

The

SCAM

page oast rea ensa

Happy Birthday, America!



In this Issue:

What is the real meaning of the Declaration of Independence? This question is discussed in a two-part series. Part One is featured this month.

Volume 24, No. 7

July, 2006

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

We have a new ExComm in place. Oddly enough, the new ExComm looks almost identical to the outgoing ExComm. The one exception, Terry Valek replaces Cliff Miller as RecSec. Likewise, just about all of the appointed positions (mine included) remain unchanged...Geez, we must be doing one helluva job! Thank you one and all for your continued confidence in us.

In this issue, you will notice *two* guest columns, both from the Flamenco, the newsletter for Miami Mensa. They have excellent writers...but, then again, so do we! Let's hear from you. By now, you must know the drill—in order to be published, you must send something in. Yes, I'm beginning to sound like a broken record (or, scratched CD perhaps...).

You might have noticed that *The SCAM* carries little, if any, news from our National Office (AML), especially if you came from another local group. This is not accidental. The *Mensa Bulletin*, provided to all current members, is the source for national info. If any SCAM member submits a letter to the editor to me on an AML topic, *The SCAM* will publish it. Otherwise, your dues money is better spent here on local events and for the quality reading we try to provide you each month.

Since we do have a “new” ExComm in place, I'll run the risk of being repetitious once again: We could really use volunteers. Will we have an RG? Will there be a SCAM Scholarship? Will there be a greater variety of SCAM events? Will *The SCAM* have better and more interesting columns? The answer...? Look in the mirror.

***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.

After years of trying to keep an open mind and trying to avoid being labeled as a bigot, I cannot turn a blind eye to what has become very obvious to me. I must precede this perspective by saying that I have a great love for my fellow man no matter what background he may come from.

However, after many hours of study, observation, research and soul searching, I have come to the conclusion that Islam (or what is called the Muslim religion) is not a religion. In reality, Islam is a political ideology under the guise of a religion. Islam is the natural enemy of democracy and freedom like Nazism, communism and fascism. I base this position on research, study and what I have observed over several years (starting long before the 9/11 attack).

On several occasions I observed interviews over the media with people of the Muslim faith, many who claim to be a peace loving people. Many Muslim people adhere to two principles of their doctrine that are critical to their position with respect to democracy or any other peaceful philosophies. First, people who do not abide by the Muslim principles and philosophies are infidels. The second is that Muslims receive heavenly rewards if they destroy or kill infidels and are encouraged to do so. This doctrine automatically makes them the natural enemy of any philosophy or ideology (political or religious) that is not Muslim.

This doctrine is the seed of extremist behavior and the cause for formation of radical groups. If all the radical and extremist groups were eliminated today, this doctrine would inspire the formation of many more extremist and radical groups in a very short time. Islam uses the label of religion to avoid being recognized as the subversive political ideology that it is, to invoke privileges of religion and to justify their perverse practices and abuse of women.

Islam is a political ideology of violence. The origin of Islam is that of violence. After Mohammed was forced out of Mecca because his ideas were rejected, he used his resources as a merchant to form an army and went back and conquered Mecca and forced the people to adopt his ideology they rejected before. He continued to conquer others and forced his ideology on all which he conquered bringing us to where we are today. The violence continues today. Along with killing infidels comes "honor killings" and the abusive way they treat their women today (the list of abuses to women within Islam is extensive).

I don't believe all Muslims are bad, subversive or evil. As a mat-

(Continued on page 6)

The price of gold has advanced more than 100% in less than a year. Is this a time to buy or sell?

As you know gold comes in many forms. Gold bars, gold coins, gold mining stocks, Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and gold mutual funds. Lots of gold bars are at the U.S. Mint. These come in various sizes and the biggest drawback is resale because they have to be re-assayed for purity content.

Gold coins are minted by many governments, including our own. They all have approximately one ounce of gold, but may be of different carat purity. There are American Eagles, South African Krugers, Austrian Philharmonics, Chinese Pandas, Canadian Maple Leafs, Australian Kangaroos and on and on. Almost all stamped in one ounce coins and many are available in 1/10 ounce size. These can be bought and sold at any legitimate coin shop with a bid and offer differential of less than 5%.

Price of gold fluctuates daily as it is traded on a supply and demand basis. There is not a single major currency in the world in which gold has not seen a price rise. That is why gold is going up and that is why gold has not seen its highest price yet.

Let's look at it a different way. An ounce of gold is still an ounce of gold, BUT the major world governments are printing more and more paper money every day with no backing to the currency.

What you are really seeing is more paper money being created for the same amount of gold. Yes, more is being dug out of the ground, but Japan, Germany, England, France, Germany, etc. etc., are running the printing presses faster than the guys are digging with the shovels. As long as that continues the price of gold will rise – and there doesn't seem to be any end in sight.

The excess printing of paper money until it has become completely worthless has been done many times in history before including by our own government. During the Civil War both the North and South printed themselves into oblivion, but gold was always accepted because it had value.

Gold has always been hoarded more in Europe and Asia because they have seen the ravages of the government printing press. We all remember the stories of inflation in the Weimar Republic of Germany after World War I where it took a wheelbarrow of paper money to buy a loaf of bread. Unless we can put a muzzle on politicians it can happen again. The only protection the citizen has is real

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

value and gold represents one item of true wealth.

Is gold still a buy? As long as the federal government continues printing worthless paper money gold will be a good investment.

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 and discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know. Copyright 2006 All rights reserved.

Guest Column

ISLAM AND FREEDOM

Continued.

(Continued from page 4)

ter of fact, I believe most are good-hearted people with the best intentions. However, most spent their entire life in an Islamic environment and have been taught principles that are contrary to the ideals that our democracy and freedom are based on. It is very difficult for one to recognize that the ideology he is raised with is flawed or even evil. Combine our natural desire to believe our parents with the threat of death (honor killing) or disgrace from the family if one departs from the family tradition, and you have few with the courage to abandon what is obvious to outsiders to be very evil.

It is my desire that all free nations recognize Islam for what it really is and adjust their policies and practice accordingly. Until we recognize who our real enemy is, the war on terrorism is like shoveling seaweed against the tide. I also hope that the people who were unfortunate enough to be born into or otherwise subjected to a Muslim or Islam environment have the intellect, means, moral fiber and courage to remove themselves and their families from that environment and seek a more peaceful, free, tolerant and loving philosophy or religion.

©2006 John F Snyder

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The preceding column first appeared in Flamenco, newsletter of Miami Mensa, Mark Puddephat, Editor. Reprinted by permission of the author.*

Warning: *If you are not an atheist or evolutionist, you may find parts of this article objectionable.*

I am a card carrying Atheist. I don't believe in God or religion. To be perfectly honest, if a hot iron were held to my head, I would become Buddhist. However, since they are a peaceful group, they wouldn't hold the hot iron to my head. There was that immolation thing during the Vietnam War, but I think they were trying to stop it, not escalate it.

What has religion done through the ages? Hmmmm, there are the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Christians being fed to the lions, Alexander the Great (not the movie, the real guy), the Irish problem, the WWII genocide of Jews, Gypsies, Catholics, and whomever else Hitler decided to take a dislike to that day, Bosnia, Darfur, Iraq, the 2004 election, and on and on. Come to think of it, most of the wars, and the needless deaths they cause, are because of religion.

Jesus and Mohammed were definitely great men. As prophets, they were persecuted for the nasty habit of spreading peace and goodwill. They were not gods. You've been reading the Bible and the Koran too much. People like you and me wrote those books. They were trying to remember what happened that day and what kind of positive spin they could put on it. I don't know about you, but my short-term memory short circuits now and then. I have a feeling theirs did too.

Catholics are in a category by themselves. I was raised Catholic and bought into all the crap until about the seventh grade when I thought, "Virgin birth, purgatory for all eternity for un-baptized babies, purgatory for each sin the length of which was determined by whom? What about new sins? Who decides the length in purgatory for those?" I dropped the Catholic faith right there and then. The Catholic Church is stuck in the eighteenth century; so about three hundred years from now they will have become mainstream – for the 21st century. No women priests (skip if you have read *The DaVinci Code*), celibacy, diddling altar boys for generations, and covering it up with hush money and clandestine relocations. The church had a huge meeting on this topic not too long ago and still refused to pass a "zero tolerance" rule. As Robin Williams says, "it's not only a sin, it's also a felony." Evidently the church can't get that right.

I used to admire Mother Teresa. I admit it was hard. She was Catholic, but she was doing all those wonderful things in India. Then

(Continued on page 18)

In the flight from Washington/Dulles to Milan on Alitalia, dinner was unremarkable. Although the meal was obviously prepared in Italy, it did not have the expected Italian taste. On the flight from Milan to Delhi, also on Alitalia, again the food was unremarkable, but the menu did give us a sample of what we were to get in India. The meal choice was vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Later the significance of this choice was made apparent.

No discussion of Indian food can be made without some mention of the religions of India. The most common religion of the country is Hindu, but there are large minorities of Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, and others. Muslims do not eat pork in any form. Hindus, to whom the cow is a sacred animal, do not eat beef. Thus there are several main cuisines in India. My experience has been with the Hindu segment, so I will confine my remarks to that.

Nowhere in India or Nepal did I see beef or veal on the menu; however, I did have buffalo once.

There are also regional differences in the cooking. India is a vast country, about as large as Western Europe with climates that range from the Alpine to the tropical. Transportation in India is crude by Western standards, thus much of the food used is locally produced and is not uniform throughout the country.

In Hindu culture the more religious, high-caste Hindu eats no meat; they are strictly vegetarian. Less orthodox Hindus will eat milk, butter, eggs, cheese, and other dairy products. Others will eat fish, chicken, or lamb. Nowhere in India or Nepal did I see beef or veal on the menu; however, I did have buffalo once.

Hindu food strictures govern most restaurant menus. Most restaurants in Delhi and the other cities that we visited are designated as being both vegetarian and non-vegetarian and serve vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, which are so nominated in their menus. Some restaurants are totally non-vegetarian. There appears to be no vegetables that are forbidden.

On the Alitalia flight from Milan to Delhi, where we were offered a choice of vegetarian or non-vegetarian meals, the non-vegetarian meal that I chose turned out to be fish as the main course and a salad with ham which would be appropriate for most Hindus, but not for any Muslim. Rita chose vegetarian which had beans, rice, and vegetables for the main course but the salad came with smoked salmon. By designating the meal as vegetarian or non-vegetarian the airline appeared to be catering to the Hindu passen-

gers. The ham in my salad would not be appropriate for a Muslim. The fish in Rita's salad would rule out this dish for an orthodox Hindu but not for most Hindus. I would think that the airline would make a more concerted effort to fit the food mores of its passengers.

Two weeks in India does not make me an authority on Indian food and cooking. We spent the time in and around Delhi in the northern part of India and my impressions of Indian food reflect that. In India the main courses, either vegetarian or non-vegetarian, generally are either in a curry or tandore cooked. Curries, which represent Indian cooking to most Americans, are pieces of meat, fish, or vegetables cooked in a sauce that contains many spices, a stew as it were. Unlike the American and European versions of curry, Indian curries vary tremendously. Although well-known and named curry dishes have their own distinctive flavors, a specific curry will vary from location to location and from family to family. In families, recipes are handed down from mother to daughter. In restaurants each cook will determine exactly how the curry is to be made.

Unlike the American and European versions of curry, Indian curries vary tremendously.

The similarity to chilies in the U. S. is apparent.

Although most curries are "hot" to the American taste, they can be relatively mild. I had a chicken curry that to even my taste was palatable and delicious. At the other end of the Scoville rating are curries that even the Indians say are hot. To make a proper curry, the cook assembles and grinds together a mixture of spices, as many as twenty. This mixture of spices is called Garam Masala. In America, the combined mixture of spices is called Curry Powder. Rarely does the Indian cook use a prepared spice mixture. Although the basic spices generally used are coriander, turmeric, cumin, fenugreek, black pepper, and cayenne, in addition, bay, onion garlic, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and other spices and flavorings may be added. The number and ratio of the spices may vary with the season, the main ingredient of the curry dish, the region and culture in which it is being prepared, and the whims and tastes of the cook. Prepared spice mixtures are available in India and in the U. S. The Indian mixtures tend to be hotter than the American products. A typical commercial Curry Powder sold in the U. S. (Spice Islands) contains cumin, coriander, fenugreek, ginger, turmeric, dill seed, black pepper, red pepper, mace, cardamom, and cloves. Other manufacturer's products will differ in ingredients and ratios.

The meat or vegetables are cooked in this spice mixture along

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

with a liquid for about an hour. The liquid may be tomato sauce but most commonly it is yogurt or coconut milk. The result is a meat or vegetable that is very tender and permeated with the spices. The resulting sauce is eaten with rice or one of the numerous breads known as naan. I should note here that in traditional Indian dining, no table utensils are used. The food is eaten with the hands, the meat chunks are picked out of the sauce, the bread is used to sop up the sauce, and the rice is formed into little balls and dipped into the sauce. For foreigners, the rice is heaped on a plate, the curry is laddled over it, and the mixture is eaten with a fork.

The other major category of cooking is in a tandoori. A tandoori is a large clay oven. It is shaped somewhat like a Greek amphora with the top cut off. Live charcoal is put into the bottom of the tandoori. Enough charcoal is put in to last the lunch or dinner period in a

The other major category of cooking is in a tandoori.

restaurant. Tandoori cooking is more of a restaurant item than a home method of cooking. To cook in a tandoori, the meat is impaled on long steel skewers. The meat is then pasted over with a sticky mixture of spices. The mixture of spices is like that of the curries, mild, hot, or something in between. Also the mixture of spices will differ in different parts of the country as well as the type of meat being cooked. The skewer is then placed in the tandoori to cook. The tandoori is also used to make the traditional Indian bread, naan. A small wheat flour ball of dough is flattened until it is the size of a pita. The naan can be plain or it can be filled with butter, cheese, onions, or other vegetables. The prepared naan is then placed in the tandoori in the overhanging section where it adheres to the clay. When done it is pulled out with a skewer with a hook at the end. One of the charms of tandoori cooking is its unevenness. The naan, for example, has burned portions, raw portions, and well cooked portions. The same is true of the meats cooked in the tandoori.

The rice that is served with curries and tandoori is long grain, simply steamed with or without various admixtures. Potatoes and pastas are rarely seen. There are many other dishes in Indian cuisine, but curries and tandooris dominate most restaurant menus. I did have a chicken burger in a small café, and in Nepal, where the food is similar to Indian food, I had fried boar. Chinese restaurants are very popular. The main roof-top restaurant in our hotel in Kathmandu was Chinese. This year, in tribute to Rita's and my recent visit to India, I will make venison curry for JT's annual venison party.

SCAM Calendar of Events for July 2006

4th - 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 18th.

Contact: *Gretchen Zimmerman, 242-7257.*

4th - Tuesday 6:00 PM

BEACH FIREWORKS & POOL PARTY

Suzanne & Marc Leichtling's at 8752 Palm Way, in Cape Canaveral. Evening pool swimming and games party at Ocean Woods Clubhouse. Kids welcome. Walk to beach for fireworks; \$5 kitty for food.

RSVP: *Suzanne or Marc, 868-5223 or 258-5437 before July 3rd.*

16th - 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.*

22nd - Saturday 7:00 PM

GAMES NIGHT

Games Night hosted by Terry Valek at her home in Rockledge. \$3 kitty.

Contact: *Terry, 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.*

SCAM Calendar of Upcoming Events

Be sure and mark your calendar for these upcoming events in the months to come. Be advised, they are tentative until published in the regular calendar (print and online). If you would like to host an additional event, please let Doug Starke know; he can be reached at 633-1636. Unless otherwise noted, normal recurring events are scheduled, although they may not be listed below.

At this time, there are no upcoming events scheduled. Be sure to check the online calendar and the August issue of *The SCAM*.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Welcome to SCAM

Zachary Whitten

Welcome to SCAM and Mensa

Colin Foo

Chari Fry

Cheryl McDonnell-Canan

Jeremy Moore

Alexandra Windle

Welcome Back to SCAM

Paul Barry

Rudine Bryant

Cheryl Russell

Reid Windle

JULY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

| | | | |
|------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| 1st | John Redmond | 16th | Katherine Cochrane |
| 5th | Robert Tuck | 20th | Jeffrey Barbour |
| 6th | William Franklin | 23rd | Scott McBride |
| 8th | Helen Lee Moore | 28th | William Anderson |
| 10th | Deanna Hoak | 28th | Thomas Wheat |
| 13th | Dale Irwin | 31st | Greer Maeder |

Foundation for Brain (Life) Research

Selected library areas we'd like to display at the AG

From our Library of Human Intelligence and Neuroscience:

- (1) Intelligence (IQ) and Giftedness (2,000+ articles) see screenshot (next page);
- (2) Language (2,900 articles in 250 subdivisions, including 500 on dyslexia);
- (3) Memory (~2,000 articles in 200 subdivisions);
- (4) Sex/sexuality [mate selection; cognitive & brain diffs; sexual orientation ...];
- (5) Music; (6) Left-handedness; (7) Longevity; (8) Normal aging (brain & intellect).

From our Library of Mental Disorders and Personality Traits:

- (1) Schizophrenia (1,325 subdivisions, housing 12,700 articles);
- (2) Bipolar (manic depressive) disorder (440 subdivisions; 3,400 articles);
- (3) Autism (180 subdivisions, with focus on Asperger & HFA); (4) OCD; ...

From our Library of Evolution and Inheritance:

- (1) Human, hominoid/primate & brain evolution (535 subdivisions);
- (2) Evolutionary concepts (including creationism -v- intelligent design)

From our Library of Genomics and Genetics:

- (1) Genomic landscapes & their regulation; (2) genome evolution by landscape feature;

From our biomedical progress and ethics holdings; (1) stem cells and cloning; (2) cannabis (ab)use; (3) end-of-life decisions; (4) polygraph potentials;

As these articles are conceptually organized and deeply subject indexed, as well as artfully labeled and very up to date, perusing storehouses of knowledge such as these will routinely generate faster, more productive results than keywording, (and, within our Apple computer software program, provide detailed pathfinding).

How you can help at the AG: (1) provide opportunities for attendees who sign up to view one of these areas, acting as a guide to its subject-index organization, doing a "show and tell" ..., (2) bring a computer (laptop or, if you're driving, PC) to house a CD or DVD for viewing a library section for a specified time period and, if needed, provide a place for them to do so (we have a suite, but other priorities may restrict its availability); and/or (3) serve a general safeguarding function.

Dr. Miles Storfer. brainfoundation@adelphia.net

Part One: The Historic Significance

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”

*–Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776.*

As you read these words, we are fast approaching the most significant of American holidays, our country’s 230th birthday. On this occasion, I believe it appropriate to reflect upon the document that gave birth to our country. Yet, does the Declaration of Independence have more significance than merely marking an important occasion? This month, we will examine this great document – perhaps more closely than most of our fellow citizens are used to. For those readers who wish to do some independent fact checking, I am providing the following link to the entire text of the Declaration: <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm>.

Consider the following passage, which follows the quote at the top of the page:

“That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. ... But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.”

From the above, it is evident that the Declaration asserts the right to abolish and replace any government that fails to properly serve its people. The Declaration is quite plain, however, that such a drastic course is not to be taken lightly:

“Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.”

Now, let us examine some of the reasons why our forefathers withdrew their consent to British rule:

“He (King George III of Great Britain) has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.”

Taking the Declaration of Independence as a whole, I believe the following statements can be made about its significance:

- It declares the institution of any government is *only* by consent of the people to be governed.
- It declares that, for good reason, the people reserve the right to withdraw that consent, and institute a new government to better suit their needs.
- It embodies the principle of equality and declares to the world that we are all equals. Accordingly, we have certain rights that no one else can deny us. Governments do not grant equality or such rights; rather they are required to *recognize* them (*See quote at beginning of this column*).

The historical significance of the Declaration of Independence, then, is that government is **ONLY** by the consent of the people. It is evi-

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 7)

she restored my dislike of Catholicism. She visited a poor village in South America where the people desperately needed food, medical care, and birth control. She urged the women to continue to reproduce since that was God's will. There went my opinion of Mother Teresa down the tubes. I should have realized that with my principal in grade school being a Mother Teresa and smacking my knuckles with a ruler, this should have been a clue that a Catholic is a Catholic.

In 2004 George W Bush was reelected President for another four years. Was he reelected on fighting the war on terrorism, on saving the environment, on providing education reform, on providing universal health care for everyone? No, he was reelected because God talks to him and all the Fundamentalist Christian right voted based on a "faith based initiative." What is this initiative? No gay marriages and no abortions. God wants us in Iraq to save those heathen Mus-

(Continued on page 19)

FROM THE VILLAGE IDIOT

Continued

(Continued from page 17)

dent from above that the British Crown, because of its actions, no longer merited the consent of its subjects to continue governing here in America. Accordingly, our forefathers officially withdrew that consent and formed the present day United States.

It is my belief that the importance of history in general lies in its significance to present day life. Certainly this is true of the Declaration of Independence as well. Aside from a midsummer holiday and its associated fireworks, it is evident that the Declaration is not merely a treasured relic. Part of its present significance lies in the opening statement of yet another relic:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

This statement is, of course, the Preamble to the United States Constitution. Next month, I will more fully discuss the present day significance of the Declaration of Independence – the fireworks should then truly begin.

lims and bring them to Christianity and democracy, along with their oil, whether they like it or not. I'm sure I have missed a few reasons, such as making all the corporation donators sinfully rich. There are so many things those Fundamentalist Right-Wingers want, but don't worry, George is doing his best to give them what they desire and destroy the country in the process.

Evolution or intelligent design, which way do you lean? I like the way creationism left a bad taste in people's mouths, so the Fundamentalists changed its name to Intelligent Design. I believe the universe and the earth have been around for more than a few thousand years. I believe everything in space and on the earth can be explained by physics and evolution. The universe was created by the Big Bang. We have pictures of it thanks to the Hubble telescope. (By the way, George, thanks for shutting it down on us.) From the Big Bang came the galaxies, solar systems, dark matter, black holes, planets, moons, etc. All explained by physics – Newton, Einstein, Hawking, et al.

The Earth is a by-product of the Bang. It slowly cooled, ooze formed, life formed in the ooze and evolution began. Of course this could be, and probably is, happening elsewhere in the universe, we just haven't found it yet. We have come close by finding planets our size and we still are rubbing our heads about Mars and the other planets in our solar system.

The life in the ooze took many forms and developed until it was capable of crawling out of the water that had been host to the ooze. Surely you saw the news story about the fish crawling onto land? Again, evolution was at work. Some life remained in the water and evolved. They became plankton, fish, and other sea creatures. The life that left the water evolved into legged animals, birds, and eventually humans. All done by evolution, not in 6,000 years as the intelligent design people would have us believe. How do they explain the pictures from space that took millions of years to get here? How do they explain carbon dating that tells us the ages of long ago life? They can't, except to point at that man-made book, the Bible, and say everything was created in seven days.

I hope I have explained my feelings clearly enough. I just don't see anything to make me believe there is a benevolent being out there. Too many horrible things happen to people. I don't believe in Satan either. I do believe in good and evil and it is up to everyone to decide which path they want to follow.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The preceding column first appeared in Flamenco, newsletter of Miami Mensa, Mark Puddephat, Editor. Reprinted by permission of the author.

I started off my April column with the statement “If you are in a hurry, don’t bother to read this, it’s mostly just an expansion of items in the minutes.” I was dissimulating, of course. This may have been a mistake, as I have not gotten so much as a peep of feedback on anything I discussed. I thought I’d at least hear somebody’s thoughts on the “learned blacksmith.” Again, I dissimulate. I didn’t really expect any feedback. Not on the blacksmith. Not on the SCAM scholarship. Not on the SR&G. Not on my grammar. Nothing. Now since we (Mike and I) are trying to get more people to contribute their thoughts to the SCAM I thought I would issue this challenge. Go back and read my April column, find something to disagree with, or to agree with and expand upon, and either write a brief or extended commentary on it and send it to Mike or whip off a quick e-mail to me. Just to let me know you’re paying attention.

I get the feeling that our local Mensans, who have, in the past, proved opinionated, literate, and all that sort of thing, are falling behind all the bloggers, letter to the editor writers, ranters, ravers, and other general offerers of opinion that are proliferating at such a great rate as internet use grows and local weekly newspapers encourage letter writers. Or perhaps I’m just annoyed at two nitwit “religion vs. science” letters in my local Hometown News. In any event, to set an example, and to set a goal for myself, I will, in the next issue, offer my opinion on the views expressed in an article by Ken Thornton-Smith way back in August 2004 that is still bothering me. One of the points I hope to make is that there are interesting and controversial topics that can be written on besides the bloody left-right, pro war-anti war polemics so prevalent today.

(Continued from page 22)

Stay safe! See you next month at the WG.

Maggie Truelove, RVC 10
3333 Honeysuckle Lane
Orlando, FL 32812
407-855-9078
rvc10@cfl.rr.com
truluvs@cfl.rr.com

ExComm Meeting Minutes**Continued**

(Continued from page 23)

gested that event attendance might be improved if we adopted the use of email reminders as is currently done for Monday night C.A.B. A.G..E. Terry volunteered to compile an e-mail mailing list for various social events. Participation (i.e., being on the list) is, of course, voluntary. There was some discussion of the problem that wider use of e-mail is, to some degree, exclusionary of those not in the habit of using e-mail. This remains an open question. It is the feeling of the ExComm that the general style of handling social events, notification in the SCAM and online, publicity, RSVPing, etc., is in need of general review, and improvement. It was also noted that two objectives of last seasons ExComm, namely SR&G review and revision, and a thorough membership survey were not yet accomplished and are on the agenda for this ExComm term. And last but not least, a decision on the 2008 RG would be needed by late summer of 2007.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 pm. Next meeting will be at **George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd.,** Indialantic on **Wednesday, July 5, 2006 at 5:30 pm.**

Editor's Note: If you plan to attend the ExComm Meeting, call first to ensure the meeting has not been cancelled.

There has been much discussion lately on the Mensa Forums about what members get for their dues. This past weekend I saw a perfect example of one of the major benefits of being a member of Mensa - the Mensa family.

You see, a long-time Mensan in Broward County, Joe Vitale, passed away a few days ago, and the memorial was on Saturday evening. So many people showed up that the funeral home had to move the event into the larger chapel, and there were still people standing in the back. I know that there were people attending who were his extended family and friends from beyond Mensa, but more than half were Mensans. But what was really heartwarming was the realization that the Mensans weren't just from Broward County. There were also Mensans there from Dade County, Palm Beach County, Polk County, Orange County, and Volusia County that I could readily identify. All of us attending were part of Joe's Mensa family. Joe will be sorely missed in the Broward Mensa group. He was always the entertaining auctioneer at their scholarship auctions. He hosted the joke-offs and Pun-demoniums. And he and his wife, Carol, were renowned for having hosted more than 300 parties (almost one per month for many years) for Broward Mensa.

We are into the home stretch of getting things in place for the World Gathering. At the time of this writing, early in June, there are already more than 1700 people registered for the WG with another month to go. If you haven't registered yet, it isn't too late for you to register, either for the gathering or for the hotel - and you can do both through the website, at (*WG06.us.mensa.org*). You can also check out the list of speakers and program, and you can plan your schedule for attending those programs, as they are listed by their scheduled time. And don't forget to sign up to be a Speaker Shepherd for some of your favorite speakers! You might as well, as you are attending their programs, anyway! Contact Kay Klasen, Volunteer Coordinator, at (*volunteers@wg06.us.mensa.org*) to sign up.

I mentioned the Mensa Discussion Forums earlier. I know that a lot of you haven't been there yet. But it might be worth the time to go check it out! It is in the Member Only section of the national website. (*us.mensa.org*)

(Continued on page 21)

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Saturday, June 3, 2006. Called to order at 4:28 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

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

Welcome Guest: Theresa Valek

Minutes for the May 6, 2006 meeting were approved as published.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: Bud handed out the May Treasurers Report which showed total funds of \$4024.49. At the current rate of income and spending, this should last for approximately two decades.

Testing: Bud reported that no candidates were tested in May, and that there was a 2 for 1 special available in June, where National would allow testing of two candidates for the price of one.

Committee Report:

There was no report from the Audit Committee which should have conducted its audit of the treasurer by now. That is not a problem since the same treasurer is continuing in office. (An audit is preferred before a transition) They will be reminded to get on with it.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: There was no new business.

George moved to adjourn at 4:30pm for the purpose of seating the new ExComm. Passed by unanimous vote.

The new ExComm meeting was called to order at 4:31pm by LocSec George Patterson.. The composition of the new ExComm is the same as the last except Theresa "Terry" "Val" Valek replaces Cliff Miller as Secretary. For the time being, George will continue to do the minutes.

Appointments: Mike Moakley has volunteered to remain as editor of The SCAM. Bud moved and George seconded that Mike remain as editor. Passed unanimously. All other appointments were also renewed.

New Business: George moved that Ellen Paul be appointed as MERF scholarship chairman. Approved unanimously.

During the open discussion period it was suggested by Tom that we start planning for an annual party, perhaps barbeque/picnic style at one of our many parks, sometime this spring. This met with general approval by all. It was noted that we still needed volunteers for Publicity Coordinator and for SCAM scholarship chair. It was sug-

(Continued on page 21)