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SCAM

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Merry Christmas!





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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

As it is that time of year once again, I would like to take this moment to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, no matter how you might choose to celebrate the holidays.

As 2011 draws to a close, it seems the current catchword is “Occupy”, usually joined with the phrase, “We are the 99 percent!” Would we—could we, perhaps, see “Occupy” in a somewhat different context? In the last few months, much publication space has been expended in our efforts to form an RG committee that, in turn, will put on our biennial party.

I have an idea. Suppose you, “The 99 Percent” show us elitists how thing should be done here at SCAM. “Occupy” an ExComm meeting. I assure you no SWAT teams equipped with tear gas will be there to run you off. Actually, you will be most welcome!

While we are on the subject, you may wish to “Occupy” the RG committee meetings as well. It’s time to show the “Upper 1%” what you’re made of. As well as we’ve done in the past, with your involvement, we can do even better! Perhaps, you’ll wish to “Occupy” the RG and help make it the most successful event ever.

Finally, if you have that burning desire to be published, you may wish to submit your work to “Occupy” these pages. Again, I promise no billy clubs or tear gas (no Tasers either).

Have I been “preoccupied” lately? Undoubtedly.

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.

In the U. S., fruitcakes are a seasonal thing. Christmas is the season. Rarely, in the U. S. are fruitcakes eaten at other times.

The sweet, heavy, spicy cake goes with hot toddies, roaring fireplaces, and three feet of snow on the ground. That's not Florida, but it's during this time of the year that most fruitcakes are sold and consumed. Oddly enough, most fruitcakes sold in the U. S. are not made in the parts of the country that the image of the season seems appropriate, but in the southern states such as Georgia and Texas.

Generically, a fruitcake is any cake made with pieces of fruit embedded in it. The cake may be dark or light, soft or hard, dry or moist, or round or rectangular; it will still be a fruitcake. Each country has its own traditional fruitcake.

The typical and traditional American fruitcake is dark, hard, and moist containing nuts and candied fruits. It is derived from the English Christmas cakes, but it is not identical. Other national fruitcakes differ.

The traditional English Christmas cake is much like our fruitcake, but is often covered with a hard white icing.

The Canadian fruitcake is similar to the English fruitcake.

German *Stollen* is usually eaten during the Christmas season, but also year round. It is loaf-shaped and powdered with sugar on the outside. It is light in color and texture, unlike our fruitcakes.

Italian *Panforte* is a chewy, dense fruitcake. Panforte is strongly flavored with spices and baked in a shallow form. *Panettone* is a Milanese fruitcake. Genoa's fruitcake, a flatter, denser but still crumbly variety, is called Pandolce.

In America, fruitcake is mostly a purchased item. Claxton's is my favorite, and probably the county's most popular, but there are dozens of others from which to choose. They are sold in grocery stores, by mail, and particularly in mall kiosks. Commercial fruitcakes usually lack two most important ingredients, aging and curing.

To many fruitcake aficionados, a fruitcake must be aged for at least six months in a rum or brandy soaked rag. A true lover of fruitcake will make his next year's Christmas cake as soon as this year's cake has been eaten. There are three reasons for this timing. There is more time available after the holidays than before to make the cake when other Christmas preparations need to be done. Making the cake in January gives the cake almost a year to cure

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and ripen, and it is in January that the food stores sell their unsold candied fruits at huge discounts. Therefore, I suggest that you make your fruitcake for next year's holiday now.

I checked my library of cookbooks and found twelve American recipes for fruitcake. All were similar, but the differences, in some cases, were significant.

The first thing that I found was that I had no recipe older than the eighteenth century. The earliest recipe for a fruitcake that I could find was something called "Great Cake" attributed to Martha Washington. It is said to have been served at family holidays at Mount Vernon. The recipe has all the ingredients that we would expect to find in a fruitcake except that the quantities are somewhat larger than I would like to handle. The finished cake weighs eleven pounds but even that is not the largest in my file. The ingredients of a recipe from Virginia in 1831 weigh over twenty pounds. Now that's a big cake.

Coming more to a contemporary recipe, the *Searchlight Recipe Book* of 1931, under wedding cakes, has a bride's cake and a groom's cake. The bride's cake is a light, white cake containing egg whites and only the smallest amount of vanilla and orange flavoring, like an angel's food cake. The groom's cake is a typical heavy fruitcake with ten whole eggs and a cup of black coffee in it. You can make of that what you will

It is interesting to note is that although fruitcake is associated with the cold weather of winter, four of the twelve recipes come from Virginia, and none of the others have any regional basis stated. A couple of recipes call for the inclusion of leavening agents, such as baking soda. Some recipes use plain sugar, some use brown, some use molasses, and some use mixtures. For simplicity, and to obtain the dark flavor that I like, I suggest using dark brown sugar as the only sweetener

The fruits mentioned in the various recipes include raisins, orange peel, lemon peel, cherries, pineapple, currants, citron, dates, and mincemeat. Raisins were the one fruit mentioned by all the recipes.

Spices presented a similar problem. In the twelve recipes, the following spices were mentioned at least once: cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, mace, clove, and ginger. No one spice was mentioned in all twelve recipes. Each recipe contained two to five spices. The selection for my recipe was based primarily on what I have on hand, and secondarily on what I liked or disliked. The nuts used in the various recipes were almonds, walnuts, and pecans. Nuts were not used in all the recipes, but where used, pecans were the most popular. I chose pecans.

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When it came to flour, shortening, and eggs the problem was to find the right ratios - with each other and with the rest of the ingredients. The more flour and eggs used, the lighter will be the cake. Leavening will also lighten the cake. With this as a guide, I selected those ingredients

Thus, after comparing the dozen recipes from my library, and checking my stock of foodstuffs, I devised the following recipe

INGREDIENTS

Flour 2 cups
Shortening (margarine) 1/2 cup
Brown sugar 1 cup
Eggs 3
Orange peel* 1/2 lb
Lemon peel* 1/2 lb
Raisins 3/4 lb
Cherries* 1/2 lb
Nuts (pecans) 1
Brandy and/or rum 1/4 cup
Cinnamon 1 tsp
Nutmeg 1 tsp
Allspice 2 tsp
Cloves 1/4 tsp

*candied or mixed candied fruit

PROCEDURE

Cut the fruit and nuts into 1/4 to 1/2 inch dice. Powder all the spices. Mix the shortening and sugar. Beat the eggs with the brandy and/or rum. Mix with the shortening and sugar. Dredge the fruit and nuts with flour. Add the remaining flour and spices to the shortening and sugar and mix well. Add the fruit and nuts to the mixture and mix well. Pour the mixture into a greased loaf pan. Bake for three hours at 300 degrees. After the cake is baked and cooled, wrap in a cloth. Pour brandy and/or rum on the cloth. Put the cake with the cloth in a waterproof bag such as a zip lock. Put it in a cool, dark place and add rum/brandy every two weeks.

As with all recipes, times, temperatures, quantities, and ingredients are approximate. Modify to your own taste, oven, and availability of ingredients.

Note: *This month's contribution to everyone's edification has been blatantly copied from something I found on one of my phone apps (McSweeney's Internet Tendency). It was written by some chap named Evan Greenspoon and is not copyrighted, therefore, I am assuming that I can reproduce it here without incurring the wrath of the authorities. I have never done anything like this before and the only reason I am doing so now is that as I read this particular piece, the more it occurred to me that it seemed like something I had (or should have) written myself.*

Friends, relatives, people I just met tonight: I humbly implore you to get this conga line started. We've been trying and failing to conga for twenty minutes. But if we buckle down and put our noses to the grindstone, we can get this thing moving.

Okay, Marie, you're behind Tom, but you can't be in front of Steve because you two used to date and Steve can't handle it. So Steve, you go in front of Mark, but not behind Stacy, Mark's sister. While Mark doesn't want to touch his sister's hips, necessarily, he also feels uncomfortable having someone like yourself -- a self-described "butt inspector" -- touching his sister from behind. However, Stacy also describes herself as a "butt inspector," so she shouldn't be behind any of Mark's friends.

We clear? I have a ton of conga experience. Trust me, we can do this.

Okay, now, Fritz, you can't be between Don and Agatha because they both like to wiggle. A lot. So we need someone like Daryl, who's good at making quick adjustments on the dance floor. That's the rumor, anyway. The goal here is to not break the train, people. It's also called "breaking the chain." Or "breaking the chain train," if you want to go deep into conga lingo. But we don't need to go that deep. We just need to get a good, clean conga going.

So: Gretchen can't be in front of Ruth because Ruth's stubby arms won't reach all the way down to Gretchen's tiny waist. We need Don -- with his spindly, sticky fingers -- to be behind Gretchen. Candace, your fingernails are, like, three inches long. You need to be behind the other Don because he's wearing seven layers of clothing.

Okay, raise your hand if you have only one hand. Great. You three go behind marching band members because they'll just go in a straight line. That's an easy one.

Everybody happy? I'm sensing a lot of consternation out there. I'm telling you from experience, consternation is deadly to the conga. Trust me. I've been doing conga longer than most of you have been alive.

Where are my baseball players? Baseball players, the six of you need to go

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SCAM Calendar of Events for December 2011

2nd - Friday 5:30 PM

FIRST FRIDAY AT HOOTERS SIG

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.*

7th - Wednesday 6:00 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

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

31st - Saturday 5:45 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at the Miyako Restaurant, 1511 S. Harbor City Blvd., 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 newsletter 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 in the Food Court*, Merritt Square Mall
6 p.m. Host: *Karen Freiberg, 633-1636*

GO!: *Every Saturday at Books-A-Million*, The Avenue, Viera. Hosted by
1 p.m. the **Space Coast Area GO Association.**
Host: *George Lebovitz, the.rokkitsci@rocketmail.com*

Membership Notes for December 2011

WELCOME TO SCAM

Mark Williams

Debra Saltzberg

WELCOME BACK!

Christopher Kalil

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>2nd</i>	Theresa Valek	<i>16th</i>	Christopher Glass
<i>5th</i>	Paul Bisson	<i>17th</i>	Alexander Lauberts
<i>9th</i>	Roberta Brock	<i>30th</i>	Travis Elmore

MENSA TESTING

No Mensa testing this month. Please be sure to check next month's issue for the next testing session.

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

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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between the construction workers. Their steel-toed boots can handle your cleats if you step on any toes. Normally, I'd tell you to take off your cleats, but no one should take off their shoes because of all the vomiting sorority sisters. Sorority sisters, you are the heart and soul of this conga line. Just keep doing what you're doing. I'd recommend flanking Don, if you can. No, the other Don. Gay Don.

Hook-hand Tommy, you go behind the Colonel. Your hook and his gun holster are a natural fit. What? Oh, he wears his holster on the wrong side... Okay, Tommy, you go behind Stacy's dad, who wears his gun holster on the right side. Mark Ruffalo, you go in front of Stacy's dad. Be warned: he too is a certified "butt inspector." Former United Nations Pres. Kofi Anan, you go behind Don. No, black Don. Black Don with the roller-skates. Black Don with the roller-skates and headband. Don, I know you wanted to be in front of a "butt inspector." Kofi, can you help Don out?

This is where I need your undivided attention. I'm very skilled at what I do, but I can't work in complete anarchy. Sometimes I feel like I'm more conga than man. Trust me, and I won't let this party down. But I demand your undivided attention.

Where's my miniature horse trainer? Not the miniature trainer of horses, the trainer of miniature horses. Can these little horses really stay on their hind legs the whole time? It's an eleven-minute song. Okay, if you say so. Where are my Supreme Court Justices? Same goes for you: can you really stay on your hind legs that long? Great. Cowpokes, lepers, samurai, born-again, cyborgs, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Don, umpires, freeloaders, washing machines, clandestine lumberjacks, grocery store clerks, tree people, Pagans, Don, convicted rapists, Don, and former conductors of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra: do you remember the numbers I gave you? Do you remember your numbers?

Yes? Yes! We did it! I did it. The conga did it. The conga always wins. Take that Mom and Dad! Okay... music starts... let us begin...

Wait. Wait, wait, wait. Stop the music. *Where the hell is Don?*

The George

Over the years, I have devoted several columns advocating reform of our campaign finance system. One of the criticisms I've often heard is that providing financial support to the candidate(s) of your choice is regarded as exercising your First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech. My critics' argument has indeed been supported by Supreme Court decisions in favor of the status quo, the most recent being Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission (2010). It has not escaped my awareness that, in writing these columns, as well as numerous Letters to the Editor, I have certainly made abundant use of *my* freedom of speech. So, it would seem, my critics' argument is well founded.

Yet, one of the truths I have learned throughout my life is that things are not always as they appear. Some of you may know that I am a public employee. As such, one of the rules under which I live forbids me, in my "official capacity" to accept a gift from any member of the public. The intent of the rule is, assuming I had the authority (in reality, I do not) to approve or disapprove a permit to engage in some regulated activity, that I not be unduly influenced to advance the donor's interest over the overall public interest. Yet, does that person not have a "freedom of speech" right to offer me a gift? Perhaps, but it does not matter. I cannot accept it (*not if I wish to stay employed – and, in some cases, not be prosecuted*).

Another observation is in order here. As concerns my SCAM columns, how many of you actually read them? How many people actually read my Letters to the Editor? More importantly, can I compel anyone to read my exercises of my "freedom of speech"? Quite obviously, the answer is "no". This is as it should be (imagine being prosecuted for muting that last annoying TV commercial?). So, here's the truth: Freedom of Speech does NOT constitute the Obligation to Listen.

My position on campaign finance policy, therefore, remains the same: Establish a fully public campaign finance system where the money allocated for a particular office is distributed evenly among its qualifying candidates. NO private donations, period. But, as enunciated in Citizens United, if we cannot forbid people to donate to political campaigns, we can absolutely forbid a political campaign from accepting any private donations.

However, I am cognizant of the fact that if my proposal ever receives serious consideration, it, too, will be challenged in the courts. I cannot predict how the Supreme Court might rule on this issue. But, as in Citizens United, if the Supreme Court, in this instance, rules in favor of Big Money, I would like to revisit that rule my employer has on the books. Meanwhile, you may wish to

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At its peak the Roman Empire had expanded beyond its ability to maintain the conquered territories and all the amenities for its people. It needed cheap workers at home to shore up its infrastructure. The population was expanding and they had to be kept happy. Everyone has heard how the Caesars did it with bread and circuses.

Think quickly. The US has military bases in 156 countries and at home more than 50% are on welfare and must be kept happy. Are we now in the stage of welfare and TV? Seems like bread and circuses, doesn't it? This was the start of the decline of the Roman Empire and now we will see the decline of the US Empire.

Rome had gold coins to pay their people. As time went on they added more and more lead to the coins to the point where the people refused to accept them.

In 1972 President Nixon took our gold-backed paper money off the gold standard and allowed the Federal Reserve (which is not Federal and has no reserves) to print as much paper as Congress could spend (and they are very good at spending more every year).

This will mean a lowering of living standards for all the people in the country especially the middle class who must produce enough to pay for those on welfare. Even the welfare recipients will receive less as they will suffer from higher basic costs and hyper-inflation that always follows.

The US Empire (and many will not like my calling it that, but facts are facts) will decline as the Roman Empire did. It will be a painful demise. Those that brought it on (the self-important politicians) will not realize until too late they will be victims of their own greed.

Those 60 and older will be affected, but not as much as their kids and grand kids. At this time it is my guess that the growth of the Asian countries will take over. Even their growth will be stunted because the buying power of the Eastern countries will have shrunk.

As time goes on it will be every man (country) for himself. Borders will tighten and jealousies will increase. The next 15 years is going to be very diffi-

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THE VILLAGE IDIOT*Continued*

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exercise extreme caution the next time you mute that commercial or change that channel on your TV.

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cult. The ruling class will become more oppressive.

I hope I am wrong. The writing is clearly on the wall. How did we get here? The people wanted more and more free stuff and the politicians borrowed from the future to give it to them. The debt is now due and cannot be paid despite what the politicians say.

My friends say I should not publish this column. You know I tell you the truth. Few will pay any attention anyway. Have a nice day.....while you can.

<i>The Last Minute</i>

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have an RG, she would prefer that we arrange it so that attendees would not need to leave the hotel; i.e., we would provide food at the hotel for everyone. There was a discussion of discounts for early enrollment, on the one hand providing incentive for people to commit; on the other hand, losing revenue for the Chapter. Everyone agreed we should try to find a venue that offered reasonable rates (financially challenging times for all of us, y'know), with the principle potential venue still being Comfort Inn of Cocoa Beach. There was general agreement that the cost for attending the RG would probably have to be increased from last time since inflation has affected everyone and everything.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm and the next meeting was set for Wednesday, Dec 7 (*Pearl Harbor Day*), 2011 at Karen Freiberg's house at 876 Buxmont Ct.

Non-Sequitur:

You'll note that there's a heading in the minutes entitled Guests. This means *you*, folks. Every member of Space Coast Area MENSA is invited and encouraged to attend these meetings. They're not very long and they're only once a month and they do determine the fate and working of our organization. Additionally, there's fun and interest to be had. For instance, had you been to the meeting described above, you would have been privy to an extended and fascinating discourse on the AI class that George P is taking. Seems that his professors, albeit knowledgeable in their field, are not particularly thorough and exact in their use of terminology. We all had a good laugh at their (*his professors'*) expense. So even though I know it's undoubtedly a waste of publication space, I do urge you to attend the ExComm meeting(s). Who knows? You might even enjoy it!

George Lebovitz, Recording Secretary

Last month I wrote a column about balancing safety with fun, and used as an example a recent change in policy by the AMC regarding the publication of local group directories. Before I wrote the column, I inquired as to the previous policy, and wrote my column based on what I was told. I received a couple of emails from people who thought that my statement as to the previous rule was incorrect, so I inquired further, only to find that there is some confusion as to what the previous policy was. So, at this point I'm not really sure if I gave accurate information in my previous column or not. Be that as it may, the new policy is as I stated it: Local groups are now free to do what they like in terms of publishing directories, and individual members are free to include as much or as little information about themselves as they like. And I hope none of this detracts from my underlying point that we can't be so careful and safety-conscious that our joy disappears and we can't have fun being Mensans.

That leads me to another topic: *Burnout*. Mensa leadership -- local, regional and national -- all experiences it from time to time. Being a Mensa volunteer is a wonderful experience that I wouldn't trade for anything. (Well, maybe for winning lottery numbers and a body that's 30 years younger. Oh, and a romantic evening with Drew Brees. Plus a cat-free planet. But other than that, I wouldn't trade it for anything.)

At the same time, it's a lot of work, and takes a lot of energy. Sometimes it's inconvenient; sometimes one has to deal with annoying people. And every Mensa volunteer has probably wondered at one time or another why they bother. Then, there's a really great First Friday or RG or games night, and it's worth it again.

When someone burns out, often there is someone else to pick up the slack. But sometimes there isn't. Sometimes it's the same few people making things happen in a local group, and if one or two of them wear out, there really is no one else to take their place. This is especially a problem in smaller groups.

If you're never volunteered, or if you haven't volunteered in a while, please consider doing so. Mensa, as with most volunteer organizations, is run by the people who show up. Ask your locsec how you can help; usually there's no shortage of things to be done if people are willing to do them. You'll get to meet some of the finest people on the planet, and be part of a family that does fun things together. Best of all, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you helped make it happen.

Finally, I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year. Thanks for making me part of your family; you are all a part of mine.

Minutes of the SCAM ExComm Meeting.

Preface: Being both the proverbial new kid on the block and the de facto Recording Secretary, I inquired of the sitting ExComm members why we had both a pre-meeting and an official meeting? Seemed to me that the real business of the ExComm was conducted in the so-called pre-meeting, then recorded in the minutes of the so-called official meeting. Bit of duplication of effort, I thought, and -- for me, at least -- a tad confusing. So, ask I, howscum we can't just roll it all up into one, big happy ExComm meeting, record it the way it happened and be done with it? Thence ensued a discussion of stuff you can and can't do under Robert's Rules of Order and such until it was determined that -- by golly gosh -- no rule, regulation, article, bylaw, stipulation, decree, ordinance, or charter mandated that we be regulated under RRO and that we could pretty much conduct our ExComm business any way we wanted to. Which is what we did.

Minutes:

The ExComm met at the home of Karen Freiberg on Wednesday, November 9, 2011. Called to order at 6:33 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Members Present: George Patterson, Terry Valek, Karen Freiberg, and George Lebovitz.

Guests: None.

Minutes for the October 5, 2001 meeting were approved as published in the November, 2011 SCAM.

Officer/Committee Reports: Hank Rhodes submitted his MENSA testing report indicating that 1 person was tested, 3 candidates were contacted for the first time, and 6 candidates for the 2nd or 3rd time. Dennis Logan (now officially our Treasurer) was out of town and did not submit a report; one is anticipated for next month's meeting.

Thence ensued a discussion of creating a SCAM directory. The challenge lies in obtaining information from known members who have not provided us either a telephone number or email address. Karen Freiberg was tasked the unenviable job of trying to ferret out as much information on these folks as possible. We have arbitrarily set a target date of June 12, 2012 for the publication of the SCAM directory.

At this point, we encountered a bit of an impasse, as George P. could not decipher his own handwriting, mumbling something about his pen skipping. Yeah, sure.

Moving on, the next topic was the RG. Surprise of surprises, we have actually had someone volunteer to participate in organizing the RG (I believe George P will mention this in the upcoming SCAM)! Terry mentioned that if we do, in fact,

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