

**The**

# **SCAM**

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*Endangered Memories of Old Florida*

**Volume 24, No. 4**

**April, 2006**

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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 on Page 2.

### Page Three

Mike Moakley, Editor

**W**ell, miracles can and do happen. Starting with next month's issue, we have a new Assembly/Circulation Coordinator, Elaine Joyce. Many thanks, Elaine, for stepping forward to volunteer for this essential function.

This month, we are seeking candidates to run for the ExComm, the body responsible for running the Space Coast Area Mensa. If you are interested in nominating a candidate, or are interested in running for office, please notify me as soon as possible. My contact info is on Page Two. This year's NomElCom consists of me, Suzanne Leichtling, and Sam Kirschten. *Included in next month's issue will be the official ballot.* Whether or not you volunteer to run for office, please take the time to vote. The people you choose will determine the course of SCAM for the next year, so this is your chance to be heard.

Our SCAM Membership Directory is virtually complete. For those who have contacted me to correct any outdated or erroneous information, you have my thanks; for those who have not, please contact me ASAP. As soon as our ExComm makes a final determination on authorizing distribution of the Directory, it will become available to you. Please see the *LocSection* and the meeting minutes for more details.

Finally, as always, The SCAM is always looking for articles by members. Barring the obscene or personal attacks, just about any subject is acceptable. Deadline is the 10th of each month.

**The SCAM sells classified ad space.** SCAM members, non-commercial, no charge. Others: \$20 full page; \$10 half-page; \$5 quarter-page per month, we offer discounts for multiple insertions, and we can help with layout and design.

**Subscriptions:** SCAM members, included in dues; others, **\$10** for 12 issues.

If you are in a hurry, don't bother to read this, it's mostly just an expansion of items in the minutes. (clever ploy to attract readers [I notice my tendency to throw in parenthetical remarks and asides bears a striking resemblance to one aspect of the style of Mad Magazine, which I read regularly in my younger days] ) But enough about my literary influences. Oh, let me slip in one more: The Flowering of New England 1815-1865, by Van Wyck Brooks which follows the intellectual development of the Northeast Intelligentsia, centered around Boston, for the period noted. You know, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, et.al. I was particularly struck by a section on the passion for self-education prevalent in the area at the time (the 1840's). I often refer to it - yes, I actually take the book off the shelf and go to a particular passage, which I have marked in the index – especially when I feel I have put in a productive day's work, to remind myself that I really could do better. The passage concerns the activities of one Elihu Burritt, also known at the time as the "learned blacksmith", a self-taught linguist, who studied before, during, and after his day's work as a blacksmith. An excerpt from his diary is presented, which reads, in part:

- *“Monday, Headache; forty pages of Cuvier's Theory of the Earth, 64 pages of French, 11 hours forging.”*
- *“Tuesday, 65 lines of Hebrew, 30 pages of French, 10 pages of Cuvier, 8 lines of Syriac, 10 Danish, 10 Bohemian, 9 Polish, 15 names of stars, 10 hours forging, etc.”*

That really puts me in my place.

But what's going on with the ExComm. This month I raised the question of the annual scholarship. Rita Johnson-Aronna, who looked after it for a number of years, has left the area and no replacement has stepped forward, despite frequent remarks on the need. A motion to forgo this year's award was put forward and then tabled to allow any interested parties to express themselves. I expect the motion to be passed at the next meeting, since none of the necessary work has been done. This is an area in which a Publicity Chairperson, which we also lack, might be involved. (Not to mention a Gifted Children Coordinator) In a letter in last month's issue, Clara Woodall-Moran commented on her stepping down from

*(Continued on page 17)*

*Things we need to know*

**T**here is yet another thing to consider: so far we have discussed the loads to the main wind force resisting system. We also have wind loads on elements that are NOT part of the main structural system. These elements are called “Components and Cladding” and cover such things as the shingles, windows, siding, etc. They often receive higher loads than the main structural system and we will discuss them during some building material considerations a little later.

So, now we know how to consider the wind forces that act on our beachfront dream house. Let’s review for a minute. We have the beautiful, ocean-front lot, a pile of hard earned dough (hah!), the knowledge of all there is to know about hurricane loading on the dream house, the codes that govern construction at our location, but no design of anything at all yet. What else can we do before getting underway? Let’s list all the stuff we’ll need to know beforehand. We have the lot, the means, hurricane awareness and the construction codes so far.

While continuing, let me expand our discussion past just designing for hurricanes a little and hope you will bear with me. We will come back to this later with some tips on how to make our house resist hurricane forces better.

We also need to know about the soil conditions, both geologically and structurally, underneath the house, the need for the house materials to resist the effects of salt air and water corrosion, direction of the prevailing winds, a complete site boundary and topographic survey, some idea of landscaping, what is immediately adjacent our location (and not so immediately) from an architectural and planning standpoint, the patterns of sun travel through the sky during all seasons at our location (no sun in the eyes as we read either morning or afternoon) and the general character of the area or neighborhood. This last point refers to such things as the nearest trailer park being next door to the million dollar office building, both representative of a lack of zoning of some sort that we want to avoid. So, as noted, there are more things than wind to think of if we really want to do this right.

*(Continued on page 6)*

### **Retaining your professionals**

It is now time to retain an architect and a structural engineer. I suggest you retain them directly so they report to you – as opposed to having the engineer be a consultant to the architect. It will also be beneficial if they know each other and have worked together before. However, it should be pointed out that you expect continuous coordination between them during all phases of the work. I would suggest you meet with them together after you have decided who they will be. They will, in turn, retain a surveyor and a geological consulting firm to perform soil borings and analysis.

### **Early results**

Let's start by getting the results of the survey. All seems OK and there is even a little dune to design around. Now we can check the capacity and character of the soil. This is determined from an analysis of the results of at least two soil borings along with a comprehensive report which will recommend the depths and types of foundation systems. Let's assume we are in southern Brevard County and the soil borings indicate a layer of solid limestone about 20 feet down with no intermediate weak layers or water-bearing seams above the limestone. Looks good for drilled concrete piers, anchored in the layer of limestone, about 22 feet deep. This is not excessive and resembles other south beachfront conditions.

The normal prevailing winds are the next thing to consider. The coastline is at an angle of about 158 degrees as measured clockwise from due north. (It runs at about 22 degrees west of north.) On other words, the bearings of the coastline are north northwest at 338 degrees to south southeast at 158 degrees. Our normal prevailing winds are from the northeast to east which is about 45-90 degrees but, of course, the winds flow from the easterly direction, in general. The thing to note is that the breezes come close to flowing perpendicularly off the shoreline. They are actually about 22 degrees south of being directly offshore. So, if we want an even breeze from the ocean, we will have to turn the northerly axis of the house a little, say about 10 degrees southerly. There is no real need to do this and it is likely an inefficient placement of the house on the site, presuming the site is relatively long and shallow with SR A1A running pretty close to the ocean all along the coast. However, just for fun and as a concession to the breezes, I would recommend a little clockwise tilting of the layout

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for general interest and it might even influence the ultimate layout positively.

### **Building materials**

Let's discuss some aspects of the building materials we can use for the house.

#### **The structural frame**

Our choices are steel, wood, concrete or masonry. The masonry should be made from stone aggregate; it is then called concrete masonry. We don't want the cinder aggregate type of light weight masonry. All of these structural materials need special attention in the corrosive environment of salt air and water. Structural steel is, by far, the most reliable of these materials. It is made under controlled conditions and is sold all over the world. However, special attention to a highly specialized painting system is required to prevent rusting and corrosion.

Wood has been the traditional framing material for houses but has some drawbacks and needs some special requirements. Termites and decay are enemies of wood and the material must be treated properly. Properly treated heavier timbers are gaining in use and can be designed to resist larger lateral forces.

Concrete is a manufactured material, mixed from precise proportions and types of sand, gravel, cement and water. Sadly, its quality is no better than the ones doing the mixing. The material is acceptable in theory but be sure to have your structural engineer ride herd on all aspects of the concrete mix design, the ingredients, mixing, delivering and placing technique.

So, of these choices, let's choose REINFORCED concrete masonry for our structure. This means we will place reinforcing bars vertically in the voids in each block with concrete placed in the block voids around the bars. This concrete is a premixed material and is pretty reliable. We will also place horizontal reinforcing in the joints between the courses. This will give us a nicely acceptable structure.

More later – *Thomas E.M. Wheat, NCARB, AIA, PE*

**I**t's been a lot better since they put that new regulation that telemarketers could not call you when you enter your phone number with a "Do NOT Disturb" sign on it, but a few calls still come through.

Dinner time is still dinner time and I don't care to be called out of the blue by some no-name broker who wants to make me rich provided I buy shares in this great new issue or some stock that is just about to "take off".

Usually they start off with do I remember he called me 6 months ago and recommended so-and-so issue that is currently in the news because it has gone up 100 or 200%. Google has been a favorite, but he has a better one. He did not make that call and if he had I am sure I would not remember it. Also the name of his firm is one I never heard of, but it sounds very legitimate and he might even say they are affiliated with Wells Fargo Bank or some other big bank. They might have their checking account with that institution, but otherwise they have no connection. Now he has another recommendation that is going to do even better than that one. Yes, and pigs can fly!

If you haven't done so yet don't let him go any further. Hang up. Oh, I know you can't because your mother taught you it is rude to hang up on people. Please, this time DON'T listen to your mother. He will try to get you into a conversation by asking simple questions that must be answered with a "Yes". Stop listening. If you can't bring yourself to hang up then put the phone down and walk away. In 10 minutes he will be gone to call another sucker.

There really are boiler rooms out there selling worthless securities and everything they do is 100% within the law and 100% immoral. How do I know this? I used to own a brokerage firm and I received monthly reports from the regulatory agencies outlining charges against these shady dealers. Fortunately, I did not have those problems as I would not allow hype to open accounts.

Before opening an account with any type of company it is necessary to do due diligence. Check them out completely. Get references from current customers. Call their regulatory agency (SEC or NASD) to see if there are complaints against the company or the salesman to whom you are speaking. Make the salesman prove

*(Continued on page 9)*

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in writing his story of where and when he bought.

The things being told on the phone are usually too good to be true and that is a fact. Not all brokerage firms are like this, but remember the basic rule:

**NEVER SEND MONEY TO A VOICE ON THE PHONE!**

*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 and receive his market letter for 3 months at no charge at [www.mutualfundmagic.com](http://www.mutualfundmagic.com) and discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know. Copyright 2006 All rights reserved.*

**MEMBERSHIP NOTES**

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**Welcome Back to SCAM**

Linda Martin  
Samuel Minter  
Beth Rutenber  
Richard Ward  
Jeff Welch

**APRIL BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**

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<i>1st</i>	Richard Hussey	<i>21st</i>	Carol Lane
<i>1st</i>	Aundrea Scott	<i>23rd</i>	Mary Ellen Donahue
<i>5th</i>	Douglas Solomon	<i>23rd</i>	LaVerne Lasobeck
<i>16th</i>	Sandra Morgan	<i>24th</i>	Boyd Smart
<i>17th</i>	Suzanne Leichtling	<i>28th</i>	Clifford Miller
<i>18th</i>	Patricia Thornton		

**F**or several months now, Rita and I have been going to a little French restaurant in Brevard County that is generally unknown. It has been a well kept secret among the cognizant. Only last month it was "outed" by Carol Jose in *Florida Today*. Also the restaurant has just started advertising in the local paper. It is time for me to bring it to your attention because of its unusual character (for Brevard).

French restaurants are steeped in tradition. Change doesn't come easy. If you're looking for a French restaurant experience, it will come in one of several categories. So where does one eat when in Paris? At the top of the heap are the Michelin star-rated luxury eating places such as the Tour d'Argent. For most of us they are too expensive for even an occasional visit. The luxury and non-rated restaurants generally limit themselves to lunches and dinners and are similar to restaurants in the U. S. in their ambiances and menus.

Brasseries typically are large establishments located at the intersections of Boulevards. Most of them are Alsatian, with a heavy emphasis on beer and choucroute (sauerkraut). The name "Brasserie" refers to their brewery origins. They have extensive menus and are open from early morning to late at night.

Bistros are smaller establishments with full bar service. Generally they are open for lunch and dinner with less extensive menus than a restaurant or brasserie. Away from the Champs Elysée they can be found along the Boulevards,

***You may have wondered, that with my deep interest in food, why I rarely write about restaurants that I have visited. One reason is the transitory nature of many restaurants in Brevard County. The accompanying article is a case in point. When I was the restaurant reviewer for the Asahi Evening News (Tokyo), my articles appeared within a few days of my submitting them. SCAM is a monthly publication and the editor would like a minimum of two weeks prior to publication for articles to be submitted to him. A lot can happen between the submitting of an article and its publication. In this case, the Atlantic Café closed after I submitted the article, but before publication.***

*I regret that you and I will no longer have the opportunity to visit this restaurant. You perhaps for the first time and me after several visits. It was a true bit of Paris brought to Brevard County. The proprietors have returned to France. I will miss them.*

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rarely at an intersection.

Another type of restaurant is the *café*. As the name implies, *cafés* serve coffee. They also serve wines, liqueurs, and a minimal amount of food with an emphasis on pastries. They can be large or small, on the Boulevards or on the side streets. *Café de la Paix* across from *le Opera* is probably the most famous.

I hope that when you are in France that you would not eat in the fast-food restaurants--both American and native French; the ethnic restaurants--we have our own in dazzling variety; or the tourist traps located on the Champs Elysée.

If you have been in France long enough you probably have discovered the small, unadvertised, individually owned and operated restaurants which abound on the side streets away from the expensive properties on the Boulevards. In these restaurants, the proprietor and his family perform all the functions of the restaurant, cooking, serving, cleaning, and receiving the money. The restaurant usually has a *prix-fixe* menu consisting of three, four, or five courses that doesn't change from day to day. However, there typically will be a different specialty every day. The restaurant is usually open for dinner and sometimes for lunch. It is where the ordinary Frenchman will regularly eat his meals.

The "French" restaurants in Brevard County, for the most part, do not match any of the categories of the French restaurants as found in Paris. They are "continental" restaurants meaning that they serve a mixture of European and American dishes, albeit with French names.

There is, however, one truly French restaurant in Brevard County. It is of the family-owned variety, hidden out of the way in Indialantic. It is a little gem; any one who has been to Paris long enough to escape from the tourist traps and considers Paris his second home will find this restaurant like a bit of that home.

It's called Atlantic *Café*. Atlantic *Café* is actually not a *café*; it is a small family restaurant with only twelve tables, just like the ones in Paris. In this case the mom, Annie Gourdon, does all the cooking with help from her son-in-law Danny Pfister. The dad, Yvon Gourdon, and daughter Aurelie Pfister, handle the tables. It feels like a Parisian restaurant because the Gourdons were *les Franciliens*, or people who live near Paris. Before Atlantic *Café* they owned a restaurant called Le Francilien in Sarasota, Florida. They sold it last year to come to the Atlantic side of the state (hence the name of the new place). Annie was driving from St. Augustine to Jupiter to scope out real estate locations when she

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stopped overnight in Melbourne. On her way over the causeway to visit the beach she noticed a "for rent" sign. She got sand in her shoes. You know the rest.

Annie has been cooking in restaurants for years. She owned a seafood restaurant in Nantes, France (in Brittany) and still loves to cook fish. She's fond of her seafood platter with Cognac sauce, her salmon with black-butter sauce, and the tilapia in *buerre blanc*.

Like most Floridians, the Gourdots were lured here after a vacation. Once Annie decided she would like to open a restaurant stateside, she contacted a French radio call-in show and sought advice. They helped her with everything from getting city permits to finding a space to rent.

The ambiance seems strange as its name, a bright, nautical theme, not in the least French, but Annie explained that she's so happy with her seaside location, she decorated Atlantic Café to reflect it.

Typical of the small local restaurants in France, Atlantic Café has a fixed five-course dinner menu consisting of soup, appetizer, salad, main course, and dessert, or a more economical three-course menu. In addition to the fixed menus there is usually one special appetizer and main course each day. It is possible to order a *la carte*, but the best and usual procedure is to order from the menu *a prix fixe*.

Another difference to almost all restaurants in France is that they do not sell any wine. Instead, you are invited to bring your own bottle and wonder of wonders, there is no corkage charge.

Some of my favorite items on the daily dinner menu are the Onion and Vegetable Soups; Eggs Mimosa among the appetizers, stuffed hard-boiled egg, like devilled eggs but stuffed with a tuna mixture; *Coq au Vin* for the main course; and crêpes for dessert.

The crêpes alone are worth a visit and can be had at breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

*Editor's Note: This article is a reprint from Tampa Bay Sounding, newsletter of Tampa Bay Mensa, November 2003, Sylvia Zadorozny, Editor.*

**I** have come to realize, much to my chagrin, that most folks are not overly fond of super-smart people. This may not seem too earthshaking, and I am generalizing, but it is a bit baffling! Society talks a good game about the value of intelligence, but in point of fact, finds its members with an abundance of those qualities an annoyance. And in some places on this planet the very bright are considered dangerous!

Anyone who has ever seen those bumper stickers, "My child is rocket scientist of the month at Plainville Elementary" knows parents love to brag about how brainy their children are. But the only people, other than the kid's parents, who are happy to see those bumper stickers, are the kid's grandparents! Even the objects of those awards are often a little embarrassed by those stickers.

Employers like smart employees. Again, this is a relative statement. An employee smart enough to be an asset and not a liability is prized. But a super-smart employee may be viewed as a threat, if not by his or her boss, then by fellow workmates. I am sure many of our members can relate to this.

In those dating personals, women will list intelligence as a quality they would like in a mate. False flag here too, my brainy hunks. They want a man smart enough to remember to put the toilet seat down and make a good wage, but not smart enough to figure out what happy crap they are running on their men. And men generally don't list smarts as a quality they are seeking because their own brains often don't think that far up a woman's frame!

And just as some very tall people will slouch, some high IQ types "play dumb" because they learned early that it will be easier for them to "fit in"! Most of us didn't pick up on this though. I have experienced this first hand. At a Mensa Regional Gathering, an engineer and I were having a discussion when suddenly, he stood up, blurted out that the Hubble Telescope group was giving a talk in five minutes and walked off. No "goodbye," no "nice talking to you," nothing. I sat there stunned, watching him walk away in his mismatched socks! (Are all engineers colorblind?)

And for years my ex-wife would call me Mr. Spock (of *Star Trek* fame) and tell me I had no people skills. I took many courses and worked very hard to develop the few skills I now have. But it does

*(Continued on page 25)*

## SCAM Calendar of Events for April 2006

**1st - Saturday 6:00 PM**

### “DOUG-FOOLERY”

Come join us for a Games Night at the home of Doug Starke and Karen Freiberg in Rockledge. *Try this one, this is a new event!*

**Contact:** *Doug Starke, 633-1636 for directions.*

**5th - 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@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:coffeetc@scam.us.mensa.org)*

**11th - Tuesday 12:00 Noon**

### SCRABBLE AT GRETCHEN'S

Join Gretchen for a challenging game of SCRABBLE at her home in Melbourne. Be sure to call for directions. We also meet at the same place and time **on the 25th.**

**Contact:** *Gretchen Zimmerman, 242-7257.*

**15th - Saturday 10:00 AM**

### MENSA TESTING

Mensa testing is scheduled at the Central Brevard Library, 307 Forrest Ave., Cocoa. Fee is \$30. Candidates must contact the Testing Coordinator, listed below, in advance of the test.

**Contact:** *Helen Lee Moore, 632-1831, or [testing@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:testing@scam.us.mensa.org).*

**15th - Saturday 7:00 PM**

### MOVIE NIGHT

Come join us at Terry Valek's home in Rockledge for an unforgettable movie night!

**Contact:** *Terry Valek, 636-1952 for directions.*

**29th - 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@scam.us.mensa.org](mailto:snort@scam.us.mensa.org).*

(Continued from page 4)

her current post and taking a hiatus from such activities while issuing an eloquent plea for more members to step forward and volunteer. I recommend to all a re-reading of her letter. (I assume most SCAM Mensans save their past newsletters.)

To semi-paraphrase a once near omni-present Washingtonian TV personality, there are opinions I'm opinionated about and those I am not. There are also opinions I don't have about which I am opinionated and those about which I am not. Does this make sense? Does this qualify me to be DefSec? One item on which I do not have an opinion, although I raised the issue, is the annual scholarship. I remark above that the prime reason for this year's cancellation is lack of a chair. Another reason is the cost. The scholarship has been for \$500 for recent past years. I haven't researched its entire history. \$500 is a goodly part of our annual outgo, and could not go on indefinitely without some serious fund raising. This has, in the past been taken care of by profits from the RG. This is not at present a critical problem, with the treasury at about \$4000, but with the fate of future RG is uncertain, it needs to be considered, or rather, we need to consider it. (I here take note of my preoccupation with contemporary language usage, in particular such locutions as "you need to ..." in place of "I want you to..." and the evolution of almost all problems into issues. Yes, most sportscasters actually say things like "He has issues with his knee.")

A last item of interest: Our Bylaws, and our Standing Rules and Guidelines (SR&G), which were once posted on our website, were then removed as a result of uncertainty as to which version of the SR&G was current. I don't believe there was a problem with the Bylaws, which are pretty much cast in concrete since they require a membership vote to change. But the ExComm can change the SR&G on its own. They were reorganized (the SR&G, not the ExComm) a couple of years ago, but never formally adopted, at least not as far as past minutes reflect. What I think are the current versions will again be posted on our website some time this month, and the ExComm will duly endorse them. If any deficiencies exist in the SR&G, as posted, we will try to correct them at subsequent meetings. I end with my usual apologies to our long-suffering editor (all editors are long suffering) for my tardiness.

*Author's note: This is part of an irregular but recurring series of articles discussing the irregular and recurring dispersion of public resources.*

**R**emarkably, Americans from all parts of the political spectrum can agree that we have a serious problem with the way our government spends our money. Of specific concern is the process of Congressional earmarks, which has received considerable attention lately.

An earmark is the process by which a Representative or Senator inserts language into a bill specifying an amount of money (Our money!) be set aside for a specific purpose. Detractors of this process refer to earmarks as “pork.”

According to Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Tom Coburn (R-OK), the practice of earmarks has increased by a factor of three in the past 12 years <sup>1</sup>, and an army of lobbyists now specializes in the process of gaining earmarks. Among the more egregious examples:

- \$315 million for “The Bridge to Nowhere” in Alaska.
- \$500,000 to renovate Memorial Coliseum in Marion, Indiana.
- \$250,000 for the Country Music Hall of Fame.
- \$100,000 for the Tiger Woods Foundation.

Another example of the pervasive and corrupting influence of earmarks is the sad spectacle of former war-hero Randall Cunningham (R-CA) having to resign in disgrace, and facing prison for abuse of his office. Mr. Cunningham, who achieved the status of “Ace” <sup>2</sup> while serving as a Navy Fighter pilot in Vietnam, accepted bribes to direct no-bid contracts to certain defense suppliers. Certainly, when Mr. Cunningham went to Washington, he had no intention of breaking the law, but by a gradual process, seduced by unchecked power, doing favors for friends “in the best interest of the nation” crossed the line of criminal corruption.

One solution to this problem was granting the power of line-item veto to the President. President Bill Clinton had this power briefly, until the Supreme Court determined this was a violation of the separation of powers doctrine. Additionally, it is readily apparent that the President is himself (or herself) a politician tending to make decisions in the interest of political expedience.

Another solution, proposed by Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC), is

*(Continued on page 19)*

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*(Continued from page 18)*

to encourage the heads of government agencies to refuse to spend money on earmarked items. The heads of government agencies are presumably the best qualified persons to determine how to execute their missions, and to set budget priorities. Although this “virtual veto” as proposed by Senator DeMint has merit, it should be noted that the heads of agencies are themselves often political appointees, and their jobs are based on their support for a political agenda. Clearly, there will be a tendency to favor projects earmarked by one’s political allies, and conversely to undermine the earmarks of the opposition. Even in the case of career civil servants, it is easy to see how disregarding an earmark could make a powerful enemy for both the individual executive and their agency.

Additionally, the Legislature should not expect low-ranking members of the Executive Branch to solve a problem that Senators and Congressman are unable to solve for themselves.

Another possible corrective measure has been proposed by Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and Diane Feinstein (D-CA), who favor a prohibition on earmarks being incorporated in conference reports after the bill has been passed by one House of Congress. This would eliminate a prime opportunity to load a bill with pork.

Congressman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) has proposed a more simple solution to this problem: limit the number of earmarks an individual legislator could submit.

Taking the best of the Lott-Feinstein and Lewis proposals, it is suggested that each member of Congress be limited to three specific earmarked items per budget year, or a total of \$1 million per budget year, whichever is more restrictive.

Additionally, each earmark must:

- be reviewed and approved by the appropriations committee, and the committee that oversees the receiving government agency.
- be expressed in plain language, and include the name of the sponsor.
- state the name and location of the recipient, and explain the intended public benefit.

Thus \$535 million of the budget would essentially be subject to discretion- which is about five hours out of an entire year of federal government operations.

Without limits on earmarks, it is worth noting what our gov-

*(Continued on page 20)*

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(Continued from page 19)

ernment can't afford:

- We don't have enough money to assure an effective regulatory and inspection regime to assure safety of coal miners (Note: At least part of your electrical power comes from burning domestic coal).
- We don't have enough money to assist our fellow Americans in the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans.
- We don't have enough money to foster the sort of educational system to keep America competitive with other nations of the global marketplace in the coming years.
- We don't have enough money to effectively protect our soldiers in combat zones from Improvised Explosive Devices. (Although we do have enough money to give no-bid contracts to take-the-money-and-run operations like Custer Battles! <sup>3)</sup>

Obviously, this proposal does not abolish a practice subject to abuse, for to attempt to abolish a practice so entrenched would be impossible. This proposal seeks to restrict the process by establishing limits. After all, one citizen's "pork" is usually another person's "vital national interest."

**Notes:**

- 1) Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) as cited in "Here to Stay," by David Baumann, *National Journal*, February 13, 2006
- 2) The elite status of "Ace" is earned by defeating at least five enemy pilots in air-to-air combat. Then-Lieutenant Cunningham became the first Naval Aviator of the Vietnam War to accomplish this, in May 1972.
- 3) Is it possible to invoke a better symbol of military incompetence than by echoing the name of "Custer?" Sort of like the "Dick Cheney School of Firearm Safety."

*“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”*

— 1st Amendment, U. S. Constitution

**I** suppose that by now you have heard of what appears to be one of the most violent controversies to surface over the last few months. Of course, I am referring to the “Muhammad Caricatures” that have become the scandal of all time. Surprisingly enough, this issue had a rather quiet, almost obscure beginning. Last September, a Danish newspaper, the Jyllands-Posten had published 12 cartoons depicting Muhammad in a less than flattering manner and implying Islam to be the source of world terrorism. As word of this got back to the Muslim-controlled states some time afterward, it appears that quite literally, all Hell broke loose.

Consider the following news accounts, all of which were reported less than two months ago. The setting for this one is Beirut, Lebanon:

*“Thousands of Muslims rampaged Sunday in Beirut, setting fire to the Danish Embassy, burning Danish flags and lobbing stones at a Maronite Catholic church as violent protests over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad spread from neighboring Syria. ... Protestors also took to the streets by the thousands elsewhere in the Muslim world, a day after demonstrators in Syria charged security barriers outside the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus and sent the buildings up in flames. ... Anger has broken out across the Muslim world over 12 caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that were first published in Denmark’s Jylland-Posten in September and reprinted in European media and New Zealand in the past week. ... The drawings have touched a raw nerve in part because Islamic law is interpreted to forbid any depictions of the Prophet Muhammad for fear they could lead to idolatry. ... ‘Insulting the prophet was unacceptable, resentful, and **a sign of barbarism,**’ Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Harnid Reza Asefi said, adding that Tehran planned to take further action.”<sup>(1)</sup>*

Publishing an unflattering cartoon is a sign of barbarism??? Please read on, this next item, only two days later, occurs in Afghanistan:

*“International peacekeepers clashed Tuesday with Afghans protesting drawings of the Prophet Muhammad, leaving three demon-*

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*strators dead and prompting NATO to send reinforcements to a remote northern city. ... On Monday, about 2,000 protestors tried to storm the main U.S. military base at Bagram, the hub of the operations for some 20,000 American forces in the country. Police shot dead two protestors.”<sup>(2)</sup>*

Libya, ten days later:

*“Libyans protesting caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad set fire to the Italian consulate in Benghazi on Friday and clashed with police in a riot that killed at least nine people, an Italian diplomat said. ... With the nine dead in Benghazi, at least 28 people have been killed in protests over the drawings in the past several weeks...”<sup>(3)</sup>*

The next day in Nigeria:

*“Nigerian Muslims protesting caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad attacked Christians and burned churches on Saturday, killing at least 15 people in the deadliest confrontation yet in the whirlwind of Muslim anger over the drawings. ... ‘Most of the dead were Christians beaten to death on the streets,’ (resident) Ezeoke said. Witnesses said three children and a priest were among those killed.”<sup>(4)</sup>*

A report from the New York Times less than a week later:

*“I keep hearing, ‘Why are liberals silent?’ ‘ said Said al-Ashmawy, an Egyptian judge and author of political books on Islam. ‘How can we write? Who is going to protect me? Who is going to publish me in the first place? With the Islamization of society, the list of taboos has been increasing daily. You should not write about religion. You should not write about politics or women. Then what is left?’ ... In the end, political analysts around the region say that governments have resorted to the very practices that helped the rise of the Islamic political forces in the first place. They have placated the more extreme voices while arresting and silencing more moderate ones.”<sup>(5)</sup>*

This would be a good time to recap a bit. In Denmark, a sovereign nation that apparently grants its citizens freedom of the press, 12 objectionable cartoons were published. Months afterward, in various Islamic nations, violent protests occurred because the protestors believe Islamic law has been violated, and that the cartoons were tantamount to barbarism. Evidently, some Muslims believe that all must follow Islamic law regardless of whether he or she is a Muslim, and even if the country is not an Islamic state. It is interesting to note that there were no reports of this sort of violence erupting in Denmark, where the barbaric violation of Islamic law took place. At this point, you may ask, “What has this to do with us?” After all, this is America, based on “Judeo-Christian principles”. *We’re* not the extremists, *they* are...but is this really so? Let’s consider this item from CNN, shortly after the September

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11, 2001 terrorist attack in our country:

*“I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way,, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say ‘you helped this (9/11) happen’ ... (Jerry) Falwell, pastor of the 22,000-member Thomas Road Baptist Church, viewed the attack as God’s judgment on America for ‘throwing God out of the public square, out of the schools. The abortionists have got to bear some of the burden for this because God will not be mocked.’”<sup>(6)</sup>*

The next item appeared during the 2004 Presidential campaign:

*“WASHINGTON – The Rev. Jerry Falwell said yesterday that evangelical Christians, after nearly 25 years of increasing political activism, now control the Republican Party and the fate of President Bush in the November election. ... Falwell said evangelical Christians are now ‘by far the largest constituency’ within the Republican Party, their route to dominance beginning in 1979 with his founding of the Moral Majority, a precursor to the Christian Coalition.”<sup>(7)</sup>*

Do you believe that Islam has the monopoly on terrorist thugs? Read on:

*“You know, I don’t know about this doctrine of assassination, but if he thinks we are trying to assassinate him, I think we really ought to go ahead and do it,’ (televangelist Pat) Robertson said. ‘It’s a whole lot cheaper than starting a war...and I don’t think any oil shipments will stop.’ ... Robertson, 75, founder of the Christian Coalition of America and a former presidential candidate, accused the United States of failing to act when Chavez was briefly overthrown in 2002”<sup>(8)</sup>*

What can we learn from all this? Before answering this question, I would like to share with you some words from former President Jimmy Carter, in my estimation the only Christian President in my lifetime. In his recent book, he details several characteristics of religious fundamentalism; I quote two of those characteristics below:

- *“Fundamentalists draw clear distinctions between themselves, as true believers, and others, convinced that they are right and that anyone who contradicts them is ignorant and possibly evil.*
- *Fundamentalists are militant in fighting against any challenge to their beliefs. They are often angry and sometimes resort to verbal or even physical abuse against those who interfere with the implementation of their agenda.”<sup>(9)</sup>*

Clearly, it is the fundamentalists, from the entire spectrum of

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religions known to mankind, that are given to using deadly force to coerce others to live as they prescribe. It is the recognition of this danger that gave birth to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which, among other things, separated religion from civil government. Today, however, our political leaders (as well as their supporters) vehemently deny such a separation exists. Should our leaders remain in power much longer, especially with the current composition of the Supreme Court, we will experience soon what until now has been on the other side of the world. In past columns, I have attempted to illustrate the point that those who would seize power under the guise of religion have objectives that actually conflict with the tenets of the faith they supposedly follow. I suspect this is just as true in the Islamic world as it is in Christendom. Should we allow this course to continue...God help us!

**Sources:**

1. Zeina Caram, “*Violence Spreads Over Muhammad Caricatures*”, Associated Press, February 5, 2006.
2. Daniel Cooney, “*Cartoon Protests Deadly in Afghanistan*”, Associated Press, February 7, 2006.
3. Khaleed el-Deeb, “*Nine Killed in Libyan Cartoon Protest*”, Associated Press, February 17, 2006.
4. Njadvara Musa, “*At Least 15 Die in Nigeria Cartoon Protest*”, Associated Press, February 18, 2006.
5. Michael Slackman and Hassan M. Fattah, “*Furor Over Cartoons Pit Muslim Against Muslim*”, *New York Times*, February 22, 2006.
6. Cable News Network, *Falwell Apologizes to Gays, Feminists, Lesbians*, CNN.com, September 14, 2001.
7. Scott Shepard, *Falwell Says Evangelicals Control GOP, Bush’s Fate*, San Diego Union-Tribune, September 25, 2004.
8. “*Pat Robertson Calls For Assassination of Hugo Chavez*”, USA Today, August 22, 2005.
9. Jimmy Carter, *Our Endangered Values: America’s Moral Crisis*, Simon and Shuster, 2005, p.34.

**M**any years ago, when I first made my feeble attempt to master typing, one familiar phrase was, “*Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party.*” Now, nearly four decades later, my typing skills can best be described as “advanced hunt-and-peck”; consequently, I have edited the time-honored test phrase: “*Now is the time for all good Mensans to come to the aid of their Local Group.*” All of which brings us to the point of this little message: The SCAM ExComm elections are just around the corner.

We are looking for candidates to run for office. If you’ve ever wished that SCAM would have some activity more to your liking, this is an excellent way to make this happen. If you wish, you may nominate another member for office (of course, the member must have agreed to run). In either case, contact me if you’re willing to run for office or nominate another member. The NomElCom must hear from you by April 10th, so we can prepare the ballot in time for the May issue. This year’s NomElCom members are:

MIKE MOAKLEY, (*Chair*)  
SAM KIRSCHTEN  
SUZANNE LEICHTLING

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**BIG BRAIN...DISDAIN?*****Continued.***

*(Continued from page 13)*

seem to be an area of weakness with the highly intelligent. I don't know if the lack of people skills is the effect of our treatment by the general populace or a manifestation of the arrogance of dealing with smooth-brained humans! And I don't really care one way or the other. That debate is for another time and forum. But I digress!

I am proud of this gift I have. I learned early in life that I would never be a jock or big scary guy. I had heard that we humans only used a very small portion of our brainpower. I figured if I worked harder I could build this organ up and that would be my edge in life. I was eight years old! It worked . . . kind of! But at a price. I don't fit in, and I know some people are intimidated, others are envious, and a few even a tad hostile! We all have our crosses to bear! Well, I have a project to finish up . . . . Oh! Nice chatting with you, goodbye!

**N**ext month, May 26-29, Memorial Day weekend, means one of the best Regional Gatherings around! Tampa Bay Mensa is putting on “Sense and Mensability” that weekend, and I for one am ready for an RG. I won't go into all the details here. You can find them all on the Region 10 website ([region10.us.mensa.org](http://region10.us.mensa.org)), click on “upcoming region 10 events”.

Recently a member of my local group wrote to the LocSec to complain that there weren't any activities in his area. I got involved and made some suggestions about how to host an event. I suggested that he go to the national member directory and find his Mensa “neighbors” by typing in nearby zip codes and then contact them. He did that. I suggested that he schedule a meal get-together at a nearby restaurant. He did that. To shorten a long story, 7 people had a great time at lunch and plan to get together again next month. The only reason I mention this is to remind all of us how easy it is to host an event on the calendar. It works!

I haven't seen many of you popping up on the Mensa Discussion Forums. It is a great place to meet and discuss things, without even having to get out of the bathrobe! <g> See you there! And if you don't see a topic of interest to you, just like hosting an event, start one!

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### ExComm Meeting Minutes

*Continued*

*(Continued from page 27)*

George pointed out that our editor, Mike , had nearly completed a membership directory, and felt that we should consider the means of distribution. Options noted were distribution to all as a newsletter insert or separate mailing, or distribution on request via email or snail mail.

The next meeting of the ExComm is scheduled for **Saturday, April 1**, at 4:00 pm at **George Patterson's** house, 301 Sand Pine Road, Indialantic. **(321-777-3721)**

Joe moved to adjourn at 5:10 pm, passed by unanimous vote.

**T**he ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Saturday, March 4, 2006. Called to order at 5:00 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Members present: George Patterson, Joe Smith and Bud Long. Cliff Miller and Thomas Wheat were unable to attend.

Welcome Guests: None.

Minutes of the January 7 meeting, as published in the February 2006 SCAM, were approved unanimously. (Non-minutes of the non-meeting in February, as published in the March SCAM were duly noted.)

**Officer Reports:**

Editor: Mike reported by email that he had found a new assembly/circulation manager. Elaine Joyce will be taking over from Clara as of the May issue.

Treasurer: Bud handed out the February Treasurers Report which showed total funds of \$4095.52.

**Committee Reports:**

There were no committee reports.

Old Business: George moved that we confirm Suzanne Leichtling and Sam Kirschten as members of the NomElCom, joining Mike Moakley. Approved unanimously.

New Business: George moved that the Jim Johnson / Doug Pearson Scholarship generally awarded each summer not be awarded in 2006. In discussion it was pointed out that this move was primarily due to the failure to find a scholarship chairperson, and a lack of associated fund raising. Joe moved that we table the motion. Passed unanimously. It was hoped that we would hear from any interested parties prior to the April meeting

George moved that the ExComm issue a formal vote of thanks to Clara Woodall-Moran for all the contributions she has made to Space Coast Area Mensa over the last decade. Seconded by Joe, passed unanimously.

Open Discussion: Bud pointed out that we were still (the point having been raised before) in need of a publicity chairperson and that Helen Lee Moore has expressed concern to him over this matter. George pointed out that we also were in need of a Gifted Children coordinator, another post which has gone unfilled for a number of years. We currently have 11 members age 17 or under, two being 6 or under.

*(Continued on page 26)*