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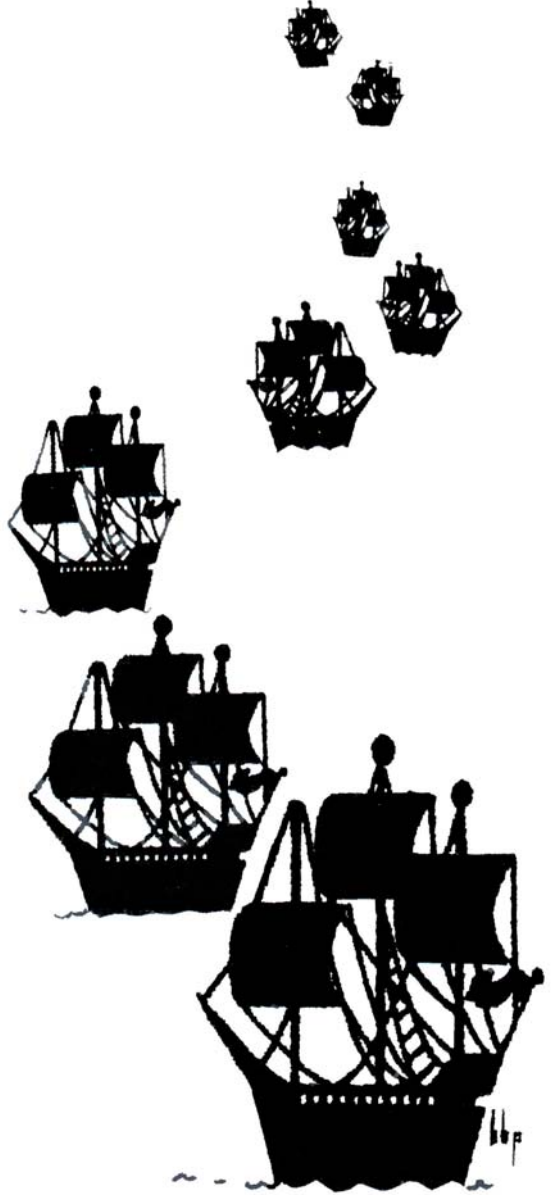
April showers bring...

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The
SCAM
space coast area mensa
Newsletter

Editor J.T. Moran
Assembly/Circulation Wynn Rostek
Events Coordinator/Gofer Jon Warner
Cover Artist Barbara Peer
Profreader Helen Lee Moore

We will appreciate your submissions **legibly handwritten, typed, in e-mail text, or on 3.5 disk in IBM text or word-processing format.** We can receive your submissions by mail at: **P.O. Box 457, Sharpes FL 32959**, or submit via e-mail to: **morwood@brevard.net**
 Subscription — \$10.00 for 12 issues.

Happy May Birthday

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 02 - Jean Marshall | 15 - Moiralynn Mefein |
| 02 - James Pickett | 17 - Parnag Adamian |
| 03 - Brian Conway | 17 - Douglas Dial |
| 04 - Adele Dace | 18 - Donald Elmore |
| 04 - George Waters | 19 - Silas Baker |
| 06 - Barry Ebert | 22 - S. Gayle Malone |
| 08 - John Horsch | 23 - Harold Crawford |
| 08 - John Van Meter | 23 - Kenneth Dimond |
| 12 - John McKeown | 25 - James Stewart |
| 12 - Martin Vanoy | 27 - Karen Freiberg |
| 14 - Ronald Enos | 29 - Donna Crowder |
| 14 - Alexander Kahn | 30 - Francis Stump |
| 15 - Catherine Kerns | |



Welcome to Mensa & SCAM

David Cashman - Satellite Beach
Ruth Cooney - Vero Beach
Paul Embry - Palm Bay

Welcome to SCAM

Norman Burtch - Vero Beach



**On the
Firing Line**



**J.T. Moran
SCAM Editor**

As I accept the Editorship of the *SCAM* (even if for only two issues) I take note of the fact that the group is entering its annual period of change. Within the next 2 months we will see a large (and temporary) membership dropoff, and we will have the election for the coming year's ExComm. If you look in this issue you will find campaign statements from of the candidates. Those of you who are active in the group's social activities will no doubt be familiar with most of those running. If you are not active please ask someone who is is they know any of the candidates. Many will have e-mail addresses: maybe you would like to ask them a question. In any event, this issue of the *SCAM* also contains the official ballot. Please follow directions and cast your vote for the candidate (s) of your choice.

And then, ask yourself what YOU can do to make this a better group. I know what you can do to make the *SCAM* a better newsletter: contribute! That's right, if you have something interesting to say about the group or the *SCAM*, or if you have something interesting to say, period, send it to me. I cannot guarantee publication, but you can be sure it will be considered. For submission information, see page (3).

Note that in the first sentence I said "... (even if for only two issues)." That's because all appointed group officer positions become vacant with the seating of the new ExComm. Volunteers for these positions need to apply to the ExComm.



Ellen's

- | |
|--|
| 1. The Pink Panther (1964) |
| 2. The Pink Panther Strikes Again (1976) |
| 3. Apocalypse Now (1979) |
| 4. The Rock (1996) |

Doug's

- | |
|-----------------------|
| 1 D (Orlando) |
| 2 C (Miami) |
| 3 E (Ft. Lauderdale) |
| 4 B (Winter Haven) |
| 5 A (West Palm Beach) |



**Doug in
Deep(er)**



**Douglas
Paul,**

LocSec

**1999
Annual
Gathering
News!**



In this issue, you'll find the selection ballot for the election of the 1999-2000 SCAM Executive Committee. Please take the time to vote, it's part of your rights as a member of Mensa to choose your leadership every year.

The big event is almost upon us - Tampa Bay Mensa's out-of-this-world Beach Bash 1999 is coming at the end of the month. It's not too late to register, see elsewhere in this issue for details. I have it on good authority that the hotel is better than ever, there will be Mensans attending from all over the country and TBM's Beach Bash Committee is populated solely by those who know how to throw one heck of a party. 'Nuff said.

See you out there.



AG CASINO DEALERS NEEDED!!!

One of the highlights of the upcoming AG, THE BIG ONE, July 1-5 in Long Beach, California, will be the Casino on Sunday evening.

We hope to have as many Mensa volunteers deal as possible, so we won't need to hire professional dealers.

If you've dealt before, and enjoyed yourself, I needn't attempt to persuade you. If you've never dealt before, you may be surprised at how much fun you can have playing with your fellow Mensans.

There will be a training session on Sunday afternoon, a few hours before the Casino.

For more information, and/or to volunteer, please contact our volunteer coordinator at:

ag99@home.com

--or--

PO Box 53841, Irvine CA 92619-3841

--or--

call Max Geffner no later than 9:00 pm, Pacific Daylight Time.



**Minutes
of the
ExComm
Meeting**



by

**Helen Lee
Moore
Substitute
RecSec**

The ExComm met at the home of Doug and Ellen Paul in Rockledge on Sunday, 4 April 1999. The meeting was called to order at 15:15. ExComm members present were Doug Paul, Bob Tuck, Ray Paul and Jon Warner. In the absence of Recording Secretary Fran Hinson, minutes were taken by Helen Lee Moore.

Guests in attendance were Clara Woodall-Moran, Nancy Lee Paul, Cathy Hornak and Kathi Harbaugh.

Moved Bob Tuck, **second** Ray Paul: to approve the minutes of the March meeting as published in *The SCAM*. **Passed** unanimously.

Correspondence:

Doug had received some campaign materials related to the upcoming AMC election.

Officers' Reports:

LocSec: Nothing to report.

Assistant LocSec: Nothing to report.

Member-at-Large: Nothing to report.

Treasurer: Ray distributed copies of the financial records for March; expenses exceeded income by \$129.24. He noted that there has been no payment for the Corporate Subscriptions for the month of January. He will attempt to have this corrected by the National Office.

Committee Reports:

Bylaws: Nothing to report.

SIGHT: Nothing to report.

SIGs: Nothing to report.

Ways and Means: Nothing to report.

Editor: Helen Lee Moore tendered her resignation as Editor and recommended that Associate Editor J. T. Moran be appointed Editor. **Moved** Jon Warner, **second** Ray Paul: to appoint J.T. Moran to the position of Editor. **Passed** unanimously.

Membership: Jon reported that SCAM membership was 213 at the end of January and 216 at the end of February. The March figures were not available. It was noted that the rosters sent by the NO now include e-mail addresses; several on the current rosters, however, are incorrect and some are seriously out of date.

Nominations and Elections Committee: Helen reported that she has received campaign statement

from Rita Johnson-Aronna and Doug Paul; she thanked these candidates and encouraged the others to submit their statements by the deadline.

Publicity: Bob Tuck has discussed displaying the Certificate and *Bulletin* article about National Testing Day with the Planetarium Director. Dr. Griffin had no objection, so SCAM will arrange publicity for our group and the Planetarium in this connection.

Scholarship: Ellen reported that information regarding the SCAM Scholarship Program will be submitted for ExComm review at next month's meeting.

Testing: Jon reported that the Mensa Entrance Tests will be administered at the Cocoa Library at 1:30 PM on Saturday, 24 April.

New Business

In response to the NomElComm's request, **moved** Bob Tuck, **second** Ray Paul: to authorize funding for printing ballots and other election materials. **Passed** unanimously.

The LocSec received a request from Mark Whitter, National Office Publicity, for an article on the three most interesting, successful, or otherwise noteworthy SCAM activities of the past membership year. These were identified by those present as the SCAM Scholarship Award, the 1998 SCAM RG, and our National Testing Day activities. Jon Warner and Ellen Paul will write these up for Doug to send to Mr. Whitter. Jon Warner was requested to seek willing members for service on the annual Audit Committee and report their names to the LocSec for subsequent appointment.

Nothing was presented for Open Forum.

Announcements:

It was noted that the National Office mangled Kathi Harbaugh's name in a letter of thanks to proctors. Bob Tuck stated that the universe is still running like clockwork. It apparently has not been thrown off stride by Daylight Time.

The next meeting will be at the home of Helen Lee Moore at 4:00 PM on Saturday, 1 May.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 16:27.



**We
Get
Mail!**



**from
Doug Paul**

In the February issue of The SCAM, we saw Joyce Megginson Kircher's missive on, among other things, her desire to see Mensans providing moral leadership for society in place of projects such as Project Inkslinger or Mensa's national campaign to promote literacy. Her opinion seems to be that such a project is "mundane." This thought both disturbs and frightens me. Joyce's idea that the ability to decipher the printed word is mundane should shock anyone who has ever sat down with a good book, or lacked the ability to do so.

Let's take these two ideas, of promoting literacy as mundane and Mensa members as the source of moral leadership, one at a time.

The Oxford American Dictionary ((c)1980, Oxford University Press, New York) offers the following:

Mundane (adj.) 1. *dull, routine.* 2. *worldly, not spiritual.*

How does one justify calling an active program that seeks to do its part to wipe out illiteracy dull and/or routine? The very fact that our college graduates cannot correctly construct a basic sentence is anything but routine! We all decry the constant lack of funding for schools, teachers and related educational materials, yet we lack the impetus to help out where we can when the educational system has fallen short of its promise of turning out literate young people. I personally see this happening in Brevard County, where students at our junior college produce a newspaper - and I, as a freelance typist paid to transfer their hard copy to computer text, have to decipher (not edit or correct, that's not my job) literally dozens of spelling, syntax and sentence construction errors. Note that their editors and faculty advisors have already passed the copy I receive. Thanks to the "mundane" idea of promoting literacy, Brevard's high technology-based industry suffers a lack of qualified young people entering the job market. Promoting literacy would help improve our lives on even a local basis.

Are Mensans, being "smarter" than everyone else, fit to lead society in a moral aspect? Answering that question with another, can anyone truly believe that intelligence goes hand-in-hand

with morality? No! Intelligence is a measure of intellect, whereas morality is a standard of behavior. I have met some folks who would never qualify for Mensa, yet despite their apparent lack of intelligence, they have a definite standard of good societal behavior that they follow, and encourage others to do so as well. On the other hand, some of the smartest people that I know of are also possibly the most amoral dilettantes ever known. History has shown that intelligence spans the moral spectrum. Albert Schweizer and Ghandi, both geniuses, were noted for their dedication and determination in helping the less fortunate. However, Adolph Hitler and Ted Bundy committed atrocities that still shock us today. The Marquis De Sade was debauched but brilliant. Benjamin Franklin was an irrepressible lecher while representing the colonies in France. "George Washington Slept Here" didn't always mean "alone". Finally, we mustn't forget convicted first-degree murderer and (at one time, possibly still) card-carrying Mensan George Trepal, who is presently sitting on Florida's death row. Is this the moral caliber Joyce is recommending for leadership?

Sit, Ubu

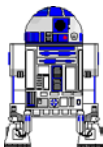


Sit!

None of these men were, or are, stupid.

Society doesn't need moral leadership - a moral standard should come from within, not from without. Sincere moral behavior, not encumbered by fear of deviance from the norm, is the goal society should seek. Anything short of that sincerity would result in the personification of Anthony Burgess' "Clockwork Orange" - natural on the outside, yet artificial on the inside.

Finally, if we must (as Joyce does) use the "sheep" metaphor to describe society, I must loudly proclaim that I am NOT, nor will I consent to being, a Border collie.



A Long Time Ago, In A Galaxy Far, Far Away....

The Adventure begins again, May 19

**ATTITUDE
ADJUSTMENT**

**"Callousness
Training"**

by

Luke Setzer

(setzerl@
digital.net)

(http://ddi.digital.
net/~setzerl/)

PART V

**Does the
Constitution**



**protect free
speech?**

My friend Brian Mos synopsised his thoughts on "emotional self-responsibility" well in a high school essay on free speech: "The First and Fourteenth Amendments protect speech that is quiet, passive, and not disruptive. This leads to the question, 'What is disruptive?' Nearly anything can disrupt someone. ...if a person wears a printed message on his own shirt, around his own neck, or in another non-intrusive manner, then there is no reason to punish the wearer. Whoever 'feels distracted' has the option of ignoring that visual display of speech.... A person who 'feels offended' by an idea being expressed is at fault if he causes a disruption by verbally or physically attacking the person expressing that idea. No one should be censored because other people cannot handle his idea."

Alas, it seems that our post-modern leaders have taken just the opposite view of the human capacity for self- management. The progress of time, the growth of government power, and the rise of the "feelings are facts" ideologies have led the U. S. government to expand its role in controlling the privately owned workplace. New legislation and key court cases have determined that individuals should be "entitled" to a workplace that is not sexually "hostile or intimidating". This means that women (or men) who "feel offended" by posters of naked people in *privately owned workplaces* may threaten to sue their employers if those displays are not removed on demand. Gone are the days of self-governance, in which people could grumble to themselves, ignore "offensive" remarks, and learn to grow a moral backbone. Today, feelings of "offense" can PAY people in terms of power and money. Why bother learning to deal with troubling emotions when the Nanny State will compensate people for experiencing them?

If you think that our esteemed leaders will stop with this level of "sensitivity", think again. A federal newspaper last year published passages from President Clinton's address regarding the topic of "religious harassment". As I have already noted, today's ideologies can become tomorrow's laws. Do not be surprised if new regulations arise in the workplace which forbid people from wearing religious symbols such as crosses and stars. This

Offense- sensitivity



***can be a
lucrative
business!***

concept is already being pushed in the public schools, at least for some symbols. President Clinton's championing of school uniforms should thus appear as no surprise. In a culture where people are no longer responsible for managing their feelings or the resultant behavior, the most aggressive and belligerent children readily accept the notion that they are entitled to their feelings of envy for their better-dressed peers. They gladly blame those feelings for their physical attacks on their classmates.

If you find this prediction of new and even more restrictive legislation upsetting, congratulations! It shows you have enough insight to notice the direction in which the "feelings-are-facts" ideologies can lead a culture; namely, a subjectivist totalitarianism in which no one is safe from arbitrary accusations from vindictive neighbors, coworkers, acquaintances, and government bureaucrats.

Happily, there is hope for those who wish to change their approach and cease relying on government handouts of emotional favors. How do the most successful people learn to manage their emotions and thus lead cheerful, productive, balanced lives? Millionaire Charles J. Givens recommends a few simple strategies in his best-selling book "***SUPERSELF***" (Chapter 22, "*Handling Stress*"):

* "Continuously affirm to yourself 'It's just an event.'" Ladies and gentlemen, when you get right down to it, cursing, "indecent" exposure, and many other "social disgraces" are *just events!* They have no power to alter your emotions except the power you grant to them by your own evaluations.

* "To cut stress, disconnect your emotions from the outcome of events." Do you constantly expect others--even strangers--to know your tastes and preferences? If so, you cling to some major self-deceptions that can only lead you to disappointment and its progeny, stressful frustration.

* "State preferences instead of expectations or demands." Stop expecting or demanding the government to enforce all your preferences onto your neighbors! You are quite free to state your

Religion



***and
politics***



***Do not
mix very
well***

***More AG
Info!***

preferences, but that is all they are--preferences, not rights or entitlements.

This concludes "Callousness Training". While the title of this thesis may have been somewhat misleading--it was, in fact, "Emotional Self-Responsibility Training"--it contrasts so starkly with contemporary "Sensitivity Training" that it serves its purpose as worded. I hope that readers will take this article and its points to mind and heart, will end their search for a "sensitive" utopia, and will instead seek to fortify their own brains with the mental nutrition of factual knowledge and valid reasoning regardless of outside events.

POSTSCRIPT:

This will be the last regularly published "Attitude Adjustment" column in the SCAM newsletter. Future columns will appear sporadically as time permits. I have commenced a local study group for fans and followers of Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, and it now consumes a significant part of my spare time. I encourage persons who enjoyed this column and who want to learn more to contact me at (407) 639-9062. If you have been looking for a more rational philosophy of life, the writings of Ayn Rand and her associates might be able to help you.



GOING PLACES AT THE AG!

We will have an optional tour of the new Getty Museum on Thursday, July 1st, leaving the Hyatt by [the trade calls it] comfortable motor coach at 11:30 am, returning around 8 PM. Lunch, transportation and admission to the Getty are included in one low price.

AG registration will open at 10:00 AM Thursday, July 1st, for those going on the Getty tour. It will open at 11:30 AM for all others.



**Gourmet's
Guide**

**Sock It
To Me!**

©1999

by

**Arthur
Belefant**
(*belefant@
winnie.fit.edu*)

From two



to one...



**Where do
they go?**

There are many mysteries of the household. Being an engineer and a scientist, I do not believe that mysteries need be mysterious. All mysteries must be explainable in terms of engineering and science. It is only a problem of finding the rational explanation.

Take, for example, the mystery of missing socks. It is a well-known fact that socks disappear, particularly in dryers. I believe that all households are plagued with that mystery.

Among other household mysteries is one that may be peculiar to me. I can't keep white slacks in my wardrobe. They, like socks, disappear without a trace. Once, while preparing to return from a vacation, I carefully packed my white trousers in the bottom of my suitcase. When I returned home and unpacked, the slacks were gone! Of the half dozen or so pairs of white slacks that I have owned in the last few years there is only one left. That is, I think there is one left, I haven't checked my closet recently.

There is a special set of mysteries associated with household moves. Objects will disappear during one move and then reappear two or three moves later. Who knows where they have been during the interim? In one move, we lost our piano, not a spinet or upright but a full grand, for more than six months.

Other mysteries abound such as, who left the refrigerator door open, where are the car keys, and what happened to my electric drill chuck key that I left on the middle of my living room floor?

But, to get back to the missing sock mystery, I have uncovered the solution. It lies in another household mysteries - that of wire coat hangers.

You surely have noticed how wire coat hangers multiply in dark closets. They seem to be as fecund as rabbits. The fact is, hangers do not multiply, they are as sexless as are the socks. What happens is this: in the dark of the interior of the dryer, socks transmogrify (as Calvin would say) into wire coat hangers and appear in the dark of closets.

I have proven that fact. Several years ago I began to tie my socks together in pairs with those plastic circular clips. Since then I have not lost a single sock, and I have accumulated no additional wire coat hangers. QED.

Calling all



cars....

Now I don't know why my socks do not disappear any longer, but maybe socks are not as sexless as I had imagined. Maybe tying them together in pairs is like marriage, and keeps them from wanting to wander. That is another household mystery inviting further study.

In any case there must be a scientific answer to every mystery, such as the disappearing socks, if you look hard enough for it. Now, what happened to my eyeglasses?



It started out in the usual manner. Luke was cleaning an unloaded stapler when it unexpectedly went off. I mean this is one of the oldest stories in the book, "I didn't know it was loaded." If only it had ended there...

Of course, I was the first one to start making retest noises, but J. T. was mere milliseconds behind me. In short order we had Clara doubled over in her chair, gasping for breath. Ellen, being considerably more civilized, had the good graces to not get involved, offering silent moral support to Luke. Helen kept a straight face, but I'm certain this was only because it was her stapler and she didn't want to antagonize someone injured on her property by her property.

Val did her level best to keep me in line by repeatedly kicking me under the table to little avail. The doctor said that as compound fractures go, it isn't really too bad.

Jon Warner arrived a little too late to actually participate in the "incident," (makes it sounds like the Navy dropping a reactor core, doesn't it?) but did get to experience some of the backwash.

Anyway, that's the reason that all future FS&L disagreements will be settled by staplers at 10 paces. Throwing not allowed.

PS- Other than a little tetanus, gangrene, and a massive loss of blood, Luke is fine. The plastic surgeon says the scar will hardly be noticeable. In the dark. From a distance. On a very foggy night. As long as he keeps his hand behind his back. (Who are we kidding here, the man has been horribly disfigured.)



**What Goes
Around...
by**

**Wynn
Rostek,
Circulation
Chief**

May 1999 Calendar of SCAM 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. 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.**

1st **4:00 p.m.** **ExComm Meeting**
Saturday **Free** **SS/NP**

The Executive Committee will be meeting this afternoon. Members are encouraged to attend and to participate.

Doug Paul (LocSec)

Helen Lee Moore (Host)

1st **5:30 p.m.** **Ballot Night**
Saturday **\$3.00** **S/P (Dogs)**

Bring your Mensa Bulletin and ballots for the AMC elections and the **International Board of Directors election**. Mark your ballots for the candidates of your choice, seal them in the properly prepared envelopes, Postage stamps will be provided by your hostess, and there will be NO KITTY CHARGE for those who vote. Food (BBQ), drink and games will follow the business of exercising your franchise. Mensa needs the Members! The Members need to VOTE!

Helen Lee Moore

3rd **7:00 p.m.** **C.A.B.A.G.E. North**
Monday **Free** **SS/NP**

Treat yourself! Coffee, games, books, at Barnes & Noble, Merritt Island.

Doug & Ellen Paul

7th **6:30 p.m.** **Firearms & Fried Rice**
Friday **\$3.00 + Meal Cost** **SS/NP**

Time to get your weaponry out of storage and loose a few rounds down range. Meet us at the Gun Site Range, 124 S. Banana River Dr., Merritt Island.

J.T. Moran

8th **11:00 a.m.** **Saturday Lunch/Wet Games**
Saturday **Meal Cost** **SS/NP**

Terry was so pleased with the turnout last month, she's doing it again! Come to Pumpnickel's in Titusville (may be the buffet or the old restaurant). Now for the additional fun, bring your swimming suits

and any games you may want to play and we'll go to Wynn & Terry's for a day of games and water.

Wynn Rostek/Terry Valek

10th Monday Newsletter & Calendar Deadline
Call Jon, 635-8581 to schedule an event; see page 3 for NL submission information.

11th 6:30 p.m. Ptomaine Ptuesday
Tuesday Meal Cost SS/NP
We haven't been to the El Charro Restaurant, 916 Florida Ave., Cocoa, in a long time ... too long according to Ellen.
Ellen Paul

12th 7:00 p.m. C.A.B.A.G.E. South
Wednesday Free SS/NP
Treat yourself! Coffee, games, books, at Books-A-Million, Melbourne.
Doug & Ellen Paul

15th 6:30 p.m. PIG SIG
Saturday Meal Cost SS/NP
Ray & Nancy say that the food is really good at Dustin's Ribs at the corner of Wright Ave. & N. Wickham Road in Melbourne. Let's meet there and check this out. **NOTICE:** No reserved seating...anyone who's late will be seated separately.
Ray & Nancy Paul

16th 11:00 a.m. SCAM Ballot Count
Sunday Free S/P (Dogs)
Want to know who won the SCAM election early? All interested members invited to attend.
Helen Lee Moore

17th 7:00 p.m. C.A.B.A.G.E. North
Monday Free SS/NP
Coffee, games, books, at Books-A-Million, Merritt Island.
Doug & Ellen Paul

20th 6:30 p.m. Sure Happy It's Thursday
Thursday Meal Cost SS/NP
Let's go Italian at Vinnie's Italian Restaurant at 2137 N. Courtenay Parkway, Merritt Island.
Wynn Rostek/Terry Valek

(Continued on Page 19)

22nd **7:30 p.m.** **Party Night**
Saturday **\$3.00** **SS/NP**
My second party night of the year! Come on up and enjoy the fun.
Games are allowed and encouraged!
Jon Warner

23rd **11:00 a.m.** **Sunday Brunch with Jim**
Sunday **Meal Cost** **SS/NP**
Jim Trammell wants to do Sunday Brunch every month for a while,
so drop on by The Colossus Restaurant, 380 N. Wickham Road,
Melbourne, and check out the food and company.
Jim Trammell

26th **7:00 p.m.** **C.A.B.A.G.E. South**
Wednesday **Free** **SS/NP**
Coffee, games, books, at Barnes & Noble, Melbourne.
Doug & Ellen Paul

29th **6:30 p.m.** **S.N.O.R.T.**
Saturday **Meal Cost** **SS/NP**
Once more we venture to the best Japanese food in Brevard County.
Join us at Miyako's Restaurant at 1511 S. Harbor City Blvd., (U.S. 1)
in Melbourne.
Helen Lee Moore

28th, 29th, 30th, 31st **Beach Bash RG**
Friday thru Monday
Party on the Gulf Coast beach in beautiful St. Pete! For further
information, contact Kathy Crum, Registrar, Wesley Chapel, FL
33544



California



Dreaming?

Surf the AG! (Or, At Least the Website!)

<http://members.home.net/ag99/>

That's the website for the latest information on
THE BIG ONE, the 1999 Mensa Annual Gathering
at the Hyatt in Long Beach, California, July 1-5.
If you can't get to the website, see your March
Bulletin, pp. 8-10.



Tampa Bay Mensa Presents: Beach Bash '99

When: Fri. May 28 - Mon. May 31 (Memorial Day Weekend)

Where: Travelodge St. Pete Beach
(formerly: Colonial Gateway Resort Inn)
6300 Gulf Boulevard
St. Pete Beach, FL 33706
800-237-8918 or 727-367-2711

Rooms: Standard with 2 double - \$62/night
Efficiency with kitchen - \$67/night

Hotel reservations must be made by May 7, 1999 for this rate

What: Fun on the Beach on Florida's Gulf Coast

- Magnificent South Seas Theme
bring your grass skirts and "aloha" shirts
- Centrally Located Hospitality Suite
- Glorious Games from the famous Tampa Bay Mensa gamers
- Traditional Joke-Off, "Mensa Bowl",
- "Fish Bowl", Sunday morning "Hymn-Along"
- "Mood Management" with the Sewells
- Meals (yes, even Brunch!) included in registration,
except Saturday "Dinner on the Town"
- Some events not handicapped accessible
- Smoking outside only

Refunds must be requested by May 15, 1999.



..... Beach Bash '99 Registration Form

Full Registration: **Amount**

Until March 31	\$60	_____
April 1 - 30	\$65	_____
After April 30	\$70	_____

Partial Registrations:

Friday only	\$20	_____
Saturday only	\$30	_____
Sunday only	\$30	_____
Monday Brunch	\$15	_____

Shirt/s _____

TOTAL: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Name Tag: _____

High Quality Beach Bash '99 Logo Shirts.
To guarantee availability, please pre-order.
Small and 3X must be ordered in advance.
(circle size ordered)

S, M, L, XL	\$9
2X	\$11
3X	\$12

Mail form and check
payable to: Tampa Bay Mensa

to: Kathy Crum, Registrar
7164 Quail Hollow Blvd.
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544
813-907-0526
katshe@aol.com
Alternate Contact: Peg Browner
727-942-3538 - MissSoPeg@aol.com

***A View
from the
Right***

***Reach
Out! XI:
Tanks, A
Lot!***

by

***J.T.
Moran
(buckmaster
@juno.com)***

***Primitive
Armor***



For the first time in recorded history, a major imbalance had arisen in the realms of offense and defense. Up until this time, any innovative leap by one side would soon be matched, then overcome, by the other. However, with the ever-widening spread of personal firearms, this extraordinary quid-pro-quo symbiosis came to an end. Personal armor, which had proved so effective against all muscle or spring-powered weapons, such as spears and bows, was incapable of protecting its wearer against the potency of chemically powered weapons. It required so much plate armor to withstand even medium range rifle fire that the knights wearing it were forced to be mounted. Add to the knight's weight the weight of the armor needed to protect the horse, and they became easy, slow-moving targets. So, as tactics and strategies changed, and since it was of little use against firearms anyway, armor disappeared from the battlefield. For the first time in centuries, man went to war effectively as naked as his caveman ancestors had.

This state of affairs lasted for more than 200 years. Without armor, the personal aspect of war changed. No longer did men fight face-to-face and man-to-man. Instead, the soldier fought in one of two ways. In ranks, firing volleys by the numbers, or as a solitary sniper, firing then retreating. And it was during this period that the need for armor was demonstrated in the most graphic manner. The numbers of the dead and maimed during the wars fought in the last quarter of this 200 year period vastly exceeded that of all the known history preceding it!

Attempts were made to reintroduce armor as a battlefield factor, but the weight-to-mobility ratio of the protection factor continued to defeat it. Any armor thick enough to defeat small arms fire was far too heavy to be borne on foot. And any attempt to armor a coach ran afoul of the need for horses to pull it. Horses that made easy targets, which in turn transformed the fortress-on-wheels into an early version of the E-Z Bake oven and the men inside it at the mercy of their enemy. Which, if you take into consideration just what the men inside had been doing, was likely to be anything other than quick. What was needed was a form of transport not dependent on muscle power. The navies of the day experimented with coal-fired boilers to propel armor-

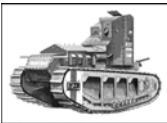
plated ships, and it worked, to a degree. At least in combat. Unfortunately, most of the early metal-clads sank or blew up without any need of aid from the enemy. And so the situation remained, for another half-century.

Then, in the early part of the new century, came the true warrior's dream – a war on a continental scale, one involving entire *NATIONS*. Millions of soldiers, fighting to the death. And death there was, on a scale so vast that it seemed the ground could not possibly hold all the bodies of the slain. When it began, it seemed that there still was a great imbalance in the opposing realms. But, armor protection was once again about to become part of the battlefield equation.

A few decades or so before the beginning of the war, an old offensive weapon gave rise to that which was needed to bring armor back to the battlefield. The scientists of the day found that the same ingredient that had made Greek Fire possible could be further refined to act as a fuel. When an engine was finally developed that was strong enough to utilize the explosive power of this fuel, the armorers of the day seized upon the idea and drove off with it. Finally, there was a way to propel an armored vehicle that could not be killed, nor would it tire as long as it was kept fueled.

The earliest of these vehicles were based upon the Kill'em-Straight Armoured Tractor, the first to substitute steel tracks for tires. The first tank was known as the "Little Willie", probably because its crew couldn't get it up and over the enemy trenches and embankments. Four rapid design changes did little to improve the vehicles, which had inherited many of the problems that had plagued the sea-going metalclads, most especially in the area of being a firetrap. They also had limited range and were slower than a soldier could trot. Their armor was only effective against relatively light weaponry, and the rivets holding the plates together had a nasty habit of popping when hit by an explosive round. However, the fifth such model, the Wimpett, improved upon many of these flaws. It still remained a slow, poorly ventilated firetrap, but to the men who served as its crew, and to the soldiers who followed in its wake, it was like a knight in shining armor. A knight whose

**Now...
Wimpett,**



**Wimp it
good!**

The Lepered



***fell apart in
battle***

but,



***the Tigger
was a
hunny of
a tank!***

While the



***Stallin...
was plagued
with engine
problems!***

presence on the battlefield no doubt helped end the war.

After the First Global Conflict there came a period of uneasy peace. But the loser of the First remembered the bitter aftermath, and began preparing for the inevitable sequel. Much of that preparation went into the development of truly effective armor. The Germanes created divisions of these tanks, known as Panzies, for the fight soon to come. The Panzies were to fall into two models: The Lepered and the later, more powerful, Tigger. The Lepered was a troubled vehicle from the start, and for all of its effectiveness was replaced because parts continually fell off of it. Its replacement, the Tigger, was one of the most efficient killing machines ever created. It was fast, heavily armed, and armored to withstand the firepower of enemy tanks. Yet, for all that, the Tigger was initially pooh-pooohed by strategists as being too unwieldy for the type of combat they foresaw. But its worthiness was demonstrated during “Das Blintz”, the lightning attack that saw the neighboring countries fall like a sack of potatoes.

Although the foes of the Germanes were taken by surprise, they proved that they had also been developing their armored corps. Their armor was as diverse as the countries it came from. From the Eastern front came the Rooshin tank, the Stallin, so called due to its seemingly incurable engine troubles. On the western front were the war machines known as the Stewpot, the Perishing, and the Leek.

Soon tank faced tank in battle, like mounted knights of old. Some battles involved thousands of armored units, charging at each other with pointed cannon, the sounds of their engines and tracks reminiscent of the thundering of thousands of horses charging into the fray. The armored combatants again ruled the battlefield! But, not for long.

For offensive technology would soon catch up and surpass that of the armored defense. The improvements in the field of explosives would soon make it possible for a foot soldier to destroy the largest tank with one shot from a shoulder-fired weapon. The blast from the past would be making even bigger noises in the years to come!



Bob at Large

**Muddy soup,
Dusty clay**

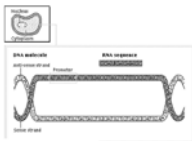
by

Bob Tuck

**Member-at-
Large**

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DNA...Building



blocks of life

Pontius Pilate, nearly twenty centuries ago, pondered the nature of truth. Nowadays, researchers seriously contemplate the nature of life. Long-standing definitions, such as those we learned in high school and college, may turn out to be too narrow. Certain recent studies and discoveries have reshaped our thoughts on how life on earth may have arisen. These, in turn, have provoked discussions and speculations regarding the possible former, or present, existence of primitive living organisms on other bodies within our solar system, chiefly the planet Mars and the large Jovian satellite Europa. Evidence of past quantities of water on the former, and signs of a global ocean on the latter, combined with newly identified mechanisms, underlie these conjectures. Until we have hard evidence, however, reasoned guesses must suffice.

What we call "life" is a summary of the known activities characterizing all organisms discovered here on earth. They range from such primitive forms as cyanobacteria (what I learned as "blue-green algae") to plants and animals (the boundaries of which are drawn differently these days). Life processes fall into two major categories: reproduction and metabolism. We now know the properties of certain large molecules called nucleic acids underlie the mechanism of reproduction, because deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) molecules can copy themselves. DNA is the hereditary material that can be passed from one cell or organism to another by a process known as template replication. The DNA molecule consists of a long series of chemically coded messages that direct the synthesis of specific proteins anytime in the cell or life cycle. In turn, the synthesis of many other substances within living organisms depends upon these proteins. Reproduction therefore involves making copies of the molecules making up an organism. The process ultimately results in copies of the organism itself.

The other mark of living organisms is its metabolism. This, the sum of the physical and chemical processes, allows energy from the outside world to control reproduction, growth, movement, and responsiveness to environmental conditions.

Up to the early 1980s, biologists confidently pointed to the sun's radiant energy, converted to a usable form by photosynthesis, as the ultimate energy source for all earth's abundant life. Now, we know a

**Find out
how it all
began?**



second possible energy source, deep undersea, where chemical energy of ingested food and minerals can come into play around fuming hot water vents. Think, then, of living organisms as motors changing one kind of energy into another.

How did life get its start? Early philosophers, naturalists, and priests and prophets have given various answers throughout history.

For example, *The Holy Bible* begins with life's origin: "Genesis 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. Genesis 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. Genesis 1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The Holy Qor'an says (Chapter LXXX. Mecca): "In the name of the merciful and compassionate God. . . . Of what did He create him? Of a clot. He created him and fated him; then the path He did make easy for him; then He killed him, and laid him in the tomb; then when He pleases will He raise him up again. Nay, he has not fulfilled his bidding! But let man look unto his foods. Verily, we have poured the water out in torrents: then we have cleft the earth asunder, and made to grow therefrom the grain, and the grape, and the hay, and the olive, and the palm, and gardens closely planted, and fruits, and grass, -- a provision for you and for your cattle!"

For a long while, the ancient theory of spontaneous generation, or abiogenesis, gripped thinkers' minds. This old philosophy held that certain lower forms of life, especially insects, reproduce by physicochemical agencies from inorganic substances. Few dared contradict this view until after the middle of the 17th century, when the Italian physician and poet Francesco

Redi disproved (1660) the prevailing notion that the maggots of flies were generated in putrefying meat exposed to air. In 1768, the Italian naturalist Lazzaro Spallanzani further showed that microorganism-containing solutions that were boiled and then sealed would remain free of microorganisms afterwards. In 1836 the German naturalist Theodor Schwann gave additional proof with still more meticulous experiments of this nature.

The French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur took the next step. He summarized his findings in *On the Organized Particles Existing in the Air* (1862). On sowing these particles in suitable sterilized nutrient broths, he found that after a day or two the broth teemed with living microorganisms. Organisms such as these were shown by the German botanist Ferdinand Julius Cohn to be plants (a classification that held until the 19th century), and he named them bacteria. Finally, the British physicist John Tyndall showed (1869), by passing a beam of light through the air in a box, that whenever dust was present putrefaction eventually occurred; when dust was absent, putrefaction did not occur. These experiments finally killed the theory of spontaneous generation.

Nowadays, biologists generally accept a theory that posits that early in earth's history, a system of replication powered by external sources of energy sprang up. By current received wisdom, life formed in the oceans about four billion years ago, probably from chemical reactions of molecules such as water, carbon dioxide, and methane. The first life forms for which there is fossil evidence are prokaryotes, one-celled organisms lacking a nucleus and reproducing only by cell division. Today's bacteria and cyanobacteria (those "blue-green algae" again) are their descendants.

Researchers believe that the earliest bacteria obtained food (read "energy") either from ingesting organic molecules or from chemosynthesis, a chemical reaction involving chemicals such as hydrogen sulfide. Not until about 3.6 billion years ago did cells evolve that could produce their own food by photosynthesis. The earliest evidence of photosynthetic organisms are stromatolites, which are domed and layered sedimentary structures formed by mats of filamentous one-celled cyanobacteria and trapped sediments.

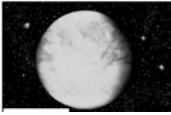
Present-day theory further assumes the Darwinian

The DNA



double helix:

a ladder to the stars!



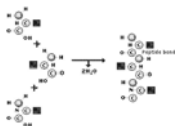
***Mars:
Did Life
start there
first?***

principle of natural selection soon began playing an important role in this process and favored replicating molecules that could find energy most readily. Such an assumption is reasonable: evolutionary success through natural selection is measured by the ability of a living system to perpetuate its replicating molecules, or genes. Thus, primitive systems could carry out the metabolic processes necessary to perpetuate their genes had a competitive advantage and eventually evolved into cells. The changes that have taken place since the origin of the cell -- the rise of prokaryotes, nucleated cells, multicellular organisms, and, ultimately, higher plants and animals -- also are thought to have occurred because of natural selection.

In 1927, the Russian biochemist Aleksandr Ivanovich Oparin (1894-1980) pioneered in developing biochemical theories of how life originated on earth. Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory strongly influenced the staunch communist scientist, and he sought to account for the origin of life through chemical and physical processes. Oparin suggested that life developed, in effect, by chance, through a progression from simple to complex self-duplicating organic compounds. His proposal initially met with strong opposition. It has since received experimental support. The scientific community now considers Oparin's scenario a legitimate hypothesis. Oparin's major work is *The Origin of Life on Earth* (1936).

The American chemist and Nobel laureate Melvin Calvin (1911-1997), noted for his study of photosynthesis and for his work with certain plant species that produce fuel oil, expanded on Oparin's insights. In the late 1950s, using sterile distilled water and very simple, chemicals representing earth early ocean and atmosphere (lacking oxygen, a byproduct mostly of green plants) sealed within a flask, he quickly produced basic amino acids and other organic compounds by passing electrical sparks through the mixture to simulate lightning and other energy sources. One of my college undergraduate associates, Gary Steinmann, set his goals toward following up Calvin's work and went on to take his graduate degrees under the celebrated scientist's guidance. As far as I can tell, Gary still has not got an elephant to leap out of a test tube, despite our challenges to him during our Michigan State days together.

Peptides... Nature's



soup mix

Oparin's general ideas, backed by Calvin's experiments, pretty much became the standard model for earth life's wellsprings. No other scientific hypothesis credibly challenged it for nearly two decades. Then, some researchers suggested life's building blocks assembled not in warm pools as an "organic soup," but, rather, from chemical precipitations and splashes upon clay minerals' regular crystals, such as kaolinite, a hydrous aluminum silicate, $\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5(\text{OH})_4$. The idea had a certain charm. It even jibed with Biblical pronouncements that link us mortals to dust.

The hypothesis' charm faded, however, when it could not alone account for metabolic processes that must take place within watery solutions bounded by membranes. Tiny clay crystals might make passable templates to amass the makings of complex organic molecules upon their surfaces, but dust, by definition, lacks sufficient moisture to let large molecules move around to form active biochemical systems. Add water, and you no longer have dust. You get mud. It's just a murky version of the warm pond.

Both hypotheses postulated chemical and physical interactions taking place where earth's early atmosphere touched exposed surfaces -- wet, dry, moist, or liquid -- where energy sources easily could reach. Oparin and Calvin's choice of sunlight and lightning bolts seemed logical sources of energy, and warm shallow ponds or lagoons would have made ideal incubators. That all life depended upon the sun remained an unquestioned premise.

Then, in 1965, geophysicists realized that part of the developing theory of plate tectonics predicted the existence of springs of hot water on the deep ocean floor. Sure enough, since then more than 80 such vents turned up in the Pacific Ocean at sites of rapid sea floor spreading. A few vents also have popped up in the Atlantic Ocean, at sites of slower spreading. Pacific vents emit sulfur-rich water at temperatures reaching 350°C (660°F). Atlantic vents boast cooler water. Known as "hydrothermal vents," they also have been found at sites of sea floor spreading in the Red Sea. In 1995, scientists started looking for hydrothermal vents in the Indian Ocean and quickly discovered one that had previously been active. Researchers also have found hydrothermal vents at hot-spots where magma

(liquid rock) rises in the middle of crustal plates to form volcanic islands, such as Hawaii.

The vents, far below levels reached by sunlight, form when cold seawater sinks deep into cracks in the ocean floor until warmed by magma-heated rock. The water then expands and rises, leaching minerals from surrounding rocks until it reaches an opening or vent on the cold ocean floor. Pouring out the vent, it dumps its load of dissolved sulfide compounds. In this way, thick deposits of minerals rich in copper, iron, manganese, and zinc form.

Here's the point: strange life forms with odd metabolisms lurk near these hydrothermal vents. The "motors" of the organisms inhabiting vent precincts run on chemical energy dished out by Mother Earth. Many forms are so different that they've required an entirely new classification, separate from plants, animals, and bacteria. They're called "archaea."

Such hyperthermophiles, or lovers of extreme heat, could team in hot vents and volcanic fissures crisscrossing tens of thousands of miles of earth's ocean floor. The cracks spew molten lava, blistering water, and microbial life. A deep-sea diver off Italy's coast in January collected samples of heat-loving microbes in a thermal vent near an extinct volcano. No sunlight or other energy sources can reach such depths from above. Off the coast of Oregon, U.S. scientists studying volcanic activity discovered signs of life on an otherwise icy ridge 1.5 miles below the surface --odd-looking colonies of heat-loving microbes characterized by long tendrils or whitish clouds. The natural undersea rock chimneys, called everything from snow blowers to smokestacks, issue mineral-rich fluid as hot as 350° C.

Other heat lovers can thrive in deep-sea petroleum deposits with temperatures of more than 176° C (350° F). Renowned German scientist Karl Stetter isolated some of them deep below the bottom of North Sea. Lacking oxygen and light, the microbes live off the gases and organic acids caused by geochemical reactions. Similar archaea live miles underground in aquifers heated by the earth's core. For nutrition they rely on water and nutrients in the rock.

Some scientists estimate the total biomass of subterranean life twice surpasses that on the surface. That's a lot of biomass! Dr. John Baross, University of

Proteins



meat life's needs

Washington, suggests primordial life rooted itself deep within our planet's crust to avoid surface barrages of meteorites and radiation. Renowned, and a bit unconventional, Cornell scientist Thomas Gold, in his 1998 book *The Deep Hot Biosphere*, theorizes such organisms are remnants of earth's first life forms.

Now, armed with knowledge of another way to inject energy into emerging biochemical systems, researchers are exploring new avenues for the origin of life.

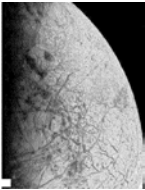
A study published last summer may explain how organic molecules may have developed into the first living cells around primordial vents on earth. The study, headed by German chemists Claudia Huber of Munich Technical University and co-author Günter Wächtershäuser, attempts to show how amino acids could have formed peptides, short chains that are essential steps toward protein formation and the development of life. The two researchers propose that peptide formation took place not in the warm pools of the early Earth's surface -- the so-called "primordial soup" theory -- but in hot, mineral-rich areas such as those in volcanoes or deep-sea hydrothermal vents. In the laboratory, the scientists recreated that environment by mixing amino acids in a solution of iron ore, nickel, and the volcanic gases hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide. The experiment successfully produced peptides. (Note, however, that critics question the study, arguing that the building blocks of life could not survive long at the high temperatures found in this type environment. The issue remains unsettled.)

Nevertheless, no longer restricted to thinking only surface waters bombarded by solar and electric sources can jump-start living organisms, some serious researchers have turned their thoughts toward possible conditions on other worlds in our own backyard. Mars, or at least an earlier version of the Red Planet, looks wetter and more promising than ever. Europa, far from being just an icy cue ball orbiting Jupiter, receives the giant planet's cyclic tidal squeezes that heat its core and perhaps force hot eruptions to vent into a chemical-laden, worldwide ocean beneath its frozen crust.

Great Jove -- Father Zeus -- may yet be a parent, as the old Greek myths related. Europa, after all, bore him three sons.

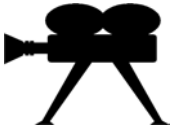


Europa: a prime



breeding ground for life

**The
Also-Rans**



**Ellen's
Excellent
Movie Quiz!**
© 1999
by
Ellen Paul

So, you think you know the movies, huh? We know all the characters in our favorite films as well as the actors who portray them, but how much attention do we pay to the important, yet secondary, characters in the movies we watch? This quiz is designed to find out.

Below is a list of five characters, each from a motion picture. The named character was important, but secondarily so. His/her/its name is spoken in the film on several occasions, but no major stars will be found here.

Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to name the movie in which the character appears. Good Luck!

1. Princess Dala
2. Professor Fassbender
3. Gunnersmate Third Class Lance Johnson
4. General Francis X. Hummel
5. Count Rugen

(The answers will be found on page 4)



**Where (In
Florida) Do
I Go To
Complain?**



by
Doug Paul

Complaints, complaints...Doug has still MORE complaints for Florida-based companies! Doesn't he ever run out? Nope, I don't think so. He always seems to know where to go. Let's see if you do for these companies by matching the companies to their cities:

- 1) Campus Crusade For Christ.
- 2) Ericsson Cellular Products
- 3) Office Depot
- 4) Scotty's
- 5) Tire Kingdom

- A - West Palm Beach
B - Winter Haven
C - Miami
D - Orlando
E - Ft. Lauderdale

(The answers will be found on page 4)

