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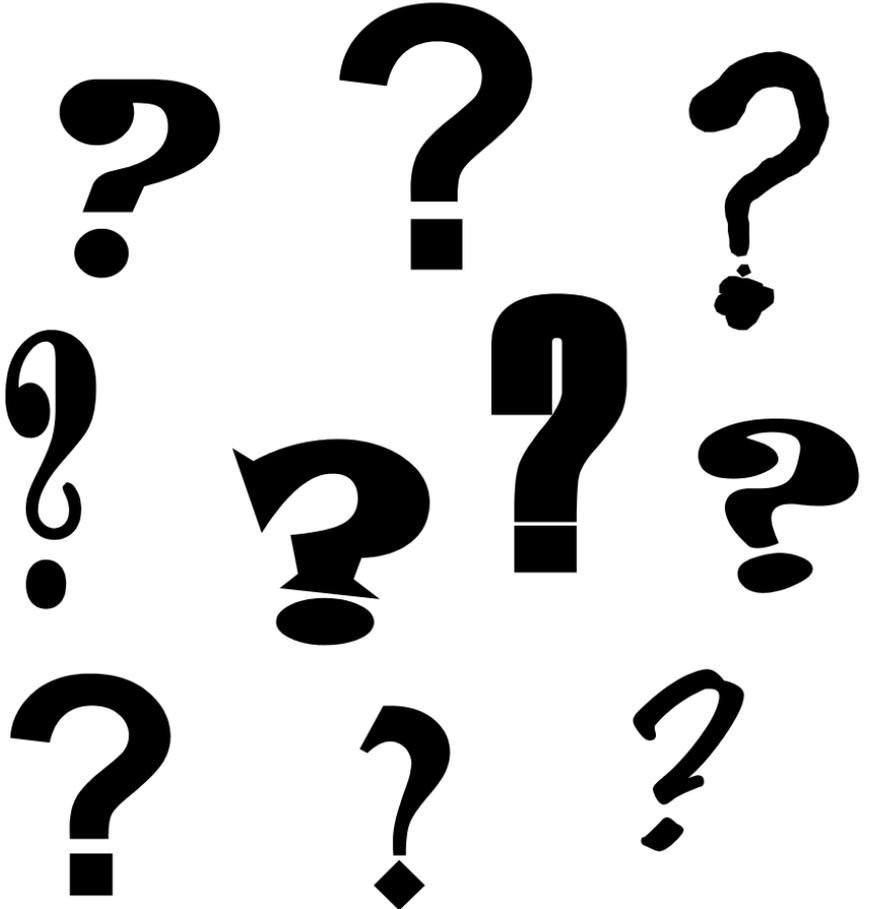
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*And The Winners Are....
(See Page 21)*

*The
Newsletter*
SCAM
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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@cfl.rr.com**

Subscription — \$10.00 for 12 issues.

Happy June Birthday

- 02 - Glen Martinie
- 03 - Joyce Drew
- 05 - Joyce Megginson Kircher
- 06 - Wilbur Sweeten
- 08 - Robert Jex
- 08 - Betty Shapbell
- 15 - Phyllis Cole
- 17 - Art Belefant
- 17 - Ellen Rogers
- 21 - Richard Kerlin
- 24 - Sam Kirschten
- 29 - Mark Murphy



Welcome Back to SCAM

Jeff Welch - Melbourne

Please Come Back to SCAM

All 49 of those members who, according to the membership roster for the period ending 4/30/01, have let their membership lapse. Come home, we miss you!



**On the
Firing Line**



**J.T. Moran
SCAM Editor**

The last few months have seen me do a bit of complaining here. About deadlines, late submissions, and the work involved in putting out a newsletter that meets my own personal standards, as well as those set by all the Editors of *The SCAM* over the years.

Well, this month you won't hear any complaints from me. Last week, I received an e-mail from Mary Donahue, the Chairperson for the 2001 Mensa Publications Recognition Program. She was notifying me that, this year, *The SCAM* was being nominated for seven awards! And, for the second year in a row, Bob Tuck was being nominated for *Essay*! The other five categories were: *Reporting*, *Blue Pencil*, *Layout*, *Style*, and *Overall Presentation*.

The SCAM is also being considered for a *Special Mention* award.

Needless to say, I was excited, flattered, and proud to have the newsletter be nominated for seven awards. Last year we were only nominated in two categories, with Bob winning the award for best *Essay*. I wasted no time in sending e-mails to all the contributors, advising them of the news. However, it turned out that I was being premature. A few hours after I had received the first e-mail, I received a follow-up message.

It came in the form of a minor apology, stating that she had not intended to do it intentionally. The "it" turned out to be that she had forgotten to include the fact that *The SCAM* has also been nominated for one more award: the *Owl* for medium size groups.

As I understand it, the categories of *Blue Pencil*, *Layout*, *Style*, and *Overall Presentation* are for **Presentation** which falls under the Editor's demesnes. That of *Essay* is self explanatory. *Reporting* falls under **Service**. Barring a reply to my inquiry about category explanations, I have to guess that this nomination is either for the Minutes, or for the Circulation column, "What Goes Around".

Special Mention is in a class by itself. From the comments about last year's winners, I interpret this to concern a unique aspect to a single item. It could be a whole issue or one article or idea in an issue. I have no real idea as to what this applies to regarding our nomination, but I again think that it might apply to "What Goes Around", which is the most unique method of describing what goes on (and to whom) at Fold, Staple, and Label, that I have ever seen.

The *Owl* is, simply stated, for best in class, for the best newsletter in the group size range.

For this newsletter, and the fine columnists who provide great articles every month, eight is barely enough.

But, I'll take it.



Mewsing About



Clara
Woodall-Moran,
LocSec
(cew@cfl.rr.com)

What is it that all of those stars (who are runners-up) say at the awards nights – the real prize is in getting the nomination? Well, our esteemed Editor and the wonderful writers all seem to be “prize” winners. Our newsletter got nominations in EIGHT categories in the Mensa publications recognition program. And, to add to this prize-winning streak of nominations, our web page, just before it was expired by Go.Com (which went out of business), was nominated for one award. We won’t know how far our winning streak will go until after

the AG in July, but we hope it continues. This is the second year our newsletter Editor has submitted an entry. Last year we were nominated for two awards, and Bob Tuck was the winner for himself and the group. We’ve always known we had one of the best newsletters, now we are proving it to the rest of Mensa. Give a big “congratulations” to any of the contributors, the Editor or the Webmaster when you next see them. It is well deserved by them all.

By the time you are reading this, the elections for the executive committee of your local group will be history. I hope you voted. I wish that everyone would vote. It is very important to the health of the group that you vote for local officers. The same is true for National officers.

I want to thank the membership for their support over this past year. We’ve seen some new names getting involved with the running of the organization. Thanks for this. It is really appreciated.

April’s membership list showed that we had 221 members. This is very high for our group. I appreciate all who have joined recently and those who chose to stay. We have a member living in Wisconsin who tested with us while on vacation on National Testing Day. He joined our group by preference. That was really nice, Mr. Garnett.

Speaking of testing, we are administering tests on a regular basis, and this is really helping the budget. We are looking forward to National Testing Day this year. I’d like to see a goal of making this our biggest testing session ever.

Most of you know (those who have your birthday listed in the Mensa Roster) that I have been sending out birthday cards. Well, best laid plans and all that...some have been late due to all sorts of technical problems. Especially the April birthdays – I ran out of stamps and it took a good bit of work to get more of them. I got through most of my term of office before having a major problem.

Well, that’s all the news that’s fit to print from your Local Secretary. Thanks for letting me serve as a member of your ExComm.



**Minutes of the
ExComm Meeting**



**Rita
Johnson-Aronna,
RecSec**

The ExComm met on May 6, 2001, at the home of Rita Johnson-Aronna. The meeting was called to order at 15:00.

Members present: **Fran Hinson, Helen Lee Moore, Clara Woodall Moran and Rita Johnson-Aronna.**

Guests: Jon Warner.

Moved Helen, **second** Clara to approve the minutes of the April meeting as published. **Passed** unanimously.

Correspondence: None.

Officer Reports

LocSec, Assistant LocSec, RecSec: No report.

Member-at-Large: No report submitted.

Treasurer: Submitted April report.

Committee Reports

Bylaws, Editor: No report.

Membership, NomElComm, Publicity: No report submitted.

Ways and Means, Webmaster: No report submitted.

Scholarship: Report submitted. On the MERF front, we had one scholarship pass muster and go on for national competition for one of the general awards. Ellen has not heard any more from the judging at the national level, but will keep us posted. On the local front, the attachments are the local scholarship information sheet and the local scholarship application. They are the same as last year, the only change is the year 2001. The award will be presented at the August SNORT.

S.I.G.H.T.: Trying to locate a non-smoking roommate for Pat Thornton, at the upcoming Tampa Busch Bash RG, over the Memorial Day weekend. If you know of someone who meets this criteria, please contact the S.I.G. H.T. coordinator.

Testing: Surrogate testing coordinator reports testing two candidates last month. Next testing session will be in June. Tests will be conducted monthly at Cape Canaveral Hospital on the second Saturday of each month. Monthly testing will allow publicity more availability.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: **Moved** Helen, **second** Fran, to discuss removal of Webmaster. Discussion followed. ExComm vote: HLM: yes. CWM: no, FH: no, RJA: no. Motion **failed**.

Open Forum: None.

Announcements: From Fran Hinson: Titusville Chamber of Commerce annual governmental affairs hosted luncheon to be held at La Cita Country Club, May 30, 2001 at noon. Many government representatives will be at-

tending including: Congressman Dave Weldon, Sen. Charles Bronson, and Rep. Ball. They will update the Chamber on the latest legislation passed at state and national levels. Reservations are required. Call the Chamber at 267-3036 for information and reservations.

The next ExComm meeting will take place on June 3, 2001, 3 p.m. at the home of Helen Lee Moore. **Moved** Helen, **second** Rita, to adjoin. **Passed** unanimously at 15:19.



What Goes Around...



**Wynn Rostek,
Circulation Chief**

It should have been a warning: &L had been going so smoothly. The only time &L goes that smoothly is when it's sliding down hill on a patch of ice, heading for disaster with a capital d. Val and Helen had almost finished getting the labels applied when I managed to let a wasp into the house.

This was no ordinary wasp, no sir, this was your mil spec, supercharged, hopped up on speed and steroids, insect with a very serious attitude wasp. This mobile bundle of bad shot across the room and hit Jon's glass so hard it almost knocked it over. I swear it made a sound like a teaspoon smacking an empty iced tea glass. The only ill effect on the micro Rambo was a minor deviation in its flight path, causing it to buzz the ladies. Helen's reflexes are as good as ever, and she dove under the table just as I was announcing to the room that there was a wasp loose, only slightly drowning out Jon's "What was that?"

Dan, perhaps forgetting the incident with Jon's glass, jumped up brandishing a rolled up newsletter. He set off in hot pursuit of the aforementioned wasp, which was making a serious effort to break the sound barrier, and might have succeeded if the walls hadn't kept forcing him to turn all the time. Dan turned *almost* all the time. Jon says he will be able to patch the wall so you'll never notice it.

George made the mistake of standing up at just the wrong time, and found himself ever so briefly in the flight path. I'm proud to report that the wasp did not knock George over, but he did get a nasty bump out of his brief encounter with the biological missile that had control of the airspace in Helen's house.

Val suggested getting a fly swatter to tackle the invader, but I figured that would be about as effective as a toothpick against a battleship. I was thinking we needed some serious weapons. I asked Helen if she had a baseball bat or any golf clubs. She came out from under the table like she had been shot out of a cannon.

In the end, I was forced by a five to one vote to open the door and shoo the winged demon out with Dan's newsletter. It was not a proud day for the &L staff, but Helen claims it was a major victory for the furniture.



Bob-At-Large:
A most mysteri-
ous manuscript
Bob Tuck,
Member-at-Large
© 2001

The English scholastic philosopher and scientist Roger Bacon (1214?-1294), one of the most influential teachers of the 13th century, remained in Paris after completing his studies and taught for a time at the University of Paris. Soon after his return to England, about 1251, he entered the religious order of the Franciscans and settled at Oxford. There, he carried on active studies and did experimental research, mainly in alchemy, optics, and astronomy.

Bacon criticized the methods of learning of the times, and in the late 1260s, at the request of Pope Clement IV, he wrote his *Opus Majus* ("Major Work"). In this work he represented the necessity of a reformation in the sciences through different methods of studying languages and nature. The *Opus Majus* was an encyclopedia of all science, embracing grammar and logic, mathematics, physics, experimental research, and moral philosophy.

The pope's response Bacon's masterpiece is unknown, but the work could not in any circumstances have had much effect in Bacon's time, because it reached Clement during the period of his fatal illness.

Bacon's revolutionary ideas about the study of science led to his condemnation by the Franciscans for his heretical views. In 1278 the general of the Franciscan order, Girolamo Masci, later Pope Nicholas IV, forbade the reading of Bacon's books and had Bacon arrested.

After ten years in prison, Bacon returned to Oxford. Despite his advanced knowledge, Bacon accepted some of the popular but later disapproved beliefs of his time, such as the existence of a philosopher's stone and the efficacy of astrology. Although many inventions have been credited to him, some of them undoubtedly were derived from the study of Arab scientists. His writings brought new and ingenious views on optics, particularly on refraction, on the apparent magnitude of objects, and on the apparent increase in the size of the sun and moon at the horizon. In fact, Bacon first described the fundamental optical principles of the telescope three centuries before Galileo.

Bacon also found that with sulfur, saltpeter, and charcoal, a substance (now known as gunpowder) could be produced that would imitate lightning and cause explosions. The previous use of gunpowder by the Arabs, however, has since been shown.

Bacon considered mathematics, together with experimentation, the only means of arriving at a knowledge of nature. He studied several languages and wrote Latin with great elegance and clarity. Furthermore, he had an interest in cryptography, the making and breaking of codes.

Bacon's extensive learning earned him the title *Doctor Admirabilis*.

Remember Roger Bacon.

Flash forward several hundred years to the Renaissance that Roger

Bacon foreshadowed. Scholars in the Western World eagerly began exploring antiquity. Fresh intellects alighted upon ancient texts and inscriptions. Egyptian hieroglyphs came under scrutiny. However, the classical Romans had believed that Egyptian hieroglyphs were symbolic and allegorical, not phonetic, and this theory prevailed into Renaissance times.

Enter Athanasius Kircher (1601 or 1602-1680), an academic and man of letters who had the misfortune of living during an age of even greater intellects. Otherwise, we would more readily acknowledge his accomplishments and insights.



In 1616, he joined the Jesuit order, and a dozen years later he was ordained a priest. Earlier, he took up humanities and languages and taught Greek.

Kircher's books on magnetism (1640) and the Egyptian language (1643) are dedicated to Ferdinand III. Ferdinand supported the costs of having manuscripts copied and sent to Kircher. Ferdinand also paid for the printing of books on hieroglyphics and ancient cultures (1652). He paid 3000 scudi printing costs, and granted Kircher a pension of 100 scudi, which his successor Leopold I also paid. I have no idea what a scudi would be worth, these days.

Kircher, who apparently understood the patronage game very well, also dedicated individual chapters of the book on hieroglyphics to a variety of individuals in high places. He could command patronage from almost any source.

Sometime around 1660 Kircher sold exclusive rights to publish his books to a prominent Dutch publisher for a large sum of money. Especially through his work on Egypt he had become a "superstar." He is the first scientist known to have been able to command support through the sale of his works. Think of him as a 17th century Carl Sagan.

Kircher's notable museum was founded with a donation from Alfons Donnius, secretary of the Roman Senate and people. From a wide variety of nobles and rulers, mostly German, he received extensive gifts of stuffed animals and birds from the New World for the museum. The museum also included a notable collection of portraits of ecclesiastical officials and rulers, all of which were given him.



When Kircher "translated" the hieroglyphs on an obelisk for the Pope, the Pope asked him what he wanted in return. Kircher refused anything for himself but asked for a donation to the church he was restoring.

Alas, Kircher deluded himself (and others) in his attempts to unravel the meaning of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Still, keep him in mind.

In 1799, a soldier serving in Napoleon's campaign in

Egypt discovered the Rosetta Stone, a bilingual stela inscribed (196 B.C.) with a decree in honor of Ptolemy V in Greek, and in hieroglyphic, and demotic Egyptian. The black basalt slab's inscriptions were the key to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. The Rosetta Stone laid the foundation of modern Egyptology.

A Swedish diplomat, Johan David Åkerblad, made progress in identifying some of the phonetic letters in the cursive version of the text. The British physicist Thomas Young (1773-1829), also an Egyptologist, went further, including the identification of some of the proper names. It was not until the work (begun 1821) of the French Egyptologist, Jean François Champollion (1790-1832), however, that the two Egyptian scripts were recognized as phonetic. In earlier stages of the work Champollion had predicted the hieroglyphic spelling of various royal names based on the demotic; these spellings were confirmed by actual cartouches on the Rosetta Stone and other Ptolemaic monuments. After identifying the names and titles of the Greco-Roman rulers, he combined the phonetic values he had so derived with his knowledge of Coptic, the late stage of the Egyptian language. This achievement enabled him to decipher earlier Pharaonic cartouches. In 1822 the decipherment of the script was completed.

More ancient scripts and languages yielded to intense study.

On the precipitous limestone rock of a mountain above the village of Behistun, in western Iran is a cuneiform inscription. I've seen it and marveled at it many times, having often stopped alongside the road that winds through copses of plane trees at the base of the cliff. I confess, however, that I never had the inclination to attempt to scale that sheer precipice on my own.

The Behistun Inscription was carved in parallel columns, repeating the same text in the Old Persian, Assyrian, and Elamite languages, by order of the Persian king Darius I, the Great (ca. 550-486 B.C.). The inscription recounts his genealogy and conquests. By 1846 the British Assyriologist and diplomat Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (1810-95) had deciphered the Persian part of the inscription. As a result of this achievement, the parallel columns of the Behistun Inscription were deciphered and became the key to deciphering other ancient Elamite and Assyrian writings.

Later came the cracking of Linear B, a system of writing used in Mycenaean Greek documents chiefly from Crete (Krēti) and Pylos. Tablets inscribed with the script and dating from about 1500 B.C. were found at Pylos and other Mycenaean sites and demonstrated to be a form of early Greek. Sir Arthur John Evans (1851-1941), a British archaeologist, dealt with the problem of decipherment of this script.

However, Linear A, another system of writing on tablets dating from the second millennium B.C. were discovered at Pylos and other Mycenaean sites. Although the writing was found to be the language of Minoan Crete it remains undeciphered to this day.

Now we pass from the inscriptions of long-dead civilizations and empires to a most peculiar artifact. It holds no claim to being the scribbblings of classical or pre-classical antiquity. Indeed, its age remains disputed. It's known as the "Voynich Manuscript."

Some claim it to be the most mysterious writing on the planet. This 234-page, handwritten, parchment book is in a class by itself. There is page after page of truly strange depictions of plants, astronomical maps, and even crude human figures. Then, there's the boldly written script that annotates the drawings --- copiously on occasion. Superficially the Voynich Manuscript looks like a medieval herbarium combined with an astronomer's musings. The words look as if you could read them easily, but you cannot. No one has been able to, except for the interpretation of a few plant labels. The words represent no known language, yet statistical tests confirm that it is a real language uncrackable after much labor by leading cryptographers.

Here's an example of an actual "sentence" from the manuscript: *fachys ykal ar ataiin*. No one knows what it means. It matches no known language. Nevertheless, modern-day investigators have brought 21st century tools to bear upon this weird script, which is how I'm able (through the technological marvels of a special computer font) to render "These are the times that try men's souls. To be, or not to be. That is the question" into "These are the times that try men's souls. To be, or not to be. That is the question."

Oh, yes, in case you've been wondering, "a most mysterious manuscript" reads: "A most mysterious manuscript."

Don't be misled. This is only using the Voynich manuscript's "alphabet" to represent Latin-based writing conventions. There is no assurance that any of my keystrokes bear any resemblance to the letters or sounds - vowels, consonants, diphthongs - denoted within the manuscript. The font, made available by Voynich manuscript aficionados via the World Wide Web, must be viewed as a convenient convention.

In the manuscript, the plant drawings look like species you might find in your backyard and nearby fields. Botanists, though, assure us that most do not exist in nature. The copious plant labels in that unreadable language are of no help. Astronomical drawings and zodiacs fill some pages. Hope rises when we see a zodiac beginning with Pisces but fades when Scorpius turns out to be a lizard. Cancer is represented by two lobsters and Gemini by a man and woman. Superficially, the manuscript seems so readable and comprehensible, but its meaning forever slips away like the grin on the Cheshire cat. The manuscript may date from the late Middle Ages, based upon a medieval crossbow drawn on one page. Down the years, the book has passed through many hands, including the notorious astrologer/occultist John Dee (1527-1608).

At any rate, it now resides at Yale University.



Who wrote the Voynich Manuscript? Polymath Roger Bacon is usually mentioned. Given his interest in ciphers and the occult, this surmise is not unreasonable.

It's unsurprising that the manuscript has a - well - convoluted history. Such circumstances invariably, perhaps unjustly, rouse my skepticism.

When, in 1639, the Prague citizen Georg Baresch wrote to the famous Jesuit scientist Athanasius Kircher that he owned a mysterious book which was written in an unknown script and that was profusely illustrated with pictures of plants, stars, and alchemical secrets, he thought that Kircher would be able to decipher this book for him. He could not have guessed that not only was Kircher unable to do this, a long succession of vastly more expert code-breakers were equally going to fail. The book has come down to us and even now, more than 360 years later, not a single word from its 234 pages can be understood. Nor was Baresch the first to attempt in vain to read the M.S.. Before him, various scientists which the Holy Roman emperor Rudolf II collected at his court may well have tried their hand.

(Rudolf II (1552-1612), by the way, was Holy Roman emperor (1576-1612), king of Hungary (1572-1608), and king of Bohemia (1575-1611). His ability to rule was impaired by frequent fits of insanity and by a passionate interest in science, to which he devoted most of his time. He was the patron of the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe and the German astronomer Johannes Kepler. His sanction of religious persecution aroused bitter discontent, and in 1604 an insurrection broke out in Hungary. By 1608, Rudolf's brother Matthias had assumed control of both Hungary and Bohemia, and in 1609 Rudolf was compelled to grant a charter of religious liberties to the Bohemians.)

The book is now known as the Voynich manuscript (M.S.), after its (re)discoverer in 1912. The discovery of the M.S. by Wilfrid Michael Voynich (1865-1930) is best told by himself:

"In 1912 [. . .] I came across a most remarkable collection of precisely illuminated manuscripts. For many decades these volumes had lain buried in the chests in which I found them in an ancient castle in Southern Europe where the collection had apparently been stored in consequence of the disturbed political condition of Europe in the early part of the nineteenth century. [. . .] While examining the manuscripts, with a view to the acquisition of at least a part of the collection, my attention was especially drawn by one volume. It was such an ugly duckling compared with the other manuscripts, with their rich decorations in gold and colors, that my interest was aroused at once. I found that it was written entirely in cipher. Even a necessarily brief examination of the vellum upon which it was written, the calligraphy, the drawings and the pigments

suggested to me as the origin the latter part of the thirteenth century. [Vellum is a finer quality parchment made from the skins of kids, lambs, and young calves.] The drawings indicated it to be an encyclopedic work on natural philosophy. [. . .] the fact that this was a thirteenth century manuscript in cipher convinced me that it must be a work of exceptional importance, and to my knowledge the existence of a manuscript of such an early date written entirely in cipher was unknown, so I included it among the manuscripts which I purchased from this collection. [. . .] two problems presented themselves - the text must be unraveled and the history of the manuscript must be traced. [. . .] It was not until some time after the manuscript came into my hands that I read the document bearing the date 1665 (or 1666), which was attached to the front cover. [. . .] This document, which is a letter from Joannes Marcus Marci to Athanasius Kircher making a gift of the manuscript to him, is of great significance [. . .].”

(We have reason to believe that Voynich’s account is a bit strained. The real circumstances of his obtaining the manuscript are shrouded in deliberate misdirection. It seems that he negotiated a clandestine deal with a monastery that had come upon hard times.)

The Prague doctor and scientist Johannes Marcus Marci (1595-1667) had been a faithful correspondent to Athanasius Kircher S.J. for 25 years, and it was shortly before his death that he sent the M.S. to Kircher. In the letter he explains how he had inherited the M.S. from a close friend, who had tried to decipher this M.S. till the very end of his life, and had also asked for Kircher’s help. He further explains that he learned from one “Dr. Raphael” how the M.S. was originally bought by the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf for 600 ducats, and that it was believed at that time (at least by Rudolf) that the M.S. was written by Roger Bacon.

The Voynich M.S. is a compact parchment codex of 6 by 9 inches, with 116 vellum leaves, of which 102 remain. Its limp vellum cover is blank: it does not indicate any title or author. The M.S. is written in an elegant, but otherwise unknown, script. The text appears to be composed



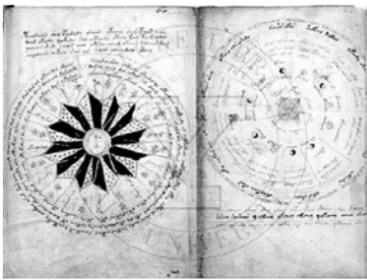
of “words,” and for a large part of the M.S. the text seems to be arranged in short paragraphs. Almost all pages of the M.S. contain illustrations. Illustrations of similar nature are grouped together in the M.S., and thus one may tentatively identify the following sections in the M.S.:

- a herbal section, with drawings of plants, most of which are unidentifiable or even phantasmagorical; an astronomical section, with illustrations of Sun, Moon, stars and zodiac symbols;
- a so-called biological section, which contains some bewildering

“anatomical” drawings with small human (feminine) figures populating systems of tubes transporting liquids;

- a cosmological section, with mostly circular drawings of an as yet unexplained nature;
- a pharmaceutical section, so called because it has drawings of containers, next to which various small parts of plants (leaves, roots) have been aligned; and
- a recipes section, which consists of many short paragraphs, each accompanied by the drawing of a star in the margin.

Since the M.S. has not been translated, nobody knows what it says -- if anything. It is assumed that the text relates to the illustrations, but this is not certain. There have been many suggestions about the historical importance of this M.S., ranging between totally opposite extremes. These



include: early discoveries and inventions by the 13th century friar Roger Bacon, written in a very complicated code; nonsense written by a medieval Italian quack, to impress his clientele; a rare prayer book from the Cathars, not destroyed by the inquisition, written in a pidgin version of a Germanic/Romance creole; and meaningless strings of characters cleverly composed by John

Dee for monetary gain. This is by no means a complete list. Most of the proposed solutions of the Voynich M.S. have been disproved, and the following questions about it remain unanswered:

- Is it plain language, encrypted language, constructed language, or meaningless drivel?
- If there is an underlying meaning, in which language is it? (A now lost language cannot even be excluded.); and
- Does the text relate to the illustrations?

I have no answers, but I doubt the manuscript, whatever its nature, holds any lost secrets of momentous importance. Think of it as a diversion, nothing more. Or, perhaps, it’s an enigmatic message through time from Roger Bacon in the 13th century to those of us eagerly looking forward to the unfolding of the third millennium.

Go ahead. Amuse yourself. Try your hand at it. Be the one who finally unravels the Voynich manuscript’s secrets. I dare you.

Better yet, and more to the advancement of human knowledge and understanding, tackle Minoan Linear A.

For more information, visit www.voynich.nu and the links this fascinating website provides.



June 2001 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.

Regular Events

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Barnes and Noble: Monday the 4th & 18th

7:00PM, Merritt Island, across from Merritt Square Mall

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 13th, & 27th

7:00PM, Merritt Square Mall, Merritt Island

C.A.B.A.G.E. (South) at Barnes and Noble: Wednesday, the 6th, & 20th

7:00PM, US192 and Hollywood Rd, Melbourne

Spend the evening with friends playing games, drinking gourmet coffee, and devouring sweet treats, and perhaps even reading a bit. It's free (except for any purchases), no pets, and outside smoking.

North Hosts: **Doug and Ellen Paul** 639-6923

South Host: **Ray Paul** 242-3100

3rd 3:00 p.m.

Sunday Free

ExComm Mtg.

NS/NP

Join the Executive Committee of our group to see how business is conducted. This month is also the changeover meeting, wherein we will see the 2001 – 2002 ExComm seated. Open to all members, free of charge. We will be meeting at the home of Helen Lee Moore, located in **Hardeeville**.

Helen Lee Moore (Host)

Clara Woodall Moran (LocSec)

9th 11:00 a.m.

Saturday \$25.00 (inc. gratuity)

Sea Pirate Cruise

SS/NP

Join the Schindlers for a lovely narrated sightseeing and wildlife cruise up the Indian River, with a luncheon buffet included. All passengers must be present by 11:00 a.m., and we embark at 11:30, returning about 2PM. More information about the cruise is available at www.seapirate.com. For the nuts and bolts: prepayment is **REQUIRED**, and can be done by check, made payable to "Sea Pirate River Cruises." Advance payments must be to the Schindlers **NO LATER THAN June 4**-we will be billed for no-shows. The Schindlers will be at SNORT on May 26 and can take payments then; if that doesn't work for you, call Ann or Dennis and make separate arrangements. The cruise departs from **705 S. Harbor City Blvd., Melbourne** (right behind Coral Bay Restaurant), across from Jim Rathmann Chevrolet, between the

causeways.

Dennis and Ann Schindler

10th

NL and Calendar deadlines

All newsletter submissions must be to J.T. no later than today. Ditto for calendar events being to Ellen.

10th

12:15 p.m.

Matinee Madness

Sunday

Movie Cost

SS/NP

Dan Lange takes us to the movies. Join Dan and your fellow moviegoers in front of the entrance to **Merritt Square South Cinemas** (behind the mall) and help choose the film of the day. After the movie, reconvene across the street for beverages and conversation about the flick.

Dan Lange

16th

3:00 p.m.

Pool Party

Saturday

\$3.00

SS/NP

George Patterson invites us to his lovely, beach-side home to swim in his pool, eat goodies from the grill (J.T. Moran as the "grill meister," according to George), and enjoy the company. George's place is located in **Indialantic**.

George Patterson

17th

11:00 a.m.

Brunch with Jim

Sunday

Meal cost

NS/NP

We'll join Jim for his monthly Sunday brunch at the **Colossus Restaurant** at **380 N. Wickham Rd., Melbourne**. Note: you must be seated no later than 11:00 a.m. or you may not be seated with us, as we can't save seats for latecomers.

Jim Trammell

30th

6:30 p.m.

S.N.O.R.T.

Saturday

Meal Cost

SS/NP

Come join us for our best-attended monthly event and sample some great Japanese fare. **Miyako's** is located at **1511 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US1) in Melbourne**.

J.T. Moran



STILL COMING EVENT!! *Barbara Peer is hosting a play for SCAM to attend at the Phoenix Theater. We're aiming for the play "Chicago" on Friday, July 13, 2001 in old downtown Melbourne. Look here for further details as the date approaches.*



Your Health



Immunizations

Ann Schindler

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When most people think of immunizations, or vaccines, they think either of the shots infants and children get, or the shots you must have to travel abroad. Immunizations are something all of us should be aware of as they serve to make us resistant to attack from the pathogens that cause various diseases. Immunizations prevent illnesses and death in millions of people each year. Still, millions of unvaccinated individuals die needlessly.

Ancient Greeks realized that individuals who recovered from certain infectious diseases seemed immune from contracting those diseases again. By 1000 A.D., the Chinese were using an ancient form of immunization by making a powder from dried crusts of smallpox lesions and having the patient inhale the mixture. This was called variolation, named for the variola (smallpox) virus. Since the proper amount of powder to use was unknown, many patients died. Variolation spread to Europe and eventually changed to an inoculation method by using a needle to scratch the fluid from the vesicles of one person into the arm of another. Edward Jenner is credited with the discovery of smallpox vaccination in 1796. Having been variolated himself as a child, Jenner was interested in stemming the number of deaths from smallpox. He devised a variation of the method by using serum from vesicles of the milder disease, cowpox, and found the patient was protected from developing smallpox. He coined the term vaccination, from “vacca,” Latin for cow. The history of variolation and Edward Jenner’s immunization method against smallpox can be found at:

<http://www.micro.msb.le.ac.uk/Tutorials/Pox/Pox1.html>.

Other immunizations introduced prior to 1900 included rabies and plague. By the 1930’s, immunizations included tuberculosis (BCG), yellow fever, and diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTP). Between 1955 and 1981 polio, hepatitis B, and measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) were included. We now have hepatitis A, HIB (hemophilus influenza b), chickenpox (varicella), anthrax, Lyme disease, meningococcal, typhoid, cholera, and many others. There is an ever-increasing number of illnesses, and thankfully, an ever-increasing number of vaccines to fight those illnesses.

Immunizations work by stimulating the disease fighting system of the body. Immunizations contain microbes that are either weakened or dead, or toxins produced by the disease-causing microbes. In response, antibodies are produced by the body, which will fight against any subsequent attack by the disease. New generation vaccines use only parts of a bacterium or virus (sub-units) or change their genetic structures or other properties in the quest for better protection.

Our federal and state governments mandate the immunizations we

receive as children. However, as we become adults, many of us forget about immunizations unless we desire to travel to a country where it is mandated that we produce proof of immunization before we can enter the area. Many people are delinquent on tetanus immunizations, which should be updated every 10 years to maintain protection. The tetanus germ is found in dust and dirt and is highly resistant to germ-killing agents or heat, and the disease can be fatal. Incidence of cases of tetanus per year in the United States has decreased from almost 1,500 in the 1920's to 45 in 1998. Approximately 95% of the cases occurred in people over the age of 20, and 3 out of every 10 persons who get tetanus will die from it. The National Health Interview Survey discovered that only 36% of adults over the age of 65 had been immunized against tetanus in the prior 10 years. An interesting fact is the increase in the number of tetanus cases due to intravenous heroin use. It seems that heroin is diluted with quinine, and quinine predisposes an even greater growth of the tetanus bacterium. Another important immunization is hepatitis B, which I discussed in last month's column. Hepatitis has become increasingly common and a simple 3 shot immunization series is extremely helpful. Another important immunization is the influenza shot. Many people decline this immunization because they fear getting the flu from the flu shot. You cannot get the flu from the flu shot. Influenza shots are no longer live vaccine, and have not been live vaccine for a number of years. There is no guarantee that you will not develop a routine cold after you get a flu shot, and many people call every respiratory infection they get the "flu." Pneumococcal vaccine is also available. Influenza and pneumococcal disease together are the fifth leading cause of death of older Americans. According to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, 140,000 people are hospitalized and 20,000 die from the flu in an average year. For more information, please check: http://my.webmd.com/content/dmk/dmk_article_54336

There have been occasional problems with immunizations and some people have considered not taking them to avoid these problems. The most common response to immunization is mild fever or soreness at the site of injection. The three most common risks of immunizations seem to be: immunity not resulting from the vaccine, live vaccine causing a reaction in an immune-suppressed individual (e.g. a person with leukemia or HIV), and an allergic or adverse reaction to a component of the vaccine. Some components that can cause problems are neomycin, streptomycin, and thimerosal, a frequently used preservative. Thimerosal is no longer used in childhood immunizations in this country. Some people are allergic to eggs, and should avoid vaccines grown in egg embryo. The pertussis (whooping cough) component of the old DTP immunization caused severe reactions in enough children that it was reformulated into the new DTaP, which contains an acellular chemically inactivated pertussis. Some people developed Guillain-Barre disease from swine flu vaccine in 1976,

but there has been no recurrence since that time. There has been concern about animal products used in the production of vaccines and possible transmission of diseases as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or the human form of BSE, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD). According to the Centers for Disease Control, found at <http://www.cdc.gov/>, there is no evidence of vCJD from any immunization in the United States and highly unlikely that any vCJD disease in the United Kingdom resulted from immunizations. There has been question if autism has been related to immunizations, particularly MMR, though studies have not confirmed such a connection.

It is rare to have health problems related to receiving immunizations, and the benefits far outweigh the risks. We have eradicated smallpox, and controlled many other diseases over much of the earth. Immunizations are something we should all be aware of and take advantage of for both our own health and for the benefit of society.

Sources:

National Immunization Program. 28 March 2001. Online. Centers for Disease Control. Internet. 16 April 2001. Available: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/>.

Offit, Paul M.D., and Louise Bell, M.D. Vaccines: What Every Parent Should Know. New York: IDG Books, 1999.

Immunizations. 19 September 1998. Online. WebMD Corporation. Internet. 6 April 2001. Available: <http://my.webmd.com/content/article/1680.51274>.



***The Voters
Have Spoken!
Meet the
Members of
the 2001 - 2002
SCAM ExComm***

At 7:00PM, on May 16th, the ballots cast for the candidates for the ExComm to be seated on June 3rd were tabulated. The results of the count of 34 valid ballots out of 37 cast are as follows:
The five highest vote counts go to:

*Rita Johnson-Aronna
Helen Lee Moore
Bob Tuck
Val Valek
Jon Warner*

Also receiving votes were: *Ray Paul* and *Clara Woodall-Moran*.

The top five vote-getters are elected. The composition of the new ExComm will be determined by the winners at the June 3rd meeting.

Those interested in the actual count may contact any member of the NomEIComm. Challenges to the election must be made to the ExComm before June 30th.



***Signifying
Nothing:
Coffee Klash***
by
Jamie Glatt
©2001

There's a special place in Hell for those who violate the rules of the office coffee machine. Violators should be glad they don't get true justice.

Violation: wet spoon in the sugar or creamer.

Implication: disgusting mess

Penalty: violator's eyes gouged out with the disgusting spoon

Violation: sneaking a cup before the brewing is complete

Implication: disgusting mess

Penalty: violator must sneak a cup using only his hands

Violation: coffee spilled on the coffeemaker, table, or floor

Implication: disgusting mess

Penalty: violator must lick it up, and then steam clean the area

Violation: partaking of brownies, cookies, and cheese dip periodically provided by office mates, but never contributing anything

Implication: brownie bakers getting hostile

Penalty: violator must eat the salt free melba toasts someone brought in once, which were shoved to the back of the cabinet where they've stayed for going on two years now

Violation: taking the last cup and not starting the next pot

Implication: the next coffee drinker has to make a pot and wait for it to finish brewing

Penalty: violator has to wait until he returns home to use the bathroom

Violation: seeing he'd be taking the last cup, violator walks away and comes back after a fresh pot has been made by someone else

Implication: violator never takes a turn making coffee

Penalty: banish violator to an office staffed only with 10 other like violators

Violation: making a fresh pot after 2 p.m., after taking the last cup that's been sitting there for four hours

Implication: an untouched pot of coffee is wasted at the day's end cleanup

Penalty: hey, if he drank four-hour-old coffee, he's suffered enough

Violation: leaving coffee maker on overnight

Implication: fire hazard; disgusting mess baked into the bottom of the pot

Penalty: branding with the hot carafe, leaving a permanent "Juan Valdez" tattooed on his ass.

Violation: taking a cup of coffee and paying with 15 pennies

Implication: someone has to count and roll the pennies

Penalty: violator beaten with a sock full of pennies

Violation: taking a cup of coffee without paying

Implication: coffee fund shortfall

Penalty: death



***A View... From
Somewhere Else
Sun Tzu and the
World Watchers
Part 1 of 2
by
Hank Rhodes
©2001***

Author's Note: Sun Tzu was a Chinese General and Philosopher who lived during the Spring and Autumn Period, approximately 500 B.C. Other than his distinguished record as a military commander, little else is known about Sun Tzu. His ideas are preserved in his book, The Art of War.

We can all be happy that our EP-3 aircrew from the Navy's Electronic Reconnaissance Squadron One (VQ-1, a.k.a. "The World Watchers) have returned safely home. So much has been written and said about

this incident in recent weeks, that one is reluctant to attempt adding any more. There are, however, some aspects of this incident worthy of further discussion, especially our complex relationship with the People's Republic of China. It is helpful to consult the teachings of Sun Tzu.

Therefore, analyze the enemy's plans so that you will know his shortcomings as well as strong points. Agitate him in order to ascertain the pattern of his movement. "Void and Actuality"

The People's Republic of China is a strengthening power, that is attempting to expand its sovereign territory into the South China Sea, to the chagrin of The Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. It is ironic that China seems to be practicing the same expansionism by which that nation has been victimized over the past two centuries. While the ideas of "spheres of influence," and colonization are repugnant to the Chinese, this doesn't seem to prevent the regime in Beijing from bullying other nations.

All nations, including the Chinese, have a right to conduct peaceful operations on the high seas, including surveillance of a potential adversary. The U.S. should continue to assert our right to do this. This is not a violation of China's sovereignty, nor is it a license to harass or interfere with the progress of operations. Simply put, the U.S. has a responsibility, for its own security, as well as collective security and stability in Asia, to assess the military capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

And for this reason, a wise general in his deliberations must consider both favorable and unfavorable factors...by taking into account the unfavorable, he may avoid possible disasters. "The Nine Variables"

But by our current method of sizing up a potential adversary, are we not exposing a weakness? The author is not under the delusion that military operations can be conducted without risk. There have, however, been plenty of incidents in recent years where American lives have been lost, a hostage situation has occurred, or at the least, we have lost national secrets because the bad guys, or the not-so-good-guys, don't play by our rulebook. Yet, our military leaders seem to be frequently surprised by this fact.

Make no mistake, without the courage and exceptional skills of the pilot, Lieutenant Osborn, 24 Americans would have lost their lives in the

South China Sea. We are fortunate that the consequence this time is limited to loss of classified material. Short of active war, can we deliberately take such a risk?

We can not rely on the simple fact of the U.S. flag, or U.S. aircraft markings, to protect our people when we do send them in harm's way. We should know this by now, certainly after the increasingly aggressive intercepts of previous surveillance flights by the Chinese. Yet, no substantive changes were made in the way the missions were undertaken. This isn't the President's fault (yes, you read that right), this is the sort of problem that we pay Admirals and Generals (and their staff officers) to resolve. While it is a principle of success in military operations not to yield the initiative to an opponent, it is hubris to ignore warnings and continue to conduct business as usual until a disaster occurs.

Consideration should have been given to using unmanned airborne assets. If real-time data analysis was essential, then a sturdier platform capable of self-defense, such as a warship would have been a better choice. If these options were not acceptable, at a last resort, decoys and armed escorts should have been provided, even if this last option required the U.S. Navy to deal with its old nemesis, the U.S. Air Force.

If [the enemy] is arrogant, try to encourage his egotism. "Estimates"

Hopefully our President learned that diplomacy is a better opening tactic than belligerent rhetoric. One of his predecessors, who was a great thinker in his own right, said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick" (Theodore Roosevelt). This is still good advice that the current President should heed, considering that few of our Presidents have done as well as Theodore Roosevelt on the world stage.

We are the dominant power of our era, but that does not assure we will achieve all or any of our objectives in a multi-polar world. We do not want the multi-polar world as it is to devolve into a bipolar world that consists of "Us" and "Everyone else." It is not in our best interest to inflame passions or resentment from other peoples who don't live as well as we do. It is important also not to embarrass our allies by rash actions. The cause of democracy has made substantial gains in the past half-century, and we should not place these gains at risk because of arrogance and short-term, self-serving political goals. The language needs to be controlled and calibrated, lest a misunderstanding occurs.

The President should save the tough talk and swagger for the cowpokes down at the Lazy "W" Ranchette. Surely, they would advise him not to bluff unless he is prepared to get called.

He whose ranks are united in purpose will be victorious. "Offensive Strategy"

Wasn't it nice, for once during an international crisis, that the President didn't have to carry his opposition on his back? Criticism ended at the water's edge, a tradition ignored during his predecessor's term. Well,

there wasn't a total absence of partisan back-biting. One conservative congressman was unable to contain his knee-jerk, and attempted to find fault with President Clinton. The right wing's black-hole-of-blame, however, has completed his term of office, and was last seen in India (which is not a bad place for the current President to visit- more about that later). Once the good congressmen became acquainted with this fact, not a peep more was heard.

Barring unforeseen developments, in the second part, the author intends to discuss the relationship with the People's Republic of China, and to suggest some policy actions for the course of this relationship. Meanwhile...

...the enlightened ruler is prudent, and the good general is warned against rash action "Attack by Fire"

Note: Quotations from Sun Tzu are taken from the Wordsworth Editions version, 1993.



**The Gourmet's
Guide:**

British Buffet

By

Art Belefant

©2001

(belefant@juno.com)

Traversing England, Scotland, and Wales by automobile in two weeks gave us the opportunity to try the foods of the various regions. We ate in bed and breakfasts, hotels, pubs, guest houses, tea rooms, coffee houses, restaurants, and luncheonettes, even a fish and chips place. Although the quality and service varied considerably, from ordinary to excellent, it belied the commonly held belief that good food cannot be found in Britain. That was true years ago, but not now.

Several years ago on our trip to Canterbury we found that the quality of meals had improved so much from previous trips to England and Scotland that there was really no comparison. Now the dining experience has improved even more. In the restaurants and hotels the menus no longer are a list of British "cuisine". The menus are eclectic consisting of French, Italian, Indian, and other foreign dishes but always including some local specialties. And the dishes are well prepared and presented. The prices are much the same as they would be in the U. S. What is particularly pleasing is that the posted or menu price is what you pay, tax and service is already included, and no additional tip is expected.

Here is a sample of what we tried on our trip. This list does not reflect the full variety of dishes available. My penchant for primarily choosing fish to eat plus my desire to try the local dishes, didn't allow much time to try the exotics.

ENGLAND

Matlock: pub. *Steak and onion pie* - One of the quintessential English comestibles. This one was made with minced (chopped) meat. As a pub

meal with beer (ale) or cider it was the perfect light meal. The pie was delicious.

SCOTLAND

Thurso: hotel. *Pea soup with ham and lamb chops* - Thurso is on the northern tip of the island and was decidedly cool even in August. The pea soup really hit the spot. The lamb chops, two triple chops, were simply broiled. Anything more done to them would have been overdoing it.

ORKNEY ISLANDS

Birsy: hotel. *Vegetable soup and sirloin steak* - The inducement here was that all local (Orkney) ingredients were used. In driving around Mainland, we saw many cattle and even more sheep. We didn't see any truck farms that would have produced the vegetables for the soup but we were assured that they all came from the Orkneys. The cattle looked like the Angus breed but they were of different colors, only a few were black. Both the soup and the steak were simply, but well, prepared.

Kirkwall: luncheonette. *Carrot and orange soup* - It seemed like an odd combination so we tried it. It came out very well.

Evie: guest house. *Leek and potato soup, grilled salmon, strawberry and raspberry meringue* - The soup could be called a hot vichyssoise, very hearty and good. What more needs to be said about a grilled Scottish salmon. The dessert was good but I do not like the combination of berries. I would prefer each separately.

Birsay: hotel. *Cream of broccoli and cauliflower soup, salmon pot pie with puff pastry* - Just as with the strawberry and raspberry meringue, I would have preferred either a broccoli or cauliflower soup, however this soup was good, especially on the cold Orkney Islands. If you think that only chicken makes a good pot pie you should try this. The puff pastry shell is a decided improvement over the flat pastry.

Stromnes: tea room. *Grilled cheese sandwich* - Made with Orkney Island cheese, a form of cheddar, another delicious light meal. A Scotch rarebit?

SCOTLAND

Lochearnhead: restaurant. *Venison casserole* - The only meal that was not entirely satisfying. The gravy or sauce was too heavily flavored and thus disguised the flavor of the meat. Note to JT. I'll try to do better. *[Ed. Note to Art : You most certainly did]*

Stirling: restaurant. *Collen skink, haggis, neeps, tatties* - This will require a translation. Collen skink is a cream soup made with herring and potatoes.

Although the combination may seem odd to us, it comes out as an excellent dish. For haggis see *The SCAM* (March 1998). This version was excellent. Neeps are mashed turnips and tatties are mashed potatoes. Both are standard accompaniments for haggis. I could do without the neeps, they were well prepared but I just don't like turnips. The tatties were excellent. The restaurant was upscale, white table cloth and all that. All that was missing was someone to pipe in the haggis.

Keswick: restaurant. *Leg of lamb* - Simply roasted and well prepared.

WALES

Llandudno: diner. *Fish and chips* - Not the best, not the worst, just ordinary.

ENGLAND

Shrewsbury: pub. *Liver and bacon in onion sauce on mashed potatoes* - The liver was lamb. The bacon was like our ham. The onion sauce was a bit heavy. The mashed potatoes were real, not from a box. All in all, different than that we would get in an American restaurant, but very good never-the-less.

Shrewsbury: coffee house. *Poppy seed bagel with cream cheese and smoked salmon* - When I saw this on the board I just had to try it. The bagel was standard. When I inquired, the waitress told me that they come in frozen. She didn't know from where. I knew that they wouldn't have a bagel bakery in Shrewsbury. The cream cheese was a local product, slightly ripened and firm, not the soft, creamy Philadelphia brand which is available in all the supermarkets and groceries in Britain. The smoked salmon (lox) was very good.

Gatwick: pub. *Grilled salmon with asparagus sauce, baked potato, carrots* - Our last evening was spent in a hotel adjacent to Gatwick Airport, not a fancy place but convenient. The hotel, a Travel Inn, had a pub on the first (ground) floor. Because we had already returned our car it was there that we ate. I didn't expect much in a busy and crowded pub. What I ordered was grilled salmon with asparagus sauce. It was a delightful surprise. Grilled to perfection with an unusually tasty sauce that didn't overpower the fish. The salmon, as all the salmon that I had, was excellent. The meal showed how much British cooking has improved in the last few decades.

BREAKFASTS

At B and B's, where you would certainly expect it, and at all hotels, breakfast is included in the room rate. The breakfasts are standard, with some

exceptions in Scotland. The standard breakfast consists of the following:

Self-served items

- Orange juice
- Fresh or stewed fruit
- Various cold cereals

Served items

- One fried egg
- One sausage
- One slice of bacon (U. S. ham)
- Fried canned mushrooms
- One half fried tomato
- Toast (white and brown) butter, margarine, jam, marmalade
- Coffee or tea (coffee seems to be even more common than tea these days), real cream

In Scotland, kippers or finnan haddock may be substituted for the standard hot foods. Also in Scotland, porridge (oat meal) is available along with the cold cereals. The oatmeal is not like our Quaker's. The American oatmeal is whole grains of oats, steamed and flattened. Scottish oatmeal is cut grains of oats. It's hard to imagine that that slight difference would create such a different taste. The Scottish variety with cream and sugar on it, is delicious. As a side note, I brought a kilo of it back with me. As yet I have been unsuccessful in matching the luscious flavor of that served in Scotland.

Years ago in the Lake District of England, breakfast at B and B's consisted of only tea and fried bread. Fried bread is just what the name says. A slice of day old bread fried in some fat, like lard. Now in the Lake District you get the standard English breakfast but with one fillip that harkens back to the old days. The fried egg is served on fried bread.

At the airport, having a few pounds in cash left over, I went searching for something to buy. At a small Harrod's outlet I saw a very small selection of cheeses. One was called Stropshire Blue. Encased in a smallish blue wax cylinder, it was something I had never heard of. At my inquiry, the clerk said that it was a blue mould cheese, something like a Stilton. Naturally I bought it and brought it home. At home I checked my cheese references and it was not listed. Some days later, after an appropriate meal, I cut it open. To my surprise, and unlike a Stilton, the cheese inside the blue wax covering was colored a bright orange. True, it had blue mould veins, but the background color was shocking. The taste? Like a ripe Stilton, sharp and mellow, and very good.

I'm sorry that I can't offer you any to taste. It's gone now. But it did have a delightful passing.



***A View
from the Right:***

***A Skunk by any
Other Name...***

by

J.T. Moran

(morwood@cfl.rr.com)

Diversity... what is it? The answer depends upon its usage, of course.

In nature, diversity refers to the proliferation of differing species of flora and fauna, each occupying its own unique niche in the environment. Individual species do not directly compete for food, or sunlight, or any other necessity. Many species are interdependent for survival and propagation of the species. This benign symbiosis is what is known as the Harmony of Nature.

However, also found in nature is the not-so-peaceful interdependence of species. Many species must act as the predator to survive. Others fulfill the function as prey. Yet it is not random. Nature ensures that there will be enough of one to maintain the other, yet also ensures that there will not be an overabundance of either predator or prey. This is the Balance of Nature.

Among other things, these two make up that which is called the "Natural Order of Things". But there are those things that Nature does not take kindly to. The forced introduction of non-native plants or animals into an eco-system is a recipe for disaster. In Florida, we see it all the time: hydrilla in the waterways, fire ant mounds on every lawn, love bugs eating away auto finishes twice a year, etc.

Nature, it would appear, is something of a xenophobe. So why do people find it surprising that mankind is xenophobic as well?

The fear or mistrust of that which is strange or different is natural. It is part of our "racial memory" (by which I refer to the race "homo sapiens", and not a particular ethnicity) better referred to as the "fight or flight" reflex. It is a survival mechanism, inherited from our most distant ancestors.

This is one reason why the enforced introduction of the "different" into society's eco-systems (currently identified as "creating the diverse workplace") has met with such resistance from those already existing in harmonious balance. Unfortunately, the "workplace" is not the first area that this enforced "diversity" has been attempted.

Go back a few decades... to the time of "school busing". The idea at that time was to create a perceived "balance" by forcibly transferring children, both white and black, from their nearby, neighborhood schools, (which were usually heavily dominated by a single racial group) to a distant school, in an attempt to bring "balance" to the schools – not only in racial numbers, but supposedly in monetary numbers, as well. Since most public schools at that time (and some, to this day) received most of their funding based upon the affluence of the school districts, the schools in the suburbs (heavily white) were usually better funded than those of the inner cities (heavily black). This caused the suburban schools to be able to afford more of everything. It was also credited with the higher testing

score averages of the suburban schools.

So, in a move almost universally despised, the liberal-activist judiciary and legislatures decided that, rather than raise funding for the inner city schools, they would transfer suburban students to the inner city schools, and vice-versa. So what if the children had to travel up to two hours one-way? So what if they (and their parents) did not want the transfer? The liberal mindset has always been “WE know what is best for you!”

Well, decades later, what are the results? Testing averages continue to drop in both urban and suburban schools. Inner-city schools, along with the rest of the urban infrastructure, continue to deteriorate, and people still hate the concept and practice of school busing. In the overall picture, nothing has changed.

The next attempt at forced diversity actually had a chance to work... except it was not allowed the time to do so. Equal opportunity was intended to create an open and level playing field. All it forced was the presence of all concerned in an equal starting status. This is also natural... in fact, after that, it is up to natural selection. But Equal Opportunity, as designed, did not perform as the liberals desired. It did not bring about either radical, or rapid change. It was, however, beginning the slow evolution of a societal change. Rights were being ensured, regardless of race, creed, or color.

That was not enough for the liberals. They did not desire Evolution: they demanded Revolution. So Equal Opportunity rapidly mutated into Affirmative Action. Equality of rights, and of opportunity, was no longer the goal. The liberal mindset now called for the granting of Special Privileges, based not upon individual need or merit, but instead upon class affiliation. These special privileges were to be available only to certain, liberal-approved, classes. And it did not matter if these privileges, and the manner of granting them, were unconstitutional. *Any* action was acceptable if it furthered their cause.

Many illegalities were ignored, based upon “the end justifies the means.” Gerrymandering to *prevent* blacks from gaining representation was illegal and unconstitutional, but gerrymandering to *guarantee* black representation was just fine. Hiring *quotas* were illegal and unconstitutional, but mandatory hiring *goals* were okay. Different standards for college admissions were bad if they did not enhance the chances of minority attendance, but simply wonderful if they guaranteed it.

All this in the name of “Diversity”. Illegalities, unconstitutionality, different standards, discrimination, the fostering of class envy, and the use of aggressive rhetoric against those who fail to agree with them... these are the weapons the Liberals use to get their way. Anything to force their will, their ideas, upon the rest of us, because “they know what is good for us.”

(Continued on Page 28)

**The
Also-Rans:**



**Ellen's
Excellent
Movie Quiz
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.

For this month, a hint: this puzzler is just beastly!

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

1. Whizzer
2. Eltivo
3. Snowbell
4. Tornado
5. Djali

(Answers will be found below)



(Continued from Page 27)

They don't know anything.

Nature's way is slow, but steady. The Darwinian model can be applied to social systems as easily as to bio-systems. A superior system will overcome a weaker one. If both are of the same nature, the stronger will absorb and supplant the weaker. This keeps the social order healthy, just as the predation of the weak and sickly in the wild is necessary for the maintenance of prey species.

What is Diversity? In nature, it is the reason for limitless beauty and wonder. In social engineering, however, *as practiced*, it is just another name for the failed quota system of reverse discrimination.

That failed, as will this, because the practice is unnatural. Nature, including human nature, will not be forced. Not without a fight.



We Have....



The Answers!

1. 101 Dalmatians (1996)
2. The Road to El Dorado (2000)
3. Stuart Little (1999)
4. The Mask of Zorro (1998)
5. The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1996)