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SCAM

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All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 20th 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, editor@scam.us.mensa.org.

Editor's Notes

Dennis D. Logan

I happily report that I no longer shoulder responsibility for editing or publishing this distinguished publication. With great pleasure I wish to announce Robert K. Roth will henceforth tend to these duties.

I regret my disservice negated the efforts of our finest contributors, Art Belefant and Stacy Strickland. They contributed timely and erudite articles which appear within the pages of this publication and I pray the delay of that publication doesn't affect their relevance. Further, I hope they will resume their submissions.

On the positive side, my procrastination saved the organization somewhere near \$600. So you're welcome for that.

That's about all I have to say. I could apologize for a few more paragraphs but I don't see where that serves anyone. Take care and please give Mr. Roth as much support as you can.

Chance and time are intimately linked in our universe. Chance occurrences take place that provide new opportunities, challenges, and perils. Since Valentine's Day is in many minds... nowhere is this most evident than in the realm of love.

A single person will meet a large but limited number of available members of the opposite sex (in these days, it is more like pick your gender) and a key question becomes: how do you know when you have met the right person for you? The assumption here is that you can't go back; once you severed a relationship with someone, he or she is gone (not so true in some cases today). For purposes of this article, how will you know which person is BEST for you?

Well, it seems that probability theory can help one out to find the best person for the best match. Once more, it can be applied to areas other than romance. An apartment or house does not stay on the market for long and you might have to make a decision for buying or renting before you have seen all your choices. Jobs too, do not stay on the market very long, and once you have been offered a position and rejected it, you usually cannot go back.

A mathematical theorem was developed that gives the best sampling and stopping rule for these types of situations. The math explanation gets very involved. It can be found and further explained in books on probability theory. But the strategy goes something like this:

You will maximize your probability of finding the best spouse you date if you date about 37 per cent of the available candidates in your life, and then choose to stay with the next candidate who you feel is the better one than all the previous ones (Mosteller, 1987).

That seems like a strange rule to me (I wonder if the computer dating services use any algorithm like that for their business?). The number 37 % is an approximation of the number, $1/e$, where 'e' is the base for natural logarithms or 2.71828 (Freund, 1973). Now mathematicians do not guarantee this rule is a success all the time. But it gives you a 37% probability of making the best decision. Any other strategy, whether choosing earlier or later, significantly reduces your probability of success in finding the best candidate (in your terms of what you believe is 'best').

Suppose over a lifetime you expect to meet 100 available candidates. If you marry the first one, the chance that you have found the very best one of all 100 candidates is only $1/100$. Likewise, if you wait to meet all 100 candidates, you will have rejected the 99 who came before, and the possibility that the last person you meet is also the best is again only $1/100$. The best strategy given by the mathematicians allows you to sample for awhile, in order to learn about the various candidates; and in all such strategies, the best has you sampling 37 percent of the total and then choosing the first candidate thereafter who beats the ones who came before. Of course, there is a chance you will never find one who is better than all the 37 percent you've already seen (Aczel, 2004). But nothing in love is certain and this way you have the highest possible odds of finding your number one match. So, if you are a young woman who expects to meet one hundred attractive bachelors over her dating years, you should let the first 37 of them go, and marry the first one you meet thereafter who is more attractive to you than all 37 young men you have already dated. Now don't you wish your mother had

given you advice like that?

But what of 'love' (or is it 'lust') at first sight? And what of all those Bachelor/Bachelorette dating games on TV? And does money versus physical attractiveness come into that equation? Or will your mother/father/sister/brother approve of him or her? Or were you just too hasty in dropping that first person you met and had second thoughts about them? And you haven't even tried 'speed dating' dating yet! Oh well, just like life in general: You can't always 'count' on everything.

References:

Aczel, Amir, *Chance*. New York, Thunder's Mouth Press, 2004.

Freund, John, E. *Introduction to Probability*, New York: Dover, 1973.

Mosteller, Frederick, *Fifty Challenging Problems in Probability*, New York: Dover, 1987, p. 74.



Love is Heaven scent!

The first used oral communications among humans was probably grunts or cries. Such communications are used by other animals such as the rumblings of alligator eggs when they are about to be hatched and the cries of the prairie dog sentinels when spying a predator. Human infants still use cries when their diapers need changing or they are hungry. Their mothers know what each cry means. Succeeding that are the primitive gestures such as the open mouths of many birds to indicate that they are hungry and want to be fed.

Ultimately humans developed words that had specific meanings no doubt like our children with “mama” and “dada”. Putting words together created language. Language was able to create a history and to store knowledge and pass it on from one generation to another. When and how to plant crops, find food, where and how to hunt, and pass on a culture such as Homer’s Iliad are examples.

Lastly writing was developed to permanently record what had previously been retained only in a person’s memory. This included commercial transactions like the sale of a cow, the ownership of a piece of land, or the history and culture of a society. These first writings were in the form of ideographs with a separate symbol representing each concept or activity.

The alphabet that an English writer uses today is derived ultimately from Canaanite of the second millennium BCE through the Phoenician, classical Greek, Etruscan, and Roman alphabets. Canaanite was the first true alphabet where the symbols represented sounds, but only consonants, rather than ideas, concepts, or actions as were ideographs such as Egyptian, Mesoamerican, or Chinese hieroglyphics.

Alphabets, since they articulated all the phonemes in a language, usually about twenty-six, every idea, concept, or action, if they could be pronounced, could be represented by just twenty-six symbols. This led to vast increase of literacy. Instead of learning several thousand symbols, only about twenty-six need to be learned.

In developing modern English writing, two major offshoots occurred. While still writing boustrophedonically, starting in one (horizontal) direction, then turning at the end of the line and reversing direction, that is first right to left and then continuing on from left to right, two Semitic writings, Arabic and Hebrew, developed writing from right to left. They are still written from right to left whereas the line of descent from classical Greek to modern English is written from left to right. It may be that the two Semitic languages were first written, that is using pen and ink and thereby subject to smudging by a right handed person, whereas ancient Greek, the first left-to-right writing was first incised in monuments. Vertical writing exists in some ideographic writings, but not in any alphabetic writings.

Because of the demise of Latin as a universal language in the Western world since the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the ascendancy of English as its replacement, the Roman alphabet has been used, and is used, to transcribe every language descended from Latin and many non-Latin languages. Because many of these languages have phonemes in their speech that don’t correspond to the Roman alphabet, the Roman alphabet was modified to accommodate those pho-

nemes and retain a one-to-one correspondence between each symbol and a phoneme, English excepted.

ALPHABET II

©Art Belefant

You may think that there is only one English alphabet. Actually there are six. The first alphabet that we learn is derived from the ancient Greek. It is all capital letters that was carved on monuments. During the middle Ages, when the only way to make copies of documents was to have scribes copy them, usually in monasteries and nunneries, usually in Latin, in Roman characters which were directly derived from the Greek. As this was a slow and tedious process, the scribes developed a sort of shorthand that quickened the process. The shorthand, which we have inherited, was what we call lower case or minuscule.

Most of our documents are written in minuscule, generally only the first letter of a sentence or names are capitalized. The second English alphabet must be learned after the capital letters are learned otherwise an ordinary book, magazine, or document, such as this one, could not be read. This second alphabet differs enough from the majuscule alphabet to compromise a separate alphabet. Although there are similarities between the two alphabets, there are enough differences to make the minuscule a different alphabet. For example: “o” is similar enough to “O” to cause no confusion. But “a” cannot be read as “A” unless learned.

The third and fourth English alphabets are upper- and lower-case script or cursive. These differ from our Roman alphabets and each other in many ways. The use of script or cursive has been recently discontinued in many schools as being considered obsolete and useless in the age of computers. It will take a long time for script to disappear as it is used for some advertising, some older documents, such as the Declaration of Independence in the original cursive, and for hand written greeting cards.



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June 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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4	5 	6	7	8	9	10 
11	12 	13 	14	15	16	17 
18	19 	20	21	22	23	24  
25	26 	27	28	29	30	

13th - Tuesday 6:00 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

This is our monthly business meeting. See minutes for location.

24th - Saturday 5:45 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some Japanese cuisine at The SCAM's best attended event at our new venue, **Hioki's**, 3200 NE Dixie Hwy. (US 1) in Palm Bay. It is about 2 miles south of US 192. **Contact:** *George, 474-4075 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".

Our Regular Events:

- **C.A.B.A.G.E.:** Food Court at the Merritt Square Mall. Every Monday at 6pm. *Host: Karen Freiberg, 633-1636.*
- **GO!:** Books-A-Million, The Avenue, Viera. Every Saturday at 1pm. Hosted by the Space Coast Area GO Association. Contact George Lebovitz for more info: recsecretary@scam.us.mensa.org.

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.

This has been quite a year we have gone through and pundits will be looking backward at what we have gone through and looking ahead and predicting what we have to look forward to in the next year.

Speaking of which, everyone has probably heard of Janus, the supposed source of the name for our month of January. In ancient Roman religion and myth, he was the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, doorways, passages, and endings. He is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks to the future and the past. Janus presided over the beginning and ending of conflicts, and hence war and peace. The doors of his temple were open in time of war, and closed to mark the peace. As a god of transitions, he had functions pertaining to birth and to journeys and exchange; and his association with Portunus who was a similar harbor and gateway god, meant he was concerned with traveling, trading and shipping.

Unfortunately, the use of the name 'Janus' in the English language, has a rather negative definition: Artificial, backhanded, double-dealing, two-faced, even Pecksniffian (Seth Pecksniff, a character in Dickens' 1844 novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*. He preaches morality but in reality is a deceptive rascal who uses all means to advance his selfish interests). Sounds familiar as we look backward to this year's elections?

A Janus word also refers to an auto-antonym, contronym, or word with multiple meanings. One is defined as a reverse of one of its other meanings. 'Cleave' can mean to cling or to split apart. 'Dust' to mean remove dust or to add dust. 'Fast' meaning not to move or fixed; or to move quickly. 'Refrain' meaning non-action or repetition of an action as in music. I am sure you can think of other Janus word dual meanings, in your 'comings and goings' of the new year.

A Janus notation in mathematics combines a dozenal number (the duodecimal system also known as base 12 or dozenal—a positional notation numeral system using twelve as its base) and negative digits to form a balanced dozenal system. For example, consider the number '9'. In decimal notation it's written with the single digit. But in Janus Notation, it is written as '1e'. This means '12-3', with a '1' in the twelves place and an 'e' in the ones place. The principle is the same as with Roman numerals, where '9' is written 'IX'—with the 'I' before the 'X' indicating that it is negative. But

Roman numerals require different symbols for each place, while in the Janus numbers, like decimal numbers use the same numerals for all magnitudes. They are relying on position to indicate the magnitude.

Since 1969, there has been a Janus Capital Group (they call themselves ‘looking forward’. I guess not choosing to ‘look backward’ at poor investments) that offers a range of fixed income, equity, alternative and multi-asset strategies for your money. They look forward to making gains on your investments, but hope you do not look backward at your losses.

The Saturn moons Epimetheus and Janus share the same orbit of 151,472 kilometers from Saturn’s center. They are only separated by about 50 kilometers. As the two satellites approach each other they exchange a little momentum and trade orbits with the inner satellite becoming the outer and the outer moving to the inner position. The exchange happens about once every four years. Their moon –faces look back and forth at each other as they do their dancing around Saturn.

There are some animals (including mammals) that are two -faced or suffer the congenital disorder Diprosopus, which causes the face to be partly or completely duplicated on the head. Few two -faced animals have survived due to associate internal organ abnormalities and brain abnormalities. One of the most famous was Ditto, a pig that was raised to adulthood but died of pneumonia cause by food inhalation when breathing through one muzzle while eating with the other. Cats with the condition are known as ‘Janus cats’. In July 2006, a 6-year old male Janus cat named “Frank and Louie” from Millbury, Massachusetts received publicity. When ‘he’ was 12-years old, it was announced that he would appear in the 2012 Guinness Book of World Records as the longest surviving Janus cat on record. In 2014, he died at the age of 15.

So, as you look back at your past and forward to your future: Keep the two-faced Roman god in mind. We should always remember there are two sides to every argument we may have in 2017. Although these days we may hear about Janus, the American alternative metal band, just keep in mind the Joni Mitchell song and Christine Jorgensen: I’ve looked at love from both sides now.

The American Mensa Committee (AMC) met on April 1 at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, FL, taking the opportunity to preview the facilities in advance of the Annual Gathering in July. I would like to thank Region 10 members Dan Tobias and Brian Reeves who attended the meeting. One of the reasons for having the meeting at various sites throughout the country is so members from each Region can have a chance to see the AMC in action for themselves. Regrettably, so few take that chance – even when it is paired with an event like an RG, as it was in New Orleans – that it seems like it's time to reconsider this expense, despite the tradition it represents.

All motions at the meeting passed, most notably an increase in annual dues to \$79 and the fees for Admission Testing to \$60, both effective July 1, 2017. Prospects can still test at the current rate and members can extend their existing membership at the current discounted multi-year rates until then (though extending membership can only be done by calling the office directly at this time). There were also a couple of licensing deals announced, including a high-profile deal with Hasbro on pairing the Mensa name with their educational board games. The mini-minutes are available at www.us.mensa.org/read/board-meeting-reports under the dropdown 2017-04-01 – Hollywood, FL, and we have a conference call scheduled for May 2 to approve the full minutes, at which point those will be posted at the same link. If you're interested, there is also an audio recording of the meeting available there.

Membership Officer Stephanie Thornton presented the results of the latest Member Satisfaction survey, which was sent to all members with email. Here are some key metrics, with Region 10 metrics following in parentheses where they vary:

Net Promoter Score (NPS), which is the likelihood that a member will recommend Mensa to a friend they think would qualify: 23 (Region 10: 24). A score > 0 is considered healthy. That ratio is highest among members 46 and older or married members without children, but the score drops significantly for single members under 46 years without children, as that group had an NPS of -6. 93% of our membership feels that the most important mission of Mensa is to provide a stimulating intellectual and social environment for our members, with 58% thinking we do this very or extremely well, compared to 54% two years ago.

The majority of Mensans say their family and friends know they are members, but don't tell co-workers – though they will include it on a resume.

80% report that they are proud to be members of Mensa, with 5% disagreeing. 54% (Region 10: 48%) report that they volunteer for Mensa. However, the NPS for volunteers is lower than the average (though still healthy at 18).

Member satisfaction in their local group officers is highest among those who interact with them. Understandably, members are far more likely to interact with their local group officers, while only a few have any interaction with the AMC or National Office staff.

There's much more, but no more room. I'm open to any questions you may have, and will also post to the Mensa Region 10 Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MensaRegion10/>) so we can discuss it (and other topics) there.

Until next month (or until I see you online), Thomas George Thomas

First, the housekeeping item: The American Mensa Committee (AMC) met via teleconference on May 2 to approve the minutes of the April 1 AMC meeting. These are available at www.us.mensa.org/read/board-meeting-reports under the dropdown 2017-04-01 – Hollywood, FL.

After several years of continuous growth, Region 10 had a year-over-year loss during the renewal season. We're running an incentive program for local groups to encourage them to contact lapsed members, and we hope some will renew as a result. As further incentive for lapsed members, renewals processed before June 30 will be at the current rate, before the dues increase in July.

Last July **Stephanie Thornton**, our National Membership Officer, presented us with the results of her Lapsed Member Survey. Several reasons were provided for lapsing. One of the top reasons given was "Negative experience with other Mensans", and this was borne out in a lively discussion on the Region 10 Facebook group last month about various experiences members have had. In the survey, 19% had reported negative in-person encounters, while 13% reported negative online experiences.

We would always hope to head off conflicts that would rise to a level that members would be discouraged from remaining, but sometimes situations get beyond our control. One tool we have to address this that many members are unaware of is a fairly detailed dispute resolution process, which can be found at <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/policydocuments/grievance-policies/grievance-documents/dispute-resolution-guidelines/>.

A significant part of this process is the use of Local Group Ombudsmen. While a few of our chapters have Ombudsmen to help resolve issues members have within their local groups, most do not, and some have told me that they don't need one right now; they'll appoint one if something comes up that requires one. Unfortunately, by that time it can be too late. During the AMC meeting in April, our National Ombudsman Garrison ("Bud") Klueck stated that "when interpersonal disputes come up the ombudsmen should be used more. ... [If] interpersonal disputes are resolved quickly, there will be greater member satisfaction and retention may improve. ... **[Once] local group leaders start bickering, it won't cure itself and someone needs to step in.**"

While acknowledging that finding new and uninvolved volunteers is often difficult, this seems to be an important enough issue to focus on. Fortunately, most of the time the Ombudsmen I've spoken to have reported little or no need for their intervention, so it's not a position that requires a lot of time. Only a couple of chapters have reported a need for intervention during my last two terms.

Region 10 does have a very capable Regional Ombudsmen in former AMC member **Brian Reeves**, and he has reported little if any activity requiring his attention. I will be working during the first part of the next year to ensure that every group has an Ombudsman in place, just in case – and one hopes they won't be needed. But it's better to have a fireman on duty to call on than to try to train one after the fire has already started.

Until next month (or until I see you online), Thomas George Thomas

Email: RVC10@us.mensa.org, Facebook: www.facebook.com/thomas.g.thomas

The ExComm met at the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955, on Tuesday, March 14th, 2017, called to order by LocSec Joe Janson at 6:03 pm.

Members Present: Joe Janson, Karen Freiberg, Aron Travis, Val Valek, George Lebovitz, Robert Roth (non-voting Chairman of Publicity).

Guests: George Patterson.

Officer/Committee Reports (details may be found in the footnotes):

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer's report was unanimously approved¹.

Testing: Testing coordinator, Hank Rhodes, reported February testing via email².

Everyone wished Robert Roth a happy birthday.

Approval of the minutes of the February, 2017 meeting was postponed until the next meeting since Joe neglected to send the recording of the session to George for transcription.

Old Business

George Patterson regaled us with an excruciatingly detailed account of the woes National is having with producing mailing labels.

There was a discussion regarding changing the frequency of publication of the SCAM to reduce costs, requesting members who wish to receive a hard copy to pay for postage, and encouraging members to receive their copies electronically (if a sufficient number of people so elect, we might be able to produce the SCAM on a printer instead of using a printing service). The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

George Patterson then described his issues with trying to log into the National Mensa web site.

New Business

Joe announced that he will not be a candidate for the ExComm next year.

Announcement of the elections must be published in either the May or June issue of the SCAM and a NomElComm will have to be formed. Joe volunteered to be on the NomElComm and will try to recruit Wynn to be on it as well.

There will also be an audit required prior to the elections.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, April 11th, 2017 at 6:00 pm in the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.

¹ General Account: \$3,137.25; Reserve Account: \$859.65; with outstanding payments due to George Patterson for postage and George Lebovitz for the Gifted Student Program.

The ExComm met at the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955, on Tuesday, April 11th, 2017, called to order by Assistant LocSec Karen Freiberg at 6:30 pm.

Members Present: Karen Freiberg, Aron Travis, George Lebovitz, Robert Roth (non-voting Chairman of Publicity).

Guests: None.

Officer/Committee Reports (details may be found in the footnotes):

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer's report was unavailable at the time of the meeting.

Testing: Testing coordinator, Hank Rhodes, reported March testing via email¹.

The minutes of the February and March, 2017 meetings were approved as distributed to the ExComm (there having been no SCAM published since December).

Old Business

There is still no word on the status of the proposed new Bylaws.

After a hiatus, the SCAM Gifted Youth Program is becoming active again with a list of proposed activities distributed for consideration.

New Business

George will contact the NomElComm (Joe Janson and Wynn Rostek) to initiate the process of determining candidates for the forthcoming ExComm elections. There is some urgency involved since the ballot must be published in the May SCAM in order for the elections to proceed in June. The June election would then result in the new ExComm being seated at the July 12th meeting.

Robert volunteered to draft an email blast to be sent out to encourage members to step up and become candidates in the election.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, May 9th, 2017 at 6:00 pm in the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.