

The

SCAM

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Back to School Issue!



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Writer's Block

Mike Moakley, Editor, The SCAM

It looks like another hurricane season is well under way. As I write this, we've dodged the bullet twice, as Dennis and Emily have passed us by. Let's hope this season continues to be uneventful for us (as many in our area still haven't fully recovered from last year).

This month, The SCAM picked up another political column. If you like politics, this is great. If not, write about something that's of interest to you and send it in before the tenth of the month.

Of course, the quest always goes on for new ideas. Let's hear from you.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bud Long, Treasurer

Financial status of the Space Coast Area Mensa as of June 30, 2005:

General Account :	\$1,056.44
RG Fund:	\$209.30
Scholarship Fund:	\$762.30
General Fund CD:	\$3,000.00
USPS Drawing Account:	\$32.43

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.

In August calendars start to fill up for the fall. Everything revolves around the most important fall calendar date: the first day of school. That's when students start to find out what their days will really be like. Will the school year be full of interesting challenges, or will it be a year of academic repetition?

If school gets off to a good start, parents can relax a bit. If it looks as if there is trouble ahead, parents need to get involved immediately. Either way, the more that parents know, the more successfully they will be able to support their child.

There are many resources that can help parents decide how to approach advocacy for gifted children. Libraries and bookstores offer various possibilities, and there are thousands of online resources. Start your Internet search at American Mensa's website, us.mensa.org/activities/giftedchildren.php3. After looking at the articles posted there, click on the Hoagies Gifted Resources link, or go directly to www.hoagiesgifted.com to reach the site with the widest selection of gifted resources online. Articles available on this website include Asimov's Law and Advocacy, which applies Mensan Isaac Asimov's advice: "Never attribute to malice what can be adequately explained by ignorance or stupidity", to working for gifted children.

One of the resources that American Mensa provides to help people become effective advocates for gifted children is the BrightKids e-mail list. Mensa hosts this list, but it is open to anyone who is interested in gifted children. BrightKids provides the opportunity to talk to people from all over the world about advocacy and other issues. One parent recently recommended Becoming An Advocate for Your Gifted Student, an interview with Carol Morreale, a past President of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children, at <http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/resources/advocacy/carolmorreale.html>. Some BrightKids participants are experts, and others are not, but they all care about gifted children and their families. To join the conversation, go to <http://www.lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/brightkids>.

Mensa provides resources and support for gifted children and their families, but it is not an advocacy group. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is the most effective nationwide advocacy group for the gifted. The NAGC funds research, lobbies for gifted education, and publishes magazines that are useful for parents and teachers. Contact the NAGC at 1-202-785-4268 or www.nagc.org for more information

Remember: you are your child's most important advocate. If you won't speak up for them, who will?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is a reprint from the August 2005 IMprint, the Newsletter of Northern New Jersey Mensa. Portions of this article have been edited for space and relevance to our group.

HMS QUEEN MARY 2 vs. HMS Queen Elizabeth 2

From 1969 until last year, the *QE2* was Cunard's flagship. At that time she was the last of the true ocean liners. She was taken out of trans-Atlantic service soon after the *QM2* was launched. In fact, the *QE2*'s last New York to Southampton run coincided with *QM2*'s first New York to Southampton run. The two ships ran parallel to each other across the pond. The *QE2* has not retired. It has taken over from Cunard's *Caronia* cruising out of Southampton.

The *QM2* is now the only true trans-Atlantic liner making 26 crossings each year. On our crossing on the *QM2*, there were many people who, like ourselves, had traveled on the *QE2*. Inevitably, at meals and at other times, these travelers would compare the *QM2* to the *QE2*. Meeting with several such travelers, there was general agreement that although the service, meals, and ambiance on the *QM2* are very good, they did not compare favorably to that aboard the *QE2*. All those to whom I spoke said that they would rather not travel on the *QM2* again. Rita and I agree. Aside from some of the details, life aboard the *QM2* just didn't seem as elegant as the times we spent on the *QE2*.

These are some of my observations. There was no classical music program on the *QM2*. On the *QE2*, on four of the six evenings of a trans-Atlantic crossing there were classical music programs. Incidentally, on the *QE2* there was a Steinway Concert Grand piano on stage of the theater. I did not see any Steinway pianos at all on the *QM2*. The *QM2* does have an in-house theater troupe that performs twice during each crossing which was not on the *QE2*. There is no Harrod's store on the *QM2* as there is on the *QE2*. There is only one display case of Harrod's branded items in the general store on the *QM2*. Even the ball point pens in each cabin were of lesser quality on the *QM2* than those provided on the *QE2*.

Also, at hand on the *QE2* but absent on the *QM2* were the presence of gigolos, or as the Cunard Line prefers to call them, Gentlemen Hosts. The *QE2* catered to an older and more sophisticated clientele than the *QM2*. The gigolos are provided by the ship to, as they put it, be available for those female passengers, and there are many of that older variety on the *QE2*, who would like a dance partner during the evening dances, but had no husband available or willing to dance. The Gentlemen Hosts are discrete, polite, well dressed, and never dance more than one dance in succession with any woman. One of these Gentlemen Hosts sat at our table during one of our crossings. He was well spoken and an interesting conversationalist. Truly he was well selected.

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At breakfast one morning on the *QM2* I was served orange juice in a chipped juice glass. I can't imagine that happening on the *QE2*. There was no butter knife at my place setting. All the other place settings at our table of six had butter knives. Whipped cream instead of clotted cream for scones was served on the *QM2* at tea. In comparing the meal service in the main dining room (the Mauritania Restaurant) on the *QE2* to that (the Britannia Restaurant) on the *QM2*, the *QM2* falls short.

The dinner menu on the *QE2* consists of seven courses; Appetizers, Soups, Salad, Pasta, Entrées, Desserts, and Cheeses, plus coffees and teas and Confectionary. The Britannia dinner menu has only four courses; Appetizers and Soups, Salads, Entrees, and Dessert. Although both appetizers and soups are available on the *QM2* they are rolled into one course. That is also true of the pastas and the entrees and the cheeses and desserts. Was this done to economize? There was never a question if a patron or-



A Surprising Discovery

I noted another unexpected difference between the *QM2* and the *QE2*. On the *QM2* urinals in the public toilets were of the flush type. On the *QE2* the urinals are waterless. Water used aboard a trans-Atlantic ship must be generated aboard, an expensive process. I am surprised that the *QM2* did not use the more advanced system of waterless urinal whereas the *QE2*, a much older ship, does.

dered more than one dish from each course, such as both an appetizer and a soup or for that matter, two entrees. Was the intention of minimizing the number of courses in the expectation that most diners would order only one item from each course, such as either a soup or an appetizer and thereby reduce the amount of food served and the waiter's and busboy's workload thus allowing fewer servers to serve more people? I did notice that our waiter covered more tables than on the *QE2* and that there was little busboy service, the waiter performed most functions.

On each crossing of the *QE2* there was a Captain's Night when he entertained the passengers at a cocktail party. This custom remains on the *QM2*. On that evening a Gala Dinner was served on the *QE2*. No such specified dinner was served on the *QM2*. Traditionally, caviar is served at that meal. Cunard boasts that they are the largest single purchasers of Russian caviar.

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Some years ago, I was surprised to see so much right-wing thinking expressed in The SCAM. I was surprised because I had always assumed that intelligent people are liberal.

Of course, "liberal" has become a dirty word now. As much as certain right-wingers decry political correctness, their rant against the word "liberal" certainly renders *them* "PC", doesn't it?

First, we have -- liberal? -- moderate? -- Clinton crucified for eight years. Then, we have those precious tax cuts, "fixing" those profligate Democrat tax-and-spend policies that somehow ended up in a great, big, huge, fat, wonderful surplus -- now annihilated by "conservative" measures -- followed by the "right" to bear and bare arms -- sans militia -- an anachronistic rationale incompatible with today's absence of an invading, controlling royalty -- an intrusion of fundamentalist religion into government, a railing against liberal judges and the appointment, not election, of the President of the United States, and now, Iraq.

The war against Iraq was a mistake from the start. Most people know that now. Why didn't more of the intelligent people know that from the beginning? Even those against the war have always been for our service people -- something we liberals are accused of not being. Yes, we liberals are for our service people.

Along with other patriotic Americans, we liberals bemoan the loss of the thousands of Americans who believed that they were fighting to preserve our freedoms, but does it ever occur to anyone else that 20,000 innocent citi-

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On the *QE2* the caviar was Seruga Malossol. On the *QM2* it was listed in the menu as just Caviar. The portion served on the *QM2* was so small that I could not ascertain that it was true caviar.

The Luncheon (sic) menu on the *QE2* showed similar differences to the Lunch menu on the *QM2*. The *QE2*'s Luncheon consists of Starters, Pastas, Main Courses, Barbeque, Pantry Chef's Selections, Desserts, and Ice Creams, seven courses in all. The *QM2*'s Lunch menu consists of four courses, Appetizers and Soups, Salad and Sandwich, Entrees, and Desserts. Not only were fewer courses offered for each lunch and dinner, there were fewer selections available, and the dishes themselves were often of simpler preparation.

Breakfasts aboard both ships are similar consisting of the usual juices, eggs, bread and sweet rolls, cereals, and fish. However, absent completely on the *QM2* was the traditional midnight buffet.

All in all, the *QM2* does not measure up to the *QE2*. The days of elegance and grace in ocean travel are fading fast.

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zens of Iraq have also been needlessly killed in this senseless, insane endeavor?

Yes, the world should have rid itself of Hussein, but surely there were ways of doing so other than invading and destroying an otherwise innocent nation. How about a gang of patriotic, "peaceful" death row volunteers parachuting en masse sufficiently to blast Hussein into oblivion, for instance?

The following passage gleaned from Mike's Writing Workshop on the Internet says it all. It shows the tenor of these very sad times. It is being reprinted in The SCAM with the permission of the author, Lee Ann Prescott.

Hush Hush

And now ...

from those who brought you the end of privacy

(We can search your house upon nothing but our vague suspicions)

from those who brought you the end of property rights

(We can take your land and build a shopping center to enrich the rich)

from those who brought you the end of freedom

(We can detain you indefinitely without charging you with any crime)

from those who brought you the end of hope

(We can keep you in the desert until you lose your job, your wife, your life)

Let us open our hands to receive

the end of a free press.

Jail journalists who hesitate to name the communists --

No, wait.

Jail journalists who watchdog the almost-elected --

No, wait.

Jail journalists who hold these truths to be self-evident --

No.

Wait.

Jail the journalists.

Blind them, gag them, stuff their ears;

cuff their hands, rape them -- with fear.

Now showing: The End of Jefferson's America.

Coming soon: Hush Hush.

It's not a poem.

It's grief.

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Lee Ann Prescott is an award-winning journalist and freelance writer who lives in Marion, Virginia. Her observation of projected judicial restraint of a free press was spotted by Joyce on Mike's Writing Workshop on the Internet.

Someday you may want to retire, BUT you have to have enough money to continue your present life style. Wall Street puts that estimate somewhere between a million dollars or maybe half that. Of course your house will be completely paid for and you won't have any other large debt. Dream on.

It seems Mr. Average IRA Investor has less than \$50,000 in his account. Just a little short here. Then there is your 401K which I hope you have been adding to every week and that nice company pension. Don't forget Social Security. Total these.

Let's do some numbers. Get your pen and paper and figure out what you are spending now. See if there are some items that will not be appearing when you stop going to the job. Believe it or not there won't be that many. Put that final number on your paper and subtract it from the total. You didn't know it was that much, huh.

Here is the big surprise. Health coverage. As you get older this item is going to increase until you find you are spending more each week than you did when you were working. That is why you should be squirreling away as much as you can right now.

Since you are going to need all the money you have saved to date and more then you should be looking at the stocks and mutual funds you currently own. Are these increasing in value? Have any of them gone down?

The great secret of Wall Street is not what to buy, but when to sell. That's right. Unless you have an exit strategy for every equity in your portfolio you will never keep your money. If it isn't holding its price or going up you want to ask that stock a question: What have you done for me lately? If it is more than 10% or at the very most 15% off its highest price it is time to sell. And don't wait to get "even".

Waiting to get even is a loser's game. People get locked into holding bad positions that only get worse when they are waiting for the stock to rally back up. Forget it. Get out before it is a bigger loss. Learn to take small losses, but never hold on for big ones.

To retire without having to work is a numbers game all through your life. You have to do the numbers on a regular basis. Check out your spending habits. Keep your credit card debt to a minimum. If it gets to be too much, cut the card in half and work with cash only. Sound difficult? It is, but unless you want to be eating cat food at retirement you must keep your numbers in balance.

Buy stocks and mutual funds, but if they start down you must sell at once. Never take advice from a broker. He will make you broker. You must be in charge at all times.

Doing it right will not require the huge sums, Wall Street says. Be prudent with your expenses and sell those weak stocks and funds immediately. Keep control of your numbers on both the debit and credit sides.

Al Thomas' best selling book, "If It Doesn't Go Up, Don't Buy It!" has helped thousands of people make money and keep their profits with his simple 2-step method. Read the first chapter at www.mutualfundmagic.com and discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know.

Deb's Corner

Hi,

Just a couple of items for this month...I'm sure there are quite a few cat lovers in our midst. So, the first item is about our feline friends who, like many humans, are homeless...and need our help.

The Space Coast Feline Network is an all-volunteer group dedicated to reduce the homeless cat population humanely through the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. SCFN is in need of volunteers & funding to spay, neuter, feed, house, vaccinate, medicate and love our feral feline friends. After reading SCFN's latest newsletter I learned that:

- Feral cats turned in to the animal shelters will not longer be safe from being euthanized. The feral cat network will no longer be called to pick up and return any feral cat to their places of residence.
- The County has severed all relationships with the Space Coast Feline Network, thus there has been NO county funding in a year.
- The County has demanded all traps on loan to the feline network be returned.
- The County is turning off its HOTLINE number. (SCFN new HOTLINE number is 631-7729)

For the monthly caregiver seminar information call Debbie Rich at 537-2757. For more information on feral cats, visit Alley Cat Allie's at www.alleycat.org.

Did you know that all feral cats in the TNR program are vaccinated against many diseases, including rabies?

The Center for Disease Control has reported 36 cases of rabies in humans in the US between 1990 and 2002, 29 of those bites was said to have been caused by bats. Also, there has not been a death reported due to rabies from a cat bite in 30 years.

When cats do get rabies, it typically comes from contact with other wild animals, such as raccoons.

On a lighter note:

The Friends of the Suntree/Viera Library (255-4404) reports that their book sales have gotten such a great response that they will be having two more sales this year: the weekend of August 18th and a one day holiday

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sale on December 3rd, 2005.

The Suntree/Viera Library*, for example, offers quite a few classes and events. I have listed below some groups that meet at the library to show the variety of their offerings:

- Brevard Antiques & Collectibles
- Space Coast Stamping Club
- Fun Stampers
- Millennium Club.
- Edu-quilters.
- Seaside Piecemakers.
- Knit-wits
- Viera Women's Club
- Mah Jong
- Neighbor's Book Club
- Planting & Maintaining Trees
- Florida Friendly Landscaping
- Calligraphy class

Last but not least.....

There are many youth services available in our County Libraries: the Suntree/Viera library has:

- Toddler Time Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10 am (with adult... ages 22-36 months).
- Story time Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 11 am (3 to 6 years)...

If you would like any details or the time schedule for any of these activities, you can call this library at 255-4404.

Gotta go.....

Thank you for visiting my corner,
See you at the library!

Deb

*NOTE: The source of these listings is the Summer 2005 issue of Library Liaison, newsletter of Friends of the Suntree/Viera Public Library.

SCAM Calendar of Events for August 2005

3rd - Wednesday 6:00 PM

COFFEE, ETC.

Come join us at the House of Joe, 1224 W. New Haven Ave., Melbourne. Great place for a get-together over coffee; a free Wi-fi connection is featured for those so inclined. *One of our best regular events.*

Contact: *Trish Thornton, e-mail: coffeetc@spacecoastareamensa.org*

21st - Sunday 11:00 AM

BRUNCH WITH JIM

Join Jim for Sunday Brunch at the Colossus Restaurant, 380 N. Wickham Road, in Melbourne. You must arrive on time or you may not be seated with our group.

Contact: *Jim Trammel, 242-8985.*

27th - Saturday 6:00 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1411 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

Contact: *Your Newsletter Editor, or e-mail: snort@spacecoastareamensa.org.*

Welcome to SCAM

Joseph Cona

Welcome to SCAM and Mensa:

Mijee Brian
Deanna Hoak
Linda O'Dea
Matt Wein



August Birthday Greetings!

02-James Vanaman
04-William Armstrong
04-Robert Johnson
05-Eric Thompson
09-James McNamara
11-Cypryan Klish II
13-Ronald Gaynor
15-William Lamoureux
16-Robert Knox
22-Shirley Jones
26-Ronald Wallace
29-Chester Young
30-David MacMakin



"Liberal, moderate, conservative shouldn't apply to judging. The correct philosophy is to judge according to the intent of the legislature or the intent of the Constitution's framers. Judges are overwhelmingly from a very narrow segment of society, and if they begin to read their own ideals into the law, then most of society isn't represented."

Judge Robert H. Bork

The war has begun. The war that will determine the direction and extent of liberty in this country for the next 20 years.

It is the war between the White House and the liberal minority Senate Democrats.

It is the war for the Supreme Court, and the opening salvos have already been fired.

In the first week of July Justice Sandra Day O'Connor stepped down from the Court. Within hours of the announcement of her retirement the Liberal machine was already warning President Bush that they would do everything in their power to prevent him from putting a constructionist on the Court.

Of course, they didn't quite say it that way.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said there would be no problem as long as the President nominates a "mainstream conservative", one like Justice O'Connor.

Liberal advocacy groups have announced that all they want is a nominee in the tradition of O'Connor or Stevens or Kennedy. They want a nominee they claim "will bring the Senate and the country together".

Teddy Kennedy warned that the Senate would not tolerate "Bork's America", referring to the constitutional scholar savaged and demonized for his strict constitutional views when he was nominated by President Reagan in 1987.

And, of course, the big gun was rolled out. Filibusters were not only not ruled out, they were implicitly threatened. Naturally, there were excuses as to why this action would not violate the recent "agreement" not to filibuster except in extreme circumstances. Of course, to a liberal, "extreme circumstances" exist if anyone is nominated who fails the litmus test of agreeing with the leftist agenda of unlimited abortion rights, gun control, homosexual marriage, etc. To a liberal, those are mainstream concepts.

But the real reason for the demand that the President "consult the Senate" (read: nominate who we want) and the threat to filibuster (read: if you don't nominate who we want) was revealed by Democrat Senator Joseph Biden.

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While being interviewed about the Court vacancy and possible nominees, Senator Biden was asked about the possibility of newly-approved appellate court Judge Janice Rogers Brown being appointed to the Court. His response was that he was against her nomination to the Supreme Court, even though he had just voted for her approval to the appellate court. His reason? Because, while appellate court judges “are governed by Stare Decisis... they don’t get to make new law”.

Make new law? Now you know.

Under the American model, the three branches of government have clearly defined and delineated powers when it comes to lawmaking.

The Legislative branch makes the laws.

The Executive branch approves the laws the legislative branch made.

The Judicial branch determines if the laws are constitutional.

For most of the first 200 years of our nation’s existence this is the way it worked. Then came the “Warren Court” and the sudden ascendancy of Judicial Activism. Suddenly the Court no longer was concerned with

deciding whether or not laws were constitutional as it was with making laws to suit their personal agendas. And this is why the Liberals will fight to the death, will resort to every possible lie, slander and calumny to prevent the appointment of a conservative, constructionist justice. Because Judicial activism has been the way the vast majority of social liberalism has been foisted upon America.

The Left has always found it difficult to find enough votes in both the House and the Senate, as well as the White House, to pass their agendas, even when the Democrats controlled all three. The reason was simple: they couldn’t risk alienating their constituencies if they wanted to continue being re-elected.

But the Supreme Court now... all they need is five activist justices with lifetime tenure and they no longer need to worry about getting majority votes in the Congress and Presidential approval to promote their agendas and enact their laws. They can instead rule by Judicial Fiat.

And in so doing, these unelected lawmakers can violate the clear meaning of the Constitution with impunity, for they retain the right to be its sole arbiters unto themselves.

So liberals, who proclaim their support for justices such as David Souter who will uphold “individual (read: liberal only) rights approve the recent decision in *Kelo v. New London*. In that decision Justice Souter, along with Justices Kennedy, Ginsburg, Breyer and Stevens decided that the Fifth Amendment right of the individual to own his own property, and that said property can only be taken for “public use” and only with “just compensation” no longer applied. The Far-Left Five decided that the clearly-worded “public use”, which means for roads, schools, libraries, etc., also meant the vague “public benefit”, meaning that private property could now be seized in the name of Eminent Domain and be turned over to another private indi-

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vidual for that individual's profit... as long as the government got its own increased pound of flesh. So the homes involved in the Kelo decision will most likely be destroyed, homes such as that belonging to Wilhelmina Ciavaglia who was born in it in 1918 and has lived in it with her husband for the last 60 years. Destroyed so that a private developer can build a hotel and office complex, thus generating far more tax revenue for New London. It's just too bad that a scrub jay or spotted owl doesn't nest there, or an abortion clinic reside next door. I'm sure that Ms. Ciavaglia's home would be safe in those circumstances. But she is just an 87 year old woman who wants to live out her last few years in the same house she was born in. Well, what is that when compared to more taxes?

In a bit of poetic irony, Justice Souter has been hoist upon the petard he so nonchalantly erected.

Four days after the Kelo decision a request was received by the code enforcement officer for the town of Weare, NH seeking to begin the application process to build hotel, café, and museum at 34 Cilley Hill Road. The requestor, one Logan Clements, CEO of Freestar Media, LLC, is seeking the property under eminent domain by rightfully pointing out the greatly increased revenues the town can expect from such a development, and states that because of the uniqueness of the site the property is the only suitable place for such a development.

The uniqueness is that 34 Cilley Hill Road is the current home of a man responsible for the destruction of property rights in America:

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court David H. Souter.

Do you think Justice Souter will contest this request for the use eminent domain?

The Far-Left Five also decided last week to set aside the execution of

1988 murderer because his attorney apparently did not try to get him off by claiming an unhappy childhood or mental incapacity. Justice Souter didn't claim that the murderer actually was unhappy as a child or was in fact mentally incompetent. His reasoning was simply that a sufficiently clever defense lawyer might have tried those ploys and thereby might have avoided the death penalty.

These decisions are insane, and unconstitutional. They are far outside the province of the Court. Yet it is this sort of Justice and decision that the Democrats and their Liberal co-travelers are demanding that President Bush appoint.

This country can't afford, either socially or economically, another 20 plus years of governance by liberal judicial fiat. We need a constructionist Court that will base its decisions upon what the Constitution says and means, and not what they feel it should mean to fit their personal political agendas.

The recent controversy over the proposed establishment of an engineering and manufacturing facility at Melbourne International Airport by the European Aeronautic, Defence and Space Company (EADS) raises some important questions about procuring military hardware.

To recap, the U.S. Air Force needs to replace its aging airborne tanker fleet, which consists primarily of the KC-135 "Stratotanker." These aircraft, derived from the Boeing 707, range in age from 40 to 50 years, with all the inherent safety concerns and maintenance issues of old systems. One possible solution to this problem was for the Air Force to lease 100 Boeing 767 aircraft from their manufacturer. This plan would have cost over \$23 billion. Several members of Congress, most prominently Senator John McCain (Republican-Arizona), challenged the proposal as a bad deal for the American taxpayer. Subsequently, the responsible Air Force procurement official went to prison for several offences, including improper conduct pertaining to this leasing plan. Nonetheless, the underlying problem remains, and the Air Force must still procure replacements.

One possible candidate is the KC-330, under development by EADS North America. Melbourne was competing against three other cities in the southeastern U.S. as the manufacturing location. The immediate benefit to the community would be the creation of an estimated 1000 high-paying jobs. This was of particular interest to Brevard County, since the inception of EADS operations would coincide with the phase-out of NASA's Space Shuttle and the projected loss of local jobs.

The EADS proposal, however, has some powerful opponents. The House of Representatives passed a defense bill containing a provision intended to prevent EADS from gaining the Air Force tanker contract, effectively reducing the pool of suppliers to one company, the Boeing Corporation. Despite the potential benefit to Brevard County, both members of our congressional delegation, Congressman Tom Feeney and Congressman (for life) Dave Weldon voted for the bill containing this restrictive provision.

From a local perspective, the issue became moot when EADS selected Mobile, Alabama, for their new facility.

Among the questions posed by this situation:

-Where do our Representatives' duties lie between the long-term interests of the nation as a whole, and the more immediate concerns of the local constituency?

Our system of government is based on the premise that everyone has a voice, and that a majority can not trample on the inherent rights of a minority. In theory, a representative should fight against a proposal that would harm the members of his district or place his constituents at a disad-

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vantage. Representatives may seek to gain special advantages for their communities, and may be successful by trading votes and by exploiting party and personal loyalties. This behavior, however, has natural limitations (one can only accrue and redeem so many favors), and the representative has a duty not to deliberately harm the nation. The representative's ultimate source of guidance is found in the principles they subscribe to, although given the factors of money and special favors that currently pervade our system, it is doubtful principles survive for very long.

-Should the people's representative dispense with any analysis and independent judgment, and simply allow his or her vote to be dictated by the leadership of their political party?

This appears to be the option preferred by our local Congressmen. The leadership of the governing party (the Republicans), ever seeking to expand their base, are hoping to gain inroads on the Pacific coast, a traditionally Democratic-leaning region where Boeing's manufacturing is concentrated. Apparently, the Republicans also believe that they "own" the citizens of the Space Coast, and that Brevard County voters are either too gullible or too apathetic to hold their Representatives accountable for voting against the interest of the constituents.

-Are the strategic concerns of national defense, especially procurement of expensive, uniquely military items, best addressed by the "free market?"

The economic model used to analyze defense procurement is faulty. In theory, a company equipped to manufacture a million items needs only slight adjustments in its program to produce an additional 10,000 items for military use. The reality is that many military items are highly specialized and unique, and that some large companies exist solely to supply government requirements.


Additionally, some industries (like shipbuilding in the U.S.) are almost exclusively military suppliers. The Navy is going to extreme measures to assure commercial shipyards remain in business in order to protect the "strategic industrial base," while at the same time, disposing of a government-owned shipyard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. This is certainly a departure from the principles of "free-market" economics. Is this really in the long-term interest of the taxpayers?

Furthermore, achieving economies-of-scale through mass production assumes a regular and somewhat predictable demand. Government purchasing is rarely conducted in such a steady-state fashion.

-Should our military establishment be viewed as a source of jobs?

Obviously, the military establishment and its industrial base exist to defend the nation, and all other considerations are secondary. On the other

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 In June 23, 2005, the United States Supreme Court rendered a decision that will have a devastating impact on the American citizen, particularly those in the working class and middle class. On that day, the court proclaimed that local governments can take property from one private owner and give it to another private owner if, in so doing, some benefit is afforded the public.

The *Washington Post* reports: "In a 5-4 decision, the court upheld the ability of New London, Conn., to seize people's homes to make way for an office, residential and retail complex supporting a new \$300 million research facility of the Pfizer pharmaceutical company. The city has argued that the project served a public use within the meaning of the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution because it would increase tax revenues, create jobs and improve the local economy." (1)

The danger of this new ruling was evidently not lost on the Supreme Court. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, in her dissenting opinion, warns us: "Under the banner of economic development, all private property is now vulnerable to being taken and transferred to another private owner, so long as it might be upgraded. ... The specter of condemnation hangs over all

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hand, a draconian approach of "hire on Monday, fire on Friday" is wasteful and counterproductive. Top quality people would seek better opportunities elsewhere, and the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the defense establishment would suffer.

-If "subsidized European" companies are allowed to bid on U.S. military projects, doesn't this mean that European taxpayers are picking up part of the tab that would otherwise be paid by American taxpayers?

To put it another way, if a procurement is restricted to only a sole U.S.-based supplier, isn't this an example of a monopoly, which is contrary to the concept of "free markets?" Is this not effectively a subsidy by another name that is levied on American taxpayers? There is a common perception that Europeans don't "pull their weight" in global affairs, leaving the United States to pay the bills and do the dirty work. Acquiring hardware at a discount from the Europeans might be a way to partly alleviate this concern.

We can conclude that in military procurement, determining precisely what is best for America proves to be more complex than one would originally presume. It is a certainty, however, that partisan politics doesn't improve the process.

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property. *Nothing is to prevent the State from replacing any Motel 6 with a Ritz-Carlton, any home with a shopping mall, or any farm with a factory.*”(2)

One interesting aspect of this decision is that the majority opinion was rendered by those justices deemed to be “liberal”, while the “conservative” justices dissented. According to conservative syndicated columnist George Will, *“Liberalism triumphed Thursday. Government became radically unlimited in seizing the very kinds of private property that should guarantee individuals a sphere of autonomy against government.”*(3)

Moreover, Representative Tom Feeney (R), District 23, states: *“Property rights are civil rights. ... furthermore, I am co-sponsor of the ‘Private Property Rights Protection Act,’ which will restore the property rights of all Americans by preventing the federal government from using economic development as a justification for exercising its power of eminent domain.”*(4)

Finally, the Wall Street Journal weighs in on the issue: *“Last week’s regrettable 5-4 decision in Kelo v. City of New London marks a new low point in the Supreme Court’s takings jurisprudence. ... Justice John Paul Stevens held that courts ... should be hugely deferential to a government decision ... to displace one private property owner in favor of a second private party in the name of overall economic development.”*(5)

Evidently, the conservative community opposes this Supreme Court ruling. Does this mean that liberals *favor* this ruling? Not quite. On June 30, *Florida Today*, long criticized by many as a “liberal rag”, opines in its editorial: *“...the Supreme Court’s decision last week not to stop local governments from taking private property solely for private economic development was so wrong.”*(6)

According to Steve Kramer, co-chair of the Green Party of the United States: *“Working class and low income homeowners will be at special risk, since they provide less tax revenue, and the Court now gives permission for city councils and statehouses to evict and replace them with commercial and residential development for the sake of a wealthier tax base. The Court has legalized theft – theft from the poor to the rich.”*(7)

Evidently, neither liberals nor conservatives favor the expansion of eminent domain. Both agree that the right of home ownership should, except for extraordinary cases, be inviolate. This leads us now to two questions.

Why would “liberal” justices rule in favor of the developers, as they had in this case? To answer this, we need to define “liberal”. In the context of the Supreme Court, it appears that one’s stance on *Roe v. Wade* is the determining factor – supporters of that decision are “liberal”, opponents are “conservative”. This is evident as the question of overturning *Roe v. Wade* is the main issue on who should replace retiring justice Sandra Day O’Connor. If one looks at the true definition of a liberal, that being one who subscribes to the principles of *freedom, equality, and opportunity*, as I have consistently held in the three years I have written for The SCAM, the answer becomes readily apparent: None of the Justices are liberals.

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Why would “conservatives” who are evidently pro-business, oppose the Supreme Court ruling? Our President, strangely enough, provides at least part of the answer. President Bush has long touted the “Ownership Society”, where Americans are stakeholders in their own futures. Consider that a great many Americans are homeowners. Most of the homeowners are deeply in debt, in no small part due to the mortgages necessary to buy their homes. Moreover, many homeowners have taken second mortgages or refinanced their homes to pay off other, many times unsecured, debt. Because of the specter of foreclosure and the eviction that would follow, most will currently struggle to make the necessary payments.

What would happen, then, if these homeowners were no longer secure in their homes, as could happen under the current Supreme Court decision? If too many homeowners believe their security to be threatened anyway, where would be the incentive for them to meet their debt obligations? The implications could well be staggering to the banking and finance community and could well bring about their ruin. Moreover, if the general population ever concludes the “American Dream” to be one big lie (and have evidence of that through their experiences), will a bloody revolt be too far behind? Already, the average American has lost his security at work, his pension (if he has one) is becoming questionable at best, not to mention the specter of privatization of Social Security; could also losing his home to upscale development be the last straw? One might do well to reread Charles Dickens’s A Tale of Two Cities.

Sources:

1. “Supreme Court Expands Government’s Right to Seize Homes”, William Branigin, *Washington Post*, June 23, 2005.
2. Supreme Court of the United States, No. 04-108, *Susette Kelo, et al., Petitioners v. City of New London, Connecticut, et al.*, O’Connor, J., dissenting.
3. “Lords of New London”, George Will, *Florida Today*, June 29, 2005, Page 9A.
4. “Property Rights are Civil Rights”, Rep. Tom Feeney, *Florida Today*, July 2, 2005.
5. “Blind Justices”, Richard A. Epstein, *Wall Street Journal*, July 3, 2005.
6. “It’s Eminently Wrong”, Editorial, *Florida Today*, June 30, 2005, Page 10A.
7. “Supreme Theft” US Green Party press release, June 28, 2005.

ExComm Meeting Notice

No meeting was held in the month of July. The next meeting will be at George Patterson's house 301 Sand Pine Rd; Indialantic on **August 6, 2005 at 4:00 pm.**

The Tenth Story

Maggie Truelove, RVC 10

It is the beginning of July - the beginning of my term as Region 10's Regional Vice Chair. I am writing my column earlier than usual, because we will be attending the Annual Gathering in New Orleans and then off on family vacation during the time the column would normally be written. Since it is so early, I have only had one response to the question I asked in the July newsletter, which was what each group does to welcome new members. Thank you to Membership Officer Jason Knight of Broward Mensa for responding so quickly! Jason tells us that Broward Mensa sends a letter to those who are offered membership, letting them know that they are invited to attend the twice-monthly Pub Night, which is open even for prospects. He also sends each member a birthday postcard, which can be redeemed for \$1.00 off the kitty of a Mensa event. Congratulations to Broward Mensa for making these efforts to welcome new - and old - members to events! We still hope to hear from other groups: what do you do to welcome new members?

In April Tampa Bay Mensa did a terrific job hosting MindGames. Because April is so close to May (when TBM usually holds a Regional Gathering), Tampa Bay and Broward traded RG dates, just for this year. Memorial Day weekend saw well over 100 of us at Broward's Suite Mayhem RG. Now we can look forward to Tampa Bay's Oktoberfest October 7-9, 2005, at the Holiday Inn Select near Clearwater-St. Pete Arpt. Advance registration is \$70, which includes meals. Contact Dan Chesnut (DChesnut@tampabay.rr.com) or see the gatherings section in the Bulletin or on the Mensa website for further information. Central Florida Mensa will not be holding Smarti Gras RG in January.

Many of the members who are usually involved with putting on their RGs are busy with the planning and preparation for the World Gathering in August, 2006, and have decided to concentrate their effort and energy on making the World Gathering a resounding success. And speaking of the World Gathering: have you decided yet how you would like to participate?

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