

The

SCAM

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ExComm Election Issue:

The END of one
Administration...

... Is it ...

...the BEGINNING
of Another???

Ballot Enclosed



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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

I **f you are** an active member of SCAM, May is a very important month for you. Each year, at his time, you have the opportunity to choose who among you will set the direction of our local group for the next year. You will find in this issue an official ballot to turn in. Please follow the ballot instructions exactly so that your voice may be heard.

Over the years, I have noted how important it is for you, the member, to participate in this process. This year is no exception. In fact, it is even more important as this is a contested election, the first in a very long time. As always, if you wish to vote for a qualified member other than those listed, you can write in your candidate of choice.

Once again, I ask that you do NOT, under any circumstance, vote for me. As Newsletter Editor, I am not qualified by our Bylaws to hold an Ex-Comm position. Members of the NomElCom are likewise not qualified to hold office. So, make your voices heard; it may be your "last" opportunity.

For those who, for whatever reason, do not understand my reasoning behind this year's theme for *The SCAM*, "The End", a short explanation may be in order. Currently, there are those who subscribe to the belief that the Mayan Calendar predicts the end of the world as we know it effective December 21st. In my not-quite-six decades of existence, I have lost count of all the occasions within my lifetime the world was supposed to have ended. As I do expect to wake up to a normal existence on the morning of December 22nd, this theme is done strictly in fun. *Enjoy!*

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.

Part Three:

A long time ago I transferred from a job-shopper engineer status to full employment with Sperry Microwave Electronics in Clearwater, Florida. At that time, I was assigned to work in electronic warfare equipment on a patrol gunboat contract for the Royal Saudi Navy.

Since I was going to be traveling back and forth some from the contractor site in Riyadh Saudi Arabia, I thought it would be useful to learn some of the Arabic language and Arabic culture. Even though the company presents you with a booklet and a presentation on the culture of foreign lands (usually it is a compilation of DO NOTs while in country), they usually only include a brief listing of words or phrases to help you get by in day-to-day activities. I thought it would be more interesting to learn more than just skim the surface. Also, I had picked up some Arabic while traveling around Morocco and Egypt while in the U.S. Navy.

My mistake back then (*it may be different now*) was that it was not that easy to learn Arabic. If I wanted to converse with folks in the city, I would have to learn one of many dialects with huge numbers of colloquialisms. This may be spoken in only a few countries. So called "Arabic" seemed to be written (I never seemed to master that skill) but not actually spoken as a one-size fits all Arabic. I could say things like 'Na'am' or 'ai-wa' ('yes') and 'Mini fad-lak' ('please') or 'Do you speak English?' (Tatakallum Ingleezi?) and be understood. The Nadji dialect was most prevalent and translation books seemed to use that approach. However, some in Saudi Arabia used a Hijazi dialect that sounded different to me, and I had to ask them if they spoke Arabic differently. So, when I worked with Saudis (and sometimes Egyptians) I learned the following:

- There is a modern standard Arabic that is usually taught to Western students and is used for newspapers and TV. But most of the people of the streets I talked to did not speak this version. Educated Arabs did, but they usually preferred to speak French or English to you.
- There was a literary Arabic (used in the Koran). It came across like old English with the '*thees*' and '*thous*'. And just like us Americans do not talk like that these days, neither do the Arabs. Unless you are some sort of scholar.
- There was a colloquial Arabic that changed from country to country from what I experienced. While I was in Qatar during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Arabic seemed different among Iraqi, Qatari, Saudi, and Egyptian friends. You

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I must apologize to my faithful readers (*and I have this horrible, sinking sensation that it is the two of you doing I-don't-want-to-know-what with that three-legged llama over there behind the bramble bush*) who may have noticed that I did not have a column in last month's SCAM. First one I've missed in over 5 years. Actually, I *did* submit an article; however, I reluctantly recalled it before publication after being advised that it might be considered offensive.

You may have read in the April, 2012 SCAM that we have an actual competition for a seat on the ExComm this year. Usually what happens is that no one wants to perform this noble function and the sitting ExComm gets re-elected by popular acclaim. However, this year, with an actual candidate, that leaves 6 people for 5 positions. An actual horse race! In fact, that's what I titled my article: Horse Race.

So I thought I would take advantage of my bully pulpit to do a little campaigning and write about how everyone ought to vote for me. Well, actually, that's not what I did. I took a page from the political strategy used by the "big boys" and instead of extolling my many laudable virtues, chose instead to perform a (humorous) character assassination of my opponents.

I did the equivalent of a written caricature of the other five folks, exaggerating certain personality and physical traits and explaining how these "defects" made them unqualified for service on this most prestigious committee. Never once occurred to me that the stuff that made me chuckle as I wrote it might not be taken quite as humorously by those about whom the stuff had been written, until it was pointed out to me that not everyone may share my sense of humor and might actually be offended.

Oops!

So, using the principle of discretion being the better part of valor, I (*reluctantly*) withdrew the article but unfortunately, had no ready substitute at the eleventh hour.

Sigh.

Y'see, I have no trouble laughing at myself but didn't consider that other folks might not have the same perspective. In fact, once I started thinking about it, I realized that I'm probably in the minority here. We seem to have formed a society of thin skins of late. Everyone's walking on eggshells lest they say or do something not PC and – heaven forbid! – upset someone's

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Is the
END
Really
Near
???

Tell us what YOU think!

Submission guideline on Page Three.

Compromise is pretty much the way the world works. Let's see what Mr. Webster has to say. Compromise: Two different ideas brought together with each changed so that the final single idea is agreeable to both parties. This can be as simple as two people deciding which of several restaurants where to go for dinner or as terrifyingly complex as heads of state agreeing on a course of action to prevent a war.

The major problem of compromise (yes, it can be spelled with a "z") is the background of those who come together to try to reach a workable plan. In government affairs the heads of state take into consideration the history of the other country and the personal character of their current head of state. There are scores of advisers who bring this type of information to the chief negotiator. Unless that person is understood the chance of reaching any agreement is very slight.

Sometimes the mutual interests of the parties is such that they may agree quickly. Other times the art of compromise is skillfully injected. Depending on the parties involved a plan may or may not be comprised quickly.

Each party must recognize the agenda of the other person. If that agenda requires a radical change it will almost surely not be reached. The history and upbringing of each person is put under a microscope. If both have strong ideological principles they will not move. Nothing will be accomplished.

Look at one side of the equation - Obama.

His mother was a Communist and kept him to age 4. Small children learn very fast and absorb ideas. There are programs today such as My Baby Can Read that have kids reading by age 2 and the newspaper by age 3. These are great as they show how the brain absorbs information very quickly. At age 4 he was turned over to a Communist organizer and stayed with him through high school. He was taught the benefits of Communism. It is doubtful he ever learned of its short comings.

In college he associated (his own words) with anti-colonialists. This is a belief that bad governments (like the British it said stripped India of its wealth) steal the assets of a country. Nothing is mentioned of the good being done to increase the life style of the natives. We still don't know who paid for his education and he won't say.

Then his spiritual mentor became the race-hating Rev. Wright where he sat for 20 years and says he did not listen.

His background has been formed by people who disagree with the U.S. the Constitutional form of government and others who profess hate for the coun-

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sensibilities.

Take for instance, the classic lawyer/blond/Polack (*oops, not-PC; should be Polish, I guess*)/llama joke. The whole idea of these things is not to belittle lawyers as being dishonest, blondes as being literal, persons of Polish descent as being dumb, or llamas as being... well, llamas, but to be funny. Haha. Didn't see that coming, didja? Har, har. Thigh slap.

No more. Now we have to tell jokes about bunny rabbits and pretty flowers. Gone are "a minister, a rabbi, and a priest walk into a bar" and "how many <fill in non-PC proper noun> does it take to..."

Is it really such a big deal if some courthouses want to put up the Ten Commandments outside? And why can't we wish each other a Merry Christmas any more (FWIW, Good Friday is called "Holiday for All" by the Brevard County School Board)? And what's wrong with telling a pretty lady she looks pretty? Stuff that used to be taken for granted is suddenly deemed inappropriate because there may be someone, somewhere who may be affronted by it. Screw the majority; make sure we accommodate the exceptions.

Ennywaze, just wanted to explain why I was AWOL last month.

Here's hoping my acerbic sense of humor doesn't chafe anyone's knickers (too much) in the future. But it seems to me we all need to lighten up a little. Be better for everyone.

The George

THE RIGHT SIDE

Continued

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try. This type of thinking allows only one way to compromise – do it their way.

To this point in his political career Obama has clearly shown that his ideological upbringing has precedent over all other ideas. **How do you compromise with an ideologue?**

Liederkrantz is back! That wonderful and storied cheese is being made again. The DCI Cheese Co. of Richfield, Ohio bought the cheese division of ConAgra a few years ago, and the Liederkrantz recipe came with it. Company executives hope the full-bodied cheese with its distinctive aroma will have a future that honors its past, thanks to increasingly adventurous palates for full flavored cheeses. The cheese is now made in Wisconsin. "Now is the time for Liederkrantz if it's ever going to make a comeback," said Myron Olson, who recently started making it on behalf of DCI Cheese Co. at the Monroe cheese plant he manages.

Liederkrantz originated in upstate New York in the late 1800s as a replacement for a traditional soft, Limburger-type cheese from Germany that immigrants missed, and could no longer get because it would spoil during shipping. The cheese manufacturing and recipe left New York and a small cheese making facility for Borden's and Ohio in 1926 before finally finding a new home in Wisconsin. The cheese was successful until a series of unfortunate accidents, fires, and contaminations forced the end of production. Borden's, whose manufacturing was based on bulk manufacturing of processed cheeses, didn't allow for the production of a narrow-market, small-production specialty cheese. The rights to the cheese then went through several hands until 1985 when the production of Liederkrantz ended. DCI recently purchased the recipe and is now in the production of Liederkrantz. I have seen no word on whether DCI also obtained some of the mold that, according to some historians, was so critical in retaining Liederkrantz's character when it moved out of New York.

The cheese is now available to the public by mail from several distributors in the Mid-West, but it is not available locally. I have given this information to my favorite cheese seller, Steve at Winn-Dixie on the Eau Gallie Causeway. He has promised to order some. I will report on my tasting when I do.

SIDEBAR

For a full history of the fabled Liederkrantz, see my article of that name in SCAM of January 2009. If you failed to keep that issue, I would be happy to send you a copy of my article if you send me an email requesting it. a.belefant@ieee.org

SCAM Calendar of Events for May 2012

2nd - Wednesday 6:00 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

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

4th - 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.*

12th - Saturday 6:30 PM

VOTE COUNT & POTLUCK

Come witness democracy at work as we tabulate the returns, then join us for potluck food and fun at Karen Freiberg's in Rockledge.

Contact: *Karen (321)633-1636.*

26th - 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 May 2012

WELCOME TO SCAM AND MENSA

David Geier

Marissa LoPresti

WELCOME BACK!

River Grace

Jeannine Stein

George Meier

MAY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

3rd	Brian Conway	18th	Donald Elmore
4th	David Wallace	19th	Eric Sperry
6th	Barry Ebert	19th	Denise Jeffreys
7th	Kenneth Kline	20th	Robert Gray
12th	John McKeown	23rd	Stephen Curtis
12th	Martin Vanoy	25th	James Stewart
14th	Michael Friedman	26th	Mark Zelios
15th	John Moore Jr	26th	Mark Williams
15th	Jean O'Brien	27th	Karen Freiberg
17th	Douglas Dial	27th	Sean Freeman
18th	David Cape	30th	Francis Stump

MENSA TESTING

May 19 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 June 16.

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.

Recently, I came across an article on *NYTimes.com* entitled, “Caring, Romantic American Boys” (April 6, 2012). From the first few paragraphs, it seems the teenage boys are beginning to depart from the traditional stereotype of attempting sexual conquests of as many girls as possible. These boys, according to the article, are beginning to prefer entering into a romantic relationship first before engaging in sex, something that has long been attributed to teenage girls and, for that matter, women in general.

The article does cite a decline in sexual activity among all American teens between the ages 15 to 17, but notes the decline among boys has been steeper. But, why is that?

Fear of an unintended pregnancy is a factor. “I found that American boys often said sex could end their life as they knew it. After a condom broke, one worried: ‘I could be screwed for the rest of my life.’ Another boy said he did not want to have sex yet for fear of become a father before his time.” Another fear touched upon is the fear of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, especially AIDS, which is both incurable and deadly.

But, the article asserts, fear is not the only reason for the decline among boys. The author hastens to say that according to the *American Sociological Review* in 2006, “teenage boys (are found) to be just as emotionally invested in their romantic relationships as girls.”

Is that really so, or is there yet another reason?

While much is made about the allegedly increasing preference for romance among teenage boys, there is a brief statement that is buried after the citations of fear of pregnancy and disease: “*Combined with growing access to pornography via the Internet, those influences may have made having sex with another person seem less enticing.*” (Emphasis mine) Let that statement sink in for just a moment.

It would be helpful here to simplify the statement: *Fear of pregnancy and disease combined with growing access to pornography via the Internet equals a reduced desire for boys to have sex with girls.* Please note we are only referring to heterosexuals here.

Some of you reading this may remember my prior article, “Rape?” whereupon I commented upon feminists and fundamentalist Christians (who cannot agree on anything else) joining forces to combat the rise in available pornography. Both groups contended pornography leads to rape. My re-

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sponse was their contention was pure bunk as pornography is used mostly as an aid for the reader (or viewer) to a successful release through masturbation.

Further, I contended then, as I do now, that women (*and* girls) generally frown on male masturbation. For the last three decades, women have controlled the relationships, largely through controlling the man's access to consensual sex, often to the point of being the exclusive source. Moreover, the rules they impose upon the man are not clearly spelled out and are often made up as they go along. For a man to avail himself to an alternative means for sexual release, such as through masturbation (no partner is needed), is seen as thwarting that control.

In my prior article, I discuss this phenomenon in somewhat more detail. The article was essentially a review of a book I had read, *Anatomy of Sex and Power* by Michael Hutchison, published around 1990. To me, it serves as an in-depth history of the "post-feminist" era that followed the "Women's Liberation" movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s and the most recent failure of the Equal Right Amendment (1982) to become the law of the land. For those who wish to pursue this issue further, I strongly recommend this book.

To conclude, I disagree with the thesis of the *New York Times* article that the decline in sex among 15 to 17 year old boys is due in any significant part to the boys' desire for a romantic relationship, given that most males of any age is left confused as to what constitutes the behavior of a good mate. Rather, I believe it is a combination of three factors: Fear of a pregnancy and/or a disease, the frustration that too often results from the role confusion that males experience in their relationships with women, and the prospect of an alternative for sexual release often aided by pornography.

There is, however, one very important point the *New York Times* article does make: Pornography does lead to reduction in desire to engage in sex with a partner. I believe this debunks the myth that pornography leads to rape, even if one was to subscribe to the incorrect notion that men rape women to satisfy an excess of sexual desire.

At this point in Presidential Campaign 2012, it appears all but certain what many of us have surmised all along. Santorum has now “suspended” his campaign, leaving Mitt Romney as the “presumptive nominee”. One indication is that the infighting between presidential hopefuls seems to have been replaced by Romney’s campaign taking swipes against President Obama.

Of course, like any other major campaign, some seem to go off the deep end. Recently, a pundit who is known for her Democrat leanings made a statement that Mrs. Romney (NOT “all women”), because of her life of wealth and privilege, enjoyed the luxury to be a “stay at home mom”. Of course, Mrs. Romney had to weigh in stating a woman choosing to stay at home to rear her children is “making a sacrifice”. The political argument now is whether a mother choosing to stay at home with her children is enjoying a luxury or suffering a sacrifice. Let’s not be confused with the facts.

Another recent example is the assertion by U.S. Congressman Allen West, from here in Florida that 78 – 81 House Democrats are “card-carrying Communists”. It seems that Rep. West was referring to the members of the House Progressive Caucus. I suppose one needs to be regressive in order not to be a Communist. In any case, why has no one come forward and asked Rep. West to document evidence of his claim? I, for one, would certainly be interested in how he knows his colleagues are, indeed, members of the Communist Party. Inquiring minds want to know...

A third recent example is a bumper sticker I saw that read, “Take Back America!” Who took America away? How did that happen? Apparently, the maker of the bumper sticker ran out of space as these (and other) questions remain unanswered. However, I can propose an answer. “Take Back America” actually brings forward a two-part question. The first part is already mentioned above. The second part is “From whom did the culprit(s) take America away?” Here is my answer.

Taking the second part first, the answer is us. That is, ALL the citizens of the United States of America. We - all of us – are the victims of this theft. That leaves the first part to be answered. The thieves are many. For starters, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the members they represent. In other words, I refer to what politicians euphemistically refer to as “the Business Community”, we more aptly know as Big Business.

Now I will add a “Part Three”; how did the theft occur? To answer this, I’ll drop a hint: *Citizens United v. FEC (2010)*. Does this mean anything to anyone

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reading this? For those who still do not know, it is the U.S. Supreme Court decision stating that it is perfectly OK for corporations to support their candidates for public office. In a supposed democracy (or, for the purist, “democratic republic”) we, the voter, get to decide our political leaders. However, with our present campaign finance system, only those with sufficient financial resources (for the most part, large corporations) get to decide what candidates are available to be chosen by the voter. I have written on this very topic numerous times in the past.

Yet, was this the message that was intended by the owner of the car bearing the bumper sticker? From the other bumper stickers on the same car, it was evident to me the owner most likely has conservative leanings. So, my answer to this question is: “not likely”. That being the case, what did HE mean by “Take Back America!”? There are a number of possibilities. Here, I will explore one.

Some years ago, I read a book written by Patrick Buchanan entitled, “The Death of the West”. In this book, Buchanan describes the reduction in population of some European countries which he attributes to the “socialism” in those nations. He goes on to describe how some of those governments are providing incentives to their citizens to bear children in an effort to stem the declining birth rates there.

Buchanan then focuses on the United States. I found this quite interesting, as the U.S. population continues to grow, in part, to our overall birth rate. So, where was our decline? Reading on, it became readily apparent that the proportion of Caucasian (white) citizens has been declining. Various non-white groups have a higher birth rate than do whites, according to Buchanan. He bemoans the fact that, because of this, many large U.S. cities no longer have white majorities (although whites still are the largest population group). Apparently, the fear for Republicans is that the reactionary white vote will no longer have the majority power it once held.

Could this be the reason for the renewed political interest in trying to deny contraception to women after most of us thought this was a long-settled matter? Did I already mention that Santorum’s extreme pronouncements are, in truth, the Republican stance in this campaign? In any event, does “Take Back America” mean to take back white majorities (*which, of course, still exist*) in American politics? So, is the message on the bumper sticker, “Take Back America!” in reality, a racist one?

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could get by with the Arabic of the textbook, but rapid fire conversation would leave me in the desert dust.

The Maghreb Arabic (what I heard in North Africa of Morocco and Tunisia) seemed very popular in the business section of cities such as Rabat, Tangiers, and Casablanca. Some of my friends liked to go to the market place and haggle with the street vendors in this variety of Arabic. I could catch some of the word (*Ma-lesh* 'It does not matter', *Moshe mum-kin* "Impossible". *Ma sa-la-ma* "good-bye). But usually asked my friends to translate.'

Having learned some of the language and the culture of Arabic-speaking countries when I worked on the Royal Saudi Navy contract was very helpful for when I was recalled to active duty in the Middle East in 2003. At least I did not suffer the culture shock that many people did who were used to traveling in lands of a more European-background. I also entered a new culture with a more receptive and appreciative mind set.

My advice for most people (at least as a Westerner, a native speaker may feel otherwise) is that it is probably best to learn one Arabic dialect (the Egyptian dialect is one of the most spoken dialects) rather than try to learn the modern standard Arabic with people. Although the modern standard is known by most people (and probably taught in classes here in the States), I personally think it is not used in conversation as much and most people do not use it. While you are in their country, they would rather speak their own dialect, English, or French.

I found Arabic had some unique consonants and can put your tongue, lips , and throat through some exercises you never thought possible. Pronunciation can be difficult for some. Speaking without an accent takes lots of practice. The grammar was logical but the vocabulary can be demanding, since it seemed endless to me. Most of the texts I tried to read did not write vowels and you had to figure out what the vowel sound was to be as determined by knowledge of the vocabulary!

It seems I make learning Arabic a real downer. It isn't. It is a beautiful sounding language (when spoken correctly) and when I heard poetry read in Arabic, it was very melodious to me. It does take a lot of determination for one to learn, if you have spent part of your life learning one of the Romance languages in high school or college. If you have access to *Al Jazeera* or *Al*

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Arabiya, that is a good way to get your ‘ear’ attuned to the language. Also, listening to some Arabic music with the lyrics can help you as well.

In the future, I may talk about how trying to learn Icelandic was not as “Thor” a subject as I imagined. Until then: *Ah-lan* (“Welcome” was what I also heard used in Saudi Arabia when departing).

A Mensan in the family?

Are you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, The SCAM is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?

The Last Minute

Continued

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AfterAfterthought

For reasons that I thought would be humorous, I deliberately neglected to include Karen Freiberg’s address in last month’s meeting minutes, choosing instead to replace it with “(yadda, yadda, yadda).” My thinking was that Karen’s address really doesn’t change much from month to month and anyone suddenly struck with the odd notion to attend a meeting could always look up said address from previous meeting minutes as published in each issue of the SCAM. Well, wouldn’tcha know it, the one time I don’t put Karen’s address in the minutes is the one time that we get a visitor (David Geier) to the meeting. I don’t know to what extremes he had to go to find Karen’s address, but find it he did and he arrived precisely on time. I’m only mentioning this because hereafter I intend to identify our meeting location (*the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955*) in excruciating and boring detail at the beginning and end of the ExComm minutes. Of course, much like washing your car assures an imminent rainfall, publishing Karen’s address virtually assures that no one will ever again be an honored guest at the ExComm meeting. Sigh.

This month, I want to continue last month's discussion about money. As with probably all organizations, Mensa has more things it would like to spend money on than it has funds available, so choices have to be made. Every year the Finance Committee, which presents a budget to the AMC for approval, has to make hard choices between worthy things on which to spend membership dues. That means making a lot of tough choices. Do we put more money into marketing and recruitment to attract new members, or do we spend the same funds on taking care of the members we have now? Do we hire a new staff person who can help the local groups, or use the same funds to directly help local groups ourselves?

At our March 31 meeting, the AMC approved a budget that conservatively projects a membership of 56,600 and ends the year \$55,000 in the black. (Before anyone asks, I am not publishing the current membership number for comparison because it is the beginning of the renewal season, which means that our numbers are temporarily low until renewals actually start coming in. However, if anyone wants current membership information, you can find it, updated daily, on our Web site at <http://us.mensa.org/lead/planning/dashboard/membershipdashboard/>).

In order to do that, we had to suspend building equity for the year. Should we have gone in the red and continued to build equity, or should we save money for a rainy day at the cost of needed programs? There are good arguments for all sides.

I voted for that budget; not all of my colleagues did. There was honest and good-faith disagreement over some of the priorities in the budget. Overall, I think the Finance Committee mostly got it right and I commend them for their hard work.

Finally, we also voted to change our investment policy. Our investment policy has been 100% safe bonds. That guarantees that we won't lose money, but it also means our rate of return is nothing to write home about. We asked our brokerage firm to advise us, and they sent two representatives to give us a briefing. We will now allow a small portion of our funds to be invested in money market funds. This will still be a very conservative approach, but we should see more money coming in as a result.

Minutes of the April SCAM ExComm Meeting

The ExComm met at the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955 on Wednesday, April 4th, 2012. Called to order at 6:15 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

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

Guests: Wynn and Zanne Rostek (waiting for the RG Committee meeting which was to follow) and David Geier.

Minutes for the March 7, 2012 meeting were approved as published in the April 2012 SCAM.

Officer/Committee Reports

Treasurer's report, showing a balance of \$3303.15

Testing coordinator, Hank Rhodes, reported (via email) 6 first-time candidates, 9 second- or third-time candidates, and 2 people tested. Next test session is April 21, 2012 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa.

There was no new business and the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 2nd, 2012 at 6:00 pm at the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955. Guests are encouraged and welcome to attend.

The ExComm Committee was adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Afterthought

I'm a lousy recording secretary.

For some reason, I was operating under the delusion that I had written up and distributed the minutes of the ExComm the day after the meeting (Thursday, the 5th) for comments. But then it started nagging at me and the more I thought about it the more I began thinking that maybe I just thought I thought I had written it up and sent it out.

So, a week later, I finally went scrounging through my "Sent" folders and – sure enough – neither hide nor hair of ExComm meeting minutes. Worse, the notes I so carefully took during the meeting were also AWOL. And since that was a week in the past, my memory of said meeting (albeit blissfully short) was similarly absent. So I was relegated to entreating the other members of the ExComm to resurrect the contents of last week's meeting. Fortunately, George P., with his bear trap mind, captured every jot and tittle and was able to provide me the details, which I then merely had to put into the appropriate format.

(Continued on page 17)