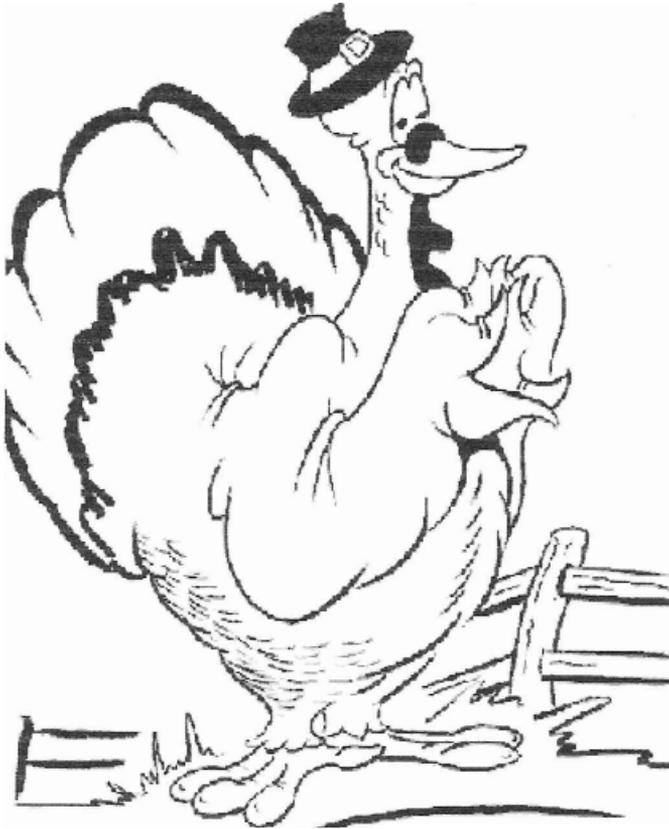


The

# SCAM

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Cover picture © 2000, Susan Q. Kawa



# SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



Website: [www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org](http://www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org)

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)

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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.

## *Inside the Pocket Protector*

*Mike Moakley, Editor*

**O**nce again, Thanksgiving has arrived, as it has this time of year over nearly four centuries. I'm sure there is much all of us may be thankful for; in this month's column, I'll share some of mine.

On the personal front, I'm thankful for my nearly 22 years of marriage to my lovely wife Deb. I am also thankful for my current job, for with it, I have managed to escape the unemployment line for the past 28 years.

I am thankful that we have enough to get by in our lives, but not so much that we forget those who are less fortunate than we are.

In Mensa, I have things to be thankful for as well. This month's issue marks four years that I've managed to escape removal as Editor of *The SCAM*. It looks like 2007 will be a solid year that I have not needed to look to other local Mensa publications for interesting and thought-provoking articles to fill these pages. Here, the thanks go to all our contributors who make *The SCAM* possible. Here, a special thanks goes to Susan Kawa who inadvertently gave me a cover illustration for this month's issue (it was part of her Thanksgiving column for this issue).

And, yes, I also thank the folks at AML, whose endless policies and requirements keep us all who keep SCAM going from dying of boredom.

Finally, I would like to thank George W. Bush and his supporters, for they have been the inspiration for my "Village Idiot" columns over the years. ***Happy Thanksgiving!***

***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.

*Before we eat, may I have everyone's attention?*

**H**ere we have gathered for Thanksgiving. The heralded opening day to the much anticipated holiday season; A time of togetherness and celebration. Or possibly food poisoning (it's still early.)

I'm thinking that everybody else in this house ought to just give thanks that **THEY** didn't have to cook for 27 people. This ought to free up some time for **MY** two cents in the Thanks Department.

Here's my modest list:

I'm thankful...

...that I didn't actually have to kill this turkey, but got it hygienically packaged and hermetically sealed at the local A&P. I'm also grateful that my kids actually enjoy fishing out the gizzard package, because frankly, it grosses me out.

...for a wonderful, healthy family, which has managed to elude most major illnesses this year, primarily by passing them directly to me.

...that none of the pictures from the '99 New Year's Eve party turned out.

...that grocery store carts now feature 5-point restraint systems.

...that the Tooth Fairy didn't miss any scheduled visits this year, and managed to have plenty of small bills on hand -- so as to avoid late-night trips to the drug store to buy a single ribbed condom with a \$20 bill. Like last year. Because it's very un-tooth-fairy-like.

...that the Easter Bunny had the forethought (after last years' debacle) to make a list of where all the hard-boiled eggs were hidden.

...that, when the cat ate the goldfish, he had the good sense to retch it up under **MY** bed, and not in front of the children.

...that when my son took it upon himself to "trim" his sister's hair, he came to me and confessed, instead of trying to pin the blame on his large stuffed clown (which I'm rather afraid of.)

...that hair grows back.

...that when my children lie, they clasp their hands behind their backs, thus causing them to respect and fear my lie-identifying psychic powers.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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*(Continued from page 4)*

...for gainful employment, in a vocation I can be proud of. (Not the humor writing - the other job.)

...that the elevator at work no longer has that dead rodent smell, and that somebody (besides me) was elected to climb up through that trap door to investigate.

...for “pay at the pump.” Not just for the incredible customer convenience, but also to avoid future incidents of watching my 4-year-old attempt to drive away with the car.

...that Halloween was on a Tuesday this year, and my children got to spend the better part of “National Sugar Shock Day” at school.

...that the nest of yellow jackets my son bludgeoned with a stick chose to come after me instead of him, thus necessitating a 16-hour convalescence on the couch - the longest I’ve had since my C-section, and rather a treat.

...that a garter snake fell out of our tallow tree onto my son's head, causing him to develop an instant pathological fear of climbing that particular tree, which was never all that sturdy to begin with.

...for the Heimlich maneuver. Who knew socks could be so dangerous?

...for my good friend’s observational skills, if not tact, when (at Church) he took it upon himself to point out that by misspelling my family-humor website by one letter, you get porn.

...for those of my friends who have completely finished their Christmas shopping and wrapping. I’m sure they’ll have plenty of free time to invite me over for coffee (so I can switch all the tags.)

...for bubble wrap. Just on principle.

...that during my sister’s wedding, my 4-year-old daughter inexplicably chose to keep her clothes on THE ENTIRE TIME.

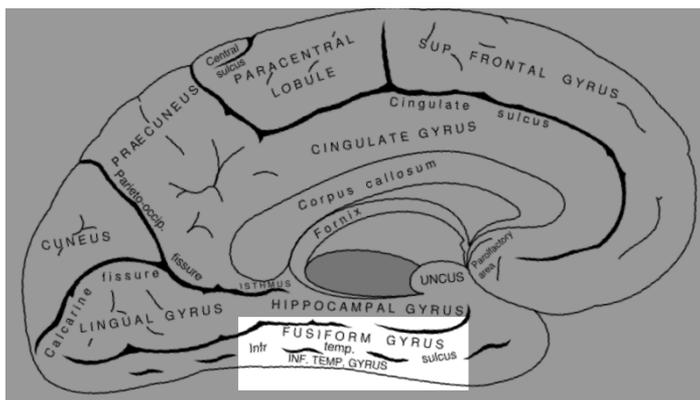
...that peer pressure has finally persuaded my 6-year-old son to stop wearing those giant yellow plastic earrings.

...that my children have grown to the point that we can walk down a sidewalk without worrying about the “cracks.” And I’m sorry I shrieked that one time, because it took them months to recover from the trauma.

...for my beloved (and well-trained) husband, who knows better than to complain if the turkey is dry, or the gravy has cranberries in it.

*(Continued on page 12)*

**A**t the bottom of the brain, on both sides, are a couple of fascinating areas. Well, fascinating to me. They are the Fusiform Gyrus and, underneath that, the Inferior Temporal Gyrus.



Not much is known about their function, although a clearer picture of their amazing role is gradually emerging.

The excruciatingly slow process of waiting for research time with a brain damage victim is steadily being replaced with fMRI (functional MRI) and our knowledge of obscure brain areas is rapidly increasing.

The interesting thing about these brain functions is not the little that we know about them; it's what is obvious but not explicitly stated that fascinates me. These brain areas exhibit marked gender differences that you don't have to be a brain surgeon to understand.

The Inferior Temporal Gyrus (ITG) appears to work faster and be associated with the immediate recognition of objects, and it also supports a snap determination of friend-or-foe status. In other words, it is primarily a simple, fear-driven gain and loss sensor optimized for object recognition.

The Fusiform Gyrus (FG), on the other hand, works as a slower and much more sensitive deciphering engine. It fills in details of the basic forms and shapes, including color, texture and lighting. Then it analyses the results in terms of context and compares this to previous occurrences. Quite a little busybody for such a small ribbon of gray matter.

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Besides being interested in the messy details, the Fusiform Gyrus is also big on the subtleties and nuances that underpin most human relationships such as facial expressions, body language and speech patterns such as pronunciation and emphasis.

### **Impaired Fusiform Gyrus**

Not surprisingly, the Fusiform Gyrus is considered a higher-functioning brain area than the ITG. We know it's a higher-functioning component because fMRI research suggests it's used by experts who practice a high level of differentiation, such as bird watchers, artists and choreographers. In fact, the Inferior Temporal Gyrus really is just that: *inferior*.

When we point in the direction of the ball, most of us are surprised to find that the dog is interested only in our finger, and that the poor animal has no idea that our finger is indicating direction.

The same failure to appreciate even the most obvious forms of body language is also indicative of severe Autism. Other remarkable symptoms include the inability to recognize people after they change clothes and the failure to understand metaphors, similes and idioms. They often take things literally. Here's a silly example of taking things a little too literally:

*"Hi, Bob, what's up?"*

*"Looks like ceiling tiles."*

Recent fMRI studies have shown that Autism and to a lesser extent Schizophrenia are related to smaller FG volume.

That's enough of Autism. What about the rest of us? You don't have to look far to see some marked symptoms of varying FG development in healthy individuals.

For instance, a man might look at a motorbike and say: "It's a 1968 Swallowtail 16B, only the carburetor is off a '72, and the wheels are obviously off a '78 Turnip X37". Men are justly proud of their object-recognition capabilities, forming as it does a significant pillar in the male social hierarchy. Much of our manly pecking order revolves around things and how well we understand them.

A woman, however, might look at the same motorbike and say: "That bit there is the same color as my sister's bathroom drapes, you know, the downstairs one with the textured yellow walls."

Same subject, totally different observations. A woman will typi-

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cally see subjects in terms of context and correlation, especially social context and personal relationships.

Although recent research indicates that some FG areas can be used in differentiating essentially similar objects—even mechanical items—there is a consensus that FG is used mainly for more aesthetic, contextual and relationship recognition. In particular, the FG is used for recognizing faces, facial expressions and body language.

Here are some keywords:

<u>ITG</u>	<u>FG</u>
intellect	emotion
thoughts	feelings
mechanistic	creative
form	content
words	intuition
colleagues	friends
distant	close
analysis	empathy
hunting	animal rescue

Are you with me here? Not only are men not very good at a lot of that arty-farty chick stuff, a lot of male behavior is looking suspiciously like a symptom of sub-clinical Autism. It's hardly surprising to learn that Autism affects mainly males.

Male bonding revolves around objects: cars, stereos, trains, skateboards, bikes, fishing poles. It's difficult to think of a male activity that doesn't revolve around objects. And, yes, that other, primary, male activity at its most basic involves the objectification of women. This is all a long, long way from sisterhood which really has no male equivalent.

The fairer sex has been dealt a much better hand in the FG department, even if it doesn't get a lot of mileage in the politically-correct medical literature. Perhaps accepting a gender delta here would lead to the unsavory suggestion that the staggering creative output of male homosexuals had a biological origin. Meanwhile, I'll just talk a little deeper and show off my new table saw.

Women have risen above the recognition of mere objects. For our female counterparts, the FG has more important things to do. Our suspicion that they have better interpersonal skills because they really don't care about transmission rebuilds is altogether too close to

*(Continued on page 9)*

**M**ensans might be interested in an opportunity to work a puzzle with the potential of big \$\$ payoff. According to an article by Stuart Elliot in the New York Times:

*“The puzzle, named Eternity II, is a brain-teaser composed of 256 pieces, which has a countdown for solving of Dec. 31, 2008. If there are no winners by then, the deadline becomes Dec. 31, 2009 and then Dec. 31, 2010.*

*Eternity II is a follow-up to a geometric puzzle brought out in 1999 that sold 500,000 copies around the world. (The winners of the first Eternity had computer and mathematical backgrounds.)*

*This time, like last time, there is a cash prize of a million British pounds for the first person to solve the puzzle. If the winner is American, the reward is now worth considerably more — around \$2 million — than it was eight years ago.*

*In the United States, Eternity II, priced at \$49.99, went on sale last month at Toys “R” Us stores, where it will be available exclusively through the end of the year. It can also be bought on the chain’s Web site (toysrus.com).”*

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**WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS...**
**Continued.**

*(Continued from page 8)*

the truth.

They are really complementary skill sets and it is easy to lose sight of the more masculine contribution that has provided so much: houses, cars, TVs, plumbing, telephones and this computer are all objects. The last few hundred years have produced a hardware bonanza from the object oafs that makes me wonder what riches are waiting to unfold from the much larger Fusiform Gyrus. This is going to get interesting.

Women have much higher developed interpersonal skills in terms of recognizing body language, voice intonation and facial expression, not because they practice more, but because their brains work that way.

Men? Well, we just dream of equality.

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### Four-Letter Words

**I**t is time for a confession: *The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, Fourth Edition* (OSPD4) does not contain all of the words that are acceptable in club and tournament play sanctioned by the National SCRABBLE® Association (even if words accidentally omitted from early printings are taken into account, and not just because it only goes up to eight-letter words for the most part).

The School SCRABBLE® Program uses OSPD4 as its source of words, and so do many “kitchen-table” players across the United States and Canada. Most English-speaking countries use SOWPODS, a list which expands upon the words given in OSPD4 (for example, SOWPODS contains twenty two-letter words not found in OSPD4), but the book you would see in clubs and tournaments across North America is the *Official Tournament and Club Word List, Second Edition* (OWL2).

To quote the preface of OSPD4, “[W]ords likely to offend players of the game have been omitted from this edition.” OWL2 can only be purchased by members of the National SCRABBLE® Association. It lists the words without definitions, which has a twofold benefit: A word that would ordinarily offend may lose some of its sting out of context, and omitting the definitions makes room for nine-letter words and their inflections.

Here are two words that appear in OWL2 but not OSPD4; a third will be hinted at. BUBBA is defined in the program Zyzyvva 1.0.4 as “a white working-class man of the southern United States,” and LIBBER is defined as “one that supports a liberation movement.” OSPD4 defines PEE as “the letter P” and classifies it as a noun with PEES as its plural; Zyzyvva gives a different definition and classifies it as a verb. Two of its inflection appear in OWL2 but not OSPD4, and one of them is literally a four-letter word. Is anyone offended yet?

Four-letter words have historically gotten a bad rap, although the family-friendly OSPD4 contains a five-letter word defined as “to complain” which in the past was not spoken in polite company. My personal bias against four-letter words -- or fours, in SCRABBLE® parlance -- is that I have not decided upon the best way to study them. It is easy to study twos: Just memorize all 101 of them. And to me it is obvious that the sevens to study are those that are most likely to appear based on the tile distribution at the beginning of the game.

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The most probable fours are AEON, AERO, and TOEA; they are equally likely because each word contains an A, an E, an O, and either an N, an R, or a T (there are six of each of these consonants in a fresh bag of tiles). These words might come in handy if you have a lot of vowels on your rack and do not want to endure a completely scoreless turn by exchanging tiles. Except for words that would require a blank, such as BIBB (a fresh bag of tiles contains only two Bs), the least probable fours are BUBU, JUKU, MUMU, and PUPU. There are twelve other fours that contain two Us. You may like to save a U in case you draw the Q, but with QI and QAT available to play this seems to be rather unnecessary.

One way to study fours would be to start with the threes and extend them by a letter using the program LeXpert (two birds with one stone, if you will). For example, ABY can become BABY, GABY, ABYE, or ABYS. But we must realize that some fours, such as ABBE, cannot be formed by extending a three.

Studying anagramming at the same time would be helpful. AABB can be rearranged into ABBA or BABA, AABL can be rearranged into ALBA or BAAL, and so on. One set of four letters, AEST, can be rearranged into eight words: ATES, EAST, EATS, ETAS, SATE, SEAT, SETA, and TEAS.

Even if I had all of the fours from OSPD3 memorized, OSPD4 contains 126 new fours. This includes BIRO, EMMY, ENUF, LILO, MIPS, and TRES, which were erroneously omitted from early printings. One may take some consolation in the deletion of EMFS\*, but that is like a ten-dollar discount on a midprice car.

Neither my spell-checker nor OSPD4 likes MIDPRICE\*, but it received 50 Google hits and that's good enough for now because it's time for me to study those four-letter words...

DARN it to HECK!

Next month: -ER (Not Starring George Clooney)

**E**veryone knows about the slowdown in home sales. The four states most affected are California, Arizona, Texas and Florida with pockets in certain major cities. In Florida one of the biggest drags on sales of all homes and condos is the required insurance.

If the person owns the property free and clear they have the choice of not buying insurance at all, but if there is a mortgage the mortgage maker requires property damage must be bought. This is their protection against loss in the unlikely event of fire or hurricane.

Because of recent losses due to hurricanes in Florida rates have doubled in certain areas. Florida politicians have tried to require insurance companies to reduce their rates, but legislation will not stop high winds.

Almost no one wants to defend the insurance companies. Of course, they can stop selling in any state, but policyholders will shout even louder. Today in Florida the State itself insures more individual homes than they can ever pay if a Force 5 hurricane blows across it. The only way the State could pay is with a bond issue taxing everyone. Not a pleasant thought.

Why do the insurance companies charge so much? They have professional actuaries who use tables of loss expectations, home valuations and time to compute anticipated loss. The companies overhead must be factored in and a reasonable profit for stockholders dividends.

Stockholders are entitled to a return on their investment each year. If this is not computed accurately the company could go out of

*(Continued on page 27)*

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***WE INTERRUPT THIS THANKSGIVING...******Continued***

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*(Continued from page 5)*

...for my wonderful extended family, all of whom are here tonight -- but none of whom would dream of crowding me in my kitchen, or risking a broken dish by attempting to carry it.

And finally, I'm thankful...

...that nobody takes me (or my cooking) too seriously.

I return you now to your regularly scheduled Thanksgiving feast.

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## SCAM Calendar of Events for November 2007

**3rd - Wednesday 5:30 PM**

### EXCOMM MEETING

.This is our monthly business meeting. All members are always welcome to attend.

Contact: *George, 777-3721, for details.*

**24th - 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: *George Patterson, 777-3721.*

### *MEMBERSHIP NOTES*

#### Welcome to SCAM and Mensa

Brad Daszynski

#### Welcome to SCAM

Trudy Teel

### *NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS*

<i>2nd</i>	Barron Perry	<i>19th</i>	Harold Long
<i>6th</i>	William McClure Jr.	<i>20th</i>	Dean Zentner
<i>10th</i>	LuAnne Johnson	<i>21st</i>	John England
<i>11th</i>	Allen Torsney	<i>25th</i>	David Raeman
<i>14th</i>	William Harris III	<i>25th</i>	David Williams
<i>18th</i>	Lee Jennings	<i>26th</i>	Harry Falconer
<i>18th</i>	Joseph Mueck	<i>30th</i>	Lisa Willnow

*Note: If your birthday is not listed, and you want it to be, please let us know.*

**Announcing:**  
**The 2008 SCAM**  
**“Back in Business”**  
**RG**

After six long years of waiting,  
the Space Coast Area Mensa is proud to present a  
special Halloween themed RG scheduled for the  
weekend of October 24-26th, 2008 in  
Cocoa Beach, Florida

***Costume Party!!***

To be held Saturday Oct 25th  
Prizes awarded for most creative costumes.  
Games, programs, and of course, our famous hospitality suites!

***We will also be celebrating SCAM's 25th Anniversary.***

*Make your reservations now.*

*Don't miss it!!*

*Return this portion with your payment*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mensa Group Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pre-registration  
(if postmarked by 12/31/07)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Adults—\$45.00  
Children (under 12) - \$30.00

Number attending: Adults \_\_\_\_\_

Children \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
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Mail registration with check or money order

**SCAM RG Fund**

**Suzanne Leichtling—Registrar**

Best way to contact you (circle one):

**8752 Palm Way**

Phone    Email    Snail Mail

**Cape Canaveral, FL 32920**

**F**orget about going to Mars or finding more oil. What we need to improve our world is three simple developments:

## 1. PHUDE

We all have to eat. It's that simple. In my case, it's admittedly more than that: I love to eat! More than I should. And my shape at-tests to my indulgence. But food, in and of itself, presents a problem.

Some foods are bad for you. Some foods are bad for you in excess, but taste good. Some foods are good for you, but taste bad. Other foods just taste so good that you eat too much of it, good or bad for you notwithstanding. Some food takes too long to make. Some foods are too hard to prepare. Some foods are too expensive for people to afford. Some foods don't look very appetizing. Some foods don't smell very appetizing. Some foods look and smell appetizing, but taste terrible. Food is confusing and problematical.

So what we need would be my version of Soylent Green – a generic comestible for which we will coin the acronym PHUDE: **P**rovisions for **H**uman **U**sage, **D**ietetically **E**ngineered. PHUDE would be nutritionally balanced, non-perishable, healthy, cheap, and would come in a variety of tasty flavors, both Regular and Diet versions, be microwaveable, and look appealing.

PHUDE would replace MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat – the crud they give our military in the field), trail food, dehydrated food, astronaut food, the snack aisle at the supermarket, virtually the entire local mini mart, meals on wheels, soup kitchens, and most of the canned or boxed foodstuffs containing vaguely food-like substances having unpronounceable ingredients.

This is not rocket science, people. Surely with our chemical technology such a product is within our ability to produce.

## 2. The UniMobile/GeneriCar

Let's face it. We obsess over our vehicles. Monster trucks, Hummers, the Bugatti Veyron (at just under a mil and a half!). We pamper and preen them and we use them to one-up The Joneses and flaunt our coolness. The car has come to represent the driver. It determines how affluent we appear, how chic an image we project. No one questions the fact of life that the guy with the Maybach is going to get his car from the valet before the guy with the Mercury.

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But what if we could remove the class distinction from the automobile? What if we converted our dear, gas-guzzling status symbol into (dare I say it?) just basic transportation?

Here's the deal. We use existing technology to produce the most cost-effective, fuel-efficient, safety-compliant, basic car, van and truck with a maximum of interchangeable parts that should last reliably for 25 years or more. This vehicle will come equipped with standard, non-upgradeable options including power everything, air, and a decent radio and speakers.

You get to pick the color.

That's it. It gets you from one place to another in relative comfort and safety, and the powerful enough engine assures you'll get there with reasonable speed as well. The only problem is that I'm still conflicted at this point between calling it the UniMobile or the Generi-Car.

The beauty of this concept is that by standardizing vehicles, we save a ton of money by not having to stock a gazillion different auto parts (which are incredibly expensive) PLUS we remove the not insignificant humiliation of having to drive down Rodeo Drive in a battered '74 Plymouth wagon.

Your only concern will be how to trick out your "Uni" or "Generi" sufficiently to be able to pick it out from the sea of look-alikes in the supermarket parking lot.

Plus we'd finally get the chance to use that thingie they advertise on the back pages of most magazines that uses magnetic technology on your fuel line to deliver over 100 mpg but which the auto manufacturers have been trying to suppress because they want you to buy a new car every year.

This is not rocket science either.

### **3. Stem Self Own**

**NEWSFLASH!** Your cell phone is not a fashion accessory!

When are people going to figure out that wearing your cell phone in a holster on your waist does not make you look either cool or important? And the Bluetooth thingie on your ear makes you look like a Borg.

If you want to take pictures and surf the web and listen to music, that's fine. But use a picture-taking, web-surfing, music-playing

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thingie dingie, not a cell phone.

Because I propose that we get our crack microbiologists working to develop the Stem Self Own. Now, this little dream uses your basic gene splicing technology to simply embed your cell phone in your hand. Speaker on the end of your thumb, mic on the end of your pinkie, and a keyboard that appears/disappears on your palm by making a fist then opening your hand. No batteries to recharge, it runs off of you. Completely waterproof and matches whatever you're wearing.

Go ahead and try it. You know you want to. Stick your thumb in your ear and hold your pinkie in front of your mouth. See how well it fits and how you don't have to shout since your pinkie's right there?

Think about it. It makes a great deal of sense. It's always with you. It's always charged. It doesn't show, so no one has to worry that theirs isn't as spiffy as someone else's. Since there would be no competing providers, it uses the Universal Network, which gets a signal virtually everywhere in the world. Everybody gets one, so no one would feel left out. We could implant them into children at birth. It's biological, so it grows with you -- no problem there. While we're at it, might as well incorporate a GPS thingie so that if you lose your little tyke at Wal-Mart or he's abducted by Omar the Tentmaker, you can track the little urchin down.

And the best part is that this isn't rocket science either. What with cloning sheep and designer drugs and a bit of gene manipulation, the Stem Self Own is just a hop, skip, and a jump around the corner.

Is brilliant, no?

*the george*

*Anger is the feeling that makes your mouth work faster than your mind.*

*- Evan Esar (1899-1995) American humorist*

## A Mensan in the family?

**A**re you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, *The SCAM* is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?

## A Mensan in the Workplace?

**A**re you the Mensan at work? Do you work with other Mensans...or...are you the only one? If the latter is true, do your coworkers know you're in Mensa? What about your boss? What are your impressions and experiences at work? Do you have a leadership position? Do you serve in any kind of "support" (formal or informal) role? Does your status as a Mensan have a positive or negative impact on your work relationships? Finally, if preparing a resume, would you include your Mensa membership as an item (or would you state that you qualified to join Mensa)? Why or why not? Let's hear from *you*.

**F**or me, one of life's little joys is reading the letters to the editor in the local newspaper. A recent letter that piqued my interest appeared in the October 2 *Florida Today*, entitled, "Women Voters Could Miss Golden Opportunity," written by Pat Freeman of Merritt Island. In the letter, Pat states, "It's the saddest thing to know that women will not vote for a female president."

Pat goes on to say, "Most women have a need to have a man for a boss. While talking with women voters about Hillary Clinton, I find that most will not vote for her because she is a woman and they want a man in charge."

I don't know about you, but I find this quite interesting. To me, it flies in the face of the low opinion of men that is shared by many women I have come to know. It seems to be in vogue for these women to criticize the male for every malady in the world ranging from the toilet seat being left up to the violence resulting from warfare (which they see as two or more male leaders who need to prove their manhood at the expense of their subjects).

This is reflected in the current TV sitcom offerings, such as *According to Jim* or *Still Standing* where the husband/father figure is always a buffoon somewhat less intelligent than their young children, and certainly no match for their (justifiably?) manipulative wives. Now, since we men are so inferior in the eyes of the fairer (?) sex, perhaps it is time to give the women a chance to excel where we have failed.

Since women are better communicators and allegedly have no need to exhibit macho pride, why shouldn't a woman lead the nation? I have no idea how accurate Pat Freeman's observations are as they apply to women in general, but I believe he has a point. However, Pat does fail (due to space requirements?) to state *why* women "want a man in charge."

I agree with Pat Freeman that a golden opportunity exists in the upcoming Presidential election. Hillary Clinton, if elected, would be the first female President. It certainly may be the time for all of us to see how our country would fare with a woman in charge. Yet, if Pat's stated observations accurately reflect the attitude of women in general, how is such an attitude to be explained? Could it be the fear of failure? Is it possible that the problems with our country, perhaps with this world, stem from factors other than the gender of the leadership?

# We're Baaack!!



## Announcing The 2008 SCAM “Back in Business” RG



After six long years of waiting, the Space Coast Area Mensa is proud to present a special Halloween themed RG tentatively scheduled for the weekend of October 24-26th, 2008 in Cocoa Beach, Florida

### Costume Party!!

To be held Saturday Oct 25th  
Prizes awarded for most creative costumes  
Games, programs, and of course, our famous hospitality suites! Don't miss it!  
More details to follow in upcoming SCAM newsletters

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** If you are interested in attending next year's SCAM RG, you can get the best prices by pre-registering today. For your convenience, the registration form is provided on Page 17 of this issue. You'll be glad you did.*

***Here's an idea:** With Christmas season already here, this RG makes for an ideal stocking stuffer for that special someone to accompany you for a great time. Don't forget your costumes!*

**Part Six: Conclusion**

**A**bout an hour before I began writing this, I was listening to a local TV newscast covering the sentencing of two convicted bank robbers. Both men were given a life sentence for their crimes.

While I cannot condone their actions, I could not help but notice the irony of this state of affairs. If you rob a bank and the law catches up with you, you can count on some serious repercussions. Obviously, our society holds that robbing a bank is not acceptable. Perhaps it is because of one of the Ten Commandments: *"Thou shalt not steal."*

Yet, what about when the banks (and other creditors) are the robbers and we become the victims? Would bankers receive stiff prison sentences for their transgressions, especially in light of our alleged Judeo-Christian principles? Hardly. Over the last several months, I have offered some examples of how the banking community systematically robs us every day. Most, if not all, of the practices described are perfectly legal; in some cases, the courts actually serve as accomplices in some of these great heists.

One side effect of this crime wave is that other industries are also getting into the act, often with impunity as well. In a letter written to me in response to Part One (pricing based on credit scores), *PensaMensa* Editor Bobbye Sikes Wicke writes: *"I recently discovered that I was paying more for coverage identical to that of younger friends who drove cars worth two to three times more than my car, and we used the same insurer. We all had equal good driving records. So I began collecting quotes from other insurers. ... What a surprise - these quotes were 50% or more higher. Two companies even volunteered that higher rates are based on age and credit reports ..."* Auto insurance is definitely not a credit transaction; either you pay the premium or the policy lapses. I could go on, but I would be rather repetitious at this point.

One issue that was not covered is that these practices as a whole have created a vast, permanent underclass while, at the same time, masking the problem. By issuing "easy credit", even those living in poverty can buy "big ticket" items, even though they cannot afford health insurance (no "easy financing" there). It seems not only are these people denied a living wage, but also the business community sees the need to steal what little that has been paid to them. As has

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been documented in this series, the beginning shots have already be fired in what conservatives term “class warfare”.

It is not quite a “class war” just yet, as wars normally feature more than just the aggressor. Retaliation is also a necessary element to a war. Thus far, retaliation that is long overdue has been notably absent. We as a society have not yet faced up to the ugly truths about the financial rape of innocent victims which has become too commonplace. Unfortunately, we are still of the mindset that the victim is to blame – perhaps he or she was not smart enough, not careful enough ... perhaps even lacking the necessary moral fiber. Eerily enough, this is reminiscent of an earlier time that I remember all too well, when statements such as the following were too common: *“Well, dear, if you didn’t wear those skirts so high and you didn’t go to those places, maybe he wouldn’t have done all those horrible things to you. It’s your own fault. Besides, you shouldn’t be talking about such things in polite company.”* Today, fortunately, we do not blame rape victims but try to help them. Perhaps victims of financial rape should be accorded the same consideration.

One final thought. Many of you reading this series have, most likely, been victimized in a way similar to the examples I have described. It happens to the best, brightest and the most moral among us, so there is no need for shame. If anything, outrage is a more fitting emotion. Don’t let the “free-marketers” fool you with their rhetoric about having to accept risks and accepting the “survival of the fittest” dictum. If, indeed, this Darwinian theory is taken as reality, there would be no laws or societies; chaos would be the order of the day.

It is past time to stand together to put an end to these abuses. Politicians will not do it for us on their own, lest they lose campaign funding. It is up to us to cause such a stir, and to continue doing so, until it becomes too uncomfortable for them to maintain the status quo. It won’t be easy – but we must start sometime. There is no time like the present; perhaps a “class war” is just what’s needed.

*Hello there, Not "The George" (Patterson)!*

**R**egarding your comments about me in the October SCAM... First of all, my name is George Lebovitz. I write under the pseudonym of "The George" simply because I have published under this nom de plume in the past, not because I am trying to hide my identity.

Secondly, although you found my most recent submissions distressing, I would point out that my intention in writing these series of articles is primarily to entertain; perhaps even encourage an interesting discussion. That you thought I was degenerating into diatribe is possibly attributable to the fact that I didn't seem to be stimulating much in the way of polemic with my blithe approach so I shifted to a somewhat more controversial style. Since I seem to have achieved my goal of eliciting some colloquy (from you, at least), I can now revert to my good-natured, easygoing style again.

Finally, I would hope that you find my upcoming articles interesting, thought-provoking or -- at least -- somewhat amusing. Also, since you seem to imply that we may have some similar characteristics, I would love to read any opinions you might like to publish. Otherwise, feel free to pass along any interesting ideas to me at: [thegeorge@cfl.rr.com](mailto:thegeorge@cfl.rr.com).

*"The George" Lebovitz*

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two is a good thing. And a hearty thank you to all of you who volunteer to keep Mensa thriving!

*Maggie Truelove*

**L**ife goes on. As I write this in early October, I am looking ahead at the LDW planned for November 3. There are about 30 Mensans signed up to attend at this point. Some Region 10 leaders have good reasons to not be joining us. One will be on vacation in France. One will be on a cruise. One will have just had wisdom teeth pulled the day before. But I am sadly disappointed to say that four of our twelve groups in Region 10 have NOT ONE person signed up to attend. I am hoping that it is a case of the groups feeling that they are in such good shape that they don't need any reinforcing rather than a serious feeling of ennui or laziness. But those of us who will be at the LDW will learn a lot and have an excellent time, besides.

There are many good things going on in Region 10. Most of our groups are participating in Mensa National Testing Day. Five of our groups are hosting Regional Gatherings, while another group has a "micro-G". Several of our groups sponsor scholarships, either through MERF or locally. Many of our groups have active programs for Young Mensans and/or gifted children. Most of our groups have growing and active GenX groups within them. And many members, whether they are able to attend activities or not, are participating in online Mensa things, whether it be through the official Mensa Discussion Forums on the national website or on Facebook or The Smart Life.

Don't forget - the American Mensa Committee (AMC - Mensa's board of directors) will hold its fourth quarter meeting at the Holiday Inn in West Palm Beach, Saturday, December 1, 2007. On Friday evening, November 30, the AMC members hope to meet local Ms in the hospitality suite, made inviting with appetizers and beverages. Interested in helping Palm Beach County Mensa throw out the welcome mat? We need volunteers to ferry arriving AMC members from the airport to the hotel and to keep the hospitality suite stocked. Contact Elissa Rudolph (elissa12@bellsouth.net) for details. NEW!! On Saturday evening there will be a catered dinner at a private home on Jupiter Island with views of the ocean. This dinner is open to everyone including spouses, partners, friends at a per person cost of about \$35.

THANK YOU -Aren't those lovely words to hear at any time? And yet, how many of us remember to thank the host/hostess at a Mensa party or the organizers of any Mensa event? I know that when I have hosted parties and RGs and other events, hearing a "thank you" or

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## *ExComm Meeting Notice*

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**T**he ExComm did not hold an October meeting. The next scheduled meeting will be November 7, 2007, at 5:30 pm at George Patterson's home, 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic. All members are welcome to attend.

## *HOME INSURANCE*

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*Continued*

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business and there would be no insurance at all for anyone.

Each year the cry goes up, "Look how many millions they made. It's not fair to charge us so much". The correct place to look is a percent of total sales, not the total dollars. How many people have screamed about the millions any of the food chains make? Maybe because the bill seems so large because it comes in once a year.

Look at the size of the premium for car insurance as compared to home insurance and it will be apparent that home premiums are not that bad.

Will lowering home insurance rates increase home sales in Florida or anywhere? That is doubtful, but it may help older folks who live on a fixed income. If rates are not lowered it could force some to sell their homes. In the current real estate market it is much cheaper to rent than to buy and renters insurance is about 25% or less of owners insurance so there would be savings in both categories.

Home insurance is a requirement in most cases. The State regulators can check the computation of corporate actuaries. If it is judged fair there isn't much the home owner can do.

Home owners should talk to their banker and insurance agent before anything drastic is done.

*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 at [www.mutualfundmagic.com](http://www.mutualfundmagic.com) to discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know. Copyright Williamsburg Investment Co. 2007 All rights reserved.*