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SCAM

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Reflections
at the
END..

Was it all
worth it?



SPACE COAST AREA MENSA

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(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

Not long before this issue went to press, my wife and I lost her mother, a much cherished family member. On the upside, she did live a fairly long life—she was 83—and she died peacefully in her sleep.

Besides the normal mourning process we inevitably all go through, given the fact that we are no longer young, the question arises: Was it all worth it? Although she was an intelligent and resourceful woman, she was never given an opportunity for an education, for women of her day “didn’t need an education to marry and have kids.”

Although, as far as I was ever able to determine, she was generally content with her life, this was the one area she did regret. This might be food for thought as the powers that be engage in devaluing education for our own children.

Bringing the discussion to our membership (many of whom are my age or older), I pose this question to you: Was your life “worth it” or simply a waste of time? Many Mensans lead well-accomplished lives; many have not. Which applies to you? Why?

If you are in the latter group, it’s not too late to change course. Of course, if you are reading this, you are still alive. What changes? I cannot say, as all lives are different. Yet we are all mortal; none of us will live forever. It might be time to take inventory.

This month’s issue, my 100th, is dedicated to the memory of *Wililee Senters (1928-2012)*.

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.

Good news - not only is the RG on, it is starting to take shape. It will be on Friday, October 26, through Sunday the 28th and will be at the Cocoa Beach Comfort Inn where we held the last two RG's. Now - everything I say here should be preceded by a "most likely" because we have not yet reviewed and signed the contract, but we expect it to go smoothly. Alas, no airshow this time. It has moved to September and that is too big a change for us to make for a side attraction. We now have ten on the RG committee and would like ten more - more people, more ideas, less work per head. Most meetings and interactions will be by email so you won't have to travel. Mensan's spouses or partners are welcome on the committee as they are welcome at all our events. Being on the committee does not mean you will have to work during the RG. Some folks will but it doesn't have to be you.

Incidentally, there is a nice RG coming up - oops, I am writing in mid-January and you get to see it in early February so I can't tell you to go to the Central Florida RG in Orlando in late January. If we had instant publishing I could do that. You say we have the internet? You're right, and I can email everyone a reminder. If only I had everyone's email address. Well, you've heard this before. About half of our members get reminders of events and occasionally other bits of SCAM information. If you want to be on the mailing list, send me an email and you will be on it.

What else is going on with your ExComm? We are trying to put together a NomElCom, a nomination and election committee, to manage the May election. This is an interesting feature of our bylaws which state that the NomElCom "shall be responsible for conducting the election, receiving and counting the ballots, and certifying the results." A "Standing Rules and Guidelines" document says a lot more about how it should operate, including, "The NomElCom members shall aggressively solicit from the membership of SCAM, individuals who will agree to run for the offices of the ExComm." Nice idea. We have only been able, for the past few years, to get (shanghai) people to serve on the NomElCom by telling them they didn't have to beat the bushes for candidates but could just monitor the election and count the votes. One thing the Bylaws don't tell us is what the role of the Standing Rules and Guidelines is. A question that should be answered one of these days...

After living and working in Casablanca for six months, my French was much improved. Two languages were commonly spoken in Morocco, then French Morocco, French and Arabic. Desiring to devote myself to learning a foreign language, I decided to concentrate on French.

I bought myself a French grammar book and a pocket French-English dictionary. Each evening after dinner, I would study French for an hour or so in my hotel room. To increase my proficiency I would do two things. Every day after work, I would go to a café, buy a French language newspaper, and with my dictionary in hand, read what I could of the paper.

The other thing that I did, after I achieved some fluency in the language, was to go shopping. Several times a week I would go to a gift shop and bargain. It was the custom in Casablanca to bargain for each purchase. The bargaining was ritualized. Once you showed a true interest in purchasing an item, the shop owner would offer you a cup of tea. Only then would he tell you his asking price.

The customer would then drink his tea and make a counter offer. The shop owner would then pour a second cup of tea and offer a lower price. The customer would drink the tea and make a second counter offer.

A third cup of tea would then come, along with a third and final offer. At this point, etiquette demanded that the offer be accepted or that the customer should leave. The customer would drink the third cup while paying for his purchase.

The offers and counter offers were not simply stated. They were accompanied by discussions of the quality of the merchandise, the economy, the weather, and politics. That is why I went to the shops. For the small price of a souvenir, I would get a half an hour of French practice, and three cups of tea. Of course, I always ended up buying the gift.

After leaving Morocco, I had many opportunities to polish my French in visits to France. Eventually I became fluent in the language. Fluent in the sense of being able to hold a conversation in that language without translating it to English. I realized that I had reached that level of fluency when returning to Paris from Switzerland one time I was in a compartment with three French Communists. I was able to hold my own in a rapid fire prolonged political discussion in French.

The January, 2012 issue of the SCAM contained Mel Dahl's The Tenth Story article describing the importance of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn to local MENSA groups. In the article, he states: "It's hard for an old fossil like me to appreciate just how significant social media is."

Facebook and MySpace seem to be the prevailing means of social contact among 16 to 24-year old age group. There are currently about 500 million active users on Facebook. And that number grows substantially every day.

As a newly minted business owner, one of the most common bits of advice I get from customers is that the shop should have a presence on Facebook (which it does) on account that's the wave of the future.

Pundits, commentators, and fools publish and broadcast a wealth of material describing the change in our social structure due to social media. There's just no avoiding it.

I've been on Facebook for a number of years due to intense pressure brought to bear on me by my three wonderful femchildren. However, until my paradigm shift (*hate that phrase*) to a smart phone, I managed to completely avoid actually participating in any activity once I figured out how to turn off the email notifications of people wanting to "friend" me ("*Lulu44DD wants to be your friend!*"). However, the Facebook app on the smart phone keeps popping up these little red numbers whenever there is any activity associated with my account and it's very difficult not to just check out what's happenin', since you never know when there might just be some event of import that I should know about.

But there never is.

A typical day on Facebook:

"Working"

"Went to Denny's with my brother"

"Toaster oven broke, now I can't make breakfast"

"Doctor says I have a yeast infection"

"Isn't my puppy cute?"

dozens of vacation pictures posted *one at a time*

"Whoa! Got pretty wasted last night"

"Isn't it Friday yet?"

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"Hello FB people!"

"Goodnight FB people!"

"Took my daughter to ballet class"

"Took my daughter to soccer practice"

"Took my daughter to the dentist"

pictures of the local temperature

links to inane YouTube videos

"Anyone wanna hook up at Chili's tonite?"

...and the inevitable *"Go <name of sports team>!"*

There is virtually nothing of substance posted, with the rare exception of a wedding or birth or some such. The rest seems to be idle babble from people who are so bored with their lives that they feel the need to bore everyone else with inanities. The preponderance of what I read leaves me profoundly underwhelmed and wondering just what it is that makes this pap app so popular.

Like Mel Dahl, I just don't get it.

So, I'm appealing to you fellow Mensans to help me out here. I'm certain that many of you must be significantly more socially aware than I am and can explain this phenomenon to me. Don't be shy. Sit down at that keyboard and compose a Letter to the Editor (editor@scam.us.mensa.org), p'raps including twenty seven eight-by-ten color glossy photographs with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explaining what each one is, and hit "Send." Then maybe I can understand the new paradigm.

The George

SCAM Calendar of Events for February 2012

1st - Wednesday 6:00 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

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

3rd - 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.

11th - Saturday 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.

25th - 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 February 2012

WELCOME BACK!

Constance Dinatale

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

4th	Dana Stetser	14th	Greg Wiggins
7th	Ann Galetta	17th	Robert Lipton
7th	Heather Howard	17th	Robert Champion Jr.
9th	Clayton Pendergrass	26th	Don Lewis King
10th	Herbert Feingold		
11th	Michael Moakley		
14th	Wynn Rostek		

MENSA TESTING

Feb. 18 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 will be on Mar. 17.

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.

As I write these words, the Republican Presidential primaries are upon us. At this point, I would venture a guess that Mitt Romney will eventually become the Republican nominee. Another political development over the last several months has been the success of the “Occupy” movement in bringing to the forefront the inequities between our richest citizens and the rest of us. For too long, this has been an issue that most politicians in both major parties hoped would simply “go away”. We now know that’s not going to happen.

Since Romney is the most likely Republican nominee, it would behoove us to pay attention to what he has to say. Shortly after he won the New Hampshire primary, he was asked questions by the media about concerns of what many see as class warfare. The upshot is that Romney dismisses the Occupy concerns as “*Politics of Envy*”.

Envy???

For your consideration, I would like to present the following scenario. You’ve just returned home from a very pleasant dinner. Upon arrival, you find someone has burglarized your home in your absence. Your house is an awful mess and almost everything of value is gone. You summon the police and file a report. Sometime later, you learn the culprit has been caught; you also learn that your burglary was one of many the culprit has committed.

Not too long afterward, you are called to the burglar’s trial as a prosecution witness. As you testify, the defense attorney begins to cross examine you. During the cross examination states, “You are not a crime victim; you are just envious because my client has more than you do (of course, to the tune of the property that used to belong to you and his other victims)!”

Returning to the politics, Mitt Romney’s comments were in reaction to the scrutiny on how many of the members of the “One Percent” have earned or increased their fortunes. In many cases, it seems that many of these fortunes have been built or increased at the expense of the rest of us. Too often, for the costs involved, there has been no corresponding benefit to us. In short, we have been robbed.

Envy???

For the last several years, I have done a bit of soul-searching, wondering if my own opposition to the favoritism displayed toward the wealthy might, in fact, be envy on my part. At this stage of my life, I am a few years away from retirement after spending my entire adult life in the actively employed

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workforce. I live in a small home, drive a four year old vehicle, and have a few creature comforts. My wife and I do not live a particularly extravagant lifestyle—nor do we wish to.

Many have more than I have; quite a few do not have as much. Neither causes me much worry. I do not lay awake nights because the guy across the river lives in a larger house or owns a yacht. So long as his wealth was not stolen from me, it simply does not matter to me. My worries? Will I be able to retire, or will there be some legislation that leaves me without a pension in favor of lowering corporate taxes? Will my wife and I still have medical coverage to take care of those medical conditions that seem to be associated with advancing age – or will the “free market” block us from coverage to increase the insurer’s bottom line? These are two examples of the things I worry about. From the above, I do not believe I am envious of anyone.

To be totally honest, however, there is one area where I do resent the wealthy having more than I have. It is political power. In a supposed democracy, each citizen presumably has an equal say in how he is to be governed. This should be no matter what one’s background or circumstances. Money can buy all sorts of nice things and that’s the way it should be. People who have lots of money are able to have lots of nice things – I have no problem with that. Yet, so far as I am concerned, money should never buy political power. The rules of the game should apply equally to all players.

Is that envy?

First let's see what protectionism is. According to Mr. Webster it is the advocacy, system, or theory of protecting domestic producers by impeding or limiting, as by tariffs or quotas, the importation of foreign goods and services.

That sounds pretty good. It is something that will protect the jobs of our workers from goods that can be produced elsewhere and undercut the prices of our local goods. How? There are a couple of ways. The merchandise or commodity itself is in very large supply in another country and is mined or grown there very cheaply. Not much you can do about that. Or the labor costs of production are vastly less than our own workers and the product can be manufactured for less.

The average worker in the U.S. makes about \$15.00 per hour while the workers in Mexico get \$2.00 and the people in China average 60 cents per hour. How do you compete with them? Answer - you can't. So what do you do? If you are a shoe manufacturer in the U.S. (there is only one left) you ask the federal government to levy a tariff (tax) on all imported shoes (or maybe just the kind you make). This sure helps that particular shoemaker who might have 300 employees making sneakers. Now the sneaker maker can keep his prices up and his workers working. That's good.

But wait a minute. There are millions of feet that need sneakers and that means millions of consumers are paying more for comparable quality sneakers. Is it fair to give special consideration to a very small group that automatically penalizes the mass of consumers?

Examine the definition of tariff again and think it through to the end. A tariff is a tax on consumers.

You are paying more for certain goods (and there are about 13,000 separate tariffs) than you should just for the benefit of a few manufacturers who cannot compete in the world market. Every country is not just a unit unto itself any more. We now have a global economy that allows specialization of products. If a company cannot compete it should not be in business and should not penalize the majority of its citizens for the benefit of a few. You, the consumer, should not have to pay more for tomatoes, brassieres and steel just so our politicians can get reelected. That is what it boils down to. Unions will promise to back certain candidates if they will vote for tariffs (tax increases) that protect incompetent manufacturers.

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The steel tariff is an excellent example. Bush put on a tariff when he could have given a tax break to help modernize that industry. In the long run our steel production will disappear because of continuing inefficiency. If we get into a trade war where one country trumps another with more and more tariffs it is a guaranteed loser for everyone. Visualize this as building a house of cards. You end up with a game of 52-pickup. It could go to the ultimate of deflation and depressions for all the countries of the world.

Protectionism, tariffs, in all of history have never worked.



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*.

If anyone has been looking for a chance to volunteer to do something that won't be a long-term commitment, but will allow you to make a big difference, I have just the opportunity for you.

Every two years, Mensa has a national election. That means that every two years, a nominating committee needs to be appointed to find and vet candidates for national office. Region 10 is entitled to three seats on the national nominating committee, which means I am looking for volunteers.

The NomComm has a face-to-face meeting at the annual gathering before the election, which will be in Reno this July. So, in order to be appointed to the NomComm, you should be planning to attend the the AG. All candidates for national office -- chair, the first and second vice chairs, secretary, treasurer, and all regional vice chairs -- are invited to a face to face meeting with the NomComm to explain their qualifications and why they think they would be good candidates. The NomComm also actively recruits candidates for national office in the event that there is difficulty in finding candidates to run.

Maybe you lack the time to volunteer for Mensa on a regular basis, but you could give us a few hours at the AG to help select the people who will govern Mensa for the next two years. Whether Mensa is well-run or poorly-run depends in large part on who is in leadership. One of the perks of being a member of the AMC is the ability to get to know most of Mensa's national leaders, and overall I am mightily impressed by what I see. I hope that we will continue to have strong leaders who move the organization forward. To that end, if you would like to serve on the NomComm, please contact me as soon as possible.

Until next time.

The SCAM ExComm Meeting that never was...

The ExComm was supposed to have been called to order on Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge 32955, United States of America, North America, Earth. However, some members of the ExComm had conflicting rendezvouses, therefore the meeting was postponed until the following week on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge 32955, United States of America, North America, Earth.

The day before the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge 32955, United States of America, North America, Earth, Val Valek, ExComm Member, notified George Patterson, ExComm LocSec, that she was under the weather and didn't believe she would be able to make it to the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge 32955, United States of America, North America, Earth; however, she courteously and courageously offered to dial-in, if desired.

Then, on the afternoon of the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge 32955, United States of America, North America, Earth, Dennis Logan informed George Patterson, ExComm LocSec, that he was "feeling poorly myself," describing some symptoms which sounded vaguely like a faulty toilet, and asked if we could "do a conference call?"

At this point, George Patterson, ExComm LocSec, apparently decided that enough was enough and cancelled the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge 32955, United States of America, North America, Earth.

Editor's Note: Our calendar lists the next ExComm meeting as being scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, 2012. If you have plans to attend that meeting, I recommend you contact our LocSec to confirm the meeting date, time, and location.