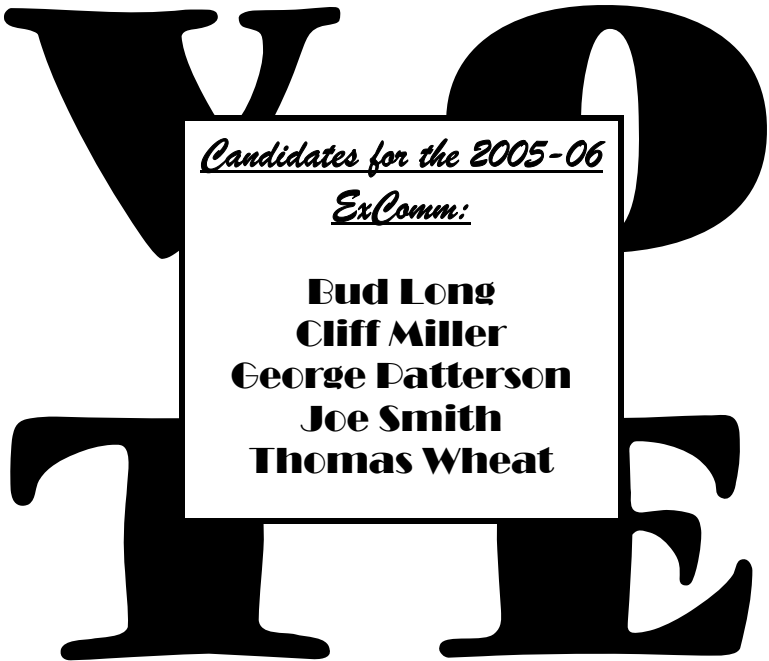


The

SCAM

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Special Election Issue!



Candidates for the 2005-06

ExComm:

**Bud Long
Cliff Miller
George Patterson
Joe Smith
Thomas Wheat**

Your Ballot is Enclosed!

The
SCAM
page coast reg mensa
Editorial Staff

Assembly/Circulation
CLARA WOODALL-MORAN
632-0854


Calendar Coordinator/Webmaster
KATHERINE COCHRANE
432-9703

Editor
MICHAEL MOAKLEY
808 Wisteria Drive, Melbourne, FL 32901
952-8400
editor@spacecoastareamensa.org

Volume 23, No. 5
May, 2005

Writer's Block

Mike Moakley, SCAM Editor

nce again, it is time to choose new leaders for the Space Coast Area Mensa. For your convenience, a ballot has been provided in this issue of The SCAM. Please use it, as every vote counts. This is your local group, be sure you are heard.

All appointed positions, including mine as SCAM Editor, expire when the new ExComm is seated. By this column, I officially declare my willingness to continue as SCAM Editor, but the final decision rests with the new ExComm.

It is appropriate, then, at this time for me to make a few comments. As Editor since the November 2003 issue, I have attempted to learn how best to perform the duties that I have been entrusted with, to introduce new ideas in The SCAM, and to ensure the best written works available on a wide variety of topics appear every month in The SCAM. It has consistently been my goal to provide thought-provoking material as opposed to having a "chatty" newsletter that may never be read! Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed being The SCAM Editor and would like to continue in that capacity.

I am committed to continue on the journey I began over a year and a half ago. I am committed to attracting new writers in addition to our current regulars. I would like to see new topics added to The SCAM. For these things I look to you, as this is your SCAM. Do you have a topic in mind? Perhaps, an opinion you believe should be expressed? Write a letter, perhaps a column. In most cases, I'll publish it. Since I am still on

(Continued on page 3)

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

(Continued from page 2)

a learning curve, constructive criticism and advice is always welcome.

As a general rule, I do NOT believe in, nor do I practice, censorship. However, I will not publish anything that violates the bounds of common decency, amounts to a personal attack, or in violation of copyright laws. I am also committed to scrupulously follow the bylaws and other applicable rules of SCAM and Mensa.

It is important to note that none of the material published in The SCAM is intended to convince you of the “rightness” of the opinion expressed by the author, rather it is intended to introduce a viewpoint and/or stimulate discussion on the topic at hand. As such, your viewpoint is always welcome!

I look forward to continuing as the Editor of your SCAM.

REMEMBER WHEN?

La Vena Kay Kidd

Reprinted from Sunflower Seeds, newsletter of Sunflower Mensa, Feb. 2004, Marlene Henkle, editor.

History has a habit of getting lost. Do you remember when Friends debuted on TV? Our puzzle this month is all about dates. Your mission is to match the date with its historical or hysterical event.

- 1) VE Day
A) June 24, 1947
- 2) San Francisco Earthquake
B) October 21, 1805
- 3) Fall of the Berlin Wall
C) July 18, 1815
- 4) Battle of Gettysburg
D) May 8, 1945
- 5) Desi Arnaz's Birth
E) April 18, 1906
- 6) Princess Diana's Death
F) 1958
- 7) Premiere of Gone With The Wind
29, 1588 G) July
- 8) Charlie Brown's Christmas Debut
August 1, 1981 H) Au-
- 9) Kenneth Arnold reports sighting of UFO's
1961 I) October 1,
- 10) Cuban Missile Crisis
J) November 9, 1989
- 11) Battle of Trafalgar
K) December, 1965

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article has been reprinted from Tampa Bay Sounding, newsletter of Tampa Bay Mensa, May 2001, Maxine Kushner, Editor.

One of those great Calvin and Hobbes strips has one character say to another, "You offend me." The other replies, "Well, I'm offended by your offensivity." The first one keeps it going with, "Well, I'm offended that you're offended by my offensivity," and so on. This came to mind as I was thinking about freedom of speech and how it gets batted around by those trying to make things "right" about what people say, especially in print.

The Sounding, as a case in point, has a history of struggling to decide which articles should not be printed, so as not to offend, and which articles to edit for perceived offensiveness, while unavoidably offending those who disagreed with these editorial decisions. More recently, a local member complained about the content of a humor article to the extent that she believed the author of the offending article should apologize. (I'm offended by her offensivity!)

The Sounding's printed policy states (inside the back cover) that "Personal attacks, racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive material will not be published." But offensive to whom? This is, for all practical purposes, an impossible policy to enforce. Even if the newsletter were watered down to an antiseptic level of safeness, it then would be offensive to the intellect of thoughtful readers, which is pretty much all of us!

Furthermore, even if really junky, ill-thought articles were eliminated and only well constructed opinion articles allowed, some readers usually will be offended. (Unless my mass brainwashing technique starts to work!) As the St. Petersburg Times pointed out in the April 11 edition, "freedom of speech and the right not to be offended are mutually exclusive."

I would simply state: It is OK to read offensive material. I do mean this from the standpoint of the reader, because if readers are open minded, then publishers and editors can feel more free to enrich content with thought-provoking material. Exposure to differing viewpoints should not be a problem.

I am less tolerant of material deficient in thought or knowledge, for one of the foundations of an effective democratic society is having enlightened citizens, this being one of the most important reasons for a strong education system. However, thoughtful material does not necessarily converge to a common viewpoint, as evidenced by issues such as abortion, marriage and divorce law, tax codes, gun control, affirmative action and free speech, where full knowledge and careful reasoning lead to divergent conclusions.

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This inevitable diversity implies the “okayness” with offensive material.

Woven into the issue of freedom of speech is the fact that we have varying notions about what we believe to be offensive. Some are offended by allowing certain articles in a publication, others are offended by disallowing those same articles. In fact, how one interprets “attack” in the *Sound-ing*'s editorial policy is wide open. The offended reader mentioned earlier stated that the humor article was a personal attack on Jesus. Well, in a way it was, and in a way it was not. Who is to say? No absolute standard separates raw attacks from critical remarks, complaints, or humor.

The *Times* quote earlier was made in reference to shrinking tolerance on college campuses for viewpoints not in agreement with those of minorities, specifically Horowitz' recent attempts to circulate his article on reparations for blacks and the ensuing backlash and apologies. According to the Student Press Law Center, students increasingly are taking to vandalizing or destroying editions of campus newspapers containing material offensive to activists for (usually) minority causes, while administrators foster a victim mentality by allowing offensive material to become equated with actual injury. While political correctness is a subject unto itself, the point here is that a healthy (?) exchange of ideas is regarded as a threat in these cases.

I would like to offer a further, more speculative thought. Bear in mind that a natural part of historical change is that standards for liberal and conservative values sometimes reverse over long periods of time. Ideas considered at one point in time liberal and progressive that gain wide acceptance become the established ideas, thus evolving into conservative values - a swinging of a pendulum, as it were. In our short life time it is easy to believe that what is now considered liberal has been and always will be, but is, instead, merely the present standard.

I'm wondering whether such a shift may be occurring in the area of freedom of speech. In order to be liberal, one must be open to change and free thinking, while being conservative often involves either maintaining the status quo, or perhaps returning to one. However, it seems to be the very same (free thinking?) liberals who now are becoming the barons of what can be printed! Could this be the swinging of a pendulum in history? Is censorship becoming a rallying point for conservatives? I thought that was one of the battle cries of radicals in the 60's!

I realize numerous factors affect social trends, but for now I would simply suggest keeping track of this issue to see what becomes of it over the decades. I think of the ACLU, an organization associated with liberal tendencies, as being a leading defender of the Constitution, but in the future defending free speech in particular might be regarded more as a conservative notion - as in returning to a previous standard.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a reprint from Empire, newsletter of Central New York Mensa, January 2004, Paul Baxter, editor.

Like so many business and social situations, unemployment is one that calls for tact and discretion. Unlike other situations, your mother never taught you how to act with regard to unemployment, yours or others'.

Rules for Employers

If funding cuts put you in the position of having to take away someone's livelihood, and very likely a source of pride and commitment, follow these simple rules.

Do not sugarcoat the act with wishy-washy revisionist terms such as "letting you go" or "downsizing."

Put it in writing. This should be short and to the point. The newly unemployed person will need this document. You can even set an apologetic tone and express appreciation for your erstwhile employee's contributions. If you need help with such terms, consult a dictionary and/or thesaurus.

Know your employment policies. This is a good time to bone up on that Employee Policy Manual. It does not make scintillating reading, but the person you have sacked has probably read it to find out his or her rights and entitlements upon termination. Your failure to follow these policies or even to know them reflects badly on you. It also sends two important messages. One: You don't care. (Heck, you probably don't, but it is good form to pretend that you do. This is what etiquette is all about.) Two: You have no business being in charge of an ant farm, let alone people's lives.

On the employee's last day, try to find it in your schedule, if not in your heart, to set aside a few minutes to talk with the person you have sacked. I know; the last thing you want to do is be with someone who is probably righteously angry and disgusted with you, no matter how gracefully he or she has taken it up until now. Failing to make time for the about-to-be unemployed sends a clear message: You don't care. Still, there are good reasons for pretending that you care.

Much as you might feel abandoned by the departure of the person you sacked, resist the urge to talk trash about that person with your employer buddies. Now free from the bother of deciding what to do with that pesky paycheck every two weeks, your ex-employee may or may not choose to spend that newfound free time and those dwindling financial resources pursuing legal action.

Do not call your ex-employee on the phone. Hard as it might be for you to imagine, he or she probably does not want to talk to you. Do not ask the answering machine why your ex-employee has not returned your calls. (Perhaps it is because he or she does not work for you anymore.) On the

other hand, this does provide a lot of laughs at your expense.

Rules for Friends and Family

Most of us know the rules of etiquette governing table manners and social occasions such as marriage, birth, and death. Keep your elbows off the table, and do not comment on the baby's cone shaped head or the unhealthy lifestyle choices of the deceased. But what do you do when you find out someone has lost a job?

If you have ever been involuntarily unemployed yourself, your understanding will be a source of comfort and companionship. If not:

Do offer your friend a big glass of wine.

Do not express any of the following platitudes:

Everything happens for a reason.

This is going to turn out to be the best thing that has ever happened to you.

You should travel, go to law school, get your Ph.D., any other ridiculously expensive endeavor.

(Remember, your friend no longer has an income.)

Do not ask any of the following questions:

What happened?

Have you found a job yet?

Are you looking?

Do not preface any of the above with "Not to rub salt in a wound..." If you really do not want to rub salt in a wound, then don't.

Do feel free to express righteous indignation on your friend's behalf.

Do offer your friend another big glass of wine.

Rules for the Newly Unemployed

You may have some things you want to say to your about-to-be-ex-boss. Don't. You may think your feelings of betrayal are perfectly normal, justified, and to be expected. Your boss is not in the business of caring about your feelings, even if he or she is in the business of caring about other people's feelings.

Do not listen to people who tell you to "be in the here and now" and "feel your feelings." No, thanks. Some other time, maybe.

No matter what you hear your former employers have done or said about you after you are gone, do not contact them. Slander and fraud may be illegal, but calling people on breaches of ethics or employment law is gauche.

That's what attorneys are for.

People will be asking you a lot of questions. If you would rather not talk about it, simply reply, "I would rather not talk about it."

People will ask you a lot of questions, anyway. Take a deep breath. Remember, it is not polite to stab people with your fork, no matter how much they deserve it.

This is a good time to work on the house, take on new projects, see how bad daytime television really is, work out a lot, take better care of your skin, learn something new, and catch up on your reading. It is not a good time to lose weight. Try to set your expectations accordingly.

Nastrovya.

Dou remember the story about the frog that was put into a pot of cold water on the stove. He was not concerned. Someone lit the burner and the water began getting warm, the frog was very comfortable and as the water became warmer he was so relaxed and complacent that he fell asleep – never to awaken.

Mr. Frog reminds me of today's stock market investors and that includes all folks with IRAs, 401(k)s and the like. Stocks have been slowly rising for the past year and a half (the water is becoming warmer and warmer) and no one is paying any attention to his investment positions. The market is becoming overheated and many investors are about to become boiled. Too many are swimming fat and happy in the increasing warmth with no thought of exit.

Currently the long term market trend is up so complacency reigns supreme. It is doing exactly the same as in 2000. When 2002 ended we had a surplus of boiled frogs. A smart frog will not be lulled to sleep and will have a plan to jump out of the pot. A frog without a plan plans to be frog soup.

There are many ways for the frog to escape and there are many ways for investors to retain their profits or at least not lose their money the next time the market heads down. It will if past performance is any guide to futures results. Any plan to jump out is better than no plan at all.

Whether you own stocks, mutual funds or ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) you can set a limit as to how much you are willing to lose from this point (that's now, today). Any fool (frog) can buy, but it is the wise man (frog) who knows how to sell (escape the pot).

If you want to have money for retirement you must protect your capital from loss with a risk management strategy. First protect your principle and then protect the profits you have made on the recent stock market advance. It is not difficult to do.

With stocks and ETFs you can place an Open Stop Loss Order with your broker or financial planner. He won't like this, but it is your money not his. Don't let him talk you out of it. For regular mutual funds you must have a mental stop and when that price is hit you call your broker (he won't call you) or the fund directly to tell them to transfer your funds to a Money Market account. Cash is a position. If you are not familiar with stop loss orders you can find books in your library and there are hundreds of articles on the Internet. See some of my previous articles on my web site. The water is heating up. Don't fall asleep and become a poor frog.

*F*R*E*E investment letter www.mutualfundmagic.com Author of best seller "IF IT DOESN'T GO UP, DON'T BUY IT!" Never lose money in the market. Copyright 2005 Albert W. Thomas All rights reserved. Former 17-year exchange member, floor trader and brokerage company owner.*

A Reminder from the Editor

- All Newsletter submissions are due on the **10th**. Items for the **Calendar** are due on the **8th**.
- All correspondence sent to The SCAM may, at the Editor's discretion, be published in The SCAM, unless it is marked "NFP" or "Not for publication".
- All opinions on a topic are welcome; none are censored. However, attacks on members, and other offensive material are not welcome.
- Opinions you disagree with are not, solely for such reason, included in the category of offensive material.
- Please see Page 3 for the Editor's contact info.

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.

Your work could appear on these pages!!



Welcome to SCAM and Mensa:

Dennis Logan
Jarred Spear

Welcome Back to SCAM:

Robert Barber

May Birthday Greetings!



02-Jean Marshall
04-Adele Dace
04-George Waters
06-Barry Ebert
07-Kenneth Kline
12-John McKeown
12-Martin Vanoy
15-Rondal Halter
17-Douglas Dial
18-Donald Elmore
19-Kate Johannsen
25-James Stewart
27-Karen Freiberg
30-Francis Stump

*“Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I’m 64?”
-John Lennon (who would now have been 64) and Paul McCartney*

At some point in everyone’s life, I suppose, there is a point where one reflects where he has been, and where he will be headed as he continues to age. That point for me occurred not long ago, when I turned 50. As I look back over three decades, when I first entered the workforce, I remember being advised by my elders to seek a job with a large employer or with the public sector where, among other things, I could count on a decent pension to take care of me in my retirement years.

At that time, this was a given. Pensions were a “defined benefit” type that was calculated based upon earnings and years of service. Back then, it was also typical for an employee to stay with the company for 30 or more years, and then retire with a predictable benefit. As we all know, much has changed since then...

Currently, the most common arrangement is the “defined contribution” plan, commonly a 401-(k) plan, where the employee invests a designated portion of his pay, often with some matching funds from the employer. There is no longer any “defined” or guaranteed benefit. Moreover, it is extremely rare for an employee to stay at one employer for more than a few years. Common advice given a young person entering the workforce today is, “Keep your resume current at all times.”

The 401-(k) and similar plans enjoy political support as well. With our President and his followers touting the “ownership society”, it would appear the 401-(k) fits right in. But will these retirement plans deliver when the need arises? According to the Employee Benefits Research Institute, at the end of 2003, the average 401-(k) balance was \$51,569. If the average U. S. worker’s wage is \$15 per hour, and he retires at age 65 at half pay; his benefits will be exhausted in just 40 months. This problem is further compounded if he gets laid off; his former employer sends him a check for the 401-(k) balance, which is then used to pay bills until he can find other employment.

Let us add one more item to the mix: health care. Over the last several years, more and more Americans are either uninsured or underinsured rendering them unable in many cases to secure health care. Medicaid, which covers the poorest of the poor, currently faces Draconian budget cuts at the hands of our current regime.

Even those, like myself, who are fortunate enough to have a “defined benefit” plan, are not immune to the impending disaster. About two years ago, my pension plan representative contacted my coworkers and me in an attempt to convince us to switch to their new “defined contribu-

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tion” plan. Moreover, many companies eager to shed their pension commitments to their loyal employees are bankrupting their pension plans, leaving the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, an agency of our government (that is, taxpayers) to pick up the tab!

In an “ownership society” such as we are fast becoming, our fate is indeed in our own hands. It is up to each of us to come up with our “own” solutions, as our very survival beyond the age of 65 is at stake. To do so, one needs to take stock of his personal situation, as well as his political environment. Failure to do so may render him homeless, with little prospect of food, shelter, or needed health care. What will be your fate, once you turn 65?

So far, I have only referred to economic conditions, but there are more factors to consider. For example, over the last 10-15 years, our political leaders have “gotten tough” on crime, resulting in more life sentences and death penalty cases. One result is our record numbers of incarcerated senior citizens. An often-ignored fact is that prisoners are the *only* Americans with the constitutional right to health care, as the 8th amendment proscribes “cruel and unusual” punishment.

Consider the case of a retired librarian, one William Bryan Cruse. For those who do not remember, in April 1987, Cruse, then 59, went on a shooting spree in Palm Bay, leaving in his wake six dead and several others injured. In 1989, Cruse was sentenced to death on the murder charges. At age 77, Cruse holds the distinction of being Florida’s oldest person on Death Row.

Cruse will surely die in state custody. What is not certain is whether that death will come at the hands of the state or due to advanced age. While Cruse waits for his eventual demise, he is provided food, shelter, and needed health care. Granted, his circumstances are neither ideal nor desirable, but is homelessness really better? Has William Bryan Cruse unwittingly become the prototype for the Retiree of the Future? Even more disturbing, will it soon become necessary to commit an egregious act of violence just to ensure our basic needs are met as we live out our final years?

On March 31st, 2005 the very public spectacle starring Terri Schiavo came to an end when the body of the young woman finally surrendered to the inevitable and ceased functioning.

But, was that the true time of death for Terri?

On February 25th, 1990 Ms. Schiavo suffered severe brain damage when her heart stopped due to complications believed to extend from hypoalkalemia (abnormally low blood potassium levels) caused by a long bout with bulimia. Due to the length of time in cardiac and respiratory arrest Terri also suffered anoxic brain damage and seizures. She slipped into a coma where she remained for two and a half months, eventually emerging into what the Schiavo family doctors, as well as six other court-appointed physicians, concluded was a persistent vegetative state (PVS).

To make matters a little clearer, let me define two things.

A **COMA** is a deep, sustained pathologic unconsciousness that results from dysfunction of the ascending reticular activating system in either the brain stem or both cerebral hemispheres. The eyes remain closed, and the patient cannot be aroused.

The term **PVS** is used to describe a person who has lost cognitive neurological function, meaning that the upper part of the brain that controls the more sophisticated functions such as speech, movement and thought, has died. People in PVS are able to breathe unaided as the lower part of the brain (the brain stem) is still functioning. (*National Health Service, UK*)

There are a few other symptoms of PVS that didn't quite make it to the narrative read by your favorite media commentator for your education and edification.

In 1998, Dr. Jeffrey Karp and Dr. Victor Gambone, Terri's primary care physician, determined Terri to be in an irreversible persistent vegetative state (PVS).

An examination of Terri's brain function was ordered by the courts in 2001 and performed by Dr. Ron Crawford, a neurologist at the University of Minnesota.

He found that:

- (1) Ms. Schiavo's cerebral cortex had been completely destroyed and replaced by cerebrospinal fluid.
- (2) Her upper brain was about 80 percent destroyed, and there was also damage to the lower brain.
- (3) The only part of the brain that remained intact was the brain stem, which controls involuntary functions such as breathing and heartbeat, allowing Schiavo to survive (with a feeding tube) even though she no longer had any cognitive function.

Dr. Crawford was quoted in *Florida Today* as stating that Ms. Schiavo "has no electrical activity in her cerebral cortex on an EEG"

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(electroencephalogram), and a CT (computerized tomography) scan showed massive atrophy in that region.”

In 2002, a trial was held to determine whether new therapy treatments would help Schiavo restore any cognitive function. A new computed axial tomography scan (CAT scan) was done, and showed severe cerebral atrophy. In place of normal brain tissue, almost all that was left were connective tissues and spinal fluid. Aside from a brain stem that kept some autonomic functions going, her brain was, for all intents and purposes, gone. An EEG showed no measurable brain activity.

The fundamental finding from all the testing was never truly challenged or disputed: that over half of Terri Schiavo’s brain was destroyed.

With her cerebral cortex (upper brain) gone, also gone were the neurological capabilities it performs: memory, reasoning, perception, emotion, cognition and volition.

In short, Terri didn’t live here anymore. All that was left was the husk she once occupied. And, like a car without a driver, as long as it was kept fueled and maintained, it would continue running in idle for a long time.

Now, the fight to release Terri from her earthly existence was one of the ugliest to be showcased by the American media in a very long time. Both sides of the political and religious aisle were there, but this was not the Right’s finest hour.

Too often I saw and heard statements that basically said that, by removing her feeding tubes, we were “playing God”, and going against “Natural Law”, and that we should “let her live”.

My take on the matter is that, if there is a soul, it is part of the individual. And what makes us individuals is the neural network made up of the hardware (the brain), the firmware (the mind) and the software (memories and perceptions). All these together make up the individual personality - that which truly distinguishes us one from another. Without the hardware, the rest is no longer existent. Including the soul, which goes on to its next destination, be it Heaven or reincarnation.

We play God and transgress Natural Law by using extremely unnatural means to keep the husk alive. “Terri” is not alive - just her body.

We all belong to the taxonomic genus *Homo*, species *Sapiens*. Homo Sapiens - “**Rational Man**”.

Terri had not fit that description since 1990. And all the hysteria surrounding the worrying of her carcass did little to impress me as to the mob’s fitness to it, either.

The saga of Terri Schiavo is an example of America most definitely NOT at its best. It featured a family divided against each other with a supporting cast of politicians, extremists, and judicial activists in a media feeding frenzy. Cause célèbre triumphed over compassion.

Death should not be a public spectacle. It is to her family’s shame, and to our shame that hers was permitted to become so.

That was the really inhuman aspect of the whole tragedy.

DEPENDS ON WHAT THE MEANING OF "A CRIME" IS

"The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

---Section 4, Article II of the Constitution of the United States.

Americans gained great familiarity with this section of the Constitution during the seemingly endless, politically-motivated, trial-by-media-and-impeachment of the 42nd President. It is therefore strange (but perhaps not surprising) to note the silence in the face of an even more egregious breach of the public trust.

Consider the case of the Republican Leader in the House of Representatives, Mr. Tom DeLay of the Lone Star State. Congressman DeLay has been admonished *four* times by the House Ethics committee, twice for influence peddling, and twice for abuse of power. (Note: President Clinton was acquitted by the Senate, and he was never admonished even *once*.)

As if this was not enough to question Congressman DeLay's fitness for office, the good Congressman continues to accept favors from lobbyists as he does their bidding, recently going on a golf junket to Scotland in return for his vote favoring a special interest.

Congressman DeLay is under investigation in Texas for allowing a Political Action Committee that he controls to launder corporate campaign contributions in state elections, and may be indicted by the time you read this.

In response to the accumulating evidence of massive corruption, Congressman DeLay dismisses each charge as a political matter, and he has successfully crippled the House Ethics committee by stacking the committee with his own hand-picked lackeys, and by pushing rule changes for his own benefit.

Interestingly enough, our President, who campaigned on a platform of "restoring honor and integrity" to government, has nothing to say about the antics of his fellow Texan. Nor does the Republican leadership, even though this type of misconduct by our lawmakers was supposed to become a thing of the past when they took over in 1994.

Despite all the sanctimonious rhetoric of the past, Congressman DeLay continues to hold not only his office but a position of leadership, which, when one thinks about it, is probably appropriate for the hypocritical puritans that now control the Republican Party, who love to make a great show of holiness while they exploit the public. And until the people express their outrage, we should expect more of the same.

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WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GANDER...

The Republicans have enjoyed launching a barrage of criticism at the United Nations recently for the failures and irregularities of the oil-for-food program during the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Some have called for the resignation of the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, despite the fact that an investigation conducted by an American official found Mr. Annan was innocent of any corruption.

It is true that the UN has often fallen short of its mission, and that organization has frequently been ineffective in confronting tyranny in the world. Nonetheless, during his term as Secretary General, Mr. Annan has been able to effect some reforms in the bureaucracy, and has limited the ability of certain nations to use the UN as a platform for anti-American rhetoric.

Rather than criticism, a good example might be more effective. Unfortunately, in our interaction with Iraq, we have failed to set the right example, since several companies, including Halliburton, have been allowed to overcharge our government for services that were either sub-standard or never delivered.

This victimization of the taxpayers doesn't seem to concern the Republican leadership. Of course, it is only a coincidence that the former CEO of Halliburton happens to be Vice President of the United States.

...IS GOOD FOR THE GOSLING

One of the key issues in the Iraqi oil-for-food scandal is that one of the contractors accused of profiting from the corruption (a corporation based in Switzerland) had as an employee Mr. Kojo Annan, son of the UN Secretary General. Even though the investigation found that Annan senior was unaware of this arrangement, this fact has been the subject of much derision on the part of the right wing, and has provoked the standard threats of withholding America's promised contribution.

Meanwhile, Ms. Elizabeth Cheney-Perry, daughter of Vice President Cheney, has been hired to fill a position at the State Department created especially for her. Instead of setting a good example by demonstrating the American way of meritocracy, we seem to be following the worst practices of the rest of the world by blatant nepotism.

A JOB FOR OTHER PEOPLES' KIDS?

In light of a 32% shortfall in recruiting in March, and a 6% new enlistment deficit over the current fiscal year, the Army is considering a new strategy for attracting volunteers. Army leaders are proposing an appeal to parents, to encourage their own children to sign up.

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Here's a suggested script for the new advertisements:

Attention Neoconservatives!

You knew Saddam had weapons of mass destruction, and the only manly thing to do was to invade Iraq. And you've really enjoyed thumping your chest lately, as if you had personally lead the Third Infantry Division into Baghdad.

But deep down, you're still a little uneasy. Of course, when you were young, you had "other priorities," and so you never actually served. Well, here's a chance to make it all right.

How about your deadbeat offspring? You know, the one who got into an elite college as a legacy, and now takes up space in the basement or the spare bedroom. Bring 'em on down to the recruiting station, and cure those chickenhawk blues!

Note for Latecomers: "FLR" pertains to how some of the author's conservative friends fondly refer to this column- "Fallacious Leftist Rantings."

Answers to "Remember When...?"

1-D	8-K	15-H
2-E	9-A	16-R
3-J	10-S	17-I
4-P	11-B	18-M
5-U	12-N	19-Q
6-T	13-G	20-L
7-O	14-C	21-F

I'm baaaccckk! Humongous thanks to Maggie Truelove, Assistant RVC, soon to be the authentic RVC for Region 10. She went to the March AMC meeting to report on our region's doings and saw just how those meetings are conducted. And she still wants more. Way to go, Maggie!

The last few months I have been concentrating on finishing up my graduate degree, a master of arts in liberal studies with an emphasis on—what else?—Florida studies. In fact, my thesis will be turned into a program for the World Gathering in 2006. I've done research on the Highwaymen landscape artists and their children, some of whom are painting in the style of their parents. If you would like more information about this unique Floridian phenomenon, try my website, www.elissa.com, where I am posting my research.

Did you attend MindGames in Tampa? If you did, you probably had a fabulous time—what a great outlet for Mensa problem-solvers.

If you are a proctor, you have a certification to renew. Do it now so that testing can continue in your area.

See you soon in Ft. Lauderdale or New Orleans!

Coming Events:

FloRanGe '05-Suite Mayhem, Broward Mensa's RG over Memorial Day weekend, May 27-30, Tampa Bay Mensa's traditional spot on the calendar. Since that group is did MindGames, Broward Mensa is hosting the 3-day RG in Fort Lauderdale. Can't miss a chance to party! Contact Robin Rhea, 954.575.1639, robinrhea@bellsouth.net for information.

MensAGumbo, July 6 – 10, in wonderful New Orleans. Laissez les bons ton roulet!

Elissa Rudolph, RVC10
5054 Lakefront Blvd, Apt D
Delray Beach, FL 33484
elissa12@bellsouth.net
561-496-0124

The ExComm met at the Cocoa Public Library on Sunday, April 3, 2005. Called to order at 3:15 pm by LocSec Sam Kirschten.

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

Welcome Guest: Barbara Nottingham

Minutes for the March 6, 2005 meeting were approved as published. Moved by Helen, approved unanimously.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: The March 31, 2005 report was distributed by Helen.

Testing: Helen (Proctor Coordinator) reported that a test was scheduled for April 9. No candidates were tested in March.

Committee Reports:

There were no committee reports.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: It was noted that it was necessary to appoint an audit committee, preferably at the next meeting. Sam took this under advisement.

In an open forum discussion, Helen spoke glowingly of the upcoming (though somewhat distant) AG scheduled for 2007 in Birmingham, Alabama. She described it as a "real old fashioned AG," featuring low prices, (registration, hotel, meals), a real hospitality suite, and fantastic programs. She sincerely recommended it to any SCAM members who might be considering taking in an AG in 2007.

The next meeting of the ExComm is scheduled for **Sunday, May 1, at 3:00 pm** at the **Cocoa Public Library**.

George moved to adjourn at 3:25 pm, passed by unanimous vote.