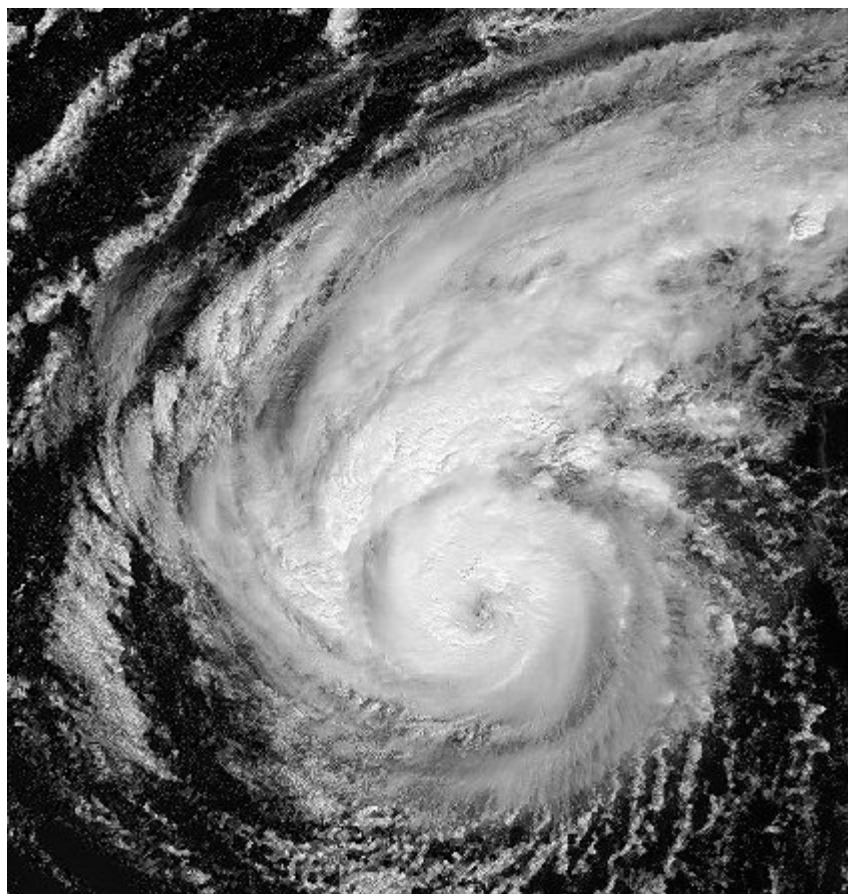


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Aerial view of Hurricane Jeanne, courtesy NASA

Post Hurricane Issue!

Volume 22, No. 11

November, 2004



Assembly/Circulation
CLARA WOODALL-MORAN
632-0854

Calendar Coordinator
KATHERINE COCHRANE
432-9703

Editor

MICHAEL MOAKLEY
808 Wisteria Drive, Melbourne, FL 32901
952-8400 moakleymj@bellsouth.net

Volume 22, No. 11

November, 2004

Happy Thanksgiving!

WRITER'S BLOCK

Mike Moakley, SCAM Editor

The end of this month officially marks the end of the 2004 Hurricane Season. I'm sure we will all breathe a sigh of relief, as these storms have truly affected all of us in some way. SCAM, as a group, was certainly affected by the cancellation of last month's RG.

Also, this month, the elections are finally over. While, at this writing (mid-October), no one yet knows the outcome, in any case it will still be time to move on. Perhaps our attention needs to turn to our local group and Mensa in general. This month, like last month, some concerns are expressed involving the general direction National seems to be headed (*see p.4*). Also included this month is an excerpt of the SCAM Member Handbook to illustrate what we're about (*page 9*). This should lend some perspective to the concerns expressed here.

At this point, I would like to remind you that, as dues paying members, SCAM and Mensa belong to you, not the AML or any other administrative body. If you have a concern, be sure your voice is heard. Appropriate contact information is on Page Two of every issue of The SCAM.

What would you like to see from our group? What are you willing to do to make it happen? If you have an activity in mind, contact our Calendar Coordinator. As for me, speaking as Editor, I can always use articles on just about any subject. Artwork, if you are so inclined, would be nice, too. Remember, SCAM and Mensa are what you make it.

All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 10th of the month preceding publication. Please allow extra time for mailed submissions, which may be **typed** or **legibly handwritten**. Whenever possible, we prefer submissions via e-mail. They may be in **e-mail text** or any of most **word processing** formats. **All** submissions should be sent to the **Editor**, whose contact information appears above.

The AMC passed the ruling to require a person with a food safety course to be on the Hospitality committee of any Mensa function such as an RG. I'm wondering if the National Office would like to reimburse me the \$249.00 I paid for a national certification (good for 3 years)? The AMC would like the local groups to get out of the RG business or have all of the Hospitality catered (which accomplishes getting the smaller groups out of the RG business). We use the RGs to fund our newsletters of other operating costs (and to help support our local Scholarships) because the stipend does not begin to cover the costs. The biggest worry from the local groups is that the liability shifts from the National Organization to the person with the certification if someone decides to sue. The response from the AMC is that the liability won't shift if the certified individual took "due care". I don't know about the rest of you folks but I always take "due care" when preparing food, whether it is for myself, my family or a large group. The food safety certification is not about taking "due care". It covered things like having meat in a separate refrigerator – which, of course we cannot do but have to put the meat at the bottom of the fridge so it won't drip on the fruit and vegetables. The food safety classes are all about preparing food in restaurants which has little bearing on the food served at RGs. We don't run a restaurant; we serve "pot luck" type meals and snacks. If due care is all that is needed for eliminating risk, then why bother with requiring certifications?

I don't appreciate the National Office spending extra money out of my pocket for something so unnecessary. Your next RG won't get approved if it is not catered or if there is no one with the certification present. Look out, they are going to take away the beer and wine next. That is on the agenda. We'll have to hire certified bartenders to make certain no one drinks more than 4 beers or glasses of wine in 24 hours (or whatever the rate of consumption is).

I joined this organization for the friendly social aspects. Guess I've just stayed in for too many years.

—Clara Woodall-Moran

The following is an excerpt from the minutes of the American Mensa Committee:

34. Moved COONTZ, seconded JACKOWSKI and KUYPER that effective July 1, 2005, at least one member of the hospitality committee for AGs, RGs, LDWs and Colloquiums must complete a food safety course prior to the gathering or workshop. Applications for these activities must include a copy of a cer-

tificate establishing that at least one member of the hospitality committee for that event has completed a federal, state, county or Mensa food safety course.

***DISCUSSION:** COONTZ said she had received positive feedback from members in her region. KUYPER noted that LDWs are very small events with not too many attendees, somewhat like a house party. She offered a friendly amendment to remove LDWs from this motion, which was not accepted by the mover. RAINEY noted a concern of a member of Tidewater Mensa. They are concerned that this transfers liability to the Hospitality Chair at a given event. SEIGLER said it is a question of “ordinary care”. If the Hospitality Chair is exercising ordinary care for the safety of the people there, he/she would not be held liable. This care is what a normally prudent person would consider to be safe. VASILIAUSKAS spoke against this motion. She said we are making a rule we cannot enforce; she recommended offering the course, but not making it a requirement. FOLKS offered a friendly amendment to replace “Hospitality Chair” in each case to “at least one member of the hospitality committee”. This was accepted and is reflected in the motion as listed above. MCBEAN asked whether the certified person is someone who will actually be on the premises 24 hours a day. COONTZ said that we are managing risk, not controlling situations. BRUCE said that the general consensus in his region is that we need this certification, but at large group gatherings only, not at local functions attended by a small amount of people. WILTERDING expressed concern that requiring LDWs to have a certified person would be a significant disincentive to host LDWs. COONTZ said she did not think it was asking too much, even for a small group.*

Approved 18-2-1 (VASILIAUSKAS and WILTERDING opposed; BECKER abstained)

ASIE 2004-111

From the Editor

In order to gain a little more perspective on this issue, you may wish to peruse the excerpt of the SCAM Membership Handbook that can be found on Page 9 of The SCAM. If you have any comments, I would like to hear from you. If you have another perspective, please share it with us. I will include them in an upcoming SCAM.

—Michael Moakley, SCAM Editor
Moakleymj@bellsouth.net

Episode Category 4: Hurricane Special

It should not have happened, but one thing is certain: it did happen. Defying all known Laws of Physics plus a couple I made up in third grade, The Wabasso Triangle has struck again.

Surgeon General Warning: Do not insert this or any other episode in your ear canal without consulting a physician.

First, this month's Oat Cuisine Tip: Stir Fried Pizza. Cut into slices, then defrost your frozen pizza by putting it in the microwave. There's no point in closing the door, as no one will have power until Christmas, but it saves space on the counter. Next, simply get the barbecue going and put the pizza slices inside a well-greased wok for 10 minutes.

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

It was Friday, and the morning had been bad enough, with a double pastacide in downtown Melbourne. Just when it was looking like things couldn't get any worse, they did. The newsreader was quite explicit – Hurricane Dubbya was coming, Wabasso was under an evacuation order and worse still, the manufacturer of Twinkies had filed Chapter Seven.

The forecast was for 140 mph winds, 25 inches of rain, a 17 foot storm surge and a Tsunami down Main Street as high as Doctor Pepperoni's Italian Restaurant and Package Lounge.

That reminds me – I wonder what's going down at Doctor Pepperoni's these days? My stomach alarm gurgled in reply: it's nigh on lunchtime and my alimentary alligator was hot for hoagie.

Doctor Pepperoni's looked like a construction accident, but somewhere underneath all that plywood it turned out they were open after all. Well, almost open:

“Senor?” A gold-capped grin greeted me across the bar. The owner had been replaced by a suntanned version of Private Doberman, Sergeant Bilko's nemesis.

“Ricardo around?”

“Si, Senor. Bang, bang, bang.” He thumped his fist on the counter.

“You shot him?”

“Si, Senor. Bang, bang, bang!” This time he waved his hands to show a

large square panel and mimed nailing it to the wall.

“Are you saying you’re here to put up the plywood?”

“Si, Señor.”

“ ... and helping yourself to free drinks?”

“Si, Señor.”

“ ...and in your spare time you’re busy learning Diddely-Squat as a second language?”

“Si, Señor.”

I nodded and left – this was my lunchtime – probably not enough time to defend his dissertation.

Everywhere else was closed, and downtown Sebastian looked like a lumber yard. It was only on the way home that I realized the full seriousness of the situation – two policeman with lesbian hairdos were enforcing the evacuation order with their car across the road at the end of Desmond Tutu Drive. Don't these people have homes to go to? I backed out and drove home the long way.

According to the radio, Hurricane Dubbya had done a loop-the-loop of The Bahamas and was heading here fast. It was decision time, and with memories fresh from the previous two hurricanes, the Chianti cerebral cortex was in overdrive. All the neighbors had evacuated, but my trusty 1976 Buick Testudo could barely limp between gas stations, so I decided to cook as much pasta as possible before the power went out.

The morning after, I ventured outside to survey the damage. Two trees, a fence and the mailbox had all assumed a curiously horizontal disposition. Fortunately, I hadn't lost any shingles – they were all in the front yard. The backyard was surreal: a sea of grapefruit bobbing in several inches of water, halfway up the cinder blocks supporting my 1969 Cadillac El Dorito.

I took stock of the situation: Things were grim – it felt like the 11th day of The Decameron. No power means shaving with a wet razor and eating raw pasta. It also means watching no TV in the dark, and missing this week's re-run of The Roquefort Files. The answer was obvious – I needed a generator.

One brunch of cold macaroni later, the answer came to me: I could run my Cadillac and string up some 12 volt auto bulbs. Pity the engine is rusted solid. Patience, Anthony: Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% antiperspirant.

Remember, Thomas Jefferson made more than 1000 lightbulbs out of

all kinds of wacky stuff until he eventually found one – tungsten – that worked. I told him not to bother with the lightbulb full of rice pudding, but he wouldn't listen.

Eventually, it hit me: I took the blade off the lawnmower, unscrewed the engine and put it back on upside down, cylinder sticking out the bottom. Rotating the carburetor 180 degrees and removing the governor completed the power plant.

Now I needed a dynamo. As you know, an electric motor turns when power is applied, but the converse is also true: spinning a motor turns it into a dynamo and produces electricity. The hunt was on. There had to be a motor somewhere in my junk pile.

I couldn't find a motor, but there was that old ceiling fan in the patio – it would have to do. The blades were rusted solid, so they stayed on to provide a convenient flywheel effect.

By late afternoon my ingenious generator was taking shape in the driveway. Completed, I stood back and admired my mechanical masterpiece. Not bad, I said to myself, not at all bad for a Pasta Detective whose only engineering ambition is to be reincarnated as Gwyneth Paltrow's bicycle seat.

The ceiling fan was perched on top of the lawnmower with the fan clamped to the engine shaft. Above that sat the fan motor with two extension cords on coat hangers. The cords stopped it from rotating and delivered power to two lamps.

With the sun sinking, it was time to fire up the generator and restore the Chianti household to its illuminated glory. I yanked the cord a couple of times and she took. As I opened the throttle, the lights glowed – things were looking good. A few more revs and...

Bang! Years of Pasta Detective training paid off as I hit the dirt. I reached for a lamp as the extension cords wrapped themselves around the fan motor. Too late – after a few wobbles the lawnmower lifted gently into the evening sky and headed north, a ceiling fan and two flickering lamps swinging crazily on top.

Personally, I don't think NASA had any right to shoot it down...

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 124, Palm Bay Special Needs Shelter.

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***EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following excerpt, part of the revised Space Coast Area Mensa Membership Handbook is provided below to illustrate the purpose of Mensa Local Groups such as ours. You will undoubtedly see reference to activities you may never have seen on our calendar. Please bear in mind that SCAM has been in existence since 1983 and, like other organizations, goes through a continuing process of change. You might wish to revive an activity that is no longer offered, or—better yet—suggest a new one. Just contact our Calendar Coordinator.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your Mensa membership guarantees you a card, ten issues of the *Mensa Bulletin* and a monthly newsletter. If that is all you want, we're glad to have you as a member. But there are many other benefits available, and we'd like to share some of them with you.

The most popular single activity of Mensa members is communicating. We enormously enjoy talking with other members; we like listening to informed people; we read voraciously and somewhat indiscriminately; we write e-mail, letters, screeds, and articles for private files and for publication.

We do our communicating any time we get together. We host Party Nights so we can sit around in casual comfort and communicate. We have pool and hot tub parties so we can loll about and talk. We have dining out meetings so we can talk - and eat. If you have something interesting to say - and everyone does - you'll be welcomed at any SCAM gathering. If you prefer to listen rather than speak, you'll quickly become one of the best-loved members in the group!

Many active SCAM members enjoy playing games. There is usually a Games Night at a member's home on the calendar each month. Almost any card game has eager players, even "silly children's games" like Uno®. Word games are also popular, as are a variety of general-knowledge trivia games. You'll find SCAM members fairly competitive, but most will never let winning interfere with the fun of playing.

SIG meetings, discussion groups, barbecues and the like are also held at the homes of members. Unless the calendar information specifies otherwise, casual dress is the norm. The host's "House Rules" should be respected at all times in matters such as smoking, start and end

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

times, and what you should provide for yourself. Normally, sodas, coffee and tea are furnished by the host, along with a variety of snacks. There is a “Kitty” amount included in the calendar listing for in-home events. This is a small charge to help offset the expenses of the host, and is not optional.

There are usually several dining out activities each month. SNORT meets on the last Saturday of every month at Miyako Restaurant, which provides us with our own room. Dress is casual and the costs for dinner and beverage range from \$15 to \$30. PIG SIG meetings are held on weekends at the restaurant of choice of the host. If you are unfamiliar with the specific restaurant, a call to the host will answer your questions about dress and cost. Mid-week dining outs, Woebe-gone Wednesday, Ptomaine Ptuesday and others, are usually at less expensive locations. Again, a call to the host can be helpful. Although arrangements are made so that we eat together at a large table, separate checks are customary.

Other activities such as theatre nights, movies, visits to bookstores, specialty shopping opportunities, beach parties, nature walks and picnics at area sites appear on the calendar from time to time. Meeting any costs of these activities is the responsibility of the individual participants.

If there is something on the calendar you think you would enjoy, join the group. If you have an interest which is not represented by a current activity, why not try making it a new event on the calendar?

Part of belonging to Mensa is the opportunity to form and join Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Below are two of the newest SIGs.

***Announcing Mensa's
UFO SIG,***

***the new international Mensa SIG
for serious analysis and discussion
of unidentified flying objects.***

UFO SIG is entirely web-based, and is open to Mensa members from all countries. There are no dues or fees.
***To join, send a blank email message to
ufosig-subscribe@yahoogroups.com***
*For more information, visit our home page at
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UFOsig/>
or write to ufo.sig@nexon.com.au*

**M-Cats is a new, international Mensa special interest group for
cats...**

and the Mensans they've chosen as their human companions.

***Your cats are invited to join. If they give you permission, you may
join, too.***

After all, this SIG isn't only for cats; Mensa people can join, too. <g>

***To join, send an email note to
m-cats-subscribe@yahoogroups.com***

For more information, write to
m-cats@gmx.de or visit our home page at
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/m-cats>

*The M-Cats SIG is entirely web-based.
There are no dues or fees.
Membership is open to Mensa members from all nations.*

Fellow SCAM Members,

It is my sad duty to inform you that the 2004 Space Coast Area Mensa October Masquerade Regional Gathering (RG) has been cancelled. The Holiday Inn Oceanfront, the site of the best Hospitality Suite in the South and long time home for SCAM RGs, suffered severe damages from Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne.


If you have already made reservations, they have been cancelled.

No other suitable site for the RG in this area is available and it is the unanimous consensus of the committee that the RG be cancelled and all paid monies be refunded as soon as possible.

The ExComm members are all in agreement that we would like to put together something for our members in the coming year. If you would like to share some of your ideas with us, please make note of the date, time and location of the monthly ExComm meetings and feel free to join us.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at (321) 259-4966.

Joe Smith
RG 2004 Chairperson
Member-At-Large, 2004

Phone: (407) 631-3548	FAX: (407) 690-2295
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<i>Charles L. Schuenger</i>	
PO Box 560017 Rockledge, Fl. 32956	webmaster@focusonbrevard.com Created by www.chna.com

Another month, but not another storm, thank goodness. The events of September and October illustrate how useful our online calendar can be. The SCAM newsletter, fine as it is, cannot alert our members to last-minute changes to local events, but the online calendar does this. Please take advantage of it by contributing and consulting information interactively.

14th

The website as a whole, not just the calendar, is growing. Only a few areas remain for us to finish transferring the content from the old site. At this writing, completed or nearly completed pages include the home page, calendar, organization, RG, newsletter, activities and history sections. In fact, the only empty section now is the Archives. A website can rarely ever be absolutely finished, especially when it is one that serves an active group such as Space Coast Area Mensa. There is always room for improvement and new information. But the framework for us to continue to build on is now in place.

A few months ago we introduced the idea of a list of email aliases, so local chapter officers and volunteers could be accessed without risking exposure of their personal email addresses to spammers and other baddies, and so updates can be accomplished easily by just changing the forwarding address. A list of these aliases is now available from a link at the bottom of the home page and in the Organization main page.

I hope you enjoy the new site, but even more I hope you will find it useful. Visit <http://spacecoastareamensa.org> and let me know what you think! Suggestions, additions and corrections are always welcome.

Reminders

Calendar Deadline is the *8th* of the month preceding publication.

Newsletter Deadline is the *10th* of the month preceding publication.

Visit the new SCAM Website:
<http://spacecoastareamensa.org>

Whitby is in the northeast of England, Yorkshire to be exact. It is an old fishing village whose origins date before any written records. The earliest certifiable evidence of human habitations is that of the Viking's sacking of an abbey on the east cliff overlooking the town. Years later the abbey was rebuilt and then later fell in ruins, which are still visible and are mentioned in *Dracula* by Bram Stoker.

Whitby is surrounded on three sides by the Yorkshire moors, the fourth side being the ocean. The Esk River runs down from the moors in a valley through the village. Mina, one of the characters in *Dracula*, describes it thusly in her diary.

24 July. Whitby

The little river, the Esk, runs through a deep valley, which broadens out as it comes near the harbour. A great viaduct runs across, with high piers, through which the view seems somehow further away than it really is. The valley is beautifully green, and it is so steep that when you are on the high land on either side you look right across it, unless you are near enough to see down. The houses of the old town—the side away from us—are all red-roofed, and seem piled up one over the other anyhow, like the pictures we see of Nuremberg. Right over the town is the ruin of Whitby Abbey, which was sacked by the Danes, and which is the scene of part of “Marmion,” where the girl was built up in the wall. It is a most noble ruin, of immense size, and full of beautiful and romantic bits; there is a legend that a white lady is seen in one of the windows. Between it and the town there is another church, the parish one, round which is a big graveyard, all full of tombstones. This is to my mind the nicest spot in Whitby, for it lies right over the town, and has a full view of the harbour and all up the bay to where the headland called Kettlethness stretches out into the sea. It descends so steeply over the harbour that part of the bank has fallen away, and some of the graves have been destroyed. In one place part of the stonework of the graves stretches out over the sandy pathway far below. There are walks, with seats beside them, through the churchyard; and people go and sit there all day long looking at the beautiful view and enjoying the breeze. I shall come and sit here very often myself and work. Indeed, I am writing now, with my book on my knee, and listening to the talk of three old men who are sitting beside me. They seem to do nothing all day but sit up here and talk.

The harbour lies below me, with, on the far side, one long granite wall stretching out into the sea, with a curve outwards at the end of it, in the middle of which is a lighthouse. A heavy sea-wall runs along outside of it. On the near side, the sea-wall makes an elbow crooked inversely, and its end too has a lighthouse. Between the two

piers there is a narrow opening into the harbour, which then suddenly widens.

It is nice at high tide; but when the tide is out it shoals away to nothing, and there is merely the stream of the Esk, running between banks of sand, with rocks here and there. Outside the harbour on this side there rises for about half a mile a great reef, the sharp edge of which runs straight out from behind the south lighthouse. At the end of it is a buoy with a bell, which swings in bad weather, and sends in a mournful sound on the wind.

This description of Whitby, although it is taken from a book of fiction, is still accurate and is more beautifully descriptive of the current town than any guide book, although it was written over a hundred years ago.

In the late 19th century, Whitby was a popular resort, as it is now. Among the artistic visitors to Whitby were James R Lowell - American poet and essayist, Sir Gerald du Maurier - actor manager, son of Daphne du Maurier, Frank M. Sutcliffe - photographer, Wilkie Collins - writer, Charles Dickens - writer, Lord Tennyson - poet, Reverend Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) - writer, and, of course, Bram Stoker, who spent some time in the summer of 1890 residing in a house across from the beach in a group of houses called The Royal Crescent. In *Dracula*, Lucy and Mina live in apartments called "The Crescent".

The village has several claims to fame. One is that it is the home of Captain Cook. There are monuments and references to him throughout the area.

The second is that Whitby is claimed by many to have the best fish and chips in the U. K. The fish is locally caught, and, of course, very fresh. There appear to be dozens of places to buy fish and chips; take-away (take out) stands, pubs, bare-table restaurants, and white-table-cloth restaurants. Every eating place serves fish and chips; sometimes that is the only item on the menu. Although there is a choice of fresh fish for the fish and chips, cod predominates and is the most popular. I can attest to the quality of the product. It is some of the best that I have ever had.

The third claim to fame, and that which brought Rita and myself to Whitby, is a fiction. It is the site of the landing of the ship that brought *Dracula* to England from Transylvania. This is how it is described in Bram Stoker's novel.

Before long the searchlight discovered some distance away a schooner with all sails set, apparently the same vessel which had been noticed earlier in the evening. The wind had by this time backed to the east, and there was a shudder amongst the watchers on the cliff as they realised the terrible danger in which she now was. Between her and the port lay the great flat reef on which so many good ships have from time to time suffered, and, with the wind blowing from its present quarter, it would be quite impossible that she should fetch

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the entrance of the harbour. It was now nearly the hour of high tide, but the waves were so great that in their troughs the shallows of the shore were almost visible, and the schooner, with all sails set, was rushing with such speed that, in the words of one old salt, “she must fetch up somewhere, if it was only in hell.” Then came another rush of sea-fog, greater than any hitherto—a mass of dank mist, which schemed to close on all things like a grey pall, and left available to men only the organ of hearing, for the roar of the tempest, and the crash of the thunder, and the booming of the mighty billows came through the damp oblivion even louder than before. The rays of the searchlight were kept fixed on the harbour mouth across the East Pier, where the shock was expected, and men waited breathless. The wind suddenly shifted to the northeast, and the remnant of the sea-fog melted in the blast; and then, *mirabile dictu*, between the piers, leaping from wave to wave as it rushed at headlong speed, swept the strange schooner before the blast, with all sail set, and gained the safety of the harbour. The searchlight followed her, and a shudder ran through all who saw her, for lashed to the helm was a corpse, with drooping head, which swung horribly to and fro at each motion of the ship. No other form could be seen on deck at all a great awe came on all as they realized that the ship, as if by a miracle, had found the harbour, unsteered save by the hand of a dead man! However, all took place more quickly than it takes to write these words. The schooner paused not, but rushing across the harbour, pitched herself on that accumulation of sand and gravel washed by many tides and many storms into the south-east corner of the pier jutting under the East Cliff, known locally as Tate Hill Pier.

There was of course a considerable concussion as the vessel drove up on the sand heap. Every spar, rope, and stay was strained, and some of the “top-hammer” came crashing down. But, strangest of all, the very instant the shore was touched, an immense dog sprang up on deck from below, as if shot up by the concussion, and running forward, jumped from the bow on the sand.

That sandy beach is still in existence in Whitby. Our hotel room in the Duke of York overlooked it. There was no trace of the ship or the dog that we could find.



As you read this, the long-awaited Election 2004 is at hand. I am sure there will be a collective sigh of relief as the attack campaign ads disappear and are once again replaced with ads for hair color, weight control pills, prescription meds, Rogaine, birth control patches, Viagra and so on. Gee, how nice it will be to look ten years younger and not have to be stressed out thinking of the important issues of the day. It does seem like the general public does not really want to bother to participate in running our country...or maybe more of us simply no longer have faith in the process.

Yet...elections (and campaigns) are here to stay. But do the various candidates really need to turn off the citizens with their sound-bite marketing-based ads and the current sorry state of elections? I think not. There are things we can—and should—do to improve the state of our campaigns and elections. They would involve reassuring the public that each voice in the political process does count—and to ensure that this is true. Below are a few ideas:

1. Publicly finance all campaigns for office. All qualifying candidates for a given office should get an equal share of the funding earmarked for that particular campaign. NO private funding whatsoever would be permitted.
2. Since the above is most likely a long-term solution, we can start by requiring publication of major campaign supporters by the same media that accept the campaign ads.
3. Abolish the Electoral College for once and for all. George W. Bush's victory in Election 2000 happened in spite of the fact that Al Gore had slightly more votes (no, we're NOT talking about this having being a "stolen" election). This happened because a Presidential candidate effectively gets ALL the votes in a state, even if he won in that state by a slim majority.
4. Abolish Gerrymandering schemes for House districts, both at the federal and state levels. Representatives are elected to *represent* their constituents, not choose whom the constituents are in order to assure their longevity in office.
5. Properly educate schoolchildren in Civics. In teaching the history in this country and the type of government we have, we need to stress how extremely important it is for us as citizens to be involved in choosing our leaders. I can relate one example of how this could be done from my memory of over 40 years ago, when I was in third grade.

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This title may seem like an odd contrast to the positions that usually grace this column, but it is not a typographical error. There are at least *five* good reasons to vote for Prince George.

1. Is this any way to run two wars at once?

Since this administration and its supporters seem to have forgotten, on September 11, 2001 our nation was attacked by terrorists based primarily in Afghanistan.

We have approximately 20,000 troops in Afghanistan, supporting a democratic government whose authority is increasingly challenged by warlords and terrorists. The terrorists who attacked us now have free travel in parts of Afghanistan. Despite this administration's efforts to keep this fact out of sight, it is clear that the situation in that country is reverting to the same dismal circumstances that enabled the 9/11 attacks to occur.

Meanwhile, we have over seven times as many troops in Iraq, where the current administration in its hubris ignored the advice of professionals and still clings to the fantasy that the Iraqi people welcome our invasion with flowers and dancing in the streets. The administration (many of whose members never served in the military) continues its refusal to acknowledge the shortage of troops, preferring to extend enlistments beyond their contractual expiration, and gutting the national guard and reserve components.

A political photo opportunity aboard an aircraft carrier isn't worth one day's hospitalization in the life of a single American service member, let alone 1000 deaths, 7000 wounded, and tragically, more to come. Mission Accomplished? Not hardly!

Vote for Bush: This President should not escape accountability for the disaster he has led this nation into, like he dodged active service during the Vietnam War, and now dodges accountability for his conduct then.

2. It's the stupid economics, stupid!

Since President Bush came into office, there has been a net loss of *over 800,000* jobs. The Social Security system continues to approach insolvency, while health insurance increasingly becomes an unaffordable luxury. The Bush administration's answer to these problems is tax cuts, tax cuts, and more tax cuts, all of which favor the wealthy. The surplus established under the Clinton administration has been replaced by a *half trillion* dollar deficit.

It becomes increasingly apparent that we are approaching an eco-

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conomic crisis, with three possible outcomes: There must be an abrupt and painful increase in taxes, or the Federal government will default on its obligations, or the government must continue financing its debt (which is our debt!) at increasingly higher interest rates, with the future risk of insolvency and the danger of hyperinflation.

Vote for Bush: This President must be held responsible for the coming economic catastrophe.

3. We're safer than ever, on any given "Orange Alert" day.

At least since 9/11, if not earlier, we have known that we are up against a resourceful adversary, who understands our weaknesses and how to exploit them. Every day, thousands of shipping containers enter our ports, and less than 10% of them are inspected. Critical targets such as nuclear power plants and chemical storage areas are protected by chain-link fence and the same type of minimal-skilled security that waved the 9/11 hijackers through the checkpoints. Each day, thousands of illegal immigrants cross our lightly guarded borders. Amazingly, the various agencies charged with the homeland security mission are still unable to communicate and coordinate effectively. The Bush administration's response to these vulnerabilities is to allow the FBI to investigate people's library records, and a five-color alert system where an elevated threat level bears a striking correlation with any drop in the current President's polling num-

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Our teacher made a class project of choosing an issue and having each student write a letter to our Senators. While I no longer recall what the issue(s) were, I do remember who the Senators were and the fact that they had given us written responses.

One of the things that we need to teach our children (and perhaps learn ourselves) is that the people are in office to serve us, and not the other way around. Too often, in reality, it appears that we are merely pawns in their quest to serve their larger campaign contributors. This needs to change if our faith in the system is to be restored. As a closing thought, I believe we really need to encourage ordinary citizens to run for public office. Perhaps this will happen if we make the process more meaningful and honest.

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bers.

Money that could have been used to effect solutions to these critical weaknesses has instead gone to corporations profiting from the Iraq War, often by no-bid contracts, and without questions raised about their ties to the Bush administration.

Vote for Bush: This President's failure to protect America from terrorism must be laid at his feet, not dropped in the next President's lap.

4. Caesar had a humble foreign policy, too!

Even before 9/11, Mr. Bush (who had promised to pursue a more humble foreign policy) set a precedent for disavowing agreements, and for openly expressing his contempt for other world leaders and for the United Nations. Besides attacking everything President Clinton accomplished in the Middle East, Mr. Bush's solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was to give the "fence-them-up-and-bomb-them-out" faction of the Israeli government a free hand. Coupled with the invasion of Iraq, this administration's arrogant and short-sighted policies have actually undercut the few progressive governments in the Middle East.

Since the Bush administration came into office, North Korea and Iran have made great strides in their nuclear weapons programs, while we have been searching for WMDs under the rocks in Iraq.

Not surprisingly, we now find ourselves alone in facing each international crisis.

Vote for Bush: This President and not his successor should face the ill-will Mr. Bush has generated all over the planet.

5. Help this author!

A person authoring a column of this type tends to worry about running out of things to say. Fortunately, the Bush Administration has provided an inexhaustible supply of stupid and hypocritical policies, statements, and actions, so that this author has never lacked material nor the desire to present it during the past four years. If Senator Kerry is elected, this author may suffer a lack of satirical targets, at least until the inevitable right-wing campaign to undermine the Kerry Presidency progresses.

Vote for Bush: *Keep this author supplied with material!*

The Day of Decision is at hand, and it will be up to the American voter to determine who will be at the helm of the Ship of State for the next four years.

Contrary to that which many pundits and journalists of the ‘mainstream’ media would like you to believe, there are great differences between the candidates, and it is from these differences you, the voter, must choose... and you must choose wisely, for the future security and well-being of our beloved nation depends upon your choice.

So, upon what will you base your choice? Party affiliation, single issues, personal likes or dislikes? How can you determine how a politician will perform if elected to office?

I have said it many times, in many columns, that actions speak louder than words. And it is by their records that the people running for office must be judged, not by their slick campaign promises. So let us see how these men have spoken, and how they have acted.

Well, to start off, during his acceptance speech in Boston John Kerry stated: *“Judge me by my record”*. It was a bold statement. But that is all it was, for in the approximately 5,000 word speech that took nearly an hour to complete he could only find 73 words to describe his 20 years of service in the United States Senate. Are those 73 words all there is? Of course not. But they might as well have been, because it seems Senator Kerry rarely has time to fulfill his duties and obligations as a Senator. I say this because he doesn’t seem to spend much time doing them:

- (1) Since becoming an announced candidate on September 2, 2003 he has voted a total of 43 times out of 346 opportunities, or about 12.4% of the time. From January 1 2004 through October 9, he only managed to be present to cast 14 votes out of 209 opportunities, or about 6.7%. He has not been present at all for any votes since June 22!
- (2) While you may wish to be gracious and excuse this absenteeism by CANDIDATE Kerry, you might also reflect on the fact that for the period of January 1 through September 1, 2003 he only cast votes 137 times out of 320 opportunities... 42.8%. What was more important to SENATOR Kerry than to do his job at least half the time? Possibly you agree with his advisor, Michael Meehan, who stated that *“Voting is just one small part of being a U.S. senator.”* He still takes home his full-time \$158,000 salary, though, and refuses to be replaced by someone willing to be a full-time Senator.

Then there is the concept of presence of mind during a crisis. Leaders must have this quality. Senator Kerry criticized President Bush for continuing to calmly read to a classroom full of 2nd graders (age about 7 years old) for 7 minutes after being informed of the hit on the second WTC tower. (Nobody knew it was an attack yet). Yet Kerry admitted on Larry King Live

that he and Senator Daschle couldn't think between the time the second tower was hit and the Pentagon was struck, about 35 minutes according to the official timeline of events. By the time Senator Kerry regained his sentience enough to be whisked out of DC to safety, President Bush had already addressed the nation, vowed to capture those responsible and begun discussions with Vice President Dick Cheney and other top aides about whether to shoot down any civilian aircraft violating the administration's order that all planes be grounded.

So, who showed the greater leadership? The man who calmly continued his task, so as not to frighten a load of schoolchildren, then went out and took care of business, or the man who went comatose for half an hour until somebody led him away to a hiding place?

On the issues, Candidate Kerry has presented himself as a shooter and hunter in hopes of winning the hearts and votes of America's millions of gun owners and sportsmen.

On his own homepage it is written: "*... I created a Sportsmen's Bill of Rights which details my commitment to the Second Amendment...*" So why is it his voting record shows that from 1988 thru 2003 he voted the Brady Campaign's (the most extremist Gun Control organization in the US) preferred manner **100%** of the time! He has **NEVER** voted against a gun control bill. Which version of the Second Amendment is he referring to?

In recent months I have documented the Kerry campaign's many lies and frauds, so I will not repeat them here. What I will do is give you a few quotes from the Men Who Would Be President, on the most important topic of the day.

John Kerry - Concerning our Military Actions:

"I'm an internationalist, I'd like to see our troops dispersed through the world only at the directive of the United Nations." Harvard's **The Crimson**, 1970

John Kerry - On the War on Terror:

"I think there has been an exaggeration of the terrorist threat." (1/29/04 - Democrat Presidential Debate in South Carolina)

"... it's primarily an intelligence and law enforcement operation." (4/18/04 - **Meet the Press**)

George Bush - Concerning our Military Actions:

"America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our people." - **State of the Union Address**, 1/20/04

George Bush - On the War on Terror:

"After the chaos and carnage of September 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers." - **State of the Union Address**, 1/20/04

"We have not forgotten the victims of September the 11th -- the last phone calls, the cold murder of children, the searches in the rubble. With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States. And war is what they got." - **USS Abraham Lincoln**, 5/1/2003

Who has been constant? Who has demonstrated leadership? Who will keep America safer? Decide, then **VOTE!**

Every day I see in the financial section of newspapers how to forecast what the market will do in 6 months, 12 months, several years. "Ten stocks that will double in the next 6 months." Right! I have trouble trying to forecast what it will do tomorrow. Do not trust any who claims he knows what the future will be for the market.

Of course, your broker will send you gobs of slick material about various companies that predict they will double or triple in the next 12 months. On the New York Stock Exchange there will be about one half of one per cent (0.5%) of companies that will double this year. Are you smart enough to pick those winners? I'm not and I am considered a professional trader. And I am sure your broker isn't either. He just wants to make a commission and is probably promoting a stock his brokerage company wants to push.

Every investor wants to know the future and will send money to some "expert" who will send him news about a company that only (?) he knows. And pigs can fly. One thing about the market. It is almost impossible to keep a secret and everyone knows everything about other companies. As soon as some "analyst" finds a cogent fact that can influence a stock price he will share that "secret" with a few close friends. Within minutes the "secret" is known by hundreds of thousands and is immediately reflected in the price of the stock.

If you do get sucked into one of these money traps by some smooth-talking salesman or newspaper verbiage I strongly suggest you immediately plan your exit strategy. Without an exit plan you can easily lose a large amount of your "investment". This is not an investment; it is a gamble and should be treated as such. The first thought of any professional trader is 'if I am wrong how much am I willing to lose'? Maybe 2%, 5%, certainly no more than 10%. Pros understand that small losses are OK, but never take a big loss.

From 1982 to 2000 it seemed everyone was a financial genius. How many of those folks kept those big winnings from 2000? Almost none. Most lost 40% to 60% of their money. Brokers said, "Hang in there. You are in for the long haul". Unfortunately he did not tell you that Modern Portfolio Theory is based on a 40 year time line.

Yes, but understand you don't need to predict anything. Don't forecast. What you can easily learn is follow the major trend. You bought in 1982 and you sold out in 2000. The trend can be found in many ways with the simplest being posted every day in Investors Business Daily newspaper under the IBD Mutual Fund Index. When the Index price is above the 200-day moving average you own equities and when it is below you are in cash or bonds. Nothing complicated,

Don't try to forecast the market. Let the market trend tell you.

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September blew by punctuated by those pesky hurricanes. While my particular area of Delray Beach suffered uprooted trees and power outages, my neighbors to the north and west endured much worse. I hope all of you reading this got through September relatively unscathed. We live in paradise 364 days a year. Then one day (or more) it is definitely not paradise.

During one weekend in September when there was no hurricane, I went to the AMC meeting in Portland, Oregon. A few business items you might be interested in: The preliminary budget for the World Gathering in 2006 was approved. Early registration is \$60 until next July (the Web site should be able to take your registration now). There is now a requirement that at least one member of the hospitality committees for large gatherings complete a food safety course prior to the events. And the AMC confirmed that membership in SIGs is limited to members of American Mensa; the SIGs can have participants who are not Ms, but they are not considered "members". The full minutes of the meeting are available online. The next AMC meeting is in our region: Orlando, at the Coronado Springs Resort, site of WG06. If you'd like to see the venue, come to the meeting December 3 through 5. There will be hospitality, of course, and a chance to meet members of your board of directors.

Thank you all (you know who you are!) for participating in the WG06 logo contest. I'll know the winner soon; hope it is one of Region 10's members!

Coming: "October Masquerade RG," hosted by Space Coast Area Mensa, Oct. 22-24; Holiday Inn Oceanfront (great location!); Registrar: Joe Smith, jsmith@arachnaweb.com. (*Editor's Note: The RG was cancelled due to the damage at the Holiday Inn incurred by Hurricane Jeanne*) AMC Meeting, Dec. 3-5, no reg. fee, Disney Coronado Springs Resort 407-933-1000. SR/DR \$109 + tax. Contact: Elissa Rudolph, RVC10@us.mensa.org. Colloquium 2005, Earth in Mind: Fueling the Future, : March 4-6, 2005, Tucson, AZ, www.colloquium.us.mensa.org

The ExComm met at the Cocoa Public Library on October 3, 2004. Called to order at 3:01 pm by LocSec Sam Kirschten.

Members present: Sam Kirschten, Helen Lee Moore, Joe Smith, and George Patterson. Suzanne Leichtling was unable to attend.

Welcome guests: J.T. Moran and Katherine Cochrane.

Minutes for August 2004 were not approved due to confusion regarding which newsletter they were published in. There was no September meeting due to Hurricane Frances.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: September 30, 2004 report distributed by **Helen**.

There were no other officer reports.

Committee Reports:

RG: The committee regretfully reported that the 2004 RG had been cancelled due to the closure of the Holiday Inn after damage from Hurricane Jeanne. No alternate site was available on such short notice, at an affordable price. It was recommended that the committee remain in place until all monies were refunded and the books closed, hopefully by the next ExComm meeting.

Old Business: none.

New Business: There was a discussion following which it was agreed that greater flexibility in the scheduling of ExComm meetings could be observed. The by-laws only require one meeting per quarter.

Helen move that the ExComm rescind all Standing Rules and Guidelines or Space Coast Area Mensa. (This does not include the By-laws.)

Sam seconded. It was explained that the intention of this motion was to raise the subject of the many rules and guidelines that are more honored in the breach than in the observance. It was expected that the motion be tabled and reopened at subsequent meetings. **Joe** moved to table. **Sam** seconded. Passed unanimously.

Katherine reported that the revamping of the website was virtually complete. The URL is www.spacecoastareamensa.org (not com).

Helen moved to adjourn at 3:48 pm, passed by unanimous vote.

The next two meetings of the ExComm are scheduled for Sundays, October 31 and November 14, both at 4:00 pm at the Cocoa Public Library.