this effort is undermined by the prevailing assumption that the SCAM newsletter should serve as a soap-box on which a limited number of people proclaim.

All members of MENSAs possess IQs in the 98th percentile, and therefore are capable of reading not only the news but also works of philosophy, epistemology, history, scientific theory and complex economics. Consequently MENSAs do not simply "have opinions" but instead comprehensive knowledge that has culminated in determined and informed beliefs. The constraints of a crowded newsletter exclude any possibility of embellishing or challenging such entrenched views. Thorough exposition on edifying topics would require greater capacity than the current format can provide, while informal statements of subjective opinion are more suitable for casual conversation or blogs than for print.

The newsletter can improve regional activity when it assumes as its focus the activity of the regional group. A publication of practical value to the membership would feature reports on recent and upcoming SCAM events, rather than relegate the important social aspect of MENSAs life to meager bullet points. For example, the date and time of SNORT are common knowledge - but never do we read the tales of its history, conversations and associated personalities, though such a report would undoubtedly improve attendance. Articles of a personal nature, be they artistic or anecdotal (e.g. Art's) are welcome (as they are in the national MENSAs Bulletin) because of their value to inform readers of the experience of their peers and to encourage all towards further experience; but commentary of a political character is both divisive and unavailing. For fun filler in slow months, there could be nothing more enjoyable to MENSAs minds than puzzles, quizzes, riddles, book reviews and the like. The ideal SCAM newsletter would decline partisan political columns in favor of a journal primarily of group meetings and personal accomplishments, celebrating the active side of MENSAs life and enticing readers to join in it. No other aim will condition a vibrant and collaborative periodical.

Having failed, for a number of months, to write a “Watch This Space” column, I went on my computer and reviewed my earlier efforts. I was shocked to find that what I started in October of 2009, I ended in July of 2010. Since then, nada, no LocSec columns, no nothin’. An explanation?

I fret every month about what I should or could write and end up letting the newsletter deadline pass by without anything written. Mostly because I don’t have anything new or useful to say, and I am sure you are all tired of the constant refrain that we need more events -- although we surely do.

We on the ExComm keep the books, keep in touch with National, appoint our committees, hold elections, produce a respectable RG, and wring our hands over how to get better participation and get “interested parties” to take the Mensa test. Our current membership is over 230, a very slow but steady increase from 220 a year ago. That number may fall off a bit as we hit the re-enlistment month, but it generally recovers.

I find it a problem that we have no good demographics of the group, in particular, age. If you have e-mail, and almost everyone does, you constantly see spam directed to you by a generally accurate picture of your age, income, and shopping and online viewing habits. For our membership, National provides us with a name and address (for mailing labels) and, for about 50% of you, a telephone number and/or e-mail address. We can often guess the gender.

In an attempt to correct this lack of vision we have developed a survey questionnaire of about 70 questions, none particularly personal, that we hope to impose on the membership, once we figure out how to do it and how to handle the responses. Dealing with the survey will be one of the first tasks of the new ExComm.

You have noticed, I hope, that elections are this month and we have the usually five struggling to maintain their hold on five seats. You may have noticed that in previous minutes, one of us expressed doubts that they could continue to serve because of the press of other duties. We hope they can continue to serve in a limited capacity for a while. The Bylaws allow the remaining ExComm members to appoint a replacement in case of a resignation.

My last “Watch This Space” column (last July) ended with the

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statement “Next month I will tell you how many comments we have managed to coax out of people.” Since there was no later column, you never got to hear that we failed to coax any comments out of anyone.

Inside the Pocket Protector*Continued.*

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In his column, the writer expressed curiosity about the history of S.N.O.R.T. I believe I can help there. First, let’s look at the acronym. It originally meant “Saturday Night at Our Round Table.” Its current meaning is “Saturday Night at Our Rectangular Table.” The change became necessary as the current restaurant has no available round tables.

As I understand it, S.N.O.R.T. came into being as an event hosted by the newsletter editor for the editorial staff (apparently we had one in those days) to celebrate putting yet another newsletter to bed. As these were the days before personal computers became common, putting together a newsletter was an altogether different task than it is today.

While I was not Editor of *The SCAM* in those early days, I did edit another newsletter nearly 30 years ago. All the material was done on a typewriter. “Cut and Paste” then had a literal meaning, and I still have the scarred drawing board to prove it. A few single-edged razor blades might also still be around the house.

The editorial staff were willing volunteers who stapled the pages in order in each issue and folded them correctly before attaching the address labels. S.N.O.R.T. was then scheduled once the finished product was finally in the hands of the U.S. Postal Service.

Today, composing a newsletter is much different. Everything from accepting the first e-mailed contribution to the final print-ready copy is done on my laptop, and is e-mailed with appropriate instructions to our printer. Our Circulation person picks up the copies, labels them and takes them to the Post Office. What about S.N.O.R.T. today? As I normally do not attend social events, it has now morphed into a chance to enjoy dining out with fellow Mensans. *Now you know...*

Stews are common throughout the world. Most stews were originally an inexpensive means of utilizing local and cheap ingredients and therefore became associated with ethnicities. With the advent of world travel and commerce, ethnic and cultural stews are available in most large communities in the Western world. Outside of their places of origin they are no longer considered a cheap meal, and even where they originated, they may now be expensive. Bouillabaisse is one example.

Stews are usually an animal protein cooked in a watery broth along with some vegetables. There are exceptions such as Ratatouille, which is all vegetable. Stews include braises and daubs.

Below is a list of some of the stews that I have eaten in their native environments. The list is far from a complete listing of named stews, there may be hundreds, and even a named stew may differ from one village or town and another only a few miles away. Individual preferences, availability, and seasonability of ingredients are also factors.

There is one unnamed stew of which I was intimately connected. When Rita and I first came to Brevard County, we were active in Surfside Players. Occasionally, the members of the Players; actors, directors, stagehands, other personnel, and some patrons, would gather, usually in the forenoon on Sunday, on the beach.

Someone would bring a net and several of the stronger men would go out into the surf and drag the net to the beach, bringing with it several fish. They would do this a few times until they had enough. Meanwhile we would send the children to catch coquina clams. They would have a high old time trying to grab them after each wave before they could dig themselves back into the sand. The clams would be put into a pot, which someone else had brought, of boiling seawater, over a campfire. The boiled clams would provide the liquid base for our stew. The clam shells and most of the sand would then be scraped out of the pot leaving behind the clam broth. The fish and any vegetables that others had brought to the feast were added as well as any spices and herbs that still others had brought.

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The recipe was never formalized. It varied from time to time, sometimes considerably, but I could see how this, if had continued for many years could become a named stew.

NAMED STEWS (*place of origin*)

Bouillabaisse (*Marseille, Provence, France*) - Contains various kinds of fish, shellfish, vegetables, and a variety of herbs and spices such as garlic, orange peel, basil, bay leaf, fennel, and saffron. The saffron is the essential herb, without which the dish could not be called a bouillabaisse. There should be at least three kinds of fish in a bouillabaisse, and it should also include shellfish and other seafood such as sea urchins, mussels, and crabs. More expensive versions may add langoustine or lobster. Vegetables such as leeks, onions, tomatoes, celery, and potatoes are included.

Bourguignon (*Burgundy, France*) - A well known traditional dish. It is a stew prepared with beef braised in red wine, traditionally red Burgundy, and beef broth, flavored with garlic, onions, and a bouquet garni, with pearl onions and mushrooms added towards the end of cooking.

Brunswick Stew (*Virginia and the Carolinas*) - Recipes vary greatly but it is usually a tomato-based stew containing various types of white beans, corn, okra, and other vegetables, and one or more types of meat. For authenticity squirrel or rabbit meat is required but chicken, pork, and beef are more common in contemporary recipes.

Burgoo (*Kentucky*) - A spicy stew that traditionally was made using whatever meats and vegetables were available and in good supply. That meant venison, squirrel, opossum, or game birds. No standardized recipe exists, but a combination of at least three things is usually required. Meat; pork or mutton, but beef and chicken are frequently used. Vegetables; such as lima beans, corn, okra, and potatoes have always been popular. A thickening agent; cornmeal, ground beans, whole wheat, or potato starch.

Bourride (*Marseille, Provence, France*) - Essentially the same as bouillabaisse, without saffron. It is usually thickened with egg yolks and flavored with aioli. Bourride is traditionally served en croûte.

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I was recently afforded a truly wonderful business opportunity from a delightful fellow I made the acquaintance of while we were both waiting in the checkout line at the Fairvilla Mega Store. Although I was a tad off put by all the homemade-looking tattoos covering both his legs below his shorts and up both arms, and on his neck to just below his ears, he described how he would provide the business acumen (of which I had none) and all I had to contribute was the bulk of my retirement savings. These being harsh economic times, I carefully considered his offer for a full three minutes before readily accepting.

Thinking back to the boom years after the war (that would be World War II), I remember my father opening several businesses during the course of his many varied careers. As best I can recall, the most difficult part of starting up a new venture back then was to come up with some suitable, catchy name and the enterprise was usually underway shortly after finding an appropriate shop front.

No more. My new partner and I are discovering the trials and tribulations associated with starting up a business in the modern era and I thought it might be of interest to any of you who may be considering doing the same.

Since my new business venture is guaranteed to generate untold wealth, I am loath to reveal its precise nature lest one of you out there sets out to steal my thunder as it were. Thus I will fictionalize it somewhat in the ensuing account by referring to this new institution as The Consolidated Olde Flirgle Flipping Emporium Enterprise Shop, or The COFFEE Shop, for short.

Having found the ideal location for The COFFEE Shop, my partner (let us call him Honest John) and I began the delicate process of negotiating a lease with the owner. This is not as straightforward a process as one would assume. I thought the property owner would offer the venue at a certain rate and we would either accept his offer or counter with a proposal of our own. Not so simple. More about this later but suffice it to say that the negotiations were only just beginning.

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In the meantime, we set out to gain the approval of our local government to open our venture. We made an appointment with the secretary of the City Council to present our enterprise. We showed up properly attired in our finest Sunday-Go-To-Meeting clothes and were met by the secretary, two representatives from the Fire and Safety Department, an undersecretary from the Zoning Commission, a stenographer with her circa 1948 vintage stenograph machine, a person who does signing for the hearing impaired, and two gentlemen who were never introduced but who stood at either side of the door wearing black suits, dark sunglasses, and government-issue iPod ear plug thingies.

I will skip the details of this three-hour long meeting, noting only that we left with instructions for submitting our business venture for approval. The first step was to prepare 27 eight by ten colored glossy pictures with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explaining what each one was for presentation to the Zoning Commission so they could get some idea of what our enterprise entailed. The Zoning Commission meets only on the second and fourth Thursday of the month (unless there is no fourth Thursday in a particular month, in which case some complex algorithm involving the phase of the moon and the alignment of the planets is used to determine the exact date of the second meeting). However, the photos must actually be submitted on the Wednesday before the selected Thursday to the Zoning Committee scheduling office so that the agenda for the meeting can be prepared properly. Appointments for the scheduling office are not straightforward, however, involving some lottery system that we were given a 63-page pamphlet to study before taking the novitiate exam.

The new business actually needs to be presented to the Commission twice. The first time (assuming the presentation materials pass muster and are accepted) the Commission sends out notification of your proposed business to every household and business within 1,000 feet of your location to ensure that no one has any objections. This is somewhat like the marriage ceremony thingie where the officiate says "If any person knows any reason why this couple should not be married, let him speak now or forever hold his peace." I

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mean... you never know when you might run across some anti-Flirgle-Flippite who doesn't want a bunch of Flirgle Flippers in the neighborhood. Then, you have to go to arbitration and settle the issue to everyone's satisfaction, otherwise it's a no go. So, assuming that all goes well on this first round, the second round (after the attendant scheduling restrictions) entails making sure that no zoning restrictions are violated: No Flirgle Flipping within a half-mile of a school, child care establishment, religious edifice, brackish water treatment facility, nature preserve, 2nd tier or lower celebuntante rehabilitation facility, and other institutions too numerous to mention. In all, this process can take on the order of seven months or more to complete.

Now I had always been under the impression that the function of city government was to run the city and make sure that developments within the city limits met compliance. This naïve perspective was quickly proven wrong and I now know that the true mission of our city officials is to provide employment for our city officials. The series of approvals, inspections, permissions, schedules, all with their attendant delays and fees, put me in awe of the bureaucratic behemoth that has been created for no other reason than to perpetuate itself. But you gotta pay to play, so we started along the path to achieve our goal.

Meanwhile, back to renting the shop itself. Not only did we have to negotiate a lease price, but also put forth proposals for the build out. Build out? What's that, you ask? Good question. A Flirgle Flipping Emporium is not like a shop where you put a couple of plastic Eiffel Tower souvenirs in a show case and sell them to customers who come into the shop to buy them. Oh no! You've got to build your arena, the flipping field, the viewing stands, snack shops, betting booths, bathrooms, resuscitation chamber, retail equipment sales showroom (for amateurs who want to get their own Flirgles, flipsticks, carrying cases, and appurtenant flipwear), and a myriad of other details, all of which become part of the negotiation.

So, the first thing we had to come up with was a blueprint of what our COFFEE Shop was going to look like. This required an architect, to the tune of \$4,567.82 and at

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SCAM Calendar of Events for May 2011

6th - 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.*

14th - Saturday 6:00 PM

FOOD, VOTING & GAMES

Come witness democracy at work (wink, wink), then join us for your favorite games at George Patterson's home in Indialantic. Lasagna, garlic bread and salad will be served. **\$3 Kitty.**

Contact: *George (321)777-3721.*

28th - Saturday 5:45 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

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, rokkitsci@cfl.rr.com*

Membership Notes for May 2011

WELCOME TO SCAM AND MENSA

Graham Mattice

WELCOME BACK!

Sarah Goldstein
LaVerne Lasobeck

MAY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>12th</i>	John McKeown	<i>25th</i>	James Stewart
<i>14th</i>	Michael Friedman	<i>25th</i>	Robert Fink
<i>15th</i>	Rondal Halter	<i>27th</i>	Karen Freiberg
<i>15th</i>	John Moore Jr.	<i>30th</i>	Francis Stump
<i>17th</i>	Douglas Dial		
<i>19th</i>	Eric Sperry		

MENSA TESTING

May 21 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 **June 18**.

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.

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Burgoo (*Appalachia*) - Made of locally available ingredients including squirrel or opossum. Similar to Brunswick Stew and Burgoo.

Chicken Paprikash (*Hungary*) - Traditionally made with chicken, onions, and sweet paprika. Sautéed in lard, thickened with sour cream or heavy cream, and served over pasta.

Chowder (*Northeast U.S.*) - Made with bacon and seafood and thickened with crushed ship biscuit. New England clam chowder is made with cream or milk. Manhattan clam chowder is made with tomatoes. Corn chowder contains whole corn kernels.

Cioppino (*San Francisco*) - As with most fish stews, the defining ingredients are what is common locally. In San Francisco that would be Dungeness crab, clams, shrimp, scallops, squid, mussels, and fish. This is combined with fresh tomatoes in a wine sauce.

Chili (*Originally from San Antonio, now worldwide*) - A stew made of chili peppers. In the U.S., it usually means chili con carne - chili with meat. Other ingredients may include beans, tomatoes, onions, masa, or almost anything else.

Cincinnati Chili (*Cincinnati, Ohio*) - Chili developed by Greek immigrants in the Cincinnati area. A regional style of chili characterized by the use of unusual ingredients such as cinnamon, cloves, allspice, or chocolate, and by the absence of chili peppers or chili powder. It is commonly served over spaghetti or as a hot dog sauce.

Cholent (*Eastern Europe*) - A traditional Jewish stew simmered overnight, for 12 hours or more, and eaten for lunch on the Sabbath. The basic ingredients are meat, potatoes, beans, and barley.

Daube (*France*) - A stew made with cubed beef braised in red wine, vegetables, garlic, and herbs.

Goulash (*Hungary*) - Beef, onions, vegetables, spices, and paprika. Paprika is the informing flavor.

Gumbo (*Louisiana*) - Made with a meat or shellfish stock, a thickener, celery, bell peppers, and onion. The thickener may be

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okra, filé powder, or a roux of flour and fat. The two main varieties of gumbo are Creole Gumbo of shellfish, tomatoes, and a thickener and Cajun Gumbo of dark roux with either shellfish or fowl. Sausage or ham is often added.

Hasenpfeffer (*Germany*) - Made from marinated rabbit or hare. The dish is prepared from the smaller parts of a rabbit that are not suitable for roasting. These are braised with onions and wine and the marinade is thickened with the animal's blood.

Irish Stew (*Ireland*) - traditionally made from mutton although in the U. S. it is usually made from lamb (mutton has too strong a flavor), as well as potatoes, carrots, onions, and parsley.

Mulligan Stew (*American hobos*) - "Mulligan" is a stand-in for any Irishman, and mulligan stew is simply an Irish stew that includes meat, potatoes, vegetables, and whatever else can be begged, scavenged, found, or stolen.

Oden (*Japan*) - Fish cakes in various sizes and shapes are the main ingredient. Hard-boiled eggs, radish, and processed seaweed are stewed in a light, soy-flavored dashi broth.

Osso Buco (*Milan, Italy*) - Cross-cut veal shanks braised with vegetables, white wine, and broth. There are two types of Osso Buco, the modern version has tomatoes, the original version does not.

Olla Podrida (*Burgos, Spain*) - Made from pork, red beans, and other meats and vegetables.

Pot au Feu (*France*) - Translates as "pot on the fire". Originally, it was literally a pot that was left on the kitchen fire in which the odd bits and pieces of edible food items left over from meals were thrown. Now it is a beef stew usually containing low-cost cuts of beef that need long cooking, vegetables such as carrots, turnips, leeks, celery, and onions, and spices and herbs.

Ragout (*France*) - A general term that covers most French stews.

Ratatouille (*Nice, France*) - An all-vegetable stew with tomatoes as a main ingredient, with garlic, onions, zucchini, eggplant, bell peppers, and carrots usually included along with herbs such as basil, bay leaf, thyme, or herbes de Provence.

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Sukiyaki (*Japan*) - It consists of meat (usually thinly sliced beef) cooked or simmered at the table, along with bamboo shoots, lotus root, and noodles, in a shallow iron pot in a mixture of soy sauce, sugar, and mirin. Before being eaten, the ingredients are usually dipped in a small bowl of raw, beaten eggs.

Tagine (*Morocco*) - Traditionally cooked in a tajine pot, whose cover has a knob-like handle at its top to facilitate removal. While simmering, the cover can be lifted off without the aid of a glove, enabling the cook to inspect the main ingredients, add vegetables, mix the contents, or add additional braising liquid. Tajines often combine lamb or chicken with an assortment of ingredients and seasonings: olives, apples, pears, apricots, raisins, prunes, dates, nuts, and lemons, with spices including cinnamon, saffron, ginger, turmeric, cumin, paprika, and pepper.

SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 3/31/2011:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$1197.55
Post Office Acct.	42.29
Reserve Fund	2305.14
RG Fund	550.00
<u>Total Funds Available:</u>	\$4094.98

<u>Deposits</u>	
Mensa Funding:	\$192.07
Interest Income	0.21

<u>Withdrawals</u>	
Postage	58.25
Printing	120.52

<u>Transfers</u>	
Savings to RG Acct.	350.00

—*Bud Long, Treasurer*

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least 8 weeks, to come up with the plans. Assuming there were no complications, of course. The blueprint is then submitted to a contractor who develops an estimate for what it will cost to make the plans a reality. Then, it is this estimate, which is presented to the property owner as the build out requirement. The property owner then reviews our contractor's estimate and goes into a huddle with his cronies to determine if his network of contacts can do the job for a better fee. All of this goes into the horse trading process with the lease price, rental period with renewal options, and window treatment color suggestions, and the delicate balancing act proceeds afoot, back and forth, until both parties are satisfied that they have screwed the other side.

With the city regulatory hoops being jumped through at a breakneck snail's pace, the lease agreement signed with a good faith deposit submitted, the general contractor bribed to begin scheduling subcontractors to actually do the work, wholesale Flirgle distributors contacted and furnished an advance to provide equipment and media coverage, and a local printer paid to generate several thousand Grand Opening flyers which recruited high school boys will tack up throughout the city, we are finally ready to embark upon our grandiose enterprise.

I have visions of counting my money, swinging in a hammock between two palm trees located on the pure white sands of some exotic tropical island, drinking some concoction served in a coconut shell with a little paper umbrella in it, brought to me by a bare-breasted native girl. After all, what could possibly go wrong?

The George

At first, I thought it might be a bad April Fool's joke. On the evening of April 1st, I heard a TV news story informing us that the Governor of Arizona is now proposing a \$50 a year tax for its obese citizens who are enrolled in the Medicaid program. The object of this tax is, in view of the extra medical expenses brought on by obesity-related illnesses, to encourage the heavy-set to lose weight and, presumably, reduce the state's Medicaid expenses.

Once it hit home that this story was not a prank, my first reaction was outrage. Despite being one of the overweight Baby Boomers, I am still in reasonably good health. I challenge anyone to point out where my "lifestyle" has increased anyone else's health care costs. Once I took a deep breath, I got to thinking maybe one's weight could be a determining factor for how much one is taxed.

One of the economic problems that I have often heard about throughout my adult life is the escalation of Social Security and Medicare costs as more and more of us Baby Boomers become eligible for benefits. While there are differing views as to the specific consequences of these issues, it appears that two factors are a generally longer life expectancy and the increase in contraception options as compared to previous generations.

With this in mind, I am proposing an overweight tax credit; the fatter you are, the bigger the credit. There is a general consensus in the medical community that obesity lowers your life expectancy, so the more overweight you are, the sooner you will die. It would follow then, that our heaviest citizens would pose the least burden on our Social Security and Medicare programs. Since a major function of taxation is to encourage desired behavior, it would only make sense to reward obesity for the long term savings that would be realized by these programs.

Of course, my proposal will have its opponents. I can just hear it now from our more physically fit fellow Americans now. They will cry foul as they, who are superior to us in every way (just ask them), should not be punished for making better "lifestyle choices". For these people, I have no sympathy.

As an obese individual, I have foregone many of the pleasures enjoyed by my thinner brethren, and now I am making the supreme sacrifice in order to make their Social Security and Medicare benefits more secure for them as they enjoy a longer and healthier life,

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What is money? According to *Merriam-Webster Online*, money is defined as: “something generally accepted as a medium of exchange, a measure of value, or a means of payment.” Money is something you receive in exchange for goods you sell or services you provide. Likewise, for the goods or services you receive, it is normally money you will need to part with.

Put another way, “your money” is that which is rightfully yours because of the value you exchanged for that money. For the things of value you receive from someone else, the money you exchange for those things becomes *his* or *her* money. It all seems rather simple, wouldn’t you agree? So, you may ask, what is my point?

As basic as this concept of money may seem, many of us seem to lose sight of this when it comes to taxes. Many of us seem to believe that the taxes we pay remain our money. The sensationalist newscaster offers an exposé of “*Your Taxpayer Dollars at Work*”. The Tea Party politicians want Big Government to stop wasting “your” hard-earned tax money. It is difficult to break this bit of news, but here goes.

Taxes, of course, are the money we exchange for the goods and services we receive from our government. Do we want to be protected from foreign enemies? Terrorists, perhaps? It costs money to do that. What about clean air and water? Same answer. Do you expect to receive your Social Security checks once you become eligible? You know the drill. Is the street in front of your nice deed-restricted home in need of repair? I’m sure you guessed it by now.

There are two differences worth noting between taxes and normal business transactions. The first is that taxes are mandatory. The

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MY \$0.02 WORTH**Continued**

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all as a result of the benefits I paid for (but might not live to receive) during my working life. As I see it, these “body beautiful” types not only got the girl, but are little more than ungrateful parasites living off my earnings.

So, as far as I am concerned, they owe *me* a debt of gratitude.

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government must function (be it federal, state or local); it is not a business. The second is that the goods and services taxes buy generally benefit the community as a whole. Public services are things we need but are not normally practical to provide on a for-profit basis.

The best parallel I can think of in the private sector is dues assessed by homeowners' associations. It is made clear in those communities that if you want to live there, the dues are a necessary expense. So it is with taxes and our society as a whole.

So, as for taxes, whose money is it? It belongs to the government. The services the government provides you, in exchange, belong to you. Taxes are not "your" money. Does this mean we should not question government? We can, and should, do so. We have the right to demand value in exchange for our taxes paid. The elected officials are, of course, accountable to us.

My objection stems from the micromanagement that often occurs where when one believes that by paying taxes, he suddenly becomes an expert in how the government services should be delivered. Somehow, by paying taxes, he can do better than the professional who is trained (and paid) to perform those services. Of course, the private sector would have little patience for such an armchair quarterback. So, how about a little perspective? Consider these two scenarios.

If you work for a living, how might you react if your employer demanded a detailed accounting of all the money you spent from your last paycheck? If you are retired or disabled, how might you react if I demanded a similar accounting of how you spent last month's Social Security. Since I do work for a living, I pay into Social Security; so, using Tea Party logic, your Social Security payment is "my" money. And, yes, *I also pay taxes...*

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every national office race is contested and we tend to have low turnout so your vote really does count.

With regard to the race for chair, we in Florida are lucky to have our national chair be one of us; Elissa is a member of the West Palm Beach group and is usually to be found at their local group events if you've always wanted to see what a Mensa national chair looks like. Having had the pleasure of serving on the AMC with her for the past two years, I feel very strongly that she is the best choice for chair and would urge all of you to vote for her. She has sent us in the direction of progress and needs another term to finish the progress that she's started.

And I hope to see many of you in Portland at the AG.

Mel Dahl

A Mensan in the Workplace?

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

At the AMC meeting held in Atlanta on March 26 the AMC decided, over my no vote, to change the default for newsletters from print to electronic. So, let me explain what that means, both for individual members and for local groups.

Local groups have the option to offer their members delivery of the local group newsletter by electronic means if they choose to do so; no local group is required to offer electronic newsletter delivery. When Mensa members renew their membership (or become members in the first place), they are asked if they prefer print or electronic newsletters. Up until now, unless someone specifically opts for electronic delivery, the default has been to send them print newsletters. That has now changed. Going forward, if a local group offers electronic delivery, and if we have an email address on file for someone, the assumption will be that people get their newsletters electronically unless they specifically request print. (Some people get both, if their local groups allow that.) If an email address bounces, that member will go back to getting print newsletters. And, since this is new, there will no doubt be bugs that need to be worked out.

Let me reiterate that if your local group is not one that offers electronic delivery, you aren't required to start. This simply means that if your local group does offer electronic delivery, you have to make a point of telling us if you want to remain a print subscriber. The whole point of this exercise is to save money on postage.

This means two things. First, you should check your profile on national's Web site to see if you are signed up for print or for electronic just to be sure that you are getting the delivery that you want. Second, if you want electronic delivery, make sure the email address shown on your profile is a valid email address for you; one concern that I have is that people often change their email addresses without sending their new addresses to national, which means that your newsletter could be going to an address you no longer check. Unless and until it bounces back, if you aren't signed up for print and the email address we have for you is an email address you haven't used in years, you may never see another newsletter. So, the onus is on each individual member to make sure that national has correct information as to your delivery preferences and e-mail address.

Finally, this is an election year and you should all have received your ballots by the time this column appears in print. Please vote;

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Minutes of the April ExComm Meeting.

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, April 6, 2011. Called to order at 6:14 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

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

Welcome Guests: None.

Minutes for the March 2, 2011 meeting were approved as published in the April 2011 SCAM.

LocSec Report: George reminded all that the May issue of the newsletter was the ballot edition and that we were all up for re-election. We have a Nominations and Election Committee, NomElCom, headed by Wynn Rostek, and expect to have a social and vote counting event following close of voting.

Treasurer: Bud submitted the Treasurer's Reports via email for March. It showed a final balance of \$4094.98

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported via email that no individuals were tested in March. Four candidates were contacted for the first time, and 8 candidates for the 2nd or 3rd time. A test was scheduled for April 16 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa. George observed that we, as the ExComm, needed to find some way to assist Hank in persuading some of those who have "expressed an interest" to actually take the test.

There was no new or old business.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 pm. The next meeting will be at Karen Freiberg's house at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL, 32955, on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at 6:00 pm. No May meeting will be held.