

The

SCAM

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Happy St. Patty's Day!



The
SCAM
space coast area mensa

Editor
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Calendar Coordinator
Volunteer Needed!

Assembly/Circulation
CLARA WOODALL-MORAN
cew@cfl.rr.com

**March
Birthday Greetings!!**



- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>01 -- Kathryn Juarez</i> | <i>18 -- Ellen Paul</i> |
| <i>02 -- Joseph Smith</i> | <i>20 -- William Daffron</i> |
| <i>05 -- Stephen Schneider</i> | <i>22 -- Jack Harris</i> |
| <i>05 -- David Terry</i> | <i>23 -- Donald Dalton</i> |
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| <i>17 -- Janice Axelrod</i> | |

Welcome!!

To SCAM: *Robert Barber* *John Schiffermuller*
Lois Duffy



To SCAM
and Mensa: *Helmuth Grimm* *Sherry Nutter*
David Lynch *Michael Zielinski*

Welcome
Back: *Silas Baker* *Robert Hartman*
James Dace

Editor's Note:

The SCAM belongs to the members of Space Coast Area Mensa. Accordingly, we welcome all material submitted for publication in The SCAM. The material may be on just about any subject. Controversial opinions or subjects are encouraged, as are rebuttals to any opinions published herein. The Editor retains the right to edit or reject any material, but will not exercise such prerogative to limit opinions or discussion of any topic.

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**. Submissions via e-mail, when possible, is preferred. They may be in e-mail text or any of most **word processing** formats. All submissions should be sent to the **Editor**, whose address, phone number and e-mail appear above.

Mewsing About



***Clara
Woodall-Moran,
LocSec***

Quite a few SCAM members had a great time at the Central Florida RG in Orlando over the last weekend of January-the first of February. I like that the two groups seem to help each other out at these events. This group in general and I, as the Local Secretary, took some heat over the Proxy issue. When asked why I had not been more active at pushing for the proxy, I responded that the members of Mensa are bright enough to arrive at decisions without any force from the officers. If the matter is presented properly the membership will act properly.

Now, I'm going to do something unprecedented by anyone else regarding this matter. I have the link to the New York Laws (in general) and will provide exact directions to get the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law. This will allow each and everyone of you to read this law and decide, by looking at the law and comparing the Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd. I cannot so provide links to the Bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd. as it requires passwords and I don't have a generic one (find that in the Mensa Bulletin). For those interested but with no Internet connection, take the links and instructions to the nearest public library and you can get there for free.

<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menugetf.cgi>

Click on: Return to Main Menu

Click on Laws of New York

Scroll to Not-for-Profit Corporation and Click on NPC

Scroll to Article 8 and Click it Open

Start reading at Section 803 (or start at the beginning of it, if you so want).

Read the entire law if you want – it is very interesting (I've read it) and it won't take long. Compare what you read with what the National Office is telling you and follow your own decisions. While the entire law is not that extensive, I do not want to take up the space in the SCAM and reading it online at the State of New York's web site is most official.

***Now Is The
Time...
...to Select Our
New Leaders!***

St is fast approaching that time when we will once again get to decide who will run the affairs of Space Coast Area Mensa. The NomElCom is tasked with seeking candidates for the ExComm. If you are interested in nominating someone, or if you are interested in running for office yourself, contact one of the members listed below:

Fran Hinson

475 Arbor Ridge Lane
Titusville, FL 32780
321-269-3925
franoosh@cfl.rr.com

J. T. Moran

P.O. Box 457
Sharpes, FL 32959
321-632-0854
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Mike Moakley

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Moakleymj@bellsouth.net

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



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

In the last couple of issues, I have emphasized that the SCAM belongs to its members. This is true not only of this newsletter, but it is true of this group as well. You will no doubt see that some of the pages in this issue have undergone a facelift of sorts. I welcome your comments on this as well as anything else in connection with the newsletter.

We are also introducing new events in our calendar. Last month, we started a "first Wednesday" get together at the House of Joe in Melbourne. It is scheduled again for March. Try it out; those who were there had a good time. A more complete account of the first get together appears in Trish Thornton's article.

Next month, we will see yet another new event! Helen Lee Moore will be hosting a talk by two members of our group with very different opinions. The event will be

somewhat structured in that the speakers will each have a set amount of time to present their points of view, then there will be a break for refreshments, and then YOU will be able to ask either speaker any questions you have that are relevant to their talk. Look for this event on the April Calendar, and plan to attend!

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

by

Hank Rhodes

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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 order to complete the measurement of the world, Delambre surveyed the northern baseline in the spring of 1798, using a straight segment of roadway southeast of Paris. It required over 40 days for the team to measure a length of approximately six miles, using calibrated platinum rods. Later that year, Delambre measured the southern baseline, a task that originally belonged to Mechain. Delambre also enlisted Mechain's wife, who was a competent astronomer and mathematician in her own right, to visit her husband and urge him to complete the project.

In the fall of 1798, with the representatives from the world already arriving in Paris for the conference of scientists, Delambre journeyed to southern France to find Mechain. Despite the hero's welcome that awaited him in Paris, Delambre simply refused to depart until Mechain accompanied him. This threatened act of sacrifice by Delambre was the only thing that motivated Mechain to complete the project.

In November 1798, Mechain and Delambre returned to Paris, to the accolades of the academic community and the gratitude of the nation. The wisest man in the Academy of Sciences could not have foreseen that it would require many more years than originally expected to complete the mission. Nor could anyone have anticipated the obstacles they would surmount. France at the end of the mission was a markedly different nation than the one that existed when Delambre and Mechain first set out from Paris. The fact that the mission was completed at all is a testament to Delambre and Mechain's tenacity and sense of duty.

Mechain and Delambre's legacy is the system of measurements used throughout the world, and which is preferred by the scientific community here in the United States, where it is gaining grudging acceptance by the general population. This is what is commonly known today as the metric system. By measuring the world, Mechain and Delambre determined the length of the meter.

The new metric system used Greek and Latin prefixes to subdivide or multiply the basic unit by powers of ten, a revolutionary concept. Equally revolutionary was the interrelationship between the different forms of measurement. The measurement of volume was derived from length. 1000 cubic centimeters comprised the basic unit of capacity, the liter. Weight in turn, was derived from volume. A cubic centimeter of ice at its melting temperature defined the basic unit of weight, the gram. Although the meter has subsequently been redefined several times, most recently as the distance light travels in a vacuum in $1/299,792,458$ of a second, each redefinition has been intended to preserve the original value determined by

But what of Delambre and Mechain themselves?

Delambre was appointed the President of the Academy of Sciences, and spent the next two decades of his life as one of France's premier scientists. Among his other many offices, he served as Treasurer of the University of Paris. He also married a wealthy widow, who shared his interest in classical literature.

Mechain became the director of the national observatory, a position vacated during the revolution. His family moved to the prime residence on the grounds, and his eldest son received a favorable appointment as a military engineer.

Both men also benefited from Napoleon Bonaparte's admiration of their work. Shortly after the completion of the expedition, Napoleon had taken control of the government from the ineffective Directory.

At this point, Mechain had achieved more success than most men hope for. He was recognized as one of the leading scientists of his era. He had a secure position, opportunities for his sons, and a happy home life. He was free to pursue the studies that interested him, and to direct others in the scientific progress of the nation. Perhaps most significantly, he had gained a measure of immortality. (For example, Mechain and Delambre each have an entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which includes their other scientific accomplishments- such as the discovery of celestial objects- along with the meridian survey of 1792-1798.)

Yet, Mechain was not satisfied with this. In 1803, Mechain set out on a new expedition. The ostensible purpose of this mission was to extend the survey along the Spanish coast, lengthening the measurement of the meridian to the Mediterranean island of Majorca. Mechain was nearly sixty, and embarking on a project that could and should have been assigned to a subordinate. Additionally, this new mission was of somewhat dubious scientific value. Persevering through difficult terrain, Mechain was absent from his home for another year. Without accomplishing any of his objectives, he caught malaria and died in Spain.

After all that Mechain had endured, after his lifelong rise to success, what could have caused him to take such a melancholy and self-depreciating view of himself? What drove him to undertake so arduous an expedition for so little promise of return? Why would a man at the pinnacle of his career choose to exile himself?

(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.

Deb's



Corner

Hi, Deb from Deb's Corner here..... I like to mention using your local library in each of my articles. The library is very important to our community's past, present and future. Those of you who are not regulars at your local library may be surprised to know that most of them have a recycling system. Not recycling of cans or bottles or even newspapers, but of books, record albums, magazines, tapes, videos and lots of other interesting things.

The way our library recycles is by having low-cost sales of over stocked, some donated items and some great finds. The money raised is recycled into our library system and the items sold are recycled into the community, at very low cost to buyer. Some libraries have a daily bookcart of new and used books for sale. Others choose to have a huge book sale 2 or 3 times a year, usually located in a room actually in the library and handled by "The Friends of the Library".

These volunteers are wonderful, patient and well organized members of our own community, giving back to the community and library. I am including a few phone numbers and possible dates of book sales for those who are interested.

Public Libraries (in Brevard County)

Cape Canaveral.....868-1101

Cocoa Beach.....868-1104

De Groodt.....952-6317....year round cart sale

Eau Gallie.....255-4303....next sale weekend of
April 16th & 17th

Melbourne.....952-4514....next sale weekend of
March 4th

Melbourne Beach....956-5642....next sale weekend of
April 1st & 2nd.

Merritt Island.....455-1368

Palm Bay.....952-4519....year round cart sale

Port St. John.....633-1867

(Continued on page 9)

THIS PAGE IS RESERVED ...JUST FOR YOU!

*A View
from the Right:
Amend This!
Part I*

by

*A View... From
Somewhere Else*

*A View
From
The
Car-
riage*

*The Poetry
Corner*



*My Point
of View
Education
"Opportunities"*



Is The SCAM too POLITICAL...?

...Too liberal?

Too Conservative...?

Needs more fiction?

More poetry?

...Maybe you'd like to see something else?

Why not write for The SCAM??

The SCAM welcomes written submissions on just about any subject matter. It must be your own work. Remember, deadline is the 10th of every month for the upcoming issue. Please see Page 3 of every issue for details.

***The 1st Coffee,
Etc. Meeting
Notes...***

***by
Trish Thornton***

We drank great coffee drinks and one person tried a sandwich (said she liked it). My choice was a mocha espresso latte and it was wonderful. Sam and his son Joe attended and were witty and thought provoking, as usual. Ellen (carver of a wondrous carousel horse!) dropped by for a short while.

I don't think anyone had a dessert but the cheese-cheesecake and brownies looked tempting.

One laptop amongst us and we looked up different topics that arose during the evening on the free WiFi internet available in the cafe: ex: the BIG LIST of oxymorons, political cartoons, question:does ebay have bloody chain-saws to auction?, etc.

George explained to Kathy and me about some ways to figure the speed of light (at least that's what I think he was explaining....my problem, not his!).

No one brought any games to play but, at our 6pm start time, we had our choice of tables we could have grabbed (round ones with 4 chairs each would have been comfortable to play at) if we'd wished to. Think about it, those of you who need a game site!

Signing out from caffeine heaven....Trish Thornton



(Continued from page 7)

Satellite Beach.....779-4004

Suntree.....255-4404....year round cart sale &
big sale the weekend of March 12th.

Those who would like to contribute, whether it be time, money or whatever please contact the library of choice and ask for the contact phone number for "The Friends of the Library". Wouldn't you like to be a "Friend"?

Thank you for visiting my corner,

deb

The Alchemist: Discipline

Al Thomas



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***al@mutualfund
magic.com***



ne of the great “secrets” of successful people is discipline and it doesn’t make any difference whether it is manufacturing, processing, servicing or investing in the stock market.

Before you can have that discipline you must have a successful plan and stick with it. If the method you use does not work or results in smaller profits it should be abandoned and a better one found. For the average investor the plans laid out by Wall Street do not work and over the long run you will lose money. Actually you will make a very small percentage, but the return will be mitigated due to ongoing inflation. The great majority of investors believe that an annual return of 10% or more is to be expected when actually it is much less and there will be periods when there will be almost no return at all.

Returns can be increased greatly if the investor will learn not to follow the 3 great lies of Maul Street. They are Buy and Hold, Dollar Cost Average and Do Research. These lies have been told so often that they have become conventional wisdom.

During 1998 and 1999 the price appreciation was fantastic. If you check back in history you will find this was an aberration. Folks still think that was “normal”. The actual norm is about 16 to 18 year periods of bull markets followed by bear markets with many 4 year cycles of ups and downs with that 16-year time frame.

Think back to 2000, 2001 and 2003. During that time did your broker ever call to tell you to sell? About 98% of brokerage company recommendations were to Buy. Many folks lost 50% to 80% of their savings. That alone should have turned on the light bulb in your head that either these guys are stupid or they are lying to you.

There is a “secret” to investing and it is one word – Sell. You must have to discipline to remove yourself from losing positions. During the worst part of that 3 years we saw many stocks drop 50 to 90% and other companies go out of business. If you have placed a limit to the amount of loss you would take you would have a lot more money today. Why do you want to wait for your stocks to drop 30, 40, 50% or more when you could have placed an Open Stop Loss Order with your broker to sell you out if your stock dropped below a certain price? Maybe 10%, hopefully not 20%, but even that is better than a huge loss.

In many cases brokers try to talk you out of selling, but your discipline will require you to be firm. You must protect your money; insist on protection of your investments.

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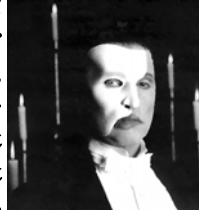
Who Knows What Fun Lurks at the Heart of a SCAM RG?



Well, just about anyone who has ever attended one, of course! You don't have to have the power to cloud men's minds to know that! A SCAM RG is synonymous with a good time. This one will be no different, as all the ingredients are again present: a great crew, the Halloween weekend, the friends you haven't seen in a while, as well as the friends you haven't yet



met, all tied together in the greatest Hospitality Suite location there ever was - one huge room, two stories high, overlooking the beach. Watch the morning sun and the almost-full moon rise over the Atlantic with nothing to impede the view of their glories. Current plans



include great speakers, hugs, tournaments, food, a costume dance, hugs, and food! So, mark your calendars for the 2004 SCAM October Masquerade RG!

STANDARD ROOM RATES ARE \$70 A NIGHT FOR UP TO FOUR RG'ERS. OCEANFRONT ROOMS ARE \$93 FOR THE SAME NUMBER. RATES GUARANTEED THRU 10/8. CALL 1-800-465-4329. GROUP CODE MNS

Sign up now for the 2004 SCAM October Masquerade RG. Registration starts \$40 from 3/1/04 thru 8/31/04, \$45 from 9/1/04 thru 10/21/04, and \$55 at the door. Day rates will be available, and, as always, registration fees will be cheerfully refunded! Meal Plans: \$15 for Sunday Brunch, \$28 for Saturday Night Buffet and \$40 for both!

*THERE'S NO DISGUIISING IT... A GREAT TIME
IS COMING SOON!*

WAIT A MINUTE! YOU CAN'T PULL THE WOOL OVER MY EYES!

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March 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 1st, 15th & 29th

6:00PM, Merritt Island, across from Merritt Square Mall

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 10th & 24th

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 459-9432

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

3rd 6:00 p.m. Coffee, Etc. at the House of Joe
Wednesday Coffee/M meal Cost 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 729-6989

7th 4:00 p.m. ExComm Meeting
Sunday Free S/P (Cats)

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 LocSec, Clara Woodall-Moran, whose address is 5685 Friendly St., Pt. St. John.*

Clara Woodall-Moran 632-0854 cw@cfl.rr.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

13th 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 632-1831 Moorehelenlee@cs.com

20th 7:00 p.m. **Venison Feast**
Saturday \$3.00 **Kitty** **SS/Cats**

Clara and J.T. invite you to their annual celebration of J.T.'s successful hunt in the Great North Woods of Pennsylvania. There will also be plenty of other goodies for those not inclined to partake of wild game. So bring a hearty appetite to **5685 Friendly St., Port St. John.**

Clara & J.T. Moran cew@cfl.rr.com

21st 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 242-8985

26th 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 5685 Friendly St. Pt. St. John. 632-0854

27th 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 952-8400 moakleymj@bellsouth.net

**The Gourmet's
Guide:**

**Romania Then
and Now**

by

Art Belefant

©2004

This article was written for publication in 1980. It was our first visit to Romania. Ceausescu was in power and the country was behind the Iron Curtain. Few visitors made the trip, as Romania was not promoted as a tourist destination. Rita and I went because the opportunity presented itself to us and we always were interested in seeing parts of the world that we had not visited before. An added inducement was the opportunity to see Dracula's homeland, even though at the time Ceausescu's government actively discouraged interest in the fictional Dracula.

Last year we again went to Romania. We participated in a "Dracula Tour". Romania is no longer a communist country, it is open to the West, and it is promoting tourism in the U. S. The present government is encouraging Dracula tourism and has proposed the construction of a Dracula theme park. My impressions of present day Romania, as contrasted to my impressions then are presented in Italics after each relevant paragraph.

Romania is in many ways the way Western Europe was 40 years ago, sometimes unpleasant or uncomfortable, but at other times charming and delightful. An example is the custom of hand kissing which is still practiced there. If you are female, be prepared for the gesture. Unfortunately, not being experts on etiquette, we cannot offer advice on the proper form of response.

Romania is still somewhat behind the rest of Europe. Communism is gone. But it is only 15 years since Ceausescu was overthrown. They have made fantastic progress since our last visit. I saw no evidence of hand kissing this trip.

Romania is a beautiful country. The rolling hills and high mountains are covered with lush farmlands and forests. The countryside is what you may imagine Switzerland should look like because there are so few tourists to spoil the scenery, virtually no advertising billboards, and still many horse—drawn carts. Cars are scarce, even on Sunday. It is like stepping back into a pre—World War II Europe. The hotels and the centers of the cities look late Victorian, which indeed many of them are. However, the newest hotels have the stark appearance of post-war construction. Shall we call it "Communist Gothic"?

Romania is still a beautiful country. Our last trip was in the summer when the fields and forests were in their full glory. This trip was in late fall. The trees had their bright autumnal colors, but most fields were bare, plowed and ready for the next planting. Bucharest and the other cities are filled with cars, mostly smaller, East-European types, but enough to make it look like Paris, four and five abreast each way on the boulevards, and of course, traffic lights of the modern LED type, for which there was no need before. Bucharest is filled with neon and illuminated signs, advertising local and international products and the local stores, restaurants, and

cafes. The older hotels are still there, updated and refurbished. New hotels, and there are many, are similar to those elsewhere in the international style. Now there are highways where there were only dirt tracks before.

When you enter Romania, visas are issued free of charge. No special applications or photos are required. No visas are required for American, Canadian, or European citizens. Tourists with prepaid arrangements for the durations of their stay are exempt from the mandatory currency exchange. A minimum exchange of U. S. \$10.00 per person per day of stay is required from travelers without prepaid arrangements, but not children under 14 years of age. This minimum currency exchange must be made at points of entry for the number of days for which the visa is issued.

Visa extensions require additional currency exchange. Import or export of Romanian currency is forbidden. Unused amounts of Romanian currency legally obtained in excess can be reconverted to the initial currency. Currency restrictions are similar to those in the rest of Europe. In other words, none for the average tourist.

Tourists may bring in free of duty, personal belongings, food and medicines necessary and proportionate to the length of their visit. Personal belongings include clothes. Articles for personal use can be new or used, but must be carried on one's person or in one's luggage. Such items are the following: jewelry, two still cameras and 24 rolls of film, a small size movie camera, and 2 rolls of movie film; a pair of binoculars; a portable tape recorder, a portable radio, portable typewriter; tent or other camping equipment, a pair of skis, 2 tennis rackets and other similar items. Also allowed are 2 quarts of liqueurs, 5 quarts of wine and 300 cigarettes, provided that the total value does not exceed 500 lei.

Entry into Romania is quick and simple, a passport check, a stamp in the book, and that is it. There are no fees for entering or leaving Romania. No vaccinations are required. On our last visit, one of our children took a picture of a mural in the Bucharest airline terminal. He was immediately surrounded by several armed soldiers who confiscated his film.

Credit cards generally are not accepted in hotels, restaurants and nightclubs. Traveler's cheques are. Power supply in Romania is mostly 220v-50 Hz. The official time is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and 6 hours ahead of New York time. Credit cards are accepted in the major hotels, restaurants, and some shops. *It is still advisable to bring cash for purchases in out-of-the-way places. Dollar bills (singles) are the best, because of the low prices. Most places will take American currency for payment but they may not have small bills for change.*

Communism doesn't appear very oppressive in Romania. There is no appearance of a police state and officials are no more or less officious than in some western countries. The people appear well fed and well

(Continued on page 17)

Yet Another View

Exporting the American Dream?

by

Mike Moakley

Well, here we are now, gearing up for yet another Presidential election year. As Election Day looms closer, certainly President Bush will be painting a rosy picture of the state of our nation's affairs and how he, as President, made it happen. He will concede that yes, because of "9-11" our economy suffered a temporary setback, but now, thanks to his tax cuts, free trade and other pro-business policies embraced by his Administration, we're now back to prosperity.

Certainly, if one looks at the stock market reports as the standard for measuring the economy, it would certainly appear that our economy is doing quite well, indeed. Yet, of course, something is wrong with this picture. Our economic "recovery" is now being termed a "jobless recovery". To hear the experts talk about it, yes, we're in recovery, but business is not yet confident enough to once again begin investing in employment. It would seem all we would need to do is make our political climate more "business-friendly", then the jobs we need will surely follow. Right??

Do we really need a more "business-friendly" climate? It appears the friendship between our elected officials and the leaders of the business community could be better characterized as Intimacy. The contention that business is not employing labor, as I will demonstrate here, is largely a myth. It appears that Big Business is employing just as many people (if not more) as it did during "good times". The question, therefore, is not how many, but from where are these numerous employees coming? The answer is, these employees are from many locations, but it seems a good many from places such as India and China.

Am I referring to manufacturing jobs? The fact that we import many, if not most, of the goods we purchase today? If so, why even bring this up? Ever since NAFTA became law in 1994, our employers and Corporate-owned politicians, acknowledging the loss of manufacturing jobs, assured us that the key to our success was our ability to be "flexible" and our willingness to continually update our skills. So, those of us who followed that course should be doing just fine, right?

Not so, if you are considering a newer trend: exporting "white collar" jobs overseas. For example, last month, IBM had plans to ship thousands of high-paying technical jobs overseas from its American employees to lower-paid foreign workers.

"The company has not made any announcements, and the employees do not know who will be affected, or when. The uncertainty about whose jobs may be sent to India or China, the two main countries in the current plans, has raised workers' anxiety in some cases to an excruciating level. ... Referring to employees who may be affected by the plans, he said, 'We deal with them as they need to know.' (1)"

"Offshoring" and "outsourcing" are two of the favored euphemisms for shipping work overseas. IBM prefers the term "global sourcing." Whatever

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clothed. Although the country seems quieter and more subdued than most western European countries, the heavy, oppressive feeling you get in other eastern bloc countries is absent. *The people on the street are well dressed. Couples walk along briskly, talking volubly. Children play and dance. Although in our last trip the Romanians seemed less subdued than those in other communist countries, all of that repression is now gone in this open country.*

Hotel and restaurant service is poor. You will often find it necessary to carry your own baggage to your rooms. Travel light - it will be easier to go up the steps. The elevators often do not work. *Service is friendly and polite. Unfortunately the older hotels have not improved their access. There are many flights of stairs, sometimes just to get to the entrance. Elevators are small and limited, but now they work. The newer hotels are not designed to modern standards. Handicapped access is virtually unknown. It is still advisable to travel light.*

All hotels we visited had only single beds - two to a room. Some hotels had air-conditioning but none worked, even in the hot days of August in Bucharest. Many hotels had TV, all black and white, and all the same Russian brand. Only one channel is available. *Many hotels now have double beds. The bed linens generally are coarser than found in Western European hotels. As it was cold when we visited Romania this time, I could not check the air conditioning, but there was adequate, sometimes excessive, heat in all our rooms. The plumbing and heating systems in some of the older hotels, al-*

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you call it, the expansion of this practice from manufacturing to the higher-paying technical and white-collar levels is the latest big threat to employment in the U.S. Nor is it limited to computers and other such high-tech products. Even now, if you have a question or dispute about an item on your credit card bill, chances are pretty good that the person you ultimately reach may be in China or India. According to the same article:

"Years ago, when concern was being expressed about the shipment of factory jobs to places with slave wages, hideous working conditions and even prison labor, proponents said there was nothing to worry about. Exporting labor-intensive jobs would make U.S. companies more competitive, leading to increased growth and employment, and higher living standards. They advised U.S. workers to adjust, to become better educated and skillful enough to thrive in a new world of employment, where technology and the ability to process information were crucial components. (1)"

According to Business Week, 1 of 3 American jobs could well wind up being outsourced overseas in the name of cost savings. This excerpt from an article published last August describes this trend:

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though now working, are sometimes victims of their antiquity. In one of the hotels we stayed at, some rooms were overheated and others were barely heated at all. Hot water was ample. TV, on modern but small color sets, was available in all our hotel rooms. In some of the more remote areas the number of channels were limited. English language programming, including CNN, was available in Bucharest.

Hotel laundries are expensive and slow. There is ample hot water in the rooms so select your clothing to be rinsed out yourself. English is spoken very little, but Romanian is a Latin language related to Spanish, French, and Italian. A smattering of these languages will go a long way. German is a major secondary language in the country, spoken and understood almost everywhere. *English is spoken in all the major hotels and restaurants, and is understood almost anywhere a tourist is likely to go.*

American cigarettes and chewing gum are in great demand (like the days in Europe after WW II). They can be used for tipping. A service charge of 10-12% is added on all restaurant bills but we've been told that a small tip before being served helps to improve service. Forget this. WWII is over, even in Romania. *We are not suggesting this kind of activity, but we've seen cigarettes, gum, and panty hose being sold by tourists to Romanians for Romanian lei.*

We were approached on the streets of Bucharest by Romanians that wanted to buy our cameras, blue jeans, and U. S. dollars. The

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"The extent to which industries are moving a wide array of mid-level professional jobs offshore is troubling. We're talking about computers and other high tech, business services, and finance. Add those industries up, along with factory jobs, and you find that one out of three private-sector jobs is now at risk of being outsourced. And that doesn't count back-office functions such as accounts payable, marketing and sales, and human resources that exist in U.S.-grounded industries such as retailing, health care, and recreation. All of them could be shipped overseas in the name of cost-cutting. (2)"

It would appear to me the possibility exists for virtually any job that does not involve face-to-face contact between an employee and their employer's customer to be outsourced. Consider essential services, those things we take for granted such as our public utilities.

For example, an increasing number of water and wastewater plants already are being monitored by computer systems. A typical application involves the plant operator at a console in a "control room" being able to monitor and make process changes in the plant by a mouse click on the computer. In some cases, the "control rooms" are not even on plant site! I

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know of one water plant that is operated from a location some 50 miles away. How much of a stretch would it be to someday have the ability to operate the plants from, say, China? What about water quality or related health issues? Well, you can always call the emergency number on your water bill and complain to someone in Bangladesh.

President Bush, in his State of the Union Address delivered on January 20th, does acknowledge the need for more jobs for Americans. He was, however, deafeningly silent on this issue of exporting these jobs. Nor did he state how more jobs will be created. He does contend, however, his tax cuts and pro-Business agenda creates jobs. My question (assuming this is true) is: Where are these jobs created? Perhaps Pakistan? Iraq? I did not hear any indication that the President meant here at home.

However, all may not be lost. When your job becomes outsourced, you will have plenty of time on your hands in between job searches. While you still have a few bucks from your final paycheck, you might choose to go to your favorite “family” (cheap) restaurant, where you will still have face-to-face contact with the waitress taking your order. It is nice to know her job, at least for the time being, will not be outsourced. It seems no one, as yet, has devised a way to wait on tables from overseas. Moreover, she works cheaply enough: \$2.13 per hour, plus tips. And, if it turns out that you wind up short after receiving the check, not to worry; in many cases, the waitress will pay – her employer will see to that! However, in good conscience I cannot recommend this, since not only is stealing immoral (at least if the thief is from the working class), but you just might wind up being her coworker (while helping to bring down the unemployment numbers).

Sources:

1. “Bracing for the Blow”, New York Times, December 26, 2003.
2. “Commentary: Outsourcing Jobs: Is It Bad?”, Business Week, August 25, 2003.



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going street rate is 25 lei for one dollar (the official rate is 12 lei for the dollar), but the street buyers won't handle less than \$100 worth at a time. Larger bills are more desirable than small. The Romanian leu is now about 32-33,000 to the dollar. which make currency conversions difficult to do in your head. *The government does not fix the rate so there is no black market in currency. Instead of dropping three zeros from their currency as the Greeks did years ago, the Romanians will change to the Euro in a few years. American, European, and Japanese products are available in stores now, so don't expect to sell your old stuff to the Romanians.*

Don't depend on Romanian time estimates. It takes twice as to get from here to there than Romanians will tell you. One-day laundry service in the hotels takes two to three days, meals can take all evening, and a "2-hour" car trip could take 5 hours. *This hasn't changed. A ten-minute cart ride took 25 minutes. A two-hour bus trip took three and a half hours.*

The pushiest Romanian restaurants have immense menus - sometimes 10 pages long. If you go through the menu routine, all you'll get is a series of "not possible's". It is faster to ignore the menu and ask what the restaurant is serving for that meal, usually one soup and one main course. One of the best buys in the food line is Borsac mineral water, 10 cents for a half liter bottle and every bit as good as Perrier. Ask for minerale. The average cost of 40 complete lunches and dinners, in the top hotels in top resort areas (Brasov and Poinia Brasov), came to \$2.65 per meal per person in the summer of 1980.

The prices have gone up but so has the availability and quality. At one upscale restaurant, the Imparatul Romanitor in Sibiu, a meal for two consisting of soup, main course, wine, water, and dessert cost 843,655 lie or about \$26.00. Everything on the extensive menu was available.

In spite of what is written in the promotional literature, automobiles rent for \$25 a day plus 25 cents per Km plus gas at \$2.85 a gallon. As it is a communist country, there is only one car rental company; the price is the same everywhere. Automobile rentals must be paid for in hard currency, not Romanian lei, but they will take personal checks. The only car available is the 4-door, floor-shift, Romanian made Dacia. It gets 45 mpg (8.5 km/l) and is underpowered. It requires constant shifting down on the twisting mountain roads. *We didn't rent a car this time.*

Bring plenty of film with you. The only film sold is Russian of dubious quality and is often unavailable. The only better quality cameras that the stores have are Chinese copies of the post-war twin-lens Rolliflex for about \$300, and a Russian range finder 35mm. Bring your own. *Kodak and other brands of film are readily available.*

Store prices all over the country are the same with some exceptions for handicrafts. However, even at the best prices, hand embroidered

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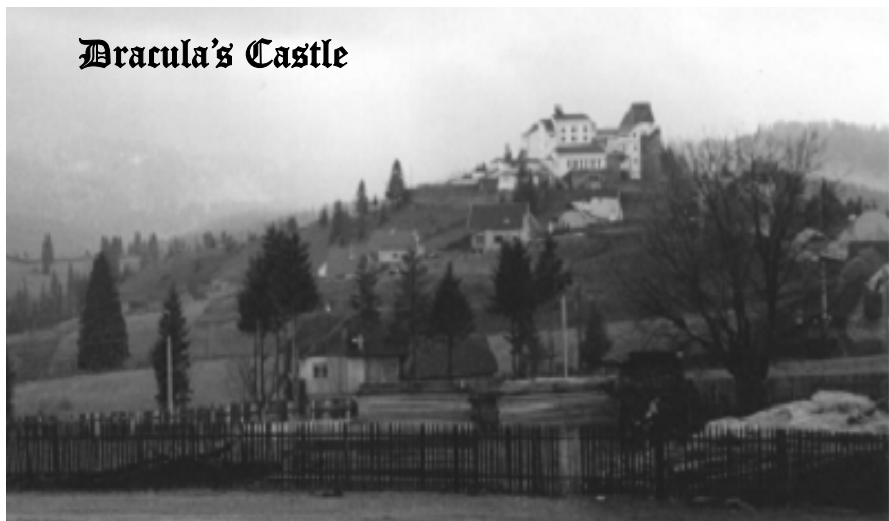
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blouses are \$50—\$75 and up. Don't expect to do any extensive shopping. There is very little variation in stock among the stores and there just isn't that much to buy. Duty-free stores sell western liquors, toilet articles, electrical appliances, and cosmetics, but the choices are slim. Bring what you need with you.

Stores are well stocked. Hand-knitted and embroidered sweaters cost about \$15.00 but are not seen everywhere. The best place to buy them is in front of Dracula's Castle Hotel.

Breakfast in the hotels is served between 7 and 10 A.M. and may consist of tea, milk, coffee or cocoa, butter, jam, bread or rolls, boiled eggs, ham, bacon, cheese, or sausages. Lunch is served between 12:30 and 3 P.M. A standard lunch or dinner at a good restaurant consists of a salad (the tomatoes and cucumbers are very good), chiorba (a minestrone type of soup with a meat base) or another soup or fried fish, a main dish of stewed or broiled meat with potatoes, and desert (usually one of four kinds of cake). Although the tea comes directly from China, it is not as good as Lipton's. It is also delivered in waterproof tea bags. You must hold it down in the hot water with your spoon to make it infuse. If you've got the habit, bring your own tea bags, instant coffee, or cocoa.

Dracula's Castle



The buffet breakfast hasn't changed much except the variety and quantity has increased. The soups that I had were very good. The other foods were good. Romanian food is still not up to their pre-war reputation. During the communist era, because of the food shortages, they seem to have forgotten how to cook. Now they are working to catch up. The most impressive change was the availabil-

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ity. Whereas previously some restaurants would have impressive menus, they had only one or two items available. Now everything on the menus was available.

Dracula's castle does not exist. Bram Stoker sited the locale of the castle at Borgo Pass in the northern, more mountainous part, of the country. Vlad Tepes, the historical "Dracula", whom Stoker probably had in mind, governed the southern part of the country. Vlad Tepes' castles are in ruins, but Bran Castle, near Brasov, which may have been visited by Vlad Tepes, is a beautiful restored castle and is well-worth a visit. The countryside west of Bran is some of the most picturesque in Romania.

Now they've done it. There's finally a castle at Borgo Pass. That's where Count Dracula kept his lair in Transylvania. There never before was a Dracula castle at Borgo Pass. That all was in the imagination of Bram Stoker, who wrote the novel. Now that Romania is in the Western world and is attracting tourists, the enterprising Romanians have built a castle where one never existed. But this castle is a hotel. It is at the top of the pass with magnificent views of the lush Romanian countryside. The hotel itself is designed to look like a castle with battlements, a portcullis gate, a central courtyard, a tower, floors on multiple levels, and dungeons. Deep underground there is a crypt with Dracula's coffin in it. But don't open the coffin; he may still be in there! For modern tourists there is a souvenir shop in the lobby and an outdoor market place near the entrance. Restaurants and bars in the hotel provide food and drinks to western European standards. The bar at the top of the tower is my favorite relaxation space. It is quiet and you can look out in all four directions. The rooms are sparse as befits a medieval castle, but clean and neat. From a peak opposite, the castle can be seen lordling over the region in all its magnificence. Count Dracula would have loved this place.

Because of the shortage of foreign exchange, and the energy crisis in general, Romania has severely cut back on lighting. Most streets are not lighted at night. Even the main streets in Bucharest are not lighted or are poorly lighted. Hotel lobbies, restaurants, and shops have very limited lighting. A typical hotel lobby would have a single bare bulb illuminating it. Unfortunately this gives a very dingy appearance to what otherwise would be a sparkling city. It severely cuts into the nightlife as well.

How things have changed! People throng the streets. Lights everywhere. Public buildings and monuments are illuminated. Hotel lobbies are bright and cheerful, usually illuminated by crystal chandeliers. It's a different Romania!



The 10th Story
by
Elissa Rudolph,
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Thank you, Ms at Smarti Gras, for signing your proxies and/or helping me get other signatures. I know it was a surprise to hug me and hear me murmur, "Have you signed your proxy yet" instead of more friendly, loving words. You were all such good sports! And the numbers continue to rise: 17,079, 71% of our goal at this writing.

This is very encouraging. As a region we have 33.5% of our members proxied and two groups are running neck in neck for the top proxy-getting group: Northwest Florida Mensa and Central Florida Mensa are at 41.8% and 41.1 respectively.

All the other groups are doing as well if not better than most Mensa groups nationwide. The last 25-30% will be the most difficult segment to reach because they are probably our less active members, the ones we rarely see at an event. Some groups are having get togethers where they call all those in their area who have not sent in proxies. Contacting people personally almost always results in a win-win interchange. Try it!

To those of you who sent in entries for the Publications Recognition Program, good luck. We have wonderful newsletters in Region 10, many of which were nominated last year. I hope to hear winners' names from Region 10 at the Annual Gathering in July.

Coming Soon: another great Mensa Gathering event!! May 28-31, MaRGargitaville, Tampa Bay Mensa's Beach Bash at the Days Inn Rocky Point; registration fee \$60 until May 1, includes meals; Trash Bowl, Treasure Hunt, SteinhiceCapades, Tai Chi, Karaoke, Latin dance lessons. Registrar: Kathy Crum, katshe@aol.com.



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Minutes of the



ExComm Meeting

The ExComm met at the home of Helen Lee Moore on February 8, 2004. Call to Order 4 pm by LocSec Clara Woodall-Moran.

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

Welcome guest present: Mike Moakley.

Minutes for January 2004, approved as published. Moved by **Helen**, seconded by **Sam**, passed by unanimous vote.

Officer reports:

Treasurer: January 31, 2004 report distributed by the Treasurer.

(No other Officer Reports)

Committee Reports:

RG Committee: Joe Smith announces RGComm meeting following this ExComm meeting.

Testing: one candidate was tested in January 2004. Inquiries have been received for the February 2004 test session.

Old business: none.

New Business: none.

Clara gave a heads up that the Audit Committee will be appointed at the March meeting. Agreement of committee-to-be is being sought.

LocSec distributed American Mensa Mediator's Handbook, First Edition July 2001.

Adjournment: Moved by **Sam**, seconded by **Helen**, passed by unanimous vote to adjourn. Meeting adjourned 4:10 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 4 pm March 7, 2004, at Clara Woodall-Moran's home.

