

The

SCAM

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Happy Valentine's Day!



*Don't forget Smarti Gras!
Jan. 30, 31, and Feb. 1—details inside!*

*The
Newsletter*
SCAM
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Volunteer Needed!

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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: **808 Wisteria Dr., Melbourne FL 32901**, or submit via e-mail to: **moakleymj@bellsouth.net**

Subscription — \$10.00 for 12 issues.

Happy February Birthday

03—Louis Daboll, Jr.

14 – Wynn Rostek

04 – Dana Stetser

17 – Robert Lipton

07 – Heather Howard

24 – Phyl Sopkin

07 – Robert Stubbe

24 – David White III

11 – Michael Moakley

26– Linda Martin

13– Craig Reynolds



Welcome to SCAM

Christopher Erickson



Mewsing About



**Clara
Woodall-Moran,
LocSec**

In this issue you will notice there has been a Nominations and Elections Committee seated for the group. This committee is charged with finding candidates for the Executive Committee.

Are you happy with the way in which the group is being run? Some of the current officers have been serving the group for many years – and are ready for a break so someone else should step up to the plate this time. Just one year, and just one meeting a month for that year (maximum – it can be less).

Are you unhappy with the way in which the group is being run? Do something about it. As stated above, some of the current officers will not be running so this is the prime time for making changes.

What does it take to serve on the ExComm? It takes a willingness to serve the group. The jobs themselves are pretty self-explanatory. The Local Secretary {LocSec} is the chief executive officer. The Assistant LocSec is the VP of the group. The Recording Secretary (RecSec) keeps the records for the group and gets the minutes of the ExComm meetings to the editor in time for inclusion in the newsletter. The Treasurer is in charge of paying the bills and keeping the financial records (these records are auditable so it requires serious attention to detail). And, last but not least, Member-at-Large, the one member of the ExComm that is the voice of all of the members.

This group has been in existence for more than 20 years – it does not require much from the individual officers but working together, they are able to accomplish all that is needed.

If you have ever served on any board or project at which you attended meetings (including plain old staff meetings) then you know what to do. Often there is no real business to be done. We follow, in a general manner, the rules found in Robert's Rules of Order.

Please, take the time to notify the NomElCom that you are willing to help this group continue into the future.



***From the Horse's
Mouth...***



***by
Mike Moakley,
SCAM Editor
(moakleymj@
bellsouth.net)***

At the risk of becoming redundant, I cannot emphasize enough: This is your SCAM. Even so, you might find that only certain viewpoints are published in The SCAM. For example, you may have noticed that I have continued publishing my political column. I do intend on continuing my column, as long as I have things to write about (and there are plenty of things to write about).

Worse yet, you might find that your views are nowhere to be found in these pages. There is a solution to that, however: Write your own opinion column. Submit it to me for publication. I will publish it, regardless of the view. It is up to YOU to stand up and be heard (or read). Have an idea or topic of interest? Send it to me (see Page 3 of any issue); there is plenty of room in The SCAM. Remember, The SCAM belongs to you!

Shifting gears, please note that Central Florida Mensa is hosting the **Smarti Gras 2004** RG in Orlando from January 30th through February 1st. Please see the Calendar and Elissa Rudolph's RVC10 column for details. I realize this is extremely short notice, but unfortunately I did not receive the info until a few days after the January issue went to the printer's. I encourage you to attend the RG; a good time is guaranteed for all.

We have a new event. On the first Wednesday of the month, we will get together at **The House of Joe in Melbourne**. Please see the calendar for the particulars. It appears that there is something for just about everybody. Books, games (bring your own), and even a guitar on the premises if you feel inclined to make music. Check it out!

One final item. Our current Calendar Coordinator would really like to retire from that position. She already is wearing too many hats and could use one less responsibility. The Calendar Coordinator is responsible for arranging the activities for each month. It's not as hard as it sounds. Certain events, such as the CABAGES are regular as to days of the week, times and locations. The Calendar, like other submissions to The SCAM, is due the 10th of the month preceding publication. Any interested candidate will get plenty of support from the current Calendar Coordinator and me.

Please call or e-mail me if you are interested.



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



Ken Thornton-Smith

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The Wabasso Triangle
Episode 23 and a bit: Sweet Home Indiana

It should not have happened, but one thing is certain: it did happen. Defying all known Laws of Physics, as well as construction zone flags and pleading NPR stations, the Wabasso Triangle has struck again.

Brought to you by Anthony Chianti, Licensed Private Eye and Indian River Community Pasta Detective –
Motto: *It Takes a Village to Raise an Idiot.*

It was Thursday and, for once, I woke up early. I flung open the bedroom window, took a deep breath of fresh air and climbed in.

After a cold shower, I bounced into the bathroom, grabbed a rough towel, scrubbed my face vigorously and peered in the mirror. There, spread across my forehead, was a world champion booger. I should have known it was going to be one of those days...

At least there was the intense pressure of running a Pasta Detective Agency to take my mind off everything. And after last month's little adventure, it felt good to be back at work and in the thick of things, which is much harder than it sounds if you happen to be born in the Chinese Year of the Sloth...

Anyways, there wasn't much happening at the office, and it was going on 9.30, high time to make an early start on lunch. Plus, I was long overdue for another tax-deductible expense-item ticket from the Shy Knees Lester Want.

"Ah-ha, Misser Chianti, you again? How nice – we welcome you to re-opening of new redecolated Amish Lester Want."

"Oh – Hi... er, gimme a number eleven with the fried rice..."

"No flyed lice, but you can have number eeven with sauerkraut..."

I looked up from the crossword, "What did you say?"

"You can have number eeven, but this is new menu. Sauerkraut..."

"No, before that, what did you say before?"

"You mean, welcome? Welcome to new Amish Lester Want?" He handed me the menu.

"Amish? AMISH? What happened to Chinese?"

"Oh – we change with times – Amish is latest fashion..."

"Huh? What's this Lancaster Chicken Wing Ping?"

"Famous spicy Lancaster Chicken Wings – you like velly much!"

"And what about the "Ping"?"

"Oh, Ping mean microwave finish."

"But – why Amish food?"

"Yes, OK, now dot-com bubble has burst we follow latest trend – austerity cuisine – said so in Catering Weekly. Anyway, you like nummer forty-two – Sin Lo Sweet Haricots..."

"Forty-Two? This item... "Der Bruder Beans" ...?"

"Same thing, we only change name, taste 'xactly same."

"Okay, give me a number forty-two and a number eleven, followed by the Appomattox Pudding, whatever that is..."

"Sure, nummer ereven, Hanover Stew with Raw Potato Sausage, Sauerkraut and Bruder Beans forrowed by Appomattox pudding..."

"Just get me something to eat... " This could be a disaster – if they don't sell noodles anymore that could mean the end of expense account lunches..."

"OK, coming light up, food here before game start, Monday night is football night..."

"Good, but it's Thursday..."

"Oh? Maybe Thursday night is football night, too."

"Okay, so who's playing?"

"Tonight's game is Romania versus Namibia – exciting Rugby World Cup...."

I sipped the soup and sampled the sausage. Raw potato sausage – life couldn't get much wurst. I can smell a rat from a mile off, and even with matzos this place wasn't kosher. Something was wrong somewhere, and for once it wasn't the High Priest of Halitosis, Detective Inspector "Raving" Ravioli of the Serious Pasta Crimes Squad, exhaling in the same zip code...

After a couple of inedible bites, I'd tasted enough – it was time to get to the bottom of this funny business – being a pasta detective is a 24/7 commitment, not counting mealtimes.

I drove out the parking lot and straight back in the other end of the plaza, pulling up between that fancy French hairdressers, Maison Dixonline, and Ma Shred's Grapefruit Outlet. From there it was only a short tippy-toe to the back of the Shy Knees Lester Want.

Crouching behind their dumpster afforded me a good view of the restaurant loading bay. For a start, there were dozens of black buggies with orange triangles on the back... orange triangles spinning around... and around...

Some time later, I slowly opened one eye, wondering what the noise was...

"...and you flink you self rucky my Vulcan Death Gwip was only set stu..."

Years of Pasta Detective training paid off as I soon realized my captor was not really a diminutive 17-Century pastor but a Chinaman wearing a false beard. It was Ho Pless Lee, my old archenemy, and looking as venomous as ever. Time can be a great healer, but a spiteful beautician...

"Ah, Misser Chianti, you are even more ugrier than I remember. But this time you snoop your last snoopy-snoop..."

"Okay, but at four feet ten you're not fooling anybody, and why that ridiculous beard?"

"Misser Chianti, soon you die, so now I tell you the lest of the story... Our persecuted brothers in the Amish Libelation Front, they decide that the only advantage the lest of society has over the Amish is erezctricity. If no erezctricity then everyone is equal. But no one in Amish understand erezctricity so they hire famous Indian Liver Triad to sabotoge..."

"You mean...?"

"Yes, as we speak, in the first stage of our operation, 2000 potato trucks driven by Chinese wearing black hats and false beards head for Colorado Liver. We empty potatoes in river and block up the Hoover Dam. With no erezctricity, then America can-

not watch Jelly Splinger and society will crumble. After levolution, we give Indiana and Pennsylvania to the Amish and Indian Liver Triad gets the lest of the country..."

"Your fiendish plan will never work!" I struggled to free myself as they bundled me into the back of a buggy.

"You will be first one in the Colorado Liver, Chianti!" Sin Lo shouted after me as a long caravan of buggies headed north.

"Where are we going and why am I in this hand basket?" I said to myself.

After several backbreaking hours of buggy bouncing we came to a halt as searchlights and flashing blue lights lit up the interior. This can mean only one thing: the Wabasso Triangle has struck again.

"You're surrounded – come out with your hands up!" A familiar voice grated through the megaphone.

The buggy door swung open and I was thrown on the ground and kicked mercilessly.

"I arrest you for being a member of a listed terrorist organization, to wit, PWP!" He shouted unnecessarily through the megaphone.

"Parents Without Partners are terrorists?" I know some divorcees can be pretty aggressive but I had no idea the situation was that bad. I craned my head up.

"No, silly, Patriots With Potatoes – the radical breakaway wing of the Amish Liberation Front is... Chianti, it's you! What are you doing here?"

"Same as you, Ravioli. I was undercover, out there busting terrorists until you ruined the whole sting."

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 72, Kissimmee General Hospital.

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Deb's



Corner

If you live in and around the Titusville, Cocoa and Merritt Island area and are interested in crafts, you may want to check with the local craft stores for special sales and classes.

For instance, the Viking Sewing Gallery on Knox McRae Drive in Titusville has many classes and clubs just waiting for you to join, ...and what better way to meet and make friends.

Their Class Policy:

- Classes are open to everyone on a first come first serve basis.
- You must bring your own sewing machines with basic sewing supplies and tools to sewing classes.
- You must register one week prior to class, by phone, with two days to confirm the spaced save for you. DO NOT send payment without pre-registering first. Cancellations must be made 5 days prior to class starting due to the fact that contracts with teachers have been made by this time. However you may find someone to take your place in the class. All supply lists will be given out after all fees are paid....

Embroidery Club will meet March 30th at 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm.....

Cactus Punch Club will meet February 24th and March 23rd at 10:00 am. There is a monthly fee of \$5.00 and please remember to ask about discounts (same day 20%), free designs will be incorporated into the project.

Quilting Classes: Friday, February 27th at 10:00 am, Pam Bon's Midnight Flowers. A final finishing class will be scheduled at the end of 12 months. Monthly kit fee is \$11.00, which includes fabric and pattern plus there is a first class fee of \$10.00.

There are so-o-o-o many classes, for the beginner, children and the most experienced quilter too. Feel free to give your local craft store a call. There is nothing like a handmade gift, even if it is for yourself.

For those who are interested in checking out a few interesting craft/sewing sites from your own computer, I will try to list a few each month. At the time of this writing I have checked out each site and they're ready for your inspection.

Sites:

www.joann.com

www.duncancrafts.com/projects/list.asp (or just [duncancrafts.com](http://www.duncancrafts.com))

www.eeschenck.com for free quilt patterns

www.quilterscache.com.....designs by and for Marcia Hohn

www.quiltmag.com/block_of_the_month.html

www.about.com..... has patterns and suggestions of all kinds

www.zundtdesign.com...for those who enjoy embroidery

For those interested in giving a helping hand by making a useful gift you

may want to try www.headhuggers.com....for chemo caps and socks.
Those in need of a stitch conversion chart or list may want to try www.dummies.com.

Thank you and don't forget to support your local library, it is a great place to learn to spread your wings.

Thank you for visiting my corner,

deb

RG Committee Minutes

The RG Committee met January 4th at 4:30 pm at the home of Rita Johnson-Aronna immediately following the ExComm meeting.

The following positions were (or will be) filled as follows:

Chair:	Joe Smith
Registrar:	JT Moran
Treasurer/Hotel:	Helen Lee Moore
Hospitality:	Rita Johnson-Aronna
Games:	TBA
Publicity:	Clara Woodall
Scholarship Coordinator:	Rita Johnson-Aronna
Programs:	TBA

- Hotel Location and Date: Holiday Inn Oceanfront, Indialantic, FL, Oct. 22nd, 23rd, 24th.
- Usual meal plan – Saturday Night Buffet/ Sunday Brunch on the Hotel (purchased tickets only). Friday night, light dinner; Saturday and Sunday morning – Continental Breakfast in Hospitality; Saturday Lunch – sandwiches and salads.
- Fees set in time for the RG at CFM.
- Theme – October Masquerade – will see about getting artwork for the theme.
- Events and Programs: Sisters Curry have said they are interested. Costume parade. Pundemonium and Jokeoff have been cancelled.

Adjourned at 5:50 pm; next meeting immediately following ExComm meeting in February.



ValenTime RG on the Gulf

February 13-15, 2004 (3 p.m Friday - noon Sunday)

Holiday Inn, 1020 Hwy 98 E.

Destin, Florida

Tentative programs include some of last year's favorites and some new stuff you're gonna love, including The Chocolate Orgy, Air Pollution: Facts and Fables, Raising Koi, Nutrition, History of the Panhandle, Greenland, Genealogy, Lipstick and Khakis (woman helicopter pilot), Improvisation.

Registration:

\$35 per person if paid in advance, \$37.50 after February 1, \$40 per person at the door, or \$15 per person for a single day. Please make checks payable to Northwest Florida Mensa.

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Address _____

Please mail this form to:

Registrar - ValenTime
616 Overbrook Drive
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Questions?

Contact John Mochan, 850-863-3599, or jmochan@cox.net. Visit us at nwflorida.us.mensa.org

Room rates range from \$73 to \$105 per night depending upon the view; please contact the Holiday Inn at 850-837-6181 and tell them you're with the Mensa Group.

It's never too soon to think of ValenTime!

(Editor's Note: You may mail a copy of this ad if you wish to keep this SCAM newsletter intact.)

February 2004 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. Announced hosts should attend their events or arrange for a stand-in if unable. 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 2nd & 16th
6:00PM, Merritt Island, across from Merritt Square Mall

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 11th & 25th
Merritt Square Mall

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.

C.A.B.A.G.E. North Host: Karen Freiberg

Karen@Freiberg.com

C.A.B.A.G.E. South Host: Position Vacant

January 30, 31, and February 1st:

"Smarti Gras 2004" RG in Orlando

(Please forgive the late notice) Our neighboring group, the Central Florida Mensa, is hosting this event. The RG will be held at the Holiday Inn Select in Orlando. Registration is \$70 until January 29; \$75 at the door. Registration includes meals (except Sat. night); 24-hour hospitality; King cake, hurricanes & touffee, Olympic size hot tub, armchair treasure hunt & more. For more info, contact Eddie Truelove at (407) 855-9078 or by e-mail: *etruelove@cfl.rr.com*.

!st 3:00 p.m.

Super Bowl Party

Sunday

\$3.00

SS/NP

Super Bowl Party at Suzanne and Marc Leichtling's house in Cape Canaveral. Come and enjoy food, drink and fellowship. (You don't have to watch the game). Card/game players are welcome, too. Located in Ocean Woods, in *Cape Canaveral*. Please RSVP by noon on Sunday.

Suzanne and Marc Leichtling

suzl@cfl.rr.com

4th
Wednesday

6:00 p.m.
Coffee/M meal Cost

Coffee, Etc. at the House of Joe
NS/NP

Let's get together for some coffee, sandwiches, bagels, and a lot of books to borrow or trade. Bring your favorite game! Featured is a free Wi-Fi hotspot for those with laptops and a wireless Internet card. They also have a guitar handy for those so inclined. **The House of Joe** is located at **1220 W. New Haven Ave.** (across from Toys-R-Us) in **Melbourne**. See you there.

Trish Thornton

trishka665@earthlink.net

8th **4:00 p.m.** **ExComm Meeting**
Sunday **Free** **S/P (1 Friendly Dog)**

The Executive Committee of the group meets to conduct its monthly business. 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 Treasurer, Helen Lee Moore, In Hardeeville.*

Helen Lee Moore *Moorehelenlee@cs.com*

9th **Deadline for PIG SIG Reservations**

Reservations for the PIG SIG need to be called in today.

Helen Lee Moore *Moorehelenlee@cs.com*

10th **NL and Calendar deadlines**

All newsletter submissions must be to Mike no later than today. Ditto for calendar events being to the calendar coordinator. *moakleymj@bellsouth.net*

14th **12:30 p.m.** **Testing Session**
Saturday **\$30.00** **NS**

If you know someone who would like to join Mensa, tell them about the Mensa Entrance Exams and send them to the Cape Canaveral Hospital Resource Center. Testing can be fun, and it's one way to get into Mensa. Call me for info on other ways.

Helen Lee Moore, Proctor Coordinator *Moorehelenlee@cs.com*

14th **6:00 p.m.** **PIG SIG**
Saturday **Meal Cost** **NS/NP**

Join us once again for excellent Polish food at the *Bellwood Restaurant, 7505 Hwy. 1 South, Titusville.* The ambience is pleasant, the menu varied, the prices moderate, but the restaurant is small, so **reservations are required.** Call Helen by Tuesday the 9th. The restaurant is located about halfway between the Space Coast Executive Airport and the Orlando Utilities power plant, and is on the east side of the Highway.

Helen Lee Moore, *Moorehelenlee@cs.com*

15th **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.* You must be seated no later than 11:00 a.m. or you may not be seated with us: we can't save any seats for latecomers.

Jim Trammell

20th **6:00PM** **Talk-about**
Friday **\$3.00** **SS/P**

We all like to sit around talking with each other about all manner of things. Join us to just talk. No TV or videos — just great conversation and some good food for thought.

Clara and JT Moran *morwood@cfl.rr.com*

28th **6:00 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 mundane for some sushi, teriyaki, and tempura. *Miyako's* is located at *1511 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US1) in Melbourne.*

Mike Moakley *moakleymj@bellsouth.net*

**The Gourmet's
Guide:**

**Yes, We Have
No Bananas...**

by

Art Belefant

©2004

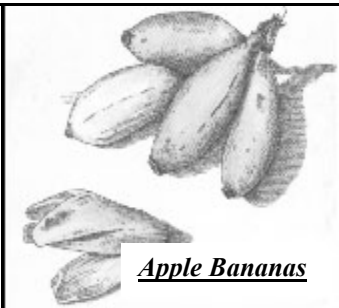
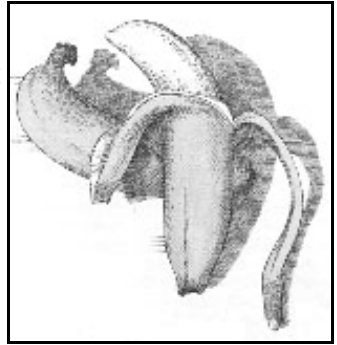
Bananas are the third most commonly eaten fruit in the U. S. That may seem to be an odd fact because they are not grown here. But, like several other common foodstuffs, such as coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate, we depend almost entirely on imports for them. With the exception of a small plantation that can be seen by the side of California 1, north of Los Angeles, I know of no commercial banana plantation in the contiguous 48 states.

Primarily, our bananas come from Central America. The countries that supply us with the fruit were collectively known as "Banana Republics". They were virtually fiefs of the United Fruit Company. Although that derisive term is not much used now to describe them, bananas were and still are their principal income-earning product. Some of our bananas also come from the Caribbean Islands.

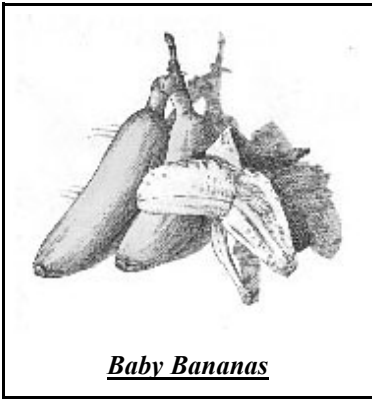
In the U. S. the regularly seen banana is the Cavendish (*Musa sapientum*) but there are over thirty varieties of edible bananas including Burro, Blue Java, Red, Apple, and Baby. The Plantain (*Musa paradisiaca*) is a non-sweet banana that is used for cooking. A related plant, *Musa textillis*, is Manila hemp.

Bananas do not grow on trees but rather on large herbaceous plants. The root is a perennial rhizome sending up new shoots every year. Each shoot grows from ten to forty feet high, bearing one large spike of female flowers. The male flowers are on the top of the spike. From shoot to fruit takes less than a year. After bearing fruit, the plant dies back to the rhizome. Because they are grown so easily and require so little space, and because the banana is so good a source of carbohydrates (sugars and starches), banana plants are commonly found in the yards of the meanest homes in the Caribbean and Central America where they constitute a major portion of diet of the poorer populations. Bananas contain negligible amounts of fat and protein.

Commercially, bananas are grown on large plantations where they are picked and shipped green, ripening on their way to the U. S. markets. Bananas originated in tropical Southeast Asia and are now grown in the moist tropics around the globe. Different varieties are grown and eaten in different parts of the world. I encountered a small orange-colored, variety that had a triangular cross section in Morocco. The Hua Moa of Hawaii, like the Plantain is not sweet and is eaten as a



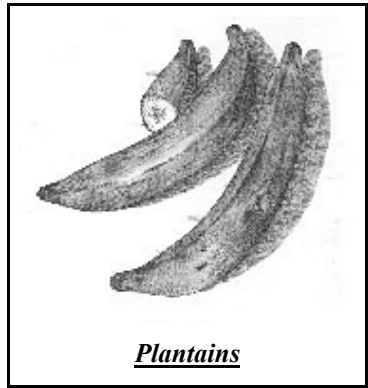
Apple Bananas



Baby Bananas

starch as if it were a potato. The Cavendish was, until recently, delivered to stores in complete bunches as grown. Now they are more commonly delivered, separated into “hands”, each banana called a “finger”. Harry Belafonte's (yes, we are related) Banana Boat song describes the arduous work in Jamaica of carrying the bunches of green bananas from the plantations to the boats. Each bunch can weigh from 25 to 40 pounds. The work was carried on at night when it was cooler. At daylight the number of banana bunches that the workers carried to the ship was tallied and the workers went home.

Culinarily, the banana is not important. The sweet varieties do not have overly distinctive tastes, but there are subtle differences. The Apple tastes of apple, the Burro has a hint of lemon, but on the whole, bananas have a sweet, bland taste with an oleaginous texture. They are best eaten out of hand or in desserts or on cereals. The only significant recipes for sweet bananas are Banana Bread and Banana Cream Pie. The non-sweet bananas also have a mild, bland flavor. In tropical areas where grains and potatoes do not grow, bananas form a major source of starch in the local diet.



Plantains

Phone: (407) 631-3548

FAX: (407) 690-2295

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***A View... From
Somewhere Else
To Measure the
World - Part III***

by

***Hank Rhodes
©2004***

Author's note: The previous articles in this series described the origin and progress of the seven-year expedition to accurately measure the circumference of the earth, by the astronomers Mechain and Delambre.

In France, the year 1794 encompassed the worst portion of the period known as the Reign of Terror. A radical faction had seized control of the government, and as a self-styled "Committee of Public Safety," they crushed anyone they perceived as an enemy, sending thousands of people to their deaths on the guillotine. In this way, several of Mechain and Delambre's friends and colleagues perished.

The new rulers of France did not confine their decrees to matters of politics. They were determined to remake French society in the mold of their rationalist, atheist, and egalitarian vision. Churches were converted to secular purposes. At the direction of the revolutionary government, the tombs of the French Kings were desecrated. The calendar was reset to the year I, and the traditional names of months which came from the Roman empire were replaced by seasonal descriptions. Instead of weeks, each month was divided into three "decades" of ten days, with public holidays thrown in to even out the solar year of 365 days and 6 hours. Even the 24 hour clock, derived from the Babylonians, was scrapped in favor of "decimal time."

In the middle of the year, however, a counter-coup displaced the radicals. Some of the leaders of the deposed party followed their own victims by a few days to the guillotine. The Reign of Terror nearly claimed as a casualty the project to measure the world. In fact, Mechain and Delambre did not resume their work on the survey until the middle of 1795. The project entered its fourth year, with its completion still uncertain.

By this time, Mechain had undergone a strange metamorphosis. While in Spain, Mechain had aggressively conducted his survey under the most arduous conditions. He could well have been excused for allowing his own injury to prevent him from active participation, but he had charged back into the mountains with the remainder of his team. Not even war could stop him from conducting his survey in the Pyrenees.

Since leaving Barcelona, however, Mechain had become despondent and lethargic, seemingly searching for excuses not to return to France, long after the overthrow of the dictatorship that spawned the Terror. This reluctance to return to his home country was especially odd, considering that Mechain had not seen his family and friends in three years. Although troubled by political events in France, neither Mechain nor his family had been directly harmed.

During his year of exile in the city-states of northern Italy, Mechain took refuge with several academics he knew by reputation. There, he composed a series of peculiar, self-depreciating letters. Neither injury nor politics adequately explains Mechain's depression. When his party finally did return

to southern France, Mechain lingered, ignoring many invitations to return to Paris. Yet, despite the entreaties of his team, he failed to resume the survey, allowing the favorable seasons of spring and summer to be wasted.

In the meantime, Delambre had recommenced work, and his team covered an additional 100 miles before the winter set in. This phase of the project posed its own challenges. Delambre's team was working in low, flat country, necessitating man-made observation points. Unfortunately, many of the structures that would serve this purpose, such as church steeples or the towers of the aristocratic estates, had been destroyed by overzealous revolutionaries.

Despite the fact that their armies were composed mostly of conscripted citizens, the French had prevailed on the battlefield, repulsing the invasions on the eastern and southwest frontiers. Still, the political upheaval continued within the nation. The Royalists staged a counter-revolution, which was put down by a promising young general named Napoleon Bonaparte.

The simple matter of provisions was a more immediate challenge. With the nation's finances in disarray, the new government had begun printing paper money without adequate reserves. This currency quickly lost value, which resulted in the issuance of more notes in larger denominations. In the countryside, this paper money was distrusted, rendering it worthless. Delambre and his team were forced to resort to extreme measures simply to feed themselves and procure supplies.

At the end of the season, Delambre returned to Dunkirk for the latitude measurement. Writing to Mechain for advice on which stars to sight, Delambre received a long and rambling reply, portions of which read like a confessional of incompetence. This was coming from a man who was regarded as one of the leading astronomers of his era.

Over the next two years, Delambre pushed on and completed the northern portion of the survey by August 1797. During this time, Mechain lodged with local officials and amateur scientists in the south of France, but made very little progress. Then, the project gained a new sense of urgency. The French government had called a scientific conference, inviting academics from all over the world to the formal inception of the new measurement system, based on Delambre and Mechain's survey. The conference was scheduled to take place at the end of 1798.

Since the renewal of the project, Delambre had completed a survey of over 200 miles, while Mechain's portion comprised about 120 miles, most of which remained uncompleted, as the deadline loomed.

(To be continued)

Sources and notes:

Primary source for this set of articles is Ken Alder's excellent work, *The Measure of All Things*, published by the Free Press in 2002.

Note that the term "scientist" is used here in its modern meaning.

Yet Another View

**Today Saddam,
Tomorrow the
World?**

by

Mike Moakley

As I write this column, it has been a week since we heard the news. On December 13, 2003, American troops captured Saddam Hussein, former dictator of Iraq. It appears the source of this news is the current American-installed Administrator of Iraq, Paul Bremer. Like most readers, I certainly will shed no tear over the ridding from the world of yet one more ruthless dictator. Yet, when Saddam's capture is placed in context with other events occurring since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001,

is this really reason for applause?

Shortly after 9/11, we were told the party responsible was al-Qaeda, led by master terrorist, Osama bin Laden. President Bush assured the nation that he would "hunt them (bin Laden and accomplices) down" and "bring them to justice". With that, the President sent the military to Afghanistan, the suspected hiding place of bin Laden. The short version of the Afghanistan venture is that our troops decimated that country but was still unable to locate bin Laden.

Then, about a year ago, President Bush had yet another mission in the works. Now, according to the President, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has been developing "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD) in violation of United Nations sanctions stemming from the Gulf War, fought during Bush I. For the sake of National Security, we needed to stop Saddam and find (and destroy) his WMD. We needed to bring Saddam to justice. And...oh, yes... there's a connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda.

Bush II did first go to the United Nations to get that body's blessing for his planned "preemptive defense". When the U.N. balked, two key players, France and Germany, became the objects of national scorn, and "Freedom Fries" came into being. Not to be deterred, Bush II announced that the U.S. would lead his "preemptive defense" without U.N. approval; did anyone else want in? Great Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair stepped up to the plate by lending British support to the venture. So off go our children on behalf of Don Quixote (Bush) and Sancho (Blair) to Iraq.

Nearly a year, billions of dollars, and hundreds of American lives later, no WMD are found nor is there conclusive evidence of the alleged "al-Qaeda Connection", Iraq is likewise decimated and under the U.S. puppet leadership of Paul Bremer. Now Saddam is arrested. Two countries in 2-1/2 years, totally destroyed and taken over by Bush II; who will be next? Perhaps France, since after all Jacques Chirac really wasn't very supportive of the Bush II plan, will they be next? Perhaps Germany or Russia, for much the same reasons? Could this really be the beginning of the new Bush II Empire?

It would appear that I am not the first one with that speculation. The *Sydney Morning Herald* published an editorial on September 20, 2002, entitled Hail Bush: A New Roman Empire. The editorial notes:

"Today a liberal dissenter such as Gore Vidal, who called his most recent collection of essays on the US The Last Empire, finds an ally in the likes of conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, who earlier this year told the New

York Times, 'People are coming out of the closet on the word 'empire'' He argued that Americans should admit the truth and face up to their responsibilities as the undisputed masters of the world. ... 'The fact is, no country has been as dominant culturally, economically, technologically and militarily in the history of the world since the Roman empire''

The editorial goes on to detail the similarities between ancient Rome and Bush II. So similar, in fact, that Rome had its own "9/11". Sometime in the 80s B.C., Hellenistic king Mithridates called on his followers to kill all Roman citizens in their midst, naming a specific day for their slaughter. The result was some 80,000 Romans killed in local communities across Greece, to the utter shock of fellow Romans throughout the empire.

Are we, under Bush II, emerging as the next world empire? If so, how long will we remain in power? For example, the Roman Empire lasted some 13 Centuries. The British Empire, in contrast, lasted only 3 Centuries. Then we have Nazi Germany, that "1000 Year Reich", lasting merely 12 short years. We can only speculate how long we would survive under the Bush II regime. But that's the subject of another article.

A Christmas Gift

by
Clara Woodall-Moran

I have a new hero. My sister, Barbara, has always been high up in my list of impressive people but she topped the list this Christmas.

Barbara has a friend, Joanne. Joanne, despite suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), tries to remain very active by getting out and doing things like ushering at a local theater and at football games at Ohio State University. Joanne encouraged Barbara to join her in these ventures. Barbara had never been one for this sort of volunteering but she finds she really enjoys it and her life improved greatly.

Joanne's health had suddenly worsened – her kidneys failed. With the RA, Joanne was not able to handle the dialysis very well. She cannot lie on her back for the required four hours. Joanne's doctors put her on the list for transplant immediately. The only family members who matched were not healthy enough to donate. Joanne's fiancé was not a match.

On a hunch, Barbara decided to be tested and was a perfect match. Barbara's age, however, was against her so the Doctors put her through more rigorous testing to be certain she could donate one of her two good kidneys. On the 23rd of December, the transplant operation was completed. Barbara leaves the hospital on the Day after Christmas and Joanne leaves the next day. Both have fully functioning kidneys, one each.

Upon hearing about this generous donation, one of our relatives immediately called dibs on the rest of her organs... just wanted to get a bit of insurance, I guess.



The Alchemist:

***What Are You
Waiting For?***



Al Thomas

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magic.com***

Do you own any mutual funds? In an IRA or 401K or wherever? Privately or at work? Have you called your fund manager to find out what is going on with your fund? Are they under investigation for late trading, improper pricing, deviation from length of sales defined in the prospectus or stale trading? Are my questions too hard?

Please don't be confused. It seems that most fund owners haven't done anything. There is a serious bout of complacency going around. Forget the flu; this is going to affect your pocketbook. Oh well, it's your money and if you don't care if some crook in a suit with a manicure is handling it then that is your loss.

Now we find out that even those foreign funds have bandits for managers. The British mutual fund industry called unit investment trusts has been doing almost the same thing as our homegrown thieves. **It seems the little investor has his wrists tied to his ankles all over the world.** The regulatory agencies such as the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) have NOT been doing their job. If you have questions about your funds you can call them in Washington at 202-942-8088. They must tell you as this is public information.

The late trading scandal hit first and has been misnamed as market timing. Late trading is illegal whereas market timing is legitimate. Late trading allows order entry at today's price as long as 3 hours after the market has closed. During that 3 hours news of financial importance regarding stocks in a particular fund could be affected by legal decisions, profit pronouncements, etc.,etc. That news could make the fund go up 2% to 5% the next day when the late trade is then offset taking a disproportionate amount of profits from the regular fund holders. That does not sound like much, but when you are dealing with big numbers it is plenty. What is nice for the crook is there is almost no risk.

In many funds there are classes such A, B, C and other strange letters. These have to do with how much and when the commission is charged. If you put in \$25,000 or more you are supposed to get a better price, but many funds have been charging more. In the prospectus it may say you are required to hold a fund for X numbers of days or pay an extra amount called a redemption fee. Their friends, the big money folks, have not been so charged.

Stale trading is the new one. It seems the buy or sell orders are not entered on the day they were placed, but done so at a more favorable time to allow for a better profit. These practices and ones not yet reported and those I have not heard of are stealing money from your account. **What are you waiting for?**

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At Your Service



*Joe Smith,
Membership Chair*

Well here we go again!!! Another two years are behind us and once again we have begun planning our RG in October of 2004, more precisely, SCAM October Masquerade RG.

Due to popular demand (and a few veiled threats if we did relocate) we are returning to our favorite Penthouse On the Beach, the Holiday Inn Oceanfront in Indianalantic. At the time of this article, details of the event are still developing, but you can be sure that with the surroundings, the view, and the time of year (weekend before Halloween) it will be both an interesting and

memorable weekend for everyone.

As always, with a project this size we must turn to our membership to help continue our tradition of providing a fun-filled weekend for all of the attendees. There are several chairmanships available ranging in scope from moderately rewarding to opportunities for full fledged self-realization!! All kidding aside, we really do need all of our members to step up to the plate and let us know that we can call on you for help (and even if you don't call – we will be calling you).

The following sub committees are available for your chairmanship or help:

- **RG Chairman** – Chairman Seated, but assistance with overall management of Project will be appreciated.
- **Registrar** – Chairman Seated, but as with all other sub-committees help is needed.
- **Treasurer** – Chairman Seated – Currently the ExComm Treasurer, but not always a requirement...reports to SCAM Treasurer
- **Hotel Liaison** – Chairman Seated – We can use an assistant chairman in Melbourne!!
- **Hospitality** – Chairman Seated. This Chairman was railroaded into it (silver-tongued devil that I am - thanks Rita), but would jump at the opportunity to pass it to someone else because they are already chairing another sub-committee.
- **Games** – Chairman Needed – this is a fun one with not too much effort.
- **Publicity** – Chairman Needed
- **Scholarship** – Chairperson coordinates fundraising for the scholarship fund (This is filled ex officio by the SCAM Scholarship Chairman)
- **Programs** – This is a really fun position – you get to arrange to have speakers, dignitaries, persons with unique talents...etc. to have a couple of hours with a room and an audience.

If you are determined to deprive yourself of a chairmanship, you can still get involved. With everyone helping a little help here and a little there we will

be able host a successful RG and still have an opportunity to have some fun ourselves. Please feel free to give me a call at 259-4966.

If even after this groveling, you are still determined not to help, then the very least you can do is to register and join the other guests in the festivities (if you can stand the guilt!!). Even in these times of accelerating prices and diminishing services we are offering the following registration fees with early registration discounts as follows:

- Registrations received or postmarked before midnight 2/29/04 - \$35.00
- Registrations received or postmarked before midnight 8/31/04 - \$40.00
- Registrations received or postmarked before midnight 10/15/04 (week before event) - \$45.00
- After that it is \$55.00

This fee includes access to all the programs, games, hospitality suite, continental breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning, finger foods/snacks Friday evening and Lunch in the penthouse on Saturday plus all the soft drinks, wine and beer you desire and so much more!!!. Prices for rooms and Saturday Evening Banquet are currently being determined. Details will be available by next month's newsletter.

If you've needed an excuse to get to know some of your fellow SCAM and/or Mensa members, then this is it. This promises to be a great time and the earlier you let us know the more you will save. Hope to see you all there.

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The 10th Story

by

**Elissa Rudolph,
RVC10**

RVC10@us.mensa.org

(Editor's Note: The first paragraph was submitted for the January SCAM; the second for the February SCAM)

Gt's amazing, but in only two months of really pushing the idea, we have nearly 10,000 proxies, 38%+ of the goal (as of this writing in mid-December). **Central Florida Mensa** is still ahead in Region 10 with 29.1% of their members submitting proxies. The rest of the region—11 groups—have percentages between 17% and 19%, not too bad for this point in the challenge. We have until the end of June to collect the others. Think we can do it?? I do!! Encourage your members to go to <http://www.us.mensa.org/> and click on "ProxyQuest" and tender their proxies. The sooner Ms respond, the less expenditure of money and energy there will be to continue contacting the quiet ones. From now until the end of the Proxy-Quest campaign, our officer mailings will include a flag to show whether a member's proxy was received (or not). This takes a lot of the guessing out of who did and who didn't. A focused telephone or email campaign could then bring quick results. Think about doing this in your group—you could gather a few *unshy* Ms and heat up those telephone cables taking turns contacting Ms never heard from.

I hope 2004 is a great year for you. See you in Orlando?

A month later, and **Central Florida Mensa** is still ahead in Region 10 with 32.9% of their proxies submitted—way to go, Ms!! Several other Region 10 groups are making good showings—**Northwest Florida Mensa** (26.7%), **Southwest by South Florida** (23.6%), **Gainesville Area** (21.4%), and **Manasota Mensa** (21.0%) are all over the 20% mark. You guys are great! Let's keep on clicking to get to the 51% mark nationally. Go to and tell your M-friends to go to <http://www.us.mensa.org/> and click on "ProxyQuest."

Congratulations to **Tampa Bay Mensa** for landing the 2005 Mind-Games event, April 15-17! Now that it will be practically in my backyard, I will definitely attend. It will be my first time... And I know Tampa Bay Ms will do a great job.

See you in Orlando at Smarti Gras??

Coming Soon... great Mensa Gathering events!!

January 30, 31, February 1, *Smarti Gras 2004*, hosted by Central Florida Mensa, at the Holiday Inn Select, Orlando; registration fee: \$60 til 10/31/2003, includes meals except Sat. night; 24-hour hospitality; King cake, hurricanes & touffee, Olympic-sized hot tub, armchair treasure hunt, & more. Registrar: Eddie Truelove (407-855-9078), etruelove@cfl.rr.com .

February 13-15, *ValenTime*, hosted by Northwest Florida Mensa at the Holiday Inn of Destin; registration fee \$35 til Jan. 31; white sand beaches, lavish hospitality overlooking those Gulf of Mexico beaches, chocolate, games,

speakers, & more. Registrar: John Mochan (850-863-3599), jmochan@cox.net.



The ExComm met at the home of Rita Johnson-Aronna on January 4, 2004.
Call to Order 4 pm by LocSec Clara Woodall-Moran.
Members present: Clara Woodall-Moran, Rita Johnson-Aronna, Sam Kirschten, Helen Lee Moore, and Joe Smith.
Welcome guest present: Mike Moakley.

Minutes for November 2003, approved as published. Moved by **Rita**, seconded by **Sam**, unanimous vote.

Officer reports -

Treasurer: December 31, 2003 report distributed by Treasurer **Helen Lee**.

Joe Smith announces RGComm meeting following this ExComm meeting.

Testing: no candidates were tested in December 2003. Six inquiries had been received for the January 2004 test session.

Old business: Karen Anderson, national MENSA to certify Henry Rhodes as proctor. **Helen Lee** has answered affirmatively.

Member Handbook: **Helen Lee** can present the Handbook when all comments have been made. Further discussion in New Business.

New Business: Nominations and Election Committee members nominated by **Helen Lee:**

Fran Hinson, Mike Moakley, J.T. Moran.
Seconded by **Joe**. Discussion reminding NomEIComm members cannot be nominated for the ExComm, nor can The SCAM Editor. Vote unanimous in favor of all nominees and they are selected.

Needing a spokesperson to MENSA NomEIComm, SCAM ExComm is appointed by the LocSec.

A discussion was held about the requirements to support the Editor of The SCAM. No changes need to be made.

LocSec gave a heads up that the Audit Committee will be needed and will be appointed at the February meeting.

An open forum discussion for the good of SCAM was held. Helen Lee among others would present a motion on behalf of any member of SCAM; and all members are invited to be guests and can bring a recorder or take notes at ExComm meetings. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

The next ExComm meeting is scheduled for 4 pm February 8, 2004, at the home of Helen Lee Moore.