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SCAM

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The End..

...Or is 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

Throughout 2012, on these pages, you have been warned, “*The End is Near*”. Now, it is December, and in three short weeks, we can say, “*The End is Here*”. Yes, according to some who claim expertise on the Mayan Calendar, as of December 21, 2012, our world will have finally reached its end.

Is it true? Worse yet, will this mean the end of *The SCAM*? Stay tuned for coverage of this cataclysmic event in our special Post-Apocalyptic Issue of *The SCAM*. It is due out in January 2013.

Since, despite the many false alarms we have experiences during our lifetimes, none of us have actually *experienced* the end of the world. I have an idea. On December 21st, why not chronicle the events of that day? It would be interesting to know how you spent your final day on Planet Earth. You can e-mail me (editor@scam.us.mensa.org) your submission. It will appear in one of the new Post Apocalyptic Editions.

With the new year coming up (*THE END* notwithstanding), I would like to remind you that this is *your* newsletter. If you would prefer to see different content than the usual fare, you may wish to submit an article.

You may also respond to any material you have seen in print on these pages. There is, however, one thing I would ask of you. Anything you send to me is deemed submitted for publication. I do understand there will be times when you want to reach me and NOT be published. In those cases, PLEASE include the statement, “Not for Publication”.

Happy Holidays to all.

***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.

SCAMFest is over. There is time to look back and see what lessons we learned.

Lesson one is that RG attendance is down, at least over most of the state of Florida, and I suspect most of the nation. We can't count on any reasonable turnout any time soon. For years, SCAM could count on having around 120 people register for our RG. This year we got about half that.

The second lesson learned concerns money.

Other groups have had trouble making their room numbers, and we fell well short this year. That means that we got to shell out over \$1900 to the hotel for all the services they provided for the RG. Ouch!

With this kind of hotel expense, we made very little money.

I can't speak for the other five members of the RG committee, but I know that I spent well over \$4000 in time and material getting ready for the RG. I know my expenses were much higher than anyone else due to the number of events I prepared for, and the number of hours required to prepare for each event. Still, in the end, if I had simply written a check to SCAM for the time and material I spent, SCAM would have been much better off. As far as I can see there is no economic justification for SCAM to ever put on an RG.

The third lesson concerns doing something positive for others. There are reasons beyond money to do things, and creating positive experiences for fellow Mensans is a very good thing in my book.

It seems that our RG attendees broke down into roughly three groups. The first group is the gamers group. They come to play, and hang out in the game room. They also tended to drift into the Media room towards the end. They have fun competing.

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Under 40 and looking for comrades? **Check out GenY SIG!** We are open to members 18-36, and looking to pull together activities for Ms our age. Pretty sweet, right? Check us out on Facebook at **'Mensa GenY Space Coast'**!

One cannot discuss knives without mentioning sharpening. Many knife sellers and reviewers will emphasize how sharp the knife is. They mean, of course, how sharp the knife is when it comes from the factory. That is a meaningless characteristic. Knives are not throw-away items. They are not like razor blades. They are intended for use over many years and once used, they must be resharpened. The meaningful characteristic is how well and easily they can be resharpened. A good carbon steel knife can literally acquire a razor sharpness. When I sharpen mine, I test it by shaving the hair on the back of my hand.

Some writers tell you that the purpose of a steel is to correct the edge of the blade, not to sharpen it. That is not true. A sharpening steel, sometimes called a honing steel, is nothing more than a round or oval file.

Sharpening steels come in various degrees of coarseness. They also are made of steel, stone, ceramic, or may be diamond coated. Under ordinary use, there is never any need to sharpen (grind) the blade. After every few minutes of use of a knife, it should be sharpened against a steel. A few swipes against the steel are all that is needed. A professional cook usually will have a sharpening steel hanging from his belt, ready for use. Eventually, after several years of use, the knife blade may need to be reshaped, but that is not sharpening.

Sharpening a knife may actually degrade it. If not carefully done, a rotary grindstone could easily overheat the edge and destroy its temper.

Japanese knives are not sharpened on a steel, a whetstone is used. In order to eliminate the taste of the steel shavings which would affect the delicate flavor of sushi, a sushi knife is soaked in water for several hours after sharpening.

Cheap knives are stamped from sheet steel. A good knife will be forged. It is easy to recognize a forged steel knife. It will have a bolster, the thickened portion of the knife, integral with the blade, between the blade and the handle. The blade will be tapered from the spine, the top of the knife, to the edge, and the bolster will extend down the blade to be a protective metal guard to keep your fingers away from the edge. The tang of the knife, that part of the forging that is in the handle, should go the full length of the handle.

A stamped steel knife will be of the same thickness along the width of the blade until the bottom where the blade is ground to create an edge. It

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will not have a bolster integral with the blade.

There is a new material that is now being offered for knives - ceramic. I have not yet had the opportunity to try these out.

Traditionally, handles were made of wood and riveted to the tang with three brass rivets. The wood was rosewood. Now there are other choices. Other woods are used. Wood impregnated with plastics and resins are common. Solid synthetic handles without rivets are popular. The use of stainless steel blades, allowing the knife to be washed in the dishwasher, something no traditionalist would conceive of doing, required the creation of handle material that could withstand that abuse.

Grease or oil could make the handle slippery so it may have to be washed often. The traditional rosewood handles and all the newer materials can deal with that quite well.

Of course, knives should never be kept in drawers. Knives hitting against each other could make nicks in the edge, and to reach into a drawer with blades which are as sharp as a razor is just foolhardiness. The best container is a wooden knife block that covers the blade. Metal knife blocks could dull the edge. Open knife racks, such as the magnetic type with exposed blades, are also dangerous.

The best cutting surface is wood. A heavy, end grain butcher block is the ultimate. They are hard to find, although I do have a small, 8-1/2 inch by 12 inch by 1 inch thick, end-grain cutting board made in Central America of many native woods. An inexpensive wood board that can be purchased almost anywhere will do very nicely. Resin impregnated bamboo is also used in cutting boards. Plastic cutting boards are popular and acceptable, particularly because they can be cleaned in the dishwasher. In any case, do not cut against metal, glass, or ceramic.

There have been objections to wooden cutting boards citing the inability to properly clean them, and that they pick up odors. Recently a reported study showed that wood has an anti-bacterial action making it more suitable than thought before. I clean my boards with hot, soapy water using an abrasive cloth. My edge grain oak kitchen work counter, which I use to prepare large volumes of food, I clean with vinegar. My boards do not smell.

Well, we are supposed to witness the destruction of the world this December. At least, if those of an apocalyptic persuasion are to interpret the Mayan Calendar as meaning we should not bother to make plans for the New Year.

But discoveries by archeologists tend put a different interpretation on this (Scientists with their own spin? It is an election year....)

An ancient Maya text has emerged from the jungles of Guatemala confirming the so-called "end date" of the Maya calendar, Dec. 21, 2012. *"The text talks about ancient political history rather than prophecy,"* said a scientist of Tulane University's Middle American Research Institute.

Carved on a stone staircase at a site they are excavating, the inscription was found at the ruins of La Corona, in the dense rainforest of northwestern Guatemala, by an international team of archaeologists.

In the wake of a particular military defeat, the Maya ruler at that time visited La Corona and perhaps other trusted allies to allay their fears after his defeat.

According to the archaeologists, the 2012 reference would have been a political move by the Calakmul king, who wanted to reassure the peoples of La Corona after the stunning defeat. In the text, he calls himself the "13 K'atun lord" -- the king who presided over and celebrated an important Mayan calendar ending, 13 K'atun calendar cycle, in the year 692.

So, the researchers say, in order to exalt himself even further and place his reign into an eternal setting, the Maya king connected himself forward in time to when the next higher period of the Maya calendar would reach the same 13 number -- December 21, 2012.

"This was a time of great political turmoil in the Maya region and this king felt compelled to allude to a larger cycle of time that happens to end in 2012," said one of the archeologists. The discovery is consistent with the only other reference to the 2012 date in ancient Maya inscriptions -- that referred

Fire and Ice

*Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.*

*From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.*

But if it had to perish twice,

I think I know enough of hate

*To say that for destruction ice
Is also great*

And would suffice.

- Robert Frost

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SCAM Calendar of Events for December 2012

5th - Wednesday 6:00 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

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

7th - 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.*

29th - 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 2012

WELCOME TO SCAM

(No new members...)

WELCOME BACK!

(No returning members...)

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

2nd	Theresa Valek
2nd	Jeannine Stein
9th	Roberta Brock
16th	Christopher Glass
17th	Alexander Lauberts
30th	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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to as Monument 6 from Tortuguero, Mexico. I recommend the site:

<http://decipherment.wordpress.com/2011/10/04/more-on-tortuqueros-monument-6-and-the-prophecy-that-wasnt/> for an interesting discussion of an interpretation of Mayan hieroglyphics.

"What this text shows us is that in times of crisis, the ancient Maya used their calendar to promote continuity and stability rather than predict apocalypse," one of the researchers said.

The key to understanding the reference to 2012 is a unique title that the king gave himself, said the archaeologists. As mentioned, the "13 K'atun lord" -- the king who presided over and celebrated an important Mayan calendar ending, 13 K'atun calendar cycle, in the year 692. He would have been calling himself something special.

Politics to promote stability (*what, no' change'?*) or Religion to promote calamity (*The Gods are grumpy*). I guess a Mayan could choose based on his or her view on the future.

Which goes to show: Politics has not changed much in the years or through the cultures, with the priests probably being the Mayan 'Talking Heads' for their time.

However, if you are a New Ager and still want to believe not to bother with Christmas shopping this December, then do as you like. You will still have time to open the presents, if not enjoy them for long.

As for me, I think I will sit by the "Fire" and add some "Ice" to my drink as I toast the New Year. (*"Say Honey,.. did we stock up enough canned food and ammunition for my rifle and gun this month"..*)

Hey, I was trained as an engineer. You always keep a back- up system.. just in case...!

by Stacy Strickland

(still counting the days until New Year.... I hope).

This Page is RESERVED:

JUST
FOR
YOU

We want to hear from YOU...
Before it's too LATE!

See Page Three of every issue for
SCAM submittal guidelines.

It seems many economists have different definitions so I won't try to make up one that applies to all of them. Instead I will try to have a partial (can't do the whole thing) understanding of how it will affect your pocket book.

If you are on welfare you don't give a damn. But you should.

Why?

Because the financial escapades of the last 20 years are going to affect everyone of us whether getting "free stuff" or not.

Whatever your income level from zero to seven figures everything you buy is going to cost more. And that is not just gasoline and electricity.

The day after his re-election Obama announced he was going to let the Bush Tax Cuts expire. Very few understand that this "tax cut" is a humongous tax increase. The prez made it sound like only the "rich" were going to pay more. No, it is you and me. Actually the rich (whatever the current definition is) will have a tax increase of \$55 billion while everyone else (that's us peons who work and pay taxes) will be paying \$210 billion more.

When taxes are increased on businesses it means those products will have that tax added to the cost and passed along to guess who – you. And that does not exclude where that extra money comes from either a pay check or a welfare check.

What is this "cliff"? It is money the government has spent when they did not have it so they borrowed it. And now we have come to the end of the road where it has to be repaid. That's the cliff. To keep from going over the edge and going bankrupt either Washington has to quit spending like a drunken sailor or taxes have to be paid by us sober people. How can we pay those bills and don't forget all the other ones – Medicare, Heathcare, etc., etc., etc.

The credit card companies (that's not just China but everyone who owns a U.S. Treasury bond) want to be paid their interest. Your bank could collapse. Not just your bank, but banks all over the world that own U.S. bonds.

Obama also announced a new carbon tax. That is for the fake global warming that will get the middle class to pay for government spending. CO2 is not a toxic gas. You exhale it with every breath. They have concocted a good story for the public.

One other temporary "solution" is to borrow more money if we can find

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someone dumb enough to lend it or the Federal Reserve can print more worthless dollars which will ultimately cause more inflation.

Is there a solution? Not as long as we have politicians who want to be elected again and again. We will continue to pay until eventually the government runs out of money and the world financial system collapses.

Europe has been “Kicking the Can Down the Road” for years. We have joined the club.



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*.

"Why are my dues so high?"

I've been asked this question a lot since the AMC voted to raise dues on October 30, and it's a fair question. As I have already publicly said, I thought it was necessary to raise dues by a dollar or two, but voted against the increase to \$7 the AMC ultimately adopted. So that you know, here's what your money goes for:

American Mensa is part of Mensa International, and we are required to pay dues to Mensa International, and those dues have just been increased. A significant chunk of International's budget is working with national Mensas that are still developing. Mensa has the potential to be huge in India and China, and giving it a secure footing in those countries would greatly enhance our international reputation, especially if those countries turn out to be high-tech superpowers. Consider it an investment.

Here at home, we provide support to local groups; many of your favorite local group activities are possible because of local group funding. I expect local group funding to increase at our annual budget meeting in March.

Mensa also has programs that, while they may not benefit every individual member, nevertheless make us a better organization. We have an active gifted children's program and a scholarship program. We have Project Inkslinger, which helps local libraries. One of our missions is to foster human intelligence, and we do that.

I've written in the past about our national office staff and the fine work they do. Without them, we would need to find volunteers to process 52,000 memberships, keep the national Web site up and running, provide logistical support to local groups and volunteers, score all those tests, and organize our annual gathering. (If you don't think it is a huge undertaking to bring 2000 Mensans together in one place, talk to someone who's done it.) Personally, I'd rather enjoy my membership and hire people to do those things for us. We are also spending on enhanced technology to make it easier for volunteers to do their job, and also to make it easier to attract younger, more tech-savvy members.

Mensa is a great organization; I'm proud to be a member and even prouder to serve as one of its regional vice chairs. Unfortunately, it takes money to run, and our costs continue to go up. Thank you all for being part of it.

The SCAM ExComm Meeting did NOT meet in November.

George

WAR CORRESPONDENCE

Continued

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The second group are the listeners. They enjoy hearing the RG speakers. I was surprised at how many people fell into this group, a large portion of the RG attendees. They have fun learning new things.

The third group are the talkers. They hang out in Hospitality most of the time, chatting with old friends and making new friends. They have fun interacting with other people.

I have a radical proposal. For smaller groups, the RG is dead. Maybe what we need to start doing is holding Regional Events. Each RE would be geared toward a different one of the three groups above.

Tampa Bay Mensa and Central Florida Mensa have already started experimenting with this by having Games Gatherings at Lake Louisa State Park. I see no reason why SCAM should not pitch in with this effort and make it a RE! Renting a cabin or two costs a very small fraction of what we dropped on the hotel. People attending get rooms, hospitality, and activities at a function they really enjoy for a small fraction of the cost of an RG.

For the listeners and the talkers, we can rent an Elks' lodge for about a third of the cost of a single conference room at the hotel. If SCAM tries this alone, it is likely that attendance would be too low to warrant the effort. But if SCAM, CFM, and TBM work together to make it a Regional Event, we would likely hit the critical mass needed to make it a success.

The idea of a Regional Event is not to make money, but to provide a service for our fellow Mensans.

Just some food for thought.

Viva la Regional Event and happy holidays.