

The

SCAM

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2003 Newsletter Owl Nominee



Happy Labor Day!

Volume 21, No. 9

September, 2003



**The
Newsletter**

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Events Coordinator *Volunteer needed!*
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We will appreciate your submissions **legibly handwritten, typed, in e-mail text, or on 3.5 Microsoft© formatted disk in TXT, RTF or Microsoft© Word format.** We can receive your submissions by mail, or submit via e-mail to:

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Happy September Birthday



- 2nd - George Patterson
- 7th - Leah Simpson
- 9th - Bill Collings
- 13th - Larry Bishop
- 15th - Joseph Cittadini
- 17th - Michael Fuller
- 19th - Ralph McKee
- 22nd - Paul Siefert
- 27th - Harry Martin Jr
- 29th - Jane Bryan

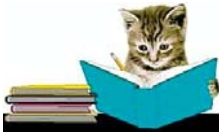


Welcome Back to SCAM

- Dana Bodine - West Melbourne*
- Roberta Brock - Melbourne*
- William Daffron III - Cocoa*
- Merri Stowe - Cape Canaveral*
- Betty Valentine - Merritt Island*



Mewsing About



There is excitement in the air. There is an RG committee forming up and if you would like to be a part of the excitement, contact **Joe Smith**, Member-at-Large, at his email address of jsmith@arachnaweb.net. We will be glad for any help. We have need for someone to arrange the programs for one thing.

Clara

***Woodall-Moran,
LocSec***

We are also would like to support the ***Boo in the Zoo***. We need folks to help set up a room in the haunted house and to staff it during the day and evening. The Jaycees putting on the Boo also need helpers with parking and other such volunteer opportunities. Our helpers can wear Mensa T-Shirts, if desired, and help out our cause as well. Many look for ways to have the group supporting the community – opportunity is knocking.

This current ExComm is getting settled in nicely. We are getting to the routine period in the term. However, it is not too early to mention that several of the current seated members will not be running for office next year. Please start looking into your own heart and decide if you can spare a bit of time to run this group. It is not too difficult and can be very rewarding.



Arachnae's Threads

by

***Clara Woodall-Moran,
Webmaster***

I was hoping to hear from fellow members who would be interested in attending stage productions at the Titusville Playhouse. Instead of a Web column, I'm going to list the plays and the dates, which based upon the date of publication of this newsletter, can be arranged for a "night out". A night out at the local theater can be a real treat. I'm considering becoming a member and I understand that the local Entertainment Books sold by various groups as a means of fundraising have discount coupons. Please let me know when you would be interested in attending.

The upcoming shows are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| "The Miracle Worker" | November 7-23 |
| "The Taming of the Shrew" | January 16- February 1 |
| "Two & Two Makes Sex" | March 12-28 |
| "Annie Get Your Gun" | May 14-30 |

For information from the theater itself: www.nbbd.com/godo/tpi

My preference is for a Friday night. The ticket information is available from the TPI website listed above. Check it out and let me know. I'll schedule my first foray to the theater and post it on the November calendar – please plan to join me.



**We
Get
Mail!**



I'd like to let you know that I found Boston Mensa's copy of the August 2003 issue of The SCAM stuffed inside my copy. The "Deluxe 32 Page Issue" was deluxe indeed!

The same sort of thing happened with North Dakota Mensa's copy of some California chapter's newsletter last month. In that instance, I wrote on the issue something along the lines of "Mail Carrier: This newsletter was misdirected (found stuffed inside my own copy)." My mail carrier indeed picked that stray issue up from my mailbox, but when, if ever, it got to its intended destination, I know not. (North Dakota Mensa doesn't have any e-mail addresses listed on the American Mensa website or their own site and when I called their Mensaphone to let them know what happened, I got a business answering machine and have never heard back from anyone in ND.)

I could try forwarding Lynn's SCAM the same way, but I'd rather not subject my mail carrier and local Post Office with the same thing two months in a row. In this case in particular, I don't consider it to be the Post Office's fault. My (the outer) copy of SCAM had one sticker to keep it closed -- on the bottom, not the usual seal on the side of newsletters. The Beacon's copy had no sticker(s) to seal it, so obviously there were some irregularities going on at FSM. As the SCAM is mailed at Publication rate the way my group's newsletter is sent out, I suspect labeled newsletters had to be bundled up and put into different mailbags for different areas. Quit likely Boston's newsletter and Washington, DC's (mine) got put into the same bag and maybe even into the same bundle. I suppose the merging of the two copies could have happened in the Postal Service's hands, as they surely would have to unbundle a multi-state pack eventually, if that's how they were sacked. I'm more tempted to blame the labelers.

The long and short of it is that I'm asking Space Coast Mensa whether they could send a replacement copy directly to "Beacon, 17 Eskimo Way, North Billerica MA 01862-2907" -- or should I force my Post Office to deliver an issue for which proper postage probably never was paid? I felt myself lucky that I got away with forwarding a Publication Rate newsletter last month (that was also probably sent for free), but I'm not sure my luck or good standing with my local P.O would hold if I were to try this again.

Finally, I'm sorry to have let so much of the month pass by before sending out this notice to the two of you. With the Full Mailing program in full swing, I stuff incoming newsletters under a large stack of Mensa newsletters and read them only in the order of receipt. The SCAM must have been beat out by a dozen or more other newsletters this month in getting to my mailbox. Incidentally, though, Dan, I found this particular issue to contain lots of interesting reading, just as the cover promised.

Russ Nevins



The 10th Story

by

Elissa Rudolph,

RVC10

RVC10@us.mensa.org

Remember the “September Song”—the one about the autumn leaves turning gray? Here in Florida, we don’t need a calendar to know when it’s September—instead of leaves changing color to indicate a change of seasons, the license plates change color as the snowbirds return (inexorably) to sunny climes.

Is your group ready for **National Testing Day** next month on the 18th? If not, get your ducks in a row and take advantage of the National Office’s media blitz. Get your test locations onto the national Web site for the best exposure. Each year since NTD was begun, we’ve had an increasing number of inquiries, test takers and joiners. So jump on the bandwagon!

Coming Very Soon...

October 24-26, ***The MagicOwl RG***, hosted by Broward Mensa, Plantation Holiday Inn, near world famous Sawgrass Mills (954-472-5600); registration fee: \$75—all meals supplied except Saturday dinner on the town; 24-hour hospitality; Scholarship Auction; treasure hunt; pandemonium. Registrar: **Barbara Moore** (954-752-8483).



Minutes of the ExComm Meeting

MENSA ExComm minutes, August 3, 2003

Minutes of the ExComm Meeting



The ExComm met at the home of **Joe Smith** on August 3, 2003. Call to Order at four PM.

Members present: **Clara Woodall-Moran, Rita Johnson-Aronna, Helen Lee Moore, Sam Kirschten, and Joe Smith.**

Sam Kirschten

Welcome guests: **Pat Aronna, Jim Clements, Dan Morgan**, Editor of Owl-award winner ***The SCAM***, and **Mrs. Joe Smith.**

Minutes for July 1, 2003, approved as printed. Moved **Helen**, second **Joe**, vote unanimous.

Correspondence: **Bob Tuck** resigns as Publicity person.

Treasurer: **Helen** reports balances as of July 31.

Scholarship: **Rita** will select the winner from 10 applications. Helen

will procure the scholarship check and **Clara** will create the certificate.

SIG: **Rita** has sessions of mai-jong and movies. Anyone with a special interest should let Rita know.

Testing: **Helen** reports no testing in July.

Old Business -

Guidelines and Standing Rules Controlled Documentation have been gathered and correlated. A series of discussions covered aspects of the Guides, Handbook, and Controlled Documentation, showing depth of interest and precision, leading to motions passed with unanimity and consensus. It is the markups from this that will be included in the texts to be voted on. These will be brought back with agreed modifications for ExComm acceptance and signatures, then published.

Members Handbook is being brought up to standards and up-to-date by Helen. The handbook will be available for publication after ExComm acceptance.

New Business:

RG - Moved **Joe**, second **Helen**, passed unanimous to begin planning for an October 2004 gathering. **Joe** will start as planning chairman.

National Testing Day - **Rita** moved, **Joe** seconded, passed unanimous not to move our test date for October. We can consider moving our date for next year.

Moved **Clara**, second **Rita**, votes for **Sam**, **Joe**, **Helen** abstaining to continue **Helen** as Testing Proctor Coordinator. Passed.

Open forum and announcements: discussed, with **Bill** and **Dan** joining in, aspects of the work needing to be done from time to time and continually.

Mrs. Smith, a Jaycee, presented opportunities to participate in Boo at the Zoo and other activities in support of the Brevard Zoo. Moved **Helen** second **Joe** to grant **Clara** all permissions to support the zoo and the Jaycees; vote for **Rita**, **Sam**, abstaining **Clara**. Passed.

Moved to adjourn **Joe**, second **Helen**, passed by acclamation. Adjourned 5:15 pm.

Next meeting: **Clara**, 4 pm September 7, 2003.



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



Ken Thornton-Smith
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The Wabasso Triangle
Episode 32 – Undercover Work

Warning: This Episode was produced in a plant that also handles peanuts.

It should not have happened, but only one thing is certain: it did happen. Defying the Laws of Physics, the inanity of Dawson's Creek dialogue and any bumper sticker that starts with "Vote", it looks like the Wabasso Triangle has struck again...

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

It was Thursday, and the word on the streets was that Sly Drool, the criminal mastermind, had invited his cronies to a heist-planning party at Dr Pepperoni's. I badly wanted to be in on this scheme before Detective Inspector "Raving" Ravioli of the Serious Pasta Crimes Squad invited a large police boot into his mouth and allowed the gang to get off scot-free again.

I spent that afternoon in the back corner of Dr Pepperoni's parking lot checking out both entrances – nothing unusual to report, but it was a pity I couldn't get any closer. The main problem is that I am so well known in the area that undercover work is next to impossible. I finished off Tuesday's crossword and headed home – it was getting close to dinnertime.

As I swung out of the parking lot, wondering how on earth I could infiltrate and uncover their little plot, I passed the Dr Pepperoni's sign. The lettering hadn't changed since I came to Florida: "Dr Pepperoni's – Italian Restaurant and Package Lounge – THURS LADIES NIGHT – LONG NECKS 1.99"

It was four hours, three Fettuccini Alfredos and two crosswords later, well after 9 p.m., when the solution suddenly dawned on me.

Somewhere around here... I rushed into the spare bedroom. Somewhere in these boxes of junk was a pile of stuff that my ex-wife, Princess Brain Damage, had left behind.

I picked up a few things of hers and paused. It was – what? – it must have been at least five years ago and I can still remember the evening quite clearly. She just yawned suddenly, then she stood up and said,

"I can't stand it any more, Tony... " – she always called me Tony, "This is it – I'm off to Daytona to buy Kweck."

I looked up from the crossword,

“I think there might be some under the sink, dear, if not, you don't need to go to Daytona, Wal-Mart will probably have some...”

She rolled her eyes again, nonplussed. And then – slam. That was it, gone. She didn't come back and the shock of it threw me completely – I never did get the answer to 27 Down.

Fortunately, she didn't come back for her clothes and this blue thing here might be just the ticket... I yanked a corner out of a large box – whoops, no... the other way up – apparently a size M – and it has a very fancy designer label, too: Fabrique en Chine. It's the knitted dress I bought her one Christmas, and this together with her blonde wig would do just fine for the evening's little adventure in criminal surveillance...

Twenty minutes later, I finished brushing the mold off her old purse and checked myself out in the mirror. I was looking pretty sharp for my date with destiny...

I lightly dusted my face with cornstarch and jumped in the car. This was going to be a breeze – I would have this case wrapped up before Detective Inspector “Raving” Ravioli could say, “Halitosis? What's Halitosis?”

I parked in the corner again, and told Tortiglioni, my faithful Italian Bloodhound, to guard the car while I unraveled this little scheme, staked out the heist and nabbed them all single-handed. That would wipe the smile off Ravioli's fuming fizzhog.

The place was crowded, but I managed to position myself fairly close to their table. Ladies drink free on Thursdays, and I was halfway through my seventh beer when the last couple of hoodlums arrived and their evil scheme was underway. Even with my back to the gang I could make out their voices above the hubbub:

“Okay so far, we just need Steve to keep watch out the back until the getaway car arrives... ” That must be a reference to Steve Adore, one of the local strong arms...

“ ... And, yeah, Len will be finished inside the bank so he can cover the front of the building... ” They were talking about Len Dussatwenny, another one of the local layabouts.

“ ... Right, and by then Mick will have the alarms fixed... ” That was probably a reference to Mick Stuppkid, the local electronics deviant.

“Do you live around here often?” That was a reference to... nope, my mistake, that wasn't a reference to anybody.

"Hey beautiful, I'm talking to you... " That still wasn't a reference to anybody, but it was a lot louder. I slowly turned my head. It was Steve Adore, standing beside me grinning like I've never seen him before. He pointed at the row of empty glasses,

"You sure can pack 'em away for someone so pretty – will your boyfriend be coming to pick you up?"

" Er, boyfriend?" I replied, falsetto. Years of Pasta Detective training paid off – if I was reading things correctly, he might be laboring under a slight misapprehension.

He put his arm around my shoulders just as Susie arrived with a tray carrying my next three beers,

"Well, Mr. Chianti... should that be Detective-Inspector or can I call you Anthony? I just wanted to say that the staff here at Dr Pepperoni's, well, we are all so proud of you, coming out of the closet at last. However, technically, I know it's Thursday, right, but you will still have to pay for these drinks... and you look so nice – where did you get that necklace? Oh, and, by the way, your dog is running around the parking lot, but I just wanted to say it was very brave of you... And now you've met someone, how nice... "

"Er... " I asked, still in my squeaky falsetto, "Closet?" Something was wrong somewhere, and for once it wasn't Detective Inspector "Raving" Ravioli of the Serious Pasta Crimes Squad swinging in on my pitch and interfering with a bust. This time it seemed to be more of a problem with the two grapefruits in my bra. These swinging busts were interfering with my pitch...

"Mister? Detective-Inspector? Anthony?" Steve Adore said in surprise. I turned as he withdrew his huge arm from my shoulders. It seemed to go back a long way, as if in slow motion. Then it stopped and started coming forwards like an express train...

Well, amazing but true, and it can only have happened here. That's about it for this month's update from the Wabasso Triangle.

Anthony Chianti, Indian River Community Pasta Detective, signing off.

Bed 27, Men's Surgical Ward, Indian River Memorial Hospital.

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***The Alchemist:
Selection vs. Di-
rection***



AI Thomas

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al@mutualfund

magic.com

As I have said many times before in this column it really doesn't make any difference what you buy - stocks, funds or indexes - it takes smarts to know when to sell. Direction of the general market is more important than selection of any equity.

Everyone from the multimillion dollar analyst on Wall Street to your broker to your barber thought he was a financial genius from 1982 to 2000. Anyone using the stock page from the Wall Street Journal as a target could have picked a winner even if his aim was terrible. Just hit the page anywhere and buy that stock. We were in a secular bull market. History shows these last about

16 to 18 years, and, unfortunately, are followed by a secular bear market of about the same period of time.

During the up time the case for "the market always goes up" becomes crystallized in their brain so that any set back is viewed as a "correction" that will be soon be overcome and the market will be making new high prices again. Unless you are willing to limit the amount of loss from those high prices you will give back all your profits and many times even more.

The price of a stock will fluctuate for many reasons usually involving how much profit they are making or anticipate making in the near future. During the past 5 years we have seen tremendous ups and downs in many of the major issues. When a "good" company's stock goes down it doesn't mean it is a "bad" company, but it does mean you will be losing money if you hang on to it. The reason you bought the stock was to make money, not lose it, so you must be willing to sell when it goes against you.

Knowing the general direction of the overall market is the key to selling success. An excellent indicator is the S&P500 Index. In the last 5 years it has gone from 920 up to 1550, down to 800 and the recent price is 975. What a ride! I have written in previous articles how to determine market direction so you will be in cash with your profits in the bank while the market is going down.

Let's compare what some of the "good" stocks have done during that same 5-year period. AT&T from 40 to 100 to 20; Merck from 60 to 95 to 40, now 60; General Electric from 25 to 60 to 22 and, 30; Coca Cola from 88 down to 38, now 45. And there are thousands more that fit this category of losing 50% or more.

These are all “good” companies, but you can lose your shirt, pants and underwear if you stick with the Buy and Hold philosophy. By placing a trailing stop loss order of 7 to 12% as your stock advances the stock itself will tell you when to sell. Whatever stock or fund you select remember to exit when the direction changes.

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***A View... From
Somewhere Else
“FLR Montage”***

In the current edition, this purveyor of fine “fallacious leftist rantings” (FLR) offers brevity and variety...

by

* * *

Hank Rhodes

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Stunning Development #1: Awed and Shocked...

Previously, this author harshly criticized the Florida state legislature for its lack of conviction in its unquestioning acceptance of the corporate-dictated solution to the alleged malpractice crisis. In a remarkable show of courage and independent judgment, some of our state Senators have apparently rediscovered where their duty lay, and have so far blocked the industry’s pet proposal (settlement caps) from being railroaded into law. Formal hearings before the Senate revealed that the alleged avalanche of frivolous lawsuits and the supposed exodus of doctors from our great state to be mythical notions created by the insurance industry.

This group of Senators, headed by majority leader Jim King of Jacksonville, have even gone so far as to defy the Governor, who is of their own party. In retaliation for their refusal to fall into line, our Governor has threatened some of these legislators with having his corporate chums deny them campaign contributions. The only thing more amazing than this blatant demonstration of the power of special interests, is the commendable fortitude displayed (so far) by some Senators in resisting both the Governor’s diktats and the siren song of sleazy but easy money.

Note: At deadline, there is a report that an agreement has been reached. We shall see if the promised benefits are achieved. But for whom?

* * *

Trust Us, We Know What's Good for You

While this author rarely needs to interact with the medical profession (thankfully so!), recently on two occasions he has been asked to sign a receipt for a copy of a medical privacy document when he was in fact not provided with a copy. On his most recent refusal to sign for something he did not receive, at the local branch of a major pharmacy chain, the counter person offered as an explanation, "It's that HIPAA thing, you know."

The author, however, suspects that obtaining a copy of the store's medical privacy policy was never intended to be an exercise in pulling teeth.

HIPAA, it turns out, is the "Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act," a law that contains several provisions, among which is a requirement that healthcare providers safeguard each patient's private information and to advise the patient of exceptions.

Some may take issue with the government's concern about the citizen's privacy. A reading of the U.S. Constitution, however, such make it clear that the third and fourth amendments are addressing an implicit right to personal privacy (apparently, the author's conservative friends rarely make it beyond the second amendment).

It is a spurious argument that since the security of electronic databases is not specifically stated in the Constitution, that citizens have no right to expect their personal information to be properly safeguarded.

One can reasonably assume that the nation's founders, even in their great wisdom, did not anticipate the proliferation of electronic data storage and transfer systems such as is the case in the current epoch. With the exception of King George III and the King's men, quite possibly the founders also did not anticipate the predatory mentality that is ready to exploit other people's private information for personal gain. They certainly did not foresee the current phenomenon of identity theft.

The privacy policy in question, once obtained, is hardly the key to greater enlightenment. In eight pages of dense and legalistic wording, it describes twenty or so cases where private information may be released to a third party.

The fact that a major pharmacy chain expects people to sign a receipt

for something which the customer is not actually provided with, and then provides it only after several repeated requests, demonstrates a lack of commitment to the spirit of the law. Instead, there is only grudging compliance. What should be a government-private sector partnership in protecting the well-being of the citizens is instead being treated as just another aggravating but insignificant piece of paperwork.

* * *

Stunning Development #2: Dumbfounded and Catatonic!

In a statement that was for the most part unaccountably ignored by the media, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz admitted mistakes in the Administration's strategy for the War against Iraq. Mr. Wolfowitz acknowledged that the rosy predictions that the Iraqi citizens would readily rise against their government and aid the Americans were wrong. He also acknowledged that the strength of the Iraqi resistance had been severely underestimated. Unfortunately, Mr. Wolfowitz did not provide any estimate of how many American lives these mistakes cost, nor did he describe any corrective measures that in the future would prevent wishful thinking by politicians from overriding realistic assessments of a potential enemy by qualified military experts. Mr. Wolfowitz was also silent on whether critics of the current regime's policies would be rehabilitated from being branded as "unpatriotic."

* * *

Speaking of Patriots...

A bumper sticker on the rear of somebody's SUV says: I SUPPORT OUR PRESIDENT AND OUR TROOPS.

So does this author. The difference is, he supported our troops and our President before it became the fashion of the season, way back when our President was named Clinton (and for that matter, when the President was named Carter).

By the way, to demonstrate your patriotism, it isn't necessary to replicate the original "Star Spangled Banner" in miniature form. How about spending a few bucks and replacing that dirty, faded, torn American flag that you've displayed on your ride for the past two years?



***The Gourmet's
Guide:***

Horsemeat

by

Art Belefant

©2003

(belefant@juno.com)

It would seem that every culture has within it some forbidden foods. Jews and Muslims should not eat pork. Hindus deny themselves beef. The Chinese avoid milk products. Jains and Buddhists eat no meat. One culture will relish what another culture abhors. Americans will not eat dog, cat, or rat, although in colonial times, squirrel, a rodent like a rat, was often eaten. The original recipe for Brunswick Stew called for squirrel and chicken. Americans eschew goats, horses, camels, and whales that form a major part of some European and Middle Eastern cuisines. We also do not eat grubs or grasshoppers, as is done in much of Africa.

Americans, except for the vegetarian cultures, are probably the most finicky of eaters. It is simpler to list what we will eat rather than what we will not. Americans will eat cattle, sheep, and pig, but of them, only certain muscle meats. The innards, such as lungs, brains, heart and the smaller organs do not show up in the butcher stores. Only liver is occasionally seen.

Americans, who try to emulate Europe in their cuisine (consider the popularity of French, Italian, and German dishes in restaurants and recipes here), differ from most Europeans who enjoy eating horsemeat, and would probably gag over the thought of eating it.

When compared to beef, horsemeat is redder, sweeter, and more tender with less fat and cholesterol, qualities that should put horsemeat way ahead of beef as a desirable meat.

The eating of horses was common in Europe for as long as we can determine, but the popularity of this meat varied over time. Horses were probably eaten long before cattle, sheep, or pigs. There is evidence, found in Stone Age caves in France, of the eating of horses. Wild horses were stampeded over a cliff, and then slaughtered for food. This occurred in a hunter-gather society before the other animals were domesticated.

With the coming of agriculture, it was cattle, sheep, and pigs that were raised for food. Cattle and sheep are ruminants, and pigs can digest almost anything. Horses require about one third more food to maintain body weight than the others, thus making them inferior as meat producers.

In later agrarian times, when cattle, sheep, and pigs were domesticated in Europe for meat, nomadic horse-riding tribes came out of Asia to raid and conquer Rome and the rest of Europe. These horse riders traveled fast and far, sometimes more than 100 miles a day. They did not bring cattle, sheep, or pigs with them (it would slow them down.) For meat, they would eat the slowest of their train of horses. They could subsist on the

blood of their horses if necessary. Their favorite drink was mare's milk, fermented as koumiss. Thus a horse eating culture overran a non-horse-eating culture.

Gradually, as the Asiatic hordes settled down and became agriculturists, the eating of horseflesh declined in popularity but remained as a special part of the European diet. I doubt that in the Dark and Middle Ages that any horse killed in battle or too old to pull a plow or carry a load was disposed of by burial. In 732 Pope Gregory III solidified the revulsion of eating horses by banning the practice. Aside from fasts, this is the only nutritional taboo in Christianity.

During the Napoleonic Wars, the eating of horses killed or maimed in battle by soldiers was common, even encouraged from a logistical and nutritional viewpoint.

After the defeat of Napoleon, the sale of horse meat in France was again officially sanctioned. Prior to that, horsemeat was sold in an unofficial underground economy because of Pope Gregory III's proscription, and it was considered to be a poor person's substitute for beef. Even after the legal and controlled selling of horsemeat was allowed, none of the great French gourmet chefs included horsemeat in their recipes and restaurants. It was considered *declassé*. It still does not appear in most cookbooks, yet it does show up in some restaurants, particularly as *steak tataré*, and can be found in licensed horsemeat butcher shops as fresh meat and in sausages. These often also carry the meat of their cousins - asses.

Horsemeat did not become popular in the U. S. because of the availability of other meats. Game was common and free on the frontier. Cattle and sheep could be grown in the vast open spaces. Pigs could be penned and fed almost anything, and in the South they could be left to forage in the woods. Horses were too valuable for transportation and service to be sacrificed for meat.

For many years horses were slaughtered in the U. S. for pet food. These were not raised for food, but were wild horses that required no care or upkeep. Because of the objections of horse lovers and because a profitable overseas market was found for horsemeat, this is no longer the practice.



My Point of View

***The American
Worker Pt 1:
Happy Labor Day!***

by

Mike Moakley

As you read these words, we have yet another holiday to look forward to. For some, it becomes a reason to fire up the barbecue for family and friends, for some others, it will present an opportunity to work overtime in an effort to catch up with their bills. For others still, it will be like any other day. And, lest we forget, it is the prime opportunity for endless advertising to inundate us with their offerings at their Labor Day Sale. In any case, however, a Labor Day parade (as in years past) will largely be unheard of.

Why is this holiday LABOR Day? Where did it come from, anyway? According to the American Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden (no, I am not kidding):

“On September 5, 1882 the first Labor Day parade was held in New York City. Twenty thousand workers marched in a parade up Broadway. They carried banners that read "LABOR CREATES ALL WEALTH," and "EIGHT HOURS FOR WORK, EIGHT HOURS FOR REST, EIGHT HOURS FOR RECREATION!" (1)”

The U.S. Department of Labor offers this version:

“Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. (2)”

So there you have it: Labor Day was created to honor the working Americans for our contribution to our great society. It is surely nice to know that we, as working Americans, since the latter part of the 19th Century are appreciated for our efforts and achievements. But is that *really* the case? According to the Illinois Labor History Society, **“The United States has the bloodiest history of labor of any industrialized nation on Earth. It is a story rich in human drama and tragedy. (3)”** In this installment, I submit two examples from the early 20th Century of just how grateful toward us our society is, especially the business community that directly benefits from labor: On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out in New York City at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory. 147 people were killed as a result of inadequate exits; most of the killed were women. The following is an excerpt from a magazine article written in reaction to a trial verdict, about 9 months following the fire:

“There are no guilty. There are only the dead, and the authorities will forget the case as speedily as possible. Capital can commit no crime when it is in pursuit of profits. Of course, it is well known that those who were killed in the

Triangle disaster are only part, and a small part, of those murdered in industry during the passing year. There are only 147 incinerated and mangled. But there were thousands of others who met a similarly agonizing fate during this year of 1911. (4)”

It is interesting to note, that most of the employees were “private contractors”, predecessors to the current “Form 1099 Employees” (See March 2003 *SCAM*). Of course, in order to improve working conditions, many American workers attempted, with some success, to organize unions to represent them. The following excerpt, from a website documenting the history of Matewan, West Virginia, describes one such union organizing effort:

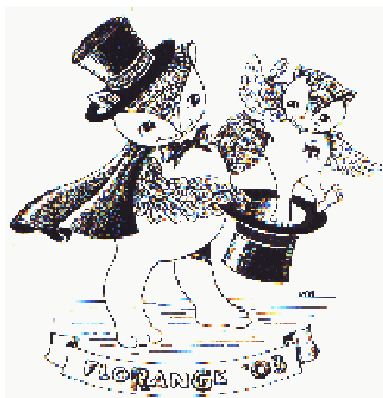
“On May 19, 1920, ten people were killed at Matewan in the deadliest gunfight in American history. The battle of Matewan, popularly dubbed the "Matewan massacre," was an integral part of the fight for industrial democracy and workers' rights that was sweeping the country. ... In the hills and hollows along the Tug Fork there was no union and the miners and their families lived in an almost feudal society. The coal companies dominated their employees' lives. The companies owned the miners' homes and required them to buy at the company store. The companies also wielded significant clout with politicians, newspapers and the school system. ... Roughly three thousand men signed the union's roster in the spring of 1920. The Matewan community church, a block south of the battle site near the river, was the place where the miners signed their union cards. They knew it would cost them their jobs and in many cases their homes. The coal operators retaliated with massive firings, harassment, and evictions. ... Matewan, incorporated in 1895, was an independent town with its own elected officials. Its mayor, Cabel Testerman, and its police chief, Sid Hatfield, refused to go along with the companies' retaliation against the miners. So the companies hired their own enforcers, the notorious Baldwin-Felts detective agency. The ‘Baldwin thugs,’ as the miners called them, had earned a reputation for brutality in other strikes. This time the coal operators had hired them to evict the newly unionized miners and their wives and children from the company owned houses. As a result, hundreds of families spent that chilly mountain spring in thin canvas tents with mud floors. (5)”

Talk about class warfare! I realize one might point out that conditions have vastly improved since then. In some ways, it would appear to be true. In the 1930s, the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed, as well as the National Labor Relations Act. In 1970, the Occupational Safety and Health Act was passed, creating OSHA to protect workers' safety. But are we, as American workers, really better off today? It would seem we made

some progress in the workplace. If this is indeed true, are we continuing to progress? I will be addressing these questions (and more) in Part II. Stay tuned!

Sources

1. Celebrate! Holidays In The U.S.A.; Labor Day Embassy of the United States of America, Dag Hammarskjölds Väg 31, SE-115 89 Stockholm.
2. The History of Labor Day, U. S. Department of Labor (www.dol.gov).
3. A Curriculum of United States Labor History for Teachers, Illinois Labor History Society.
4. 147 Dead, Nobody Guilty, *Literary Digest*, January 6, 1912. p 6.
5. The Battle of Matewan, website (www.matewan.com)



UPDATE TO THE FloRanGe '03' RG: All the stuff from last month plus a few changes. The Registration fee has been frozen at \$75 according to Phil Hales of Broward Mensa.

FloRanGe '03' The MagicOwl RG October 24-26, 2003

We hope to see you at our RG where you will join all your old friends and meet new friends. There will be drawings at Sunday's brunch for 3 pieces of

LYA'S art work!

We will have games, tournaments, awesome speakers, a costume contest, a joke-off, Wiccans, pandemonium, dancing, ghost stories, hugging contest, a young Mensan afternoon, a pumpkin decorating contest. As always we will have our **Scholarship Auction** and a **24-hour Hospitality Suite**. **Art Gallery** (fine arts, and arts-n-crafts) to be exhibited. We would like to display your art work (as done in the past). **All meals supplied** except Saturday night "on the town". Plantation Holiday Inn, 1711 University Drive, Plantation, FL 33322, 954-472-5600. Room rates \$75. **Registration fee: \$75**, Barbara Moore, Registrar 12212 NW 31st Dr. Coral Springs, FL 33065, phone 954-752-8483. Make checks payable to **Broward Mensa**.