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SCAM

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2001 Newsletter Owl Winner



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*The
Newsletter*
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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**
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Happy February Birthday

- 01 – Steven Henshaw, Jr.
- 02 – Shirley Flynn
- 03 – Louis Daboll
- 04 – Dana Sitter
- 05 – John Dibble
- 07 – Heather Howard
- 07 – Robert Stubbe
- 10 – Greg Marquino
- 11 – Michael Moakley
- 13 – Craig Reynolds
- 14 – Wynn Rostek
- 17 – Robert Lipton
- 19 – Brenda Spakes
- 21 – Raymond Rudd
- 24 – Phyl Sopkin
- 24 – David White, III
- 26 – Linda Martin
- 27 – Michael Purcell



Welcome Back to SCAM
C.J. Hall - Indian Harbor Beach



**On the
Firing Line**



**J.T. Moran
SCAM Editor**

Editorials can sometimes be profound, cutting, and insightful. Other times they can be short and sweet. This time, it will be short, at least.

You may have noticed that we have a new contributor: Kenneth Thornton-Smith. He brings yet another unique take on reality to these pages, one we haven't seen in a while: pure fiction. I hope you will enjoy his offerings as I do.

You will also notice that, like myself, *The SCAM* has grown a bit larger. Even with my best efforts, it has become a problem(?) to fit most everything I receive every month into a mere 32 pages, so I will expand your newsletter to 36 pages when necessary.

Such a problem I can live with, and most Editors would maim for.



**Come Gather
'Round People**



**J.T. Moran
RG Registrar**

The Chambers Brothers had a song back in the late '60s: "*Time Has Come Today*". Well, today the time *has* come – the time to bring you up to date on the status of the 2002 SCAM *Rollback RG*.

For those of you who are relatively new to SCAM, or to Mensa, many local groups host a Regional Gathering (RG) every year to raise the funds needed to support many of the groups' vital functions, most especially the newsletter. In our case, SCAM hosts an RG once every other year, alternating with Broward Mensa.

If you have attended an RG before, you know what to expect. If you haven't, this will be your chance to experience the uniqueness that is Mensa at its best.

Joke-offs, Pundemonium, and Hugging are but a few of the activities you can look forward to. Games, Food, and Conversation with old and new friends will occupy most of your time during the Gathering.

As the months go by, I will detail more of what will be happening on the weekend of October 18th, 19th, and 20th. Make plans to attend, and register early: the sooner you sign up, the cheaper it is (\$30 thru Feb. 28th). If you plan on attending CFM's Heart of Florida RG at the end of January (you should receive this issue early enough to do this) then you can even save five bucks with our RG special of \$25 registration. The same special will also be available at some of the other RGs in the region, as well as the AG in July.

RGs are a blast, and a great way to meet Mensans from all over the nation, and even the world. Sign up and see for yourself!



**Still Lurking
About.....**



**Jon Warner,
LocSec**

This is going to be a very short LocSec Column this month, as I really have nothing to talk about. It's the night of the 9th and it's cold! I don't like the cold, that's why I moved to Florida in the first place. I spent a year on the Yukon River in Alaska, six years in Montana, two years in Germany and six years in Delaware, not to mention my first 17 years in northern Pennsylvania. And I don't like the cold anymore now than I did then ... probably less. This is Florida ... the sunshine state, snowbird country, so why is there frost on my car in the morning? I'm not happy with this turn of events. My idea of the perfect winter in Florida is low 50's at night and 72 - 76 during the days. Somebody's goofed and I want to know who!

We now have a home for our web page. Clara Moran got us a fantastic deal by getting us a domain name for 10 years for \$70. This means we own the name and nobody can use it but us. Our new web page is:

www.spacecoastareamensa.org

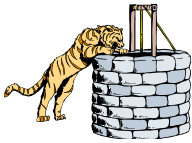
Since my computer modem is still giving me trouble (actually it's not even in the house, but that's another story altogether), I haven't had a chance to look at it yet, but I'm told it's pretty nice. Check it out.

The SCAM RG in October 2002 is coming along, but we still need some volunteers to help run things. Specifically, we need a Games Chair, a Saturday Night Entertainment Chair and help with other jobs. If you're interested, give me a call.

As I said at the beginning, this is a short column this month, so see you later.



**Are You
Interested?**



**Rita Johnson-
Aronna, SIGs
Coordinator**

I am interested in helping form S.I.G.s for SCAM. I am volunteering my house for the first meeting to discuss or initiate any activity that you may be interested in. I would appreciate your feedback on interests and activities that you would like to see on the SCAM calendar.

My email address is: *patrita@worldnet.att.net*

Telephone: 676-5999.

SIGs refers to **S**pecial Interest **G**roup(s). Mensa has many of these that comprise a diverse compilation of some fairly unique interests. If you go to the national website (remember the monthly login requirements!) at <http://www.us.mensa.org/activities/sigs.php3> you will find a list of the officially recognized SIGs. A SIG need not be a national one, however: almost any group of like-minded individuals can have regular meetings placed on the SCAM calendar.



**Minutes of the
ExComm Meeting**



**Val Valek,
RecSec**

Jan 6, 2002 15:02

The ExComm met at Val's house. Members present: Jon Warner, Helen Lee Moore, Rita Johnson-Aronna, and Val Valek. Guests present: Fran Hinson, Clara Woodall-Moran, and Pat Aronna.

Correspondence

Jon received the semiannual *Bulletin* update form from the national office.

Minutes of the last meeting - Val **moves** to accept minutes, Rita **seconds**. Helen abstains, all others approve.

Acceptance of minutes **passes**.

LocSec, Assistant LocSec, RecSec, Bylaws, SIGHT -no reports

Treasurer - Helen submitted treasurer's report.

Member-at-Large, Publicity, Ways & Means -no reports sent

Editor - JT has almost completed the Membership Directory

Membership - 202 members as of the end of November (most recent data available).

Scholarship - Receiving completed applications and essays. Deadline is January 15, earlier than in years past. After the deadline she'll be contacting people to act as judges.

Testing - Five people are scheduled for January testing

Webmaster - registered as *SpaceCoastAreaMensa.org* for 10 years. Clara has not yet settled on where she would like to host the website as she is still doing research.

RG committee - Clara and JT will go to CFM and do some advertising for SCAM's 2002 RG. Helen passed around a copy of the Saturday night and Sunday brunch buffet offering.

Old Business - none

New Business

1. Helen **moves** to appoint Fran, JT, and Clara to the NomElComm. Rita **seconds**. **Passes** unanimously.

2. Helen **moves**, and Rita **seconds**, that the RecSec make and keep tape recordings of ExComm meetings. In discussion, it was agreed that tapes should be retained for two years. **Passes** unanimously.

3. Val **moves**, Helen **seconds**, that someone with a clue purchase a tape recorder and decent microphone for not more than \$75. Helen volunteers to do so. **Passes** unanimously.

4. Helen **moves**, and Rita **seconds**, that the RecSec prepare an agenda and distribute it before every ExComm meeting at least 24 hours before the meeting. As far as possible this will be done with email. Val will email Jon's to Helen since his computer isn't online at the moment. Clara suggests RecSec send along the past month's minutes as well. **Passes** unanimously.

5. Helen **moves**, and Rita **seconds**, that the Webmaster position be brought into line with the latest directive of the AMC, "AMC approved a motion to establish a policy that websites are local group pubs extended electronically and are not to be treated as activities." **Passes** unanimously.

6. Helen introduced a discussion item: Get SCAM's old Go URL off the National website, officially abandon the cold fusion website plan, and rescind or rethink the allocation we'd made for \$15/month for the cold fusion website. Clara has tried a number of times to get the reference to SCAM's old Go URL removed. Jon volunteers to give it a try. Clara needs a little time to decide on a new web-hosting site. URL registration payment has already been made. Clara reminds us that the web-hosting site she selects will likely be considerably cheaper than the allocated \$15. We all extended kudos to Clara for getting our URL registered for \$69.50, which covers the next 10 years.

7. Helen introduced a discussion item: What are the responsibilities of the Scholarship Chairman regarding the funding of scholarships? She cites the 1998 and 1987 Handbooks of Space Coast Area Mensa. Rita and Jon believe this responsibility belongs to the scholarship chairman. Val suggested we table the discussion until next month.

8. Helen introduced a discussion item: What are the responsibilities of the calendar-listed events hosts, and does SCAM think it is acceptable to have no-host events on the calendar? She attended a C.A.B.A.G.E. South the previous Wednesday and no host was present. It was suggested the host should be there or the event should be taken off the calendar. Clara suggests the calendar description for this event might state that first timers RSVP, stating otherwise it was possible no host would be present. Val suggested we table the discussion until next month so the calendar coordinator and C.A.B.A.G.E. South hosts might confer.

9. Helen introduced a discussion item: Regarding the term of the bylaws committee following installation of a new ExComm. The ExComm appoints a bylaws committee "the first meeting after taking office." Does that mean June or July? Jon offered that he believes that means July. All others agreed with this interpretation.

10. Val introduced an discussion item: About sending out a blank agenda - Val repeated her request for phone call submissions three days before the meeting so she can prepare the written agenda.

11. Val **moves**, and Helen **seconds**, Rita's appointment to the open position of Scam's SIGs Coordinator. **Passes** unanimously.

Open Forum - none.

Next meeting

Jon's house, Sunday, Feb 3 at 3 p.m. Helen **moved** to adjourn. Rita **seconds**. **Passes** unanimously at 16:14.



Bob-At-Large:



**When Did Humans
Become Human?**

**Bob Tuck,
Member-at-Large
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*“No educated person any longer questions the validity of the so-called theory of evolution, which we now know to be a simple fact.” – Ernst Mayr (1905 - ?), “Darwin’s Influence on Modern Thought,” *Scientific American*, July 2000.*

At age 97, the German-born zoologist Ernst Mayr, who showed that new species usually arise in geographic isolation, often following a genetic “revolution” that rapidly changes the contents of their gene pools, has a long-established reputation for being bluntly straightforward.

A recent, admittedly non-scientific, Internet poll regarding evolutionary theory, which had garnered 29,716 responses by the time I saw it, showed that fifty-six percent agreed with Mayr’s assessment that the evidence is so strong that the theory is beyond doubt. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents felt that the evidence is insufficient to support the theory, and the remaining sixteen percent just weren’t sure.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court declined last month to be drawn into a debate over the teaching of evolution in America’s public schools. The refusal was a victory for schools that require teachers to instruct on the subject, even if the teacher disagrees with the scientific theory.

It was a loss for a Christian biology teacher in Minnesota who was reassigned amid questions about his views on evolution. Justices declined without comment to review the teacher’s case.

The instructor, a Creationist, believes that God created the world in six days. He was reassigned to a ninth-grade teaching job in the southern Minnesota town of Faribault, home to about 20,000 residents.

The case presented the Supreme Court an opportunity to revisit the debate over public school instruction on the origin of humans. In 1987, justices struck down a Louisiana law that prohibited the teaching of evolution without equal time for Creationism.

The teacher, who has a master’s degree in biology education, contended that his reassignment violated his constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of religion. He argued that he “was silenced, not for anything he said in the classroom, but merely for holding a contrary viewpoint and expressing a desire to say certain things which the school district deemed out of step with its officially imposed orthodoxy.”

A judge had dismissed a lawsuit he filed against the Faribault School District, and Minnesota appeals courts upheld the dismissal. So he appealed to the Supreme Court. And, in effect, lost.

Presumably an “educated person,” this particular biology teacher obviously did not fit into Ernst Mayr’s characterization.

Often we see the term “Scientific Creationism” bandied about by modern Fundamentalists. Sorry, but there’s nothing “scientific” about the be-

lief. In order for science to come into play, there must be a level where hypotheses and theories can be tested and shown to be false. By its very nature, Creationism cannot be tested.

During the past quarter-century, many new fossil finds and advances in genetics and biochemistry have clearly put our species, *Homo sapiens*, into the grand context of life on Earth. Not only are we primates; our blood, bones, and behavior show that we're apes.

Well, apes with a difference. Anthropologist Ian Tattersall points out that “the acquisition of language and the capacity for symbolic art may lie at the very heart of the extraordinary cognitive abilities that set us apart from the rest of creation.” His words, not mine.



Tattersall, an excerpt of whose latest book, *The Monkey in the Mirror*, appears in the December 2001 issue of *Scientific American*, argues that “becoming human” meant more than just attaining our current physical characteristics. Something, he says, happened tens of thousands of years after anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* appeared. That “something” was the comparatively sudden rise of our ability to manipulate symbols.

I find Tattersall's speculations a bit fuzzy. He points out that humans showed up, probably in Africa, with modern skull structures between one hundred and fifty thousand and one hundred thousand years ago, but he contends that they shared their world with other members of the human lineage, namely *Homo neanderthalensis*, until perhaps just thirty thousand years ago. Furthermore, Tattersall asserts that a so-called cultural innovation took place in one human population around seventy thousand or sixty thousand years before the present.

That innovation, according to Tattersall, “activated a potential for symbolic cognitive processes that had resided in the human brain all along.” In other words, for perhaps half our species' entire existence, says Tattersall, our otherwise fully human forebears, who looked just like us, behaved more-or-less the same as their Neanderthal neighbors.

Tattersall credits the “simple mechanism of cultural diffusion” to account for the rapid spread of symbolic behaviors throughout the species of *Homo sapiens*, leaving our otherwise capable Neanderthal cousins far behind and ultimately outdone.

To bolster his scenario, he presents photos of artifacts and art dating back no further than thirty-two thousand years.

Tattersall goes on to suggest that it's possible that an initial form of language may have been invented not by adults, but by children. It's a charming hypothesis.

I don't buy it.

I suggest that the initial form of human language arose between *mothers* and their children. Of all the apes, we have the longest infancy, childhood,

and youth. The human mother-child bond is not only strong, it's lasting. And it affects both boys and girls.

Furthermore, even after I had reread Tattersall's article several times, I found myself convinced that his account of the sudden invention of symbolic thought halfway into the existence of our otherwise established species smacks of a "just-so" story.

Guess what? Just as I was gathering my few wits for this column, MSNBC reported (January 11) that researchers in South Africa had announced the discover of a *seventy-seven-thousand-year-old* piece of ochre, small enough to be held in the hand, that bears etchings. These scientists say such markings represent evidence of abstract thought in prehistoric times, suggesting ancient humans were capable of complex behavior and abstract thought thousands of years earlier than once believed. Contrary to Tattersall's belief, people in those ancient times already were practicing "modern behavior."



The find pushes back by thirty-five thousand years the earliest time when biologically modern humans were known to have developed modern behavior, said Christopher S. Henshilwood, a researcher at State University of New York at Stony Brook, and at the Iziko Museum of Cape Town, South Africa. "The theory up until now has been that modern human behavior started only around forty thousand years ago," he said.

Henshilwood said a list drawn up thirty years ago by archaeologists suggested that the yardstick for modern behavior among ancient people should include evidence of the ability to produce art, such as cave paintings, to make bone tools, and to develop the fairly complex technology needed to catch food, such as fish. Such factors, the experts decided, would suggest that the ancient people had a modern ability to reason, to create, to organize and to plan. Until now, it was believed that such modern behavior first appeared in Europe.

But Henshilwood said discoveries in the Blombos Cave east of Cape Town on the Indian Ocean show that modern human behavior developed in Africa even earlier than in Europe. He said the cave contains thousands of pieces of worked ochre, along with polished bone tools and many bones from fish -- all signs of modern behavior.

"The whole of South Africa was occupied by a biologically modern people who had evolved about a hundred-fifty thousand years ago," Henshilwood said. Now, he said, "there is no doubt that the people in southern Africa were behaviorally modern seventy thousand years ago."



The engraved stone artifacts found in the cave include two pieces of red ochre that had been rubbed on one side to make a flat smooth surface. Ancient craftsmen then carved intricate geometric patterns, cross hatching and diamonds and chiseled lines that crossed through and around the carving.

“The engraving itself is quite a complex geometric pattern. There is a system to the patterns,” Henshilwood said. “We don’t know what they mean, but they are symbols that I think could have been interpreted by those people as having meaning that would have been understood by others.”

He said more than eight thousand other pieces of ochre were found in the cave, many of which had been rubbed smooth as if to make pigment powder. “We think the powder was mixed with animal fat and applied to their bodies as a decoration or to artifacts such as skin bags,” Henshilwood said. Ancient peoples in many cultures, he said, have used ochre pigment in similar ways.

The ochre stone, he said, was mined at a site almost 20 miles away. There were other colors of the stone at the mine, but Henshilwood said there was evidence that the ancient peoples concentrated on the red pigment. Use of the pigment may have been used in rituals, marking such things as puberty or childbirth, he said.

Very few sites where ancient modern people may have lived in Africa have been excavated, he said, but he believes that eventually more evidence will be found to confirm the level of civilized practices on that continent seventy thousand years ago.

This is in contrast to Europe, where thousands of ancient sites have been excavated and there is a rich collection of artifacts proving that modern behavior existed there about forty thousand years ago, he said. Two separate scientific teams chemically dated the artifacts at the caves, confirming that the artifacts were left in deposits that were about seventy-seven thousand years old.

Steve Kuhn, a University of Arizona scientist who specializes in research on ancient people, said the South African study was “very good work by some very serious researchers.”

But he said more evidence of engraved stones must be found before the research community accepts Henshilwood’s conclusions. “I’d be more comfortable if there were more of these engraved stones, if these alleged symbols were found many times in different places,” said Kuhn. “It is possible they were just doodlings that really didn’t mean anything.”

As for the origin of all humankind’s various languages, well there’s another charming story for that:

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thor-

oughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11: 1-9)

It's certainly a more dramatic beginning than baby-talk.



Florida's Coral Castle



Barbara Peer

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An intriguing place to visit, one Mensans should relish, is the puzzling Coral Castle in Homestead, Florida. Weeks after our own visit, we are still discussing it and shaking our heads in wonder. And one of us is an engineer!

In 1913, Edward Leedskalnin came to Florida City from Latvia at the age of 26. His 16-year-old bride-to-be had spurned him the day before the wedding as being too old for her. He never had another love, and built this castle dedicated to her, whom he always referred to as his

“Sweet Sixteen.”

Ed wandered for years in Canada, California, Texas, and eventually Florida, working in lumber and cattle yards. He bought an acre of ground, and set to carving the coral which was thousands of feet thick at that locale. When a subdivision was planned nearby, he moved the entire venture to Homestead.

Coral weighs 125 pounds per cubic foot. The sections of wall surrounding the compound are 8 feet tall, 4 feet wide, 3 feet thick, and weigh some 13,000 pounds. The gate weighs 18,000 pounds, fits in the gateway with a quarter-inch space all around, and is balanced on the axle of an old car. My one finger easily rotates the gate to an open position. Scientists today have X rayed, examined, and probed, but as yet have no explanation for this extraordinary wonder.

Now the intriguing part: Ed was five feet tall, weighed 100 pounds, had a fourth-grade education, and a touch of tuberculosis. His only tools were parts of dis-

carded automobiles. No one is ever known to have seen him at work or loading or unloading anything from his old truck. He only worked at night and stopped if anyone ventured near. When asked for an explanation, Ed replied that he understood weights, leverage, and magnetism.

Within the walled compound is a two-story edifice holding his hand-made tools and, upstairs, some meager furniture which hangs suspended from the ceiling so the room could simply be hosed down. That floor is reached via 16 steps honoring "Sweet Sixteen." The rest of the castle is under the stars, which Ed studied.

There is a bedroom with two beds, with stone pillows; a Florida-shaped table with with six rocking chairs; a throne room; other chairs, lounges, and tables, one heart-shaped. A sunken pool with running water cooled his food kept there in bottles. A barbecue is fashioned from car pieces. The bathroom has a basin with a squarish bowl set in it, painted black and filled with water, thus creating a gazer's reflection.

He created a telescope, fountains, a well. He fashioned a precise sundial, but it records the time only from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the period of time Ed felt a man should work. There is much, much more to see and be amazed by. And everything -- everything -- is carved from coral.

My favorite spot is the "repentance corner," which is shaped like a large phone booth with a bench for Ed to sit on, facing two holes in the wall shaped like spoons standing on end. It was his plan to punish his future children and perhaps his wife by putting their heads through the opening, bending them over, and placing a weight on their shoulders. They could not retreat from his planned hour-long lectures on behavior.

If you find yourself in the southernmost part of Florida, take the road less traveled and a couple of hours to visit this unique Coral Castle. Or view some of it at www.coralcastle.com.



At Your Service



***Clara
Woodall-Moran,
Membership Chair***

My goodness where does the time go? It seems like only 20 years ago the first edition of *The SCAM* was delivered. That's right folks – we been publishing for 20 years. The actual anniversary date for the group is in April of 2002 but the newsletter was started before then. That first editor, Steve Schneider, needs to stand up and take a bow. We owe him a lot.

When the area code for this County changed (officially and finally) many of the members did not inform the National Office. The membership chair took care of that task. There were some typographical errors as well, but just this week I cleared up the last of the problems. As always, this membership chairperson is at your service.





Rabies

Ann Schindler

©2002

Rabies, also known as hydrophobia, is a highly fatal viral disease of warm-blooded animals. The disease has been known for centuries. It is thought to be the oldest communicable disease of humans. The Sanskrit word for rabies is “rabhas” meaning “to do violence.” Ancient Egyptians first described rabies about 2300 BC. Ancient Greeks also knew of the disease, referring to it as “lyssa” meaning “madness.” In his writings, Aristotle described the disease, its effects, and transmission. In Medieval times, it was believed that drinking the blood of a king would cure rabies, though I am unsure how the remedy was obtained.

The Talmud, a book of Jewish traditions and laws completed around the 5th century AD, refers to treatments for rabies. In 1530 the Italian Girolamo Fracastoro described rabies in depth, including its method of transmission. By the 19th century, rabies abounded in Europe and many people killed themselves after being bitten by a rabid dog, rather than endure the disease and its tortuous death. In 1885, Louis Pasteur discovered rabies was caused by organisms (viruses) too small to be seen by microscopes, and he was then able to develop the first preventive vaccine against rabies.

The rabies virus, a rhabdovirus of the genus *Lyssavirus*, is bullet shaped and is transmitted in the saliva of infected animals. Human to human transmission is rare but has occurred via organ transplants or human bites. A less frequent method of contracting rabies is by aerosol (respiration). This could occur in a laboratory during work with infected animal brains or in heavily populated bat caves, since bat excreta contain the rabies virus. Rabies is found on all continents except Antarctica. Certain countries have a very high rate of the disease as the Philippines, Mexico, Thailand, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, and a number of South American countries. The highest rate, however, is India where between 35 and 50 thousand people die each year from the disease. The reasons for these high numbers seems to be a lack of government health policies, a lack of public education, and an estimated 25 million dogs in India, many of which are strays. Also, the rabies vaccine in general use in India is, although inexpensive, an antiquated and ineffective one, and treatment is rarely initiated early enough.

Rabies is a disease of the central nervous system, traveling along nerve pathways to the brain where it causes encephalitis, an inflammation that leads to the symptoms of the disease. The incubation period can last from 10 days to 7 years, though the average is about 3 to 7 weeks. This period of time varies depending on the amount of virus transmitted and the site of entry. There are two forms of rabies: *ferious* or *fulminant* rabies, and *dumb* or *paralytic* rabies. Ferious rabies affects the brain and causes aggression and irritability while dumb rabies affects the spinal cord and causes lethargy and weakness of the limbs. Untreated rabies can lead to a painful death.

In ferious rabies, an animal changes personality: a quite animal may

become active or a wild animal may act tame. The animal may bite anything in its environment, animate or inanimate and may even bite itself. The disease progresses to an excitable stage where the animal may be easily startled, change its eating habits, stray, or become aggressive. Gradual paralysis develops in the hind legs and throat, leading to drooling. Death soon follows. In dumb rabies, the animal may seem depressed and isolate itself or it may seem sluggish and confused. Nocturnal animals may be seen during the day. The animal becomes unapproachable, begins to stagger, and becomes increasingly ill. In both forms, complete paralysis manifests in the final stage, followed by coma and death. Death is usually due to respiratory failure and occurs within seven days of the onset of symptoms unless intensive care is administered.

In humans, the virus enters through a bite wound of the skin or through a mucous membrane that comes in contact with the saliva of an infected animal. The rabies virus travels along a nerve until it reaches the salivary glands where replication takes place. The amount of time this takes is dependent on the length of the nerve and quantity of virus present. The closer to the central nervous system, the quicker the symptoms will develop. A bite on the face would be quicker to cause symptoms than a bite on the foot. Sometimes a wound is healed and the incident forgotten by the time symptoms develop. The most important thing to remember after any bite or scratch from an animal is to thoroughly wash the area with soap and water to reduce the amount of rabies virus present, and then contact local health authorities as soon as possible. In ferious rabies, the course of the disease may be: headache, fever, irritability, anxiety, muscle pain, salivation, and vomiting. A stage of excitement follows with painful muscle spasms. Attempting to swallow water or other fluids becomes unbearable, and the patient may develop a fear of water, hence the name "hydrophobia." Sensitivity to drafts develops, particularly on the face. After several days, coma develops and death follows shortly. The disease is 100% fatal once symptoms develop. In dumb rabies, the symptoms begin similarly, but there will be no stage of excitement. The patient will instead slowly decline, develop some paralysis, then death will occur.

The diagnosis of rabies is made by observing a suspect animal in quarantine for 7 to 10 days. If the animal survives and stays healthy, it does not have rabies. Sick or dead animals are further examined. The head is packed carefully in leak-proof bags and is shipped in ice to a qualified laboratory for a series of tests. If a person is bitten by a normal behaving animal or a valuable one that the owners do not want to sacrifice, post-exposure treatment should be started and the animal may be kept quarantined for 6 to 12 months.

Rabies immunizations for pets, once every 2 years, are required in many places around the world. Some places have even instituted a program for orally immunizing certain breeds of wild animals, e.g. raccoon and fox, with rabies baits in the hopes of further protecting the public. There is a pre-

exposure and post-exposure rabies immunization for persons in need of protection or for those desiring it. Pre-exposure rabies immunization is encouraged for persons at risk of contact with infected animals, for instance veterinarians, zoo employees, and animal control personnel. There are several types of pre-exposure immunizations, and they are administered at specific time intervals. Having a pre-exposure immunization series does not eliminate the need for post-exposure immunization if a bite or other contact with a suspicious animal occurs. It does decrease the number of doses required for treatment. Booster doses are recommended at assigned intervals. A blood test, called rabies titer, can also be done to check on antibody production. Post-exposure rabies immunization is also a series of injections given at specified intervals. An injection of rabies immune globulin is also given intramuscularly with a portion injected at the site of injury.

To prevent the spread of rabies have your pet vaccinated at recommended intervals and do not let your pet roam free. Spaying may also help to prevent roaming animals. Teach children not to play with wild animals or pets they do not know. Do not attract wild animals to your home. If you find a dead animal that must be moved, use a shovel or other implement and use disposable gloves. Bats rarely have rabies, but if you see one during the day or in an area where it would not usually be found (in your home), be aware it may have rabies. Call your animal control or county wildlife office whenever you have a concern about an animal and seek medical care for any injuries.

Sources

Rabies. 8 March 2001. Online. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Internet. 14 November 2001. Available <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/>.

The AnswerSleuth Looks at Rabies. 2001. Prompt Software Inc. Internet. 25 November 2001. Available <http://www.answersleuth.com/health/diseases/rabies.shtml>.



“Clyde”

I once had a dog by the name of Clyde
Who wouldn't stay tied
No matter how we tried.
One morning, the dog who wouldn't stay tied
Broke loose into the road quite wide.
Got hit by a car, right there in his side
Lay down in the road and there he died.
And that is the tale of a hide named Clyde.



**The Poetry
Corner**



**Rita
Johnson-Aronna**

February 2002 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 14th & 28th
7:00PM, Merritt Island, across from Merritt Square Mall

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 9th & 23rd
7:00PM, Merritt Square Mall, Merritt Island

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.

Host: **Ellen Paul 639-6923**

****PLEASE NOTE**** *CABAGE South is no more. Ray Paul, our usual host for this event, reports little attendance, and an occasional inability to attend. He, therefore, is no longer hosting. If anyone out there is interested in reinstating CABAGE South, call Ellen Paul (639-6923) and it can make a comeback.*

1st	6:30 p.m.	P.O.E.T.S.
Friday	Meal cost	SS/NP

Wynn Rostek and Terry Valek have found a great new place in Titusville, and are inviting the rest of us along to try it out. The place is called "*Chops*", and is known for delicious meals and some great Early Birds that our hosts are trying to arrange for us, so don't be late! Our location is **3350 S. Washington Ave., Titusville, FL.**

Wynn Rostek and Terry Valek

2nd	2:00 p.m.	Go SIG
Saturday	Free	SS/NP

Steve Schneider has put together a SIG for an age-old game, Go. According to its enthusiasts, Go takes a very short time to learn and a lifetime to perfect. If you play or would like to learn, meet the group at *Barnes and Noble in Merritt Island* this afternoon.

Steve Schneider

3rd	3:00 p.m.	ExComm Meeting
Sunday	Free	SS/NP

The Executive Committee of the group meets to conduct its monthly busi-

ness. All members are welcome to attend, to volunteer, and to see how things are done. This month's meeting will be held at the *home of our LocSec, Jon Warner*, whose address is listed inside the front cover of the newsletter.

Jon Warner

9th	12:30 p.m.	Mensa Entrance Exam
Saturday	\$30.00	NS/NP

On the second Saturday of every month, SCAM conducts the Mensa Entrance Exam at the *Annex of the Cape Canaveral Hospital Resource Center*. The admission fee is \$30.00, which must be paid on-site, and valid photo identification is also required. Bring some of your friends and family who are also some of the bright ones. Cape Canaveral Hospital is located on the **S.R. 520 Causeway, on the way to Cocoa Beach**, on the north side of the highway.

Helen Lee Moore

10th	NL and Calendar deadlines
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All newsletter submissions must be to J.T. no later than today. Ditto for calendar events being to Ellen.

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 late-comers.

Jim Trammell

21st	6:30 p.m.	Sure Happy It's Thursday!
Thursday	Meal cost	SS/NP

Ellen Paul takes us to her favorite Mexican restaurant in Rockledge, *El Charro*. Great Mexican fare, plus delicious margaritas in a relaxed atmosphere await the group. El Charro is located on **Florida Avenue, just south of the Cocoa/Rockledge border**.

Ellen Paul

23rd	6:30 p.m.	S.N.O.R.T.
Saturday	Meal Cost	SS/NP

Wasabi! Join us at our best-attended monthly event and sample some great Japanese fare; take a break from the Christmas sweets for some sushi and tempura. *Miyako's* is located at **1511 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US1) in Melbourne**.

J.T. Moran



***A View... From
Somewhere Else
The Line of
Magenot: Part II***

***by
Hank Rhodes***

©2002

Author's Note: The Maginot Line refers to a chain of fortifications built by France along its border with Germany in the 1930s. The first part of this article discussed how the Maginot Line came to be built, and details of its defenses.

While the Maginot Line was under construction, there were some changes in Germany, which suffered from the combined effects of the worldwide depression and a period of hyperinflation. Additionally, there was lingering resentment in Germany over the treatment received at the Versailles peace conference. A fringe party, previously noted only for its flair for pagan-style rituals and symbols, gained control of the government. Under the leader of this party, Adolf Hitler, the Germans embarked on a course of rearmament and occupation, first of demilitarized regions within Germany, then annexation of other nations' territory.

Strangely, the victorious nations from the last war, who were so eager to punish Germany at Versailles, now ignored the increasingly aggressive actions of the rising Third Reich. With the horrors of the trenches still in mind, the French, like many other nations, had embraced a staunchly pacifist outlook. They were willing to allow the Nazis to violate standards of civilized conduct, so long as France was not in the Nazi's expansionist plans. After all, they were safe from the Teutonic menace, behind the Maginot Line.

There were, however, some weaknesses in the French plan. The south abutment against the Swiss Alps was solid. However, the other terminus of the line, opposite the border with Belgium, is worth examining. Aside from the prohibitive costs, there were several reasons why the line did not extend all the way to the North Sea (a further distance of 175 miles from the end of the Maginot Line at La Ferte).

At the end of the Maginot Line, the border region between Belgium and France is comprised of hills covered with a dense forest, the Ardennes. It was believed that this difficult country would prevent the passage of a large military formation, and a small, mobile force could adequately defend the border in this region.

Equally important, Belgium was a key ally of the French. It was expected that in a future war the French Army would march across this border and fight alongside their Belgian comrades. To fortify the border would imply distrust or abandonment of a strategic partner. This was unacceptable.

While militarizing, the Germans constructed their own defenses. Al-



though the Germans referred to their system as the “Westwall,” it was popularly known among the western nations as the Siegfried Line. This was a series of obstacles and bunkers along the entire western frontier of Germany. It was not an integrated system, and its components did not approach the level of complexity of the Maginot Line. Furthermore, it was only manned with a token force, while the main elements of the German Army were pursuing conquests elsewhere. Nazi propaganda, however, managed to make the Siegfried Line as formidable as the Maginot Line in many minds, at a fraction of the cost.



After ignoring Hitler’s aggressive actions for years, the French and British were finally forced to declare war after the Nazi attack on Poland in 1939, due to a mutual defense treaty with the latter unfortunate country, which was conquered in three weeks. During this time, elements of the French Army made a brief incursion into Germany. This was not a sustained effort, and stopped short of the Siegfried Line. After a few weeks, the operation was terminated, and the French withdrew to the Maginot Line.

For the remainder of the Winter of 1939-1940, the Armies remained in their positions, often within sight of one another, without conducting any offensive operations. This strange period is known as “The Phony War.”

The Phony War ended in April 1940, when Hitler attacked the Scandinavian countries. He followed this rapid conquest by attacking Belgium and the Netherlands in May.

In these campaigns, the Germans employed the revolutionary tactics and weaponry they had developed since the last war. This involved a rapid offensive thrust of tanks and mechanized infantry, supported by dive bombers, with liberal use of airborne shock units (both paratroops and glider-borne).

The German offensive to the west involved three Armies. One Army demonstrated as if staging for an attack opposite the Maginot Line, where the French committed over half their Army. The second German Army swept across the Netherlands and northern Belgium. The third Army, which was the major striking force, thrust through the “impassable” Ardennes, north of the Maginot Line. The Germans broke through the defenses in that area, and then annihilated each makeshift defensive line the French attempted to throw before them. Meanwhile, the British Army in France had been surrounded by the Germans at Dunkirk shore, to be rescued at the eleventh hour by a makeshift flotilla.

During this time, the majority of the French Army remained anchored in the Maginot Line.

Five weeks after their initial attack, the German Army entered Paris on June 14. The French government surrendered on June 22. The last of the Maginot Line forts did not surrender until June 27. France would be under Nazi occupation for the next four years.

There were three fatal mistakes pertaining to the Maginot Line as a system of defense. First, and most obvious, was the failure to adequately defend the Belgian border, allowing the line to be flanked.

A second fatal mistake was due to the complacency throughout the French political-military establishment. Convinced they had an infallible system of defenses, this complacency manifested itself in the failure to conduct sustained offensive operations against the Germans early in the war, when the majority of the German forces were committed elsewhere.

Finally, there was the failure to abandon the Maginot Line in a timely manner to counterattack the Germans after France was invaded.

The Maginot Line has become a metaphor for faulty strategy and a monument to failure. These failures should be properly assessed. The designers and builders are not to blame. While fixed fortifications were an outmoded paradigm by the 1930s, it can also be argued that the Maginot Line accomplished its mission and deterred a German invasion across the common border.

The failures of the Maginot Line are mainly on the part of short-sighted politicians and generals who embraced complacency, and made bad decisions. They failed to understand the threat, they failed to aid the victims of Nazi aggression, and they failed to make any significant effort to counterattack the menace until it was too late.

The French people, guided by their pacifist impulses, and fear of the Germans, trusted the assurances of their leaders. They placed their faith in a single technology at their own peril. Are we any wiser than they?

Notes

Primary sources for this article are: *The Maginot Line: Myth and Reality*, by Anthony Kemp, New York: Military Heritage Press, 1988, and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.



I hereby request permission to reprint Jamie Glatt's copyrighted article, "Signifying Nothing: All I want for Christmas," printed in the December 2001 issue of the excellent *SCAM*, in the January 2002 issue of the *Spirit of 76*. Jamie's piece is well worth wider dissemination!

Angie Richardson, Editor, *Spirit of 76*
The Newsletter of Mensa76 (Texas)



***The Casebook of
Anthony Chianti,
Private Eye***



***Kenneth
Thornton-Smith***
© 2002

***The Case of The Wabasso Triangle: Episode I
The Pink Mystery***

It should not have happened, but one thing is certain: it did happen. Defying several Laws of Physics, not to mention most of Deuteronomy, the Wabasso Triangle has struck again.

Anthony Chianti, Licensed Private Eye and Indian River Community Pasta Detective, reporting:

It was Monday. The alarm reminded me that it was time to take a break. Anyway, after staring at the few available facts all afternoon I wasn't making any progress solving the current case – last week's Crossword. I looked up from my desk – the office was deserted this late in the afternoon. That's because I'm the only

one that works here.

I was stressed. It had been a long day, with two more pesticides to add to the unsolved pile, and I needed a stiff drink. I found the decanter among a pile of Lasagna litigation, poured myself a double YooHoo and wandered over to the window. I looked out at the string of brightly lit speakeasies, meandering like fresh fettuccini until it reached the foothills of the San Sebastian River. The neon metropolis of Sebastian beckoned a blinking welcome far below me with its garish downtown lights. Mainly: green, yellow, red, yellow, green.

It was time for a break. One thing's for sure: plain-clothes pasta work is hard on the gray matter. I was in a spin and burned out, or, as we say in the trade, "Rotini al Forno". Time to hit the beach.

It was packed.

It's quite amazing how much stuff you need for a trip to the beach, but at last it was packed. Squeezed tight in the trunk of my 1976 Buick Testudo along with a mountain of soggy evidence gathered at the raid on Dr Pepperoni's, a local house of ill repute and pasta purgatory.

Wabasso Beach: I parked the car, leaving Tortiglioni, my Italian bloodhound, panting in the passenger seat. I walked for hours, churning the mystery in my mind – 19 Across: *LINGUINI* didn't fit because of 7 down. Something was wrong somewhere, and for once it wasn't Inspector Ravioli of the Pasta Police breathing down my neck.

Enough was enough, I had work to do – pasta was being abused and here I was having fun. I headed for the stairs, and that was when it all began. For a start, the stairs were unusually crowded. Some of them looked... well, not normal. We Pasta Detectives are trained to be observant. Couldn't put my finger on it, not wacky, but definitely not normal. As I reached the top and made for the parking lot, it got weirder still. The parking lot had gone. So had Boppy's Wabasso Beach Market and its wide range of durum-wheat products. Everything I knew and loved had

evaporated and been replaced by a strange, otherworldly apartment complex.

Where was I? And the car? "Tortiglioni... " I called out. People stared at me. I looked back, only not as hard, as I was outnumbered. This could mean only one thing: The Wabasso Triangle!

As students of the paranormal will already know, the Wabasso Triangle is an area defined by the three points of Wabasso, Winter Beach and Wero Beach. Those of you not psychically aware of the unknown will observe that these locations are actually in a straight line on US Highway 1. But that is only true in this dimension. In fact, due to a localized Macarena in the space-time continuum, they appear to us as a straight line. That's just one of the many unsolved mysteries of the Wabasso Triangle.

Anyway, I looked around. I mean, it was weird. Like, I'm not racist or anything, but the place was full of them. Packed. You know, "them". Like, would you let your daughter marry one of these? A Pinky? A bright pink body in a loud shirt reeking of cheap wine. Some say they don't have jobs. The man at the deli says they're the vanguard of an alien invasion. Eric the bartender, who knows everything, leaned across the counter and whispered "...they come from... somewhere up North". One guy even told me that they live in RVs.

I made for the bar. Among the scarlet schnozzles and flamingo foreheads there were a few whites so I felt safe.

Figuring I might single-handedly solve another mystery (it's been four years since the Cannelloni Incident), or at least order a beer, I pushed my way to the bar. It got weirder – there were more whites in the bar, but I felt less and less welcome. They were staring at me. I felt uncomfortably warm. Maybe I put too much Jalapeno in that sauce. Or maybe I was ovulating – I'll try anything once.

I ordered a beer. The man behind the bar looked curiously white. And him. And him. This was strange, these people were white! I mean, like, super white. Like Spaghetti Alfredo. Not a flesh white – they were all, literally, as white as sheets. Of Lasagna. It was ghoulish – I tried not to look at their pasty, bleached skin. Then it occurred to me – these people are not from here!

And then I remembered: There is no sunshine on a flying saucer! I was in an alien drop zone! I panicked and ran back towards the beach. They tried to stop me, white and pink. Some looked innocent as they stood, threatening and immobile, in my path. They threw soda cans, plastic buckets and babies at me as I zigzagged through the sea of haunting eyes, pink pachyderms and clammy Cloroxed skin.

At last I reached the boardwalk at the top of the stairs, panting, took one last look behind me and threw myself off the rail, diving headfirst for the beach.

[Long pause.....]

I never liked hospitals. The only time you ever go there is when there's something wrong. So even when you're 100% healthy, and, say, you have to visit Auntie Dora, the next thing you know, your brain says "Hospital" and psychosomatically compensates by making you as sick as Vermont Ziti.

Now, you probably think that the clever British just rounded up all the Puritan types and put them on ethnic cleansing boats to the New World. But the real truth is much more sinister: In medieval England, all the religious fruitcakes taught their daughters to boil macaroni to death. And guess what – proud of their origins, they still carry on this gruesome tradition up in New England. Names like "Vermont" still send a shudder down the spine of any self-respecting Community Pasta Detective. Lying there bandaged, that's how sick I felt: *Ziti al Vermonti*

So I heard this doctor type say, "Yeah... apparently, he threw himself off the stairs at Disney, you know, the Vero Beach Resort. Landed on the sand but knocked himself out cold..."

So that was their cover. Disney was a front for the alien invasion.

Anyway, I had tumbled their little game. This was one case I was determined to solve without the help of the Indian River Serious Pasta Crimes Squad.

Things started to click into place. Like, one thing had always bothered me: Why was it called "Disney at Vero Beach" when it was in Wabasso? Now the answer was obvious: a pathetic attempt at concealment that didn't fool anybody.

Except me.

I kept an eye on the place by sneaking out of hospital every day after supper. By Tuesday, among all the pasty whites a few people were pink. Thursday night most were definitely around the 600 nanometers end of the spectrum – Friday it was 100% Hot Pinky. I rummaged through the dumpsters looking for empty pods or discarded UFO oil filters. Nothing – they cover their tracks well.

Saturday, and all the Pinkies were gone, equally distributed among the population, no doubt, where they just wait, sleepers, eating our pasta, until they can be summoned when needed by their alien overlords. And then, on Sunday evening, the place was once more full of the whiter-than-white Clorox-skin types awaiting their furtive conversion to pink mode.

It all started to make sense. The new arrivals – the freshly cloned white people – were being processed at Disney until they turned pink!

Well, amazing but true; that's about it for this month's update from the Wabasso Triangle.

Anthony Chianti, Indian River Community Pasta Detective, signing off. Bed 327, Indian River Memorial Hospital.



**A View
from the Right:
The Bend
Sinister**
by
J.T. Moran
(morwood@cfl.rz.com)

Members of the media, along with their apologists, have begun something of a quest for their own Holy Grail: to prove that there is no “liberal bias” in the mainstream media. They quote polls, they point to studies, and they proclaim their unswerving devotion to truth, justice, and the American way as loud as they can. The only problem is that their actions, as always, are much better indicators of their true agendas. And those are incontrovertibly left of center. Even liberal *New York Times* columnist Richard Berke has admitted that news reporters now shade the news with in ways that belong strictly in opinion columns. And the bombshell dropped recently by Bernard Goldberg has them frothing at the mouth.

Bias in the media is usually not blatantly obvious, but that it exists is easily inferred as well as demonstrable. The inference is easy. In 1996 a survey was taken of every press and media person covering the Washington beat. EVERY person. The results were startling, but not surprising. Over 90% described themselves as “liberal, rather than conservative.” The same number stated that they had voted for Clinton. 89% were registered Democrats. Now, with those credentials, there is no way personal biases cannot impinge upon their professional duties, which include reporting for the national news media. Impartiality cannot be achieved.

Most of this impingement can be seen in the different methods of reporting about members of the different parties. When Bill Clinton was newly ensconced in office, the news media reported... extolled how he “kept his promise” about abortion. They neglected the broken promise about a tax cut, but praised him for keeping what he did. Move to 2001, and G.W. Bush was reported as having made “questionable decisions about his controversial tax cut.” Controversial? Abortion is most certainly a controversial topic in this country. Questionable? A negative inference on the part of the media. Yet where were the laudatory remarks from the press for his “keeping his promise?” Nowhere to be found.

Another subtle bit of bias can be found in the media’s questioning of a conservative’s ability. At the beginning of his first term Bill Clinton had a 46% job approval rating. At the beginning of his, President Bush enjoyed a 52% approval rating. Yet never was then-President Clinton’s competency to do the job questioned as G.W. Bush’s was.

When it comes to polls, the liberal media usually loves them. However, they can upon occasion be embarrassing, so they do what any partisan would do: they either spike them, or spin them.

During the early part of last year, when President Bush was out stumping for support of his tax cut, a *CBS* poll showed that 67% of Americans supported it. Two-thirds of Americans thought that the tax cut was a great idea. What did *CBS* do with this information? Was it at the top of the evening news? Nope. *CBS* spiked the story, so you never heard it from

Dan Rather, a man who loves to cite polls.

Around the same time, over at *ABC*, an *ABC/Washington Post* poll found that 58% of Americans thought the cut was either “just right” or “too small,” while only 36% thought it was “too big.” Did we hear these numbers from that other poll-loving anchor, Peter Jennings? Nope. Instead, we heard from correspondent Terry Moran (*Ed. Note: No relationship, thank God!*) who said that the public is “becoming a little skeptical about some aspects of his leadership” and quoted another poll saying 61 percent of Americans think Bush “favors large business corporations of the interests of ordinary working people.” And he quoted polls showing that only 50 percent think Bush is handling the economy well. Then he suggested it would be a “feat of rhetorical sleight of hand” for Bush to sell his tax cut as an economic recovery plan.” The one thing you didn’t hear was the results of their own poll – the one favorable to President Bush.

On topics of interest, the one area where President Bush is slammed more often is that of the environment. Almost daily you can read or listen to talking heads inferring that the President is trying to pollute the oceans and poison the populace. So is it any wonder that the far-left liberal combination poll from *CBS/New York Times* showing that more Americans approve than disapprove was spiked? The fact is, 46% approve of the way Bush is handling the environment and 42% disapprove. But did you ever see these numbers? No.

Sometimes the media bias can even be observed in the treatment of the politician’s children. We lately have seen the daughters of President Bush splashed all over the newspapers and even as lead stories on the evening news because of their scrapes with the law for drinking. But, do you remember the story in 1996 when Vice-President Al Gore’s then-16-year-old daughter Sarah was cited for underage possession of alcohol, in an episode remarkably similar to Jenna Bush’s? Or how in that same year 14-year-old Albert Gore III was suspended from St. Albans prep school for smoking marijuana at a school dance? I doubt it, especially in the case of the son, as the media hushed up the younger Gore’s drug bust after his father personally contacted news editors and asked them to kill the story. For something more recent, how about Chelsea Clinton’s bar-hopping drunken binge in Aspen this spring? No story or headlines about the alcoholic daughter of Senator Hillary Clinton, was there?

Many times the bias is due to a wish to further a social, or socio-political agenda favored by the media, rather than a purely political agenda. Such an agenda falls under the banner of “hate crimes.”

Remember Matthew Shepard? He was the gay student who was beaten to death in Wyoming by two heterosexuals and left hanging on a fence. The story was top-of-the-news for months, with over 3,000 stories on the subject published in the nation’s print and electronic media in the month following the murder.

So, you might ask, why am I bringing this up? The story is newsworthy, and the crime was heinous. Well, I bring it up because of another heinous crime that did not receive nearly so much attention.

How many of you recognize the name of Jesse Dirkhising? In September 1999, he was kidnapped, drugged, and then sodomized and repeatedly raped over several hours after being bound with duct tape and rope, and gagged with his own underwear. Jesse Dirkhising suffocated and died. Jesse was only 13 years old. Yet this horrendous death of an innocent child was reported all of 46 times in the month following his murder at the hands of two homosexuals.

These two crimes occurred less than a year apart. They were both heinous events. Yet one was a national sensation while the other might as well not have happened. One was paraded in front of the national audience as a reason for more "hate-crime" legislation while one was ignored. Matthew Shepard's mother made the rounds of the interview circuit, while the Dirkhising parents were invisible to the nation. Why such a dichotomy? Both crimes were heinous, but is not the torture, rape and suffocation death of a 13 year old even worse than the beating death of a mature adult? Or, at least as newsworthy? As a point of fact, in all of year 2000 only one article about Dirkhising appeared in a major mainstream newspaper, *The Boston Globe*. The *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* ignored the incident completely. In the same period, The *New York Times* published 45 stories about Shepard and The *Washington Post* published 28. Not one of the major networks gave the Dirkhising story any coverage whatsoever. The best excuse was given by *CBS*: "Every day we have 22 minutes to fill ... (and during the trial) the overall editorial judgment was that it couldn't fit into the broadcast that day." Yet these are the same networks that devoted literally hundreds of minutes and stories to the Jon Benet Ramsey case. Ask yourself: "Why?"

There can only be one reason that stands up to any reasonable scrutiny. That is the agenda of the media. The crime **AGAINST** the homosexual male was promoted as a cause-celebré by the media as a hate crime. The crime **BY** the homosexual males on the person of a child, however, was ignored, and could even be said to have been suppressed by the media, a media whose socio-political agenda includes preferential treatment for special groups.

These are but a few of what I call the media's "Sins of Omission." The stories are not lies (although these have occurred as well: the *NBC* report on "assault weapons" that presented a fully automatic weapon as an example of the weapon to be banned, and the report on "exploding" Ford pickups that required the judicious use of some explosives to achieve, are a couple of examples) but achieve the bias through slanted presentation or by presentation of only one side of the story.

The First Amendment guarantees, in part, the freedom of the press.

This right was to insure that the truth would not be suppressed by the government. Yet what difference is there if the truth is suppressed by the press itself? As long as the media actively promotes its own agendas through the use of lies and slanted reporting, and through the biased, partisan promulgation of only one side of a story, the people of this country do not have a “free press.”

We have the American version of “Pravda.” And *that’s* the truth.



The 10th Story

***Elissa Rudolph,
RVC10***

RVC10@us.mensa.org

It’s the shortest month, but has the most interesting holidays: Groundhog Day (watching a rodent watching his shadow? C’mon!), Valentine’s Day (feel obligated to send a Valentine? Blame Hallmark!), President’s Day (earmarked for all presidents, only because we don’t want to ignore Abe or George or John or Grover or Millard or any of the others). You can say that February is not boring, a little over the top on holidays, but not boring.

Speaking of boredom, here are a few ideas to chase those winter blues away. Renew your membership early! You will have already received your renewal package—find it and get your dues in early. March 31 falls on a Sunday this year, so if you want your membership to be continuous, you need to be sure your renewal in the National Office by Friday, March 29. Or just renew on line! How easy!

CultureQuest® XIII is coming, planned for April 28 this year. You can join CQ Classic or CQ: The Next Generation (age 17 or under) and have fun stretching your brain on a Sunday afternoon along with Mensans across the U.S. Think of all those neurons snapping and sparking! Your LocSec and Editors all received full information on CQ XIII.

Regional Spotlight this month is on **Central Florida Mensa** located in and around Orlando. This group had an RG, *Smarti Gras* at the end of January, but I can’t tell you how good it was because I haven’t been there yet! (It’s early January as I write this.) Their January newsletter, *The Flame*, had a compelling banner across it: “Please destroy this newsletter!!” You were to rip off the back cover because it was a registration form for the RG. Very clever. With more than 420 members, Central Florida is the second largest group in Region 10. Keep up the good work, Central Florida Smarties!!

Coming events

May 24-27, Tampa Bay Bash, same hotel as last year:

www.thatparrotplace.com ; or Barbara Loewe,

bloewe@juno.com



**The Gourmet's
Guide:**

**England
and Fish**

by

Art Belefant

©2002

(belefant@juno.com)

In a two-day visit to England, Rita and I managed to experience what has happened to some traditional British cooking. In previous articles I described how the cooking in Britain has improved over that of only thirty years ago.

There has been a major improvement with the introduction and appreciation of continental cuisine and that has led to the improvement of English cooking generally. Particularly the treatment of local products is now imaginative and excellent. There still remains, however, an undercurrent of the old cooking as exemplified by several traditional dishes.

On the first day of our arrival, after having a very early breakfast on the airplane, we had an early lunch of leek and Stilton soup, garnished with mushrooms and cauliflower, an excellent combination and an example of the new British cuisine.

Then, being a Sunday, we went to get the traditional Sunday dinner (in the afternoon) of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. We selected an old pub, complete with dark wood interior, for our repast. Several pubs in Salisbury were serving roast beef and Yorkshire pudding that afternoon. The one we chose was in an old hotel, the Cornmarket Inn, in the center of the town. The inn and pub had obviously been there for many years, perhaps hundreds

The roast beef came on a large platter with plain boiled vegetables (cabbage, cauliflower, peas, carrots), something like a potato pancake, and, of course, Yorkshire pudding. Gravy was poured over the lot. The Yorkshire pudding was a circle of puff pastry sitting atop the beef.

The beef was several thin slices of overdone and dried-out beef. The vegetables were insipid. All in all, it was exactly the sort of cooking that gave England its reputation for poor food for so many years.

For breakfast the next day, at our B&B, we had a "full English Breakfast". This is the same breakfast served in every hotel, inn, and B&B in England. First there is orange juice, fruit, and a choice of cold cereals. All of that is self-served. The served portion consists of brown and white toast, butter, and marmalade, one greasy fried egg, bacon (which we call ham), sausage, a greasy fried tomato, and fried mushrooms. It is quite filling but does get boring after the first few days and is yet another example of unimproved British cuisine.

We skipped lunch that day so we could have tea at Bath at the suggestion of Nancy Paul. The Pump Room at Bath is a large, elegant tea-room. It was built in 1706 as a place to drink the curative waters and to view the bathers. It has been renovated and enlarged several times since. Bath mineral water is still served in the room at 50p a glass.

The room is opulent, at least two stories high, with crisp white linens, and excellent service. The Pump Room serves morning coffee, lunch, and

afternoon tea. For tea, one has a choice from about seven accompaniments. Most consisted of sweets, such as cakes, pastries, scones, and such. We chose rarebit made with aged cheddar cheese and herbs. It came with spiced apple chutney, a sort of applesauce, and a choice of two pastries. It was all excellent. The rarebit is an example of the improvement that can be found in some of the traditional English dishes.

Later that day, rather than having a full meal, we decided to have that old standby - fish and chips. We found a small shop near our B&B, so small that it had no name, just a sign declaring "fish and chips". I chose cod, while Rita had plaice. In British fish and chips shops, cod is the usual fish although most also have plaice. Some even have other fish as well.

Cod is a strong flavored fish; plaice is much milder. The fish was dipped in a batter and deep-fried before us. The portions were large and delicious. The chips were a bit soggy. This traditional comestible has not changed since I first had it many years ago, nor could it be improved.

The next morning, in order to avoid the "full English Breakfast" I asked for kippers, which can be had in many B&B's if given enough notice. The kippers (smoked sardines) were unlike the canned variety available in the U. S. and were much better. Kippers are also a traditional English dish that has not been changed since my first visit to England and need not be.

Thus in two days we had a sampling of some traditional English cooking. Some was excellent and some could do with some improvement.

SIDEBAR: COD (*Gadus morhua*)

Danish: *torsk*

Dutch: *kabeljau*

Faroese: *torskur*

Finnish: *turska*

French: *cabillaud, morue*

German: *Kabeljau, Dorsch*

Greek: *lepiron* (phonetic)

Greenlandic: *tros*

Icelandic: *thorskur* (phonetic)

Irish: *trose*

Italian: *merluzzo*

Turkish: *morina*

Norwegian: *torsk*

Polish: *dorsz, watlusz*

Portuguese: *bacalhau*

Russian: *treska, pertui* (phonetic)

Spanish: *bacalou*

Swedish: *torsk*

Scottish: *bodach*

Welsh: *penfras*

Cod is one of the most common food fishes and, perhaps because of that, one of the most maligned. Fresh cod can be delicious, but because of the traditional marketing of dried, salt cod, many fish eaters have never had the fresh.

In much of the world's markets the dried, salt cod is the preferred form. It is sold in the U. S. under the Portuguese name bacalhau.

Cod has been a staple of European cuisine for many years, the major source being the Grand Banks off of Newfoundland. It was exploited very early on by the Portuguese. Some say that they discovered America long before Columbus while fishing for cod; they just kept it a secret in order to protect their source as a monopoly.

Cod figured importantly in the economy of Colonial America, so much so that Boston is called the "home of the bean and the cod".

Cape Cod was given its name, and an effigy of a cod hangs in the Massachusetts State House in honor of the cod's importance.

Perhaps the best novel written about cod is *Captains Courageous* by Rudyard Kipling. Not only will it tell you much about cod fishing, it is a good read.

SIDEBAR: PLAICE (*Pleuronectes platessa*)

Danish: *rodspaette*

Dutch: *schol*

Finnish: *punamapela*

Flemish: *pladijs*

French: *plie*

German: *scholle*

Greek: *glossa* (phonetic)

Icelandic: *skarkkoli*

Irish: *leathog*

Norwegian: *gulliflyndre, rodspaette*

Polish: *gladzica*

Russian: *morskaya kambala*

Portuguese: *solha*

Spanish: *platija*

Swedish: *rodspatta, scadda*

Welsh: *lleden*

Plaice is the most commonly eaten flatfish eaten in Europe. It is not generally considered as good as sole but superior to flounder, two other of the more common flatfishes. Plaice is found only on the European side of the Atlantic. It has a mild flavor and is preferred by many fish and chips eaters to the more common cod. It usually commands a higher price.



It's Party Time!

***News from the
RG Front***

Following Central Florida Mensa's *Smarti Gras RG* (1/25 - 1/27), next up will be Central Alabama Mensa's *Owlabama Blast*. Check it out! And keep an eye out in future issues for the 2002 *SCAM Rollback RG* registration form!

**Presidential Owlabama Blast
Birmingham, Alabama**

February 22, 23, 24 – 2002

Come to a mixture of the new and the old. Don't miss yet another great Owlabama Blast Chocolate Off, speakers of all types, and a great dance on Saturday night, in addition to karaoke on Friday night. The "Presidential" Blast will be held at the Redmont Crown Plaza in downtown Birmingham

The rate is \$45 until the 8th of February. The rate at the door is \$50.

For more information write to the address below or contact me via e-mail at: lsporter@bellsouth.net

Mail form to:

Steve Porter
2249 Tyler Road
Hoover, AL 35226

Registrations at \$. = \$.

Total Enclosed \$.

Amount Due \$.

Registrant #1

Registrant #2

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Name for Badge: _____

City for Badge: _____

Make checks payable to "Central Alabama Mensa RG"

**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.

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

1. Mark Darcy
2. Ed Masry
3. Alex O'Connell
4. Alexandra Marshall
5. Sir William Gull

(Answers will be found below)



Arachnae's Threads
by
Clara Woodall-Moran,
Webmaster

The new web site is coming together nicely. If you have not checked out our site, please do so as information on the front page is updated weekly for points of interest. SCAM possesses its own little piece of the cyberworld. This means that there will be no annoying little ads popping up or under as this chunk of virtual real estate will not be used for making a profit.

I am getting assistance from many sources, not the least of which is

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my husband, J.T. Moran, who is doing all of the hardware assembly and loading the system software. Thanks also to those who gave me the idea to self-host the site and have been giving me guidance in the proper means of getting the job done.



We Have....



The Answers!

1. Bridget Jones' Diary (2001)
2. Erin Brockovich (2000)
3. The Mummy Returns (2001)
4. What Women Want (2000)
5. From Hell (2001)