

*The*

# SCAM

*pace coast rea ensa*

**Happy Valentine's Day!**





## 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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**Volunteer Needed!**

#### Gifted Children Coordinator

**Volunteer Needed!**

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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*

**F**ebruary—the shortest month of the year. I suppose that's why this month's issue is somewhat shorter than last month's. Yes, February is so short that the "powers that be" found it necessary to consolidate two holidays into a single day! What used to be Lincoln's Birthday (Feb. 12th) and Washington's Birthday (Feb. 22nd) is now "Presidents' Day".

This month is also known for its most noted "holiday" (as we married men know only too well), Valentine's Day. If you did not already buy that box of candy for the love of your life, you can always treat her (or him) to Northwest Florida Mensa's **ValenTime RG** (Valentine's Day weekend).

One final note about Valentine's Day. It is a pity none of our esteemed writers had chosen to do a column about the origin of that particular occasion, or of St. Valentine! That would certainly have been a treat!

Of course, there is always Groundhog Day on February 2nd. Does anyone know if he has seen his shadow? No matter, I suppose; the 90-plus degree weather will return before we know it.

There is, however, one thing I did not know about February. It is also the month for Engineer's Week (this year, from the 15th through the 21st). For all the things we take for granted, at some point, an engineer was involved in their development.

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**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.

**T**his month this nation sees fit to honor its engineers by celebrating Engineers' Week (February 15 - 21). The engineer is honored for the engineer's contribution to society. Engineering has been called the "invisible" or "stealth" profession. Everything around us and that we use every day has been engineered in some way yet we may not see the engineers behind the scenes or know much about engineering. Engineering is not part of our general school education.

The engineering field is as varied as the engineers themselves. Engineers design and build superstructures and delicate medical instruments. Engineers explore for new energy sources and for new worlds in space. They design the environmental controls for an art museum, latest cars, and computers.

The Engineers' Creed explains it in part: "*As an Engineer I dedicate my professional knowledge and skill to the advancement and betterment of human welfare.*"

In doing that engineers are concerned with safety, to prevent harm to people and things. Engineers, like other professionals can be held liable for their errors resulting in the loss or abridgement of their licenses to work as engineers.

Yes, there have been engineering failures, some of them spectacular -- the Tacoma bridge collapse, the Northeast power failure, the levees in New Orleans, for example. These failures are spectacular in part because they are so rare. How many bridges don't collapse, how often do power systems not fail, how many levees are not breached? Engineers learn from their failures, so our world becomes safer all the time.

But just who is an engineer? As with the other learned professions, where graduation from a law school does not make one a lawyer and graduation from a medical school does not make one a doctor, graduation from an engineering school does not make one an engineer. Florida, as every other state in the union, and in most other advanced countries, has codified who is an engineer, the person must be licensed. Florida statutes 471, under definitions states

5) "Engineer" includes the terms "professional engineer" and "licensed engineer" and means a person who is licensed to en-

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gage in the practice of engineering under this chapter.

Some companies may give an employee the title of "engineer", but that does not make that employee an engineer.

Beyond the license, every engineer that I know or have known is a member of at least one professional society (IEEE, ASME, ASPE, etc.), attends society and technical meetings several times a month, subscribes to technical magazines and proceedings, keeps abreast of codes and standards applicable to his/her discipline, updates his/her license every periodically. Every engineer that I know or have known is a proud member of his/her profession and works diligently to better this world and the profession as do I.

*Arthur Belefant, P. E.*

### **SCAM Treasurer's Report**

**As of 12/31/2008:**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$764.49
Post Office Acct.	176.85
Reserve Fund	2115.75
RG Fund	96.65
<b><u>Total Funds Available:</u></b>	<b>\$3153.74</b>

**Deposits**

Mensa Funding:	\$230.86
Interest Income	0.14

**Withdrawals**

RG Expenses	\$51.00
Postage	54.72
Printing	147.23
Bulk Mail Permit	180.00

**Transfers**

RG fund to General Fund: \$400.00  
General Fund to Post Office acct.:  
   \$200.00

*—Bud Long, Treasurer*



**Your editorial question, V27 No.1, p. 9:**

“mensa” – Latin, literally ‘the table’

*“Bakke... has recommended that Mensa change its image to that of a more personable “average guy” who is more attractive and an interesting conversationalist...”* As far as I can tell, the current image is more in line with the “*tabula rasa*”, the empty table, empty slate.

Mensa doesn’t seem to be noted, nor does it seem to want to be noted, for anything except intelligence. Mostly, empty intelligence. If I look at your monthly SCAM, there are groups to play Go, and Scrabble, but nothing to help tutor kids or college wanna-bees who need remediation, Is there any effort to bring intelligence testing to schools in poor communities, to show some of these kids that they are a lot smarter than anyone has ever told them? Or an effort to help such kids find scholarships and other programs to help them to get out of the ghetto, or, as Earvin “Magic” Johnson has done, to do well in the ghetto?

I haven’t ever seen a call for the “gentleman geniuses” to find new ways of extracting energy from unused plant mass; for educating people functionally that a gross overpopulation of an environment by any species is likely to result in destructive change to the environment, and perhaps to the species itself; to plan a healthy economy without the idea that every market has to grow, which entails growth in the buying public – more houses, more cars, more clothes, more airplanes and X-Boxes and ... whatever else you like. How can a stable economy remain healthy? Who knows... yet? There are answers which don’t work; why can’t the smartest people in the world finish some of these projects so that they do work?

If you think back, Aristotle, Plato, Archimedes, up through Priestly, Lavoisier, Newton , Darwin and Einstein, none were known for advanced degrees. All were quite capable of explaining their subject matter to other intelligent people who did not have advanced degrees, and I would guess that many Mensans should be in this category. No limit appears to be pre-established with respect to the accomplishments of people of good will and healthy intelligence, who are not hampered by corporate goals and oversight. Mensans haven’t shown much recognition of that freedom, nor of the unique ability they have to deal with local and world problems in a way that simply

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## 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*.

**MENSA? WHY?**

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isn't open to most people, I haven't seen that Mensans have any goals identified with Mensa, except to be patted on the butt and told how intelligent they are.

It doesn't seem to be "Here I am – let's get started!" It's always "Here I am – adore me."

Maybe it's time for change to start, right here.

*Barry Brogan*

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES

### Welcome to SCAM:

Frank Tremaine (*transfer in*)  
Thomas Magee  
Isabela Rovira

Patricia Caporale  
Kenneth Dimond  
Mary Ann Leigh  
Harry Martin Jr.  
Maribeth Salge  
Jennifer Thropp

### Welcome Back:

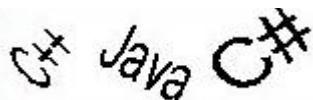
Michael Battaglini  
James Burnett  
Barbara Byrnes

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

4th	Dana Stetser	14th	Wynn Rostek
7th	Heather Howard	17th	Robert Champion Jr.
8th	Amy Montgomery	17th	Robert Lipton
11th	Michael Moakley	25th	Eric Rowley

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

## ANNOUNCING A NEW SIG!



**J**oin the Computer Science SIG. Any Computer Science topics from work or school are welcome. To join email Michael Zielinski at [mikez23@aol.com](mailto:mikez23@aol.com) or [compscisig@yahoogroups.com](mailto:compscisig@yahoogroups.com).



## SCAM Calendar of Events for February 2009

**4th - Wednesday 5:30 PM**

### EXCOMM MEETING

. This is our monthly business meeting. All members are always welcome to attend. This month, it will be held at the home of George Patterson in Indialantic. ***All members are welcome to attend.***

Contact: George, 777-3721, for details.

**6th - Friday 7:00 PM**

### GAMES NIGHT

Come join us for your favorite games at Terry's home in Rockledge.  
**Kitty is \$3.**

Contact: Terry, 626-8523, for more details.

**8th - Sunday 11:00 AM**

### BRUNCH & GAMES

Come join us for brunch followed by your favorite games at Terry's home in Rockledge.

**Kitty is \$3.**

Contact: Terry, 626-8523, for more details.

**28th - 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.

**Your Event Here!**

### ATTENTION SCAM MEMBERS!

Do you have a great idea for that perfect event? Do you have the urge, even the *desire* to socialize with other Mensans, but simply do not want to use the extra gasoline? *Why not host that event in your own home?* If this sounds good to you, contact our Calendar Coordinator today. You'll be glad you did. *Info on Page Two.*

***The honeymoon is over.***

**M**oakley gave me my first pink slip, rejecting my submission of a ribald satire on the Samuel Pepys diaries. He made some lame excuse about some of the SCAM readers being as young as 6 years old and that my article may not have been "appropriate."

Yeah, sure.

I know it's really because he's insanely jealous of my devilishly good looks and he just wanted to take me down a peg to bolster his own insecurity.

I didn't know this was a G-rated periodical. I will thus restrict all future articles to discussions regarding bunny rabbits and cotton candy. *No problemo.*

Seriously, though, the issue of censorship is one of those truly slippery slopes.

The First Amendment assures us that "*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...*" However, common sense has prevailed over that carte blanche statement, viz the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Schenck v. U.S.* (1919), setting limits on the freedom of speech guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Junior, wrote: "*The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic.*"

But where is the line to be drawn? It's a very gray area, indeed. And, not only gray, but moving, too (maybe it's an elephant?).

*I Love Lucy* was the most-watched show in the United States in four of its six seasons, from October 15, 1951 to May 6, 1957 on CBS. During the second season, Lucille Ball was pregnant with second child Desi Arnaz, Jr., and the pregnancy was incorporated into the series' storyline. CBS, however, would not allow *I Love Lucy* to use the word "pregnant", so "expecting" was used instead.

*The Dick Van Dyke Show* aired from 1961 to 1966 and starred

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Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore playing Rob and Laurie Petrie. The series was considered a trailblazer for its comparatively realistic portrayal of relationships, yet the Petries slept in separate beds.

Comedian Lenny Bruce pushed the obscenity boundaries in the 60's. Bruce would prowl the stage attacking taboo subjects. His act was full of four letter words and he would force people to examine their own prejudices. Racism, religion, drugs and sex were all covered in Bruce's monologues. His monologues were so controversial that he was blacklisted by nearly every nightclub in the United States and was banned outright from several U.S. cities. On October 4, 1961 Bruce was arrested for obscenity at the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco for using a vulgar word for oral sex. A three-judge panel presided over his widely publicized six-month trial, with Bruce and club owner Howard Solomon being found guilty of obscenity on November 4, 1964. Bruce was sentenced on December 21, 1964, to four months in the workhouse.

A couple of years ago, I attended a performance at the King Center by comedian George Carlin\*. He was famous for his monologue "*Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television*" (originally released on his 1972 album, *Class Clown*) which became a central issue in the 1978 U.S. Supreme Court case *F.C.C. v. Pacifica Foundation*, in which a narrow 5-4 decision by the justices affirmed the government's power to regulate indecent material on the public airwaves. All seven words (no, I will not enumerate them – remember our 6-year old reader) are now heard with alarming regularity, many on network television.

Times have changed, and so, apparently, have the guidelines regarding censorship.

Then there is the matter of who is doing the censoring? It is not unusual to see a bare breast in a European or Japanese TV commercial. In fact, recently making the internet rounds was a Danish commercial by Fleggaard (for a washing machine!) in which a bevy of bountifully endowed bare-breasted beauties sky-dive from a cargo plane! (No, I will not provide a link to the video. Our 6-year old, remember? However, if you Google "Fleggaard best commercial ever"... [betcha the 6-year old is the first one to find it]). Yet a revealed mammary gland at the halftime ceremony of the Super Bowl was enough to provide fodder to the talking

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heads of the U.S. news media for months afterward.

The issue is certainly complex and there is no clear-cut right answer. Clearly, a literal interpretation of the First Amendment forbidding censorship of any kind is not practical. On the other hand, if there is to be a limit, where do you draw the line?

Glad I'm not the one who has to decide.

\* *The Carlin show had me literally ROTFL. He was excruciatingly funny. OTOH, he was also incredibly vulgar and outrageous. Nothing was sacred. If you left the show without being offended, insulted, or scandalized at least once, then you probably were not listening.*

### **Inside the Pocket Protector**

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In last month's column, I actively sought feedback from you, the member, on what we as Mensa should do as far as addressing the challenge of increasing our membership numbers. So far, one member has taken the time to give a well-thought out response to the question I posed. You will find that response elsewhere in this issue.

The forum is still open. If you have an opinion (or a suggestion) on this topic, by all means drop me a note.

Last month, I also noted that I had never heard from AML about my taking to task our Chairman for his expressed view of the need to change Mensa's image. At this point, I am able to report that, if nothing else, AML remains consistent. Still no word from them.

**B**y now, the sorry state of our economy is no longer news. It appears Corporate America has been done in by its own greed. Once again, “We, The People” will suffer the most as “collateral damage.” Of course, many, if not most, of our elected leaders were complicit in this meltdown.

The question is, how did we get there in the first place? At least part of the answer lies in the adage, “He who pays the piper calls the tune.” By this, I mean that our “representatives” abdicated their responsibilities to us by dancing to the tune of Corporate America who had bankrolled their campaigns. It has been apparent to me for quite some time that we need to seriously reform campaign financing. It seems I am not alone.

Recently, I read in the January 9<sup>th</sup> edition of Florida TODAY, “*Senator Decries Election Cash*,” where Haridopolos apparently also sees the need to reform campaign financing. To that end, he filed legislation to end all public financing of campaigns for state office. According to the article: “*In tough economic times like these, we shouldn't be providing welfare for politicians,’ Haridopolos said of his constitutional amendment (SJR 566) and statutory bill (SB 564) that will be considered when the regular 2009 session convenes in March.*” Current state law provides for matching funds for contributions of \$250 or less for the post of governor and state Cabinet seats.

According to Haridopolos, “*Good candidates will attract the resources necessary to run their campaigns.*” Of course, we already know where these resources originate. Given that bit of knowledge, would we be better off to do away with what little public financing there is of political campaigns? He and many of his allies have justified his stand by accurately noting that Barack Obama, in his campaign, rejected public money and raised record amounts of funds.

Let's examine what Haridopolos has to say. First, there's the “welfare” issue. Whether the contributions come from private or public sources, they are just that, contributions. Where does “welfare” come in? I personally find it a rather amusing choice of terms, considering that the recent corporate bailouts over the past few months might be somewhat closer to the meaning of the term, “welfare”. Then there is the statement about “good” candidates attracting resources to run their campaigns. Is this true? It depends upon what is meant by “good”. To put all this into perspective, let me assert one

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truth that is too often conveniently overlooked: *Campaign financing, from whatever source, is NOT charity; rather it is an investment.* Contributors (more accurately, investors), whoever they might be, expect a return on that investment. The more one invests, the greater the expected return. Clearly, Haridopolos actually wants *more* corporate control of campaigns.

We have what is largely a private system of funding political campaigns with a voluntary public funding supplement made available to a campaign that agrees to certain conditions to receive some matching public funds. Public funding, as it currently stands, is largely ineffectual. There's no argument from me.

The private system is an overwhelming success and, at the same time, an equally overwhelming failure. Big Business, the major players in campaigns, has been extraordinarily successful in getting the candidates of choice elected. That said, Big Business has been just as successful in getting legislation favorable to its agenda passed. Yet these same successes are also extraordinary failures. With the resultant lack of reasonable regulation, few if any safeguards existed to prevent the economic meltdown we have experienced over the last several months.

What is needed is to phase out the private system, and replace (not supplement) it with a taxpayer-supported public system. In simple terms, a public system would allocate funds to support campaigns for each elected office. The funding would be split evenly among the qualified candidates for each office. There would be publicly sponsored debates for each office, where the candidates would be required to participate as a condition of receiving funding. *We* would be paying the piper; therefore *we* would call the tune. After all, the successful candidate is supposed to be *our* representative.

**A**s you might have guessed from last month's column, sometimes it doesn't take much to keep me amused. Such is the case this month as well. Recently, I saw a bumper sticker declaring "I Love My Wife" (or, more accurately "I ♥ My Wife"). The fine print advised the message was brought to you by the Promise Keepers, a Christian men's group. I did glance at the driver of that car – it was a woman (there were no passengers). Was she the "wife", or...does she have her own wife?

In cases like these, I've often wondered why many find it necessary to announce personal matters to a wide audience of strangers. Perhaps the message is "I love my wife, but the rest of you do not love your own wives (unless your car sports a similar bumper sticker)." That would be the height of arrogance, as well as supreme ignorance. How would that fool know whether I love my wife, or, for that matter, whether I am indeed married?

It might instead be a case of self-affirmation. Many of you may remember the 1970s, when bookstores were literally flooded with all kinds of self-help "pop-psych" novels, with titles such as, "*99 Ways to Attract Beautiful Women Through Personal Magnetism*", "*Bark Your Way to Instant Success*", and "*Think and Grow Rich*". Of course, my first contact with the concept of self-affirmation was several years earlier, when I was a young boy watching *Bugs Bunny* cartoons. As I remember one such episode, Bugs was counseling his arch-nemesis Elmer Fudd that in order to fulfill his dreams of becoming rich, he must visualize himself as already being wealthy. "Repeat after me," Bugs instructs. "*I am Elmer J. Fudd, millionaire; I own a mansion and a yacht.*' Again! '*I am Elmer J. Fudd...*" You get the picture.

It might also be a case of denying the truth. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is known for the saying "*She protests too much, methinks.*" A somewhat more contemporary example is an episode of *The Flintstones* (those blasted cartoons, again), where Wilma was advising Fred to try to get along with her mother: "*I love my mother-in-law...*" "*I love my mother-in-law...*"

The answer could be far simpler: She may have *told* him to put that bumper sticker on his car. As for me, about the woman driving that car...*Is* she the wife, or does she have one? *We may never know.*

**F**ebruary, the shortest month, perhaps calls for the shortest column. If your newsletter comes early enough, you might want to still consider attending CFM's SMARTI GRAS, which is January 30-February 1. If you are able, you might wish to plan to attend Northwest Florida's VALENTIME, which is Valentine's Day weekend. Both of these groups do an excellent job throwing a party, or should I say Regional Gathering?

Then at the end of February, if such a trip is possible for you, a trek to Atlanta might be in order, to attend the Colloquium on Weather. I am looking forward to that one!

There is an awful lot packed into a very short month! And I didn't even mention Presidents' Day. Say - whatever happened to simply Washington's Birthday and Lincoln's Birthday? Do young people now even know why there is a Presidents' Day? Our reverence for this holiday is almost as lax as that nowadays given to Veteran's Day, which began as Armistice Day. But this discussion would lead to a much longer column, so I won't continue there.

Have a lovely short month, and a Happy Valentine's Day.

Maggie Truelove, RVC 10  
3333 Honeysuckle Lane, Orlando, FL 32812  
407-855-9078  
[rvc10@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rvc10@cfl.rr.com)

**Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:**

**T**he ExComm met at the home of George Patterson, January 7, 2009. Called to order at 6:54 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

**Members present:** George Patterson, Terry Valek, Bud Long, and Karen Freiberg. Joe Smith was unable to attend.

**Welcome Guests:** None

Minutes for the December 7, 2008 meeting were approved as published in the January 2009 SCAM.

**Reports:**

**LocSec:** George reported that the three members of the Bylaws committee had offered their resignations due to the press of personal affairs. These were accepted. This leaves us in need of a Bylaws committee. Terry agreed to write an article for the newsletter calling for volunteers. It was noted by several that members of the ExComm could serve on Bylaws, if necessary, but that this was not an ideal situation. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the search continues for NomElCom members, with one probably and two possibles in sight. (LocSec wonders why there are two m's in ExComm and only one in NomElCom. He will research it.)

**Treasurer:** Bud submitted the December Treasurers Report which showed total funds of \$3,153.74.

**There was no old or new business.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm. Next meeting will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic (321-777-3721) on **Wednesday, February 4, 2009 at 5:30 pm**