

The

SCAM

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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

As I write these words, we on the Space Coast can welcome yet another hurricane season—six months of pure bliss as our weather threatens to make every one of us waterfront property owners (or, in some cases, turn our houses into houseboats).

I am pleased to announce that our hard-fought campaign for the ExComm is now over. The election result can best be described by that 1960s line from Herman's Hermits, "Second verse, same as the first!" At this point, let me congratulate our incoming ExComm members as they assume and express my appreciation to the outgoing ExComm for a job well done. Well, at least I do not have to change the directory on Page Two.

At this time, I also wish to extend my appreciation to all the contributors to this issue of *The SCAM*. Because I needed to travel out of state for two weeks last month, I found it necessary to temporarily move up the deadline to June 5th, so you would get this issue on time. Good job!

At this writing, I do not yet know the outcome of the National elections, but we do know that Mel Dahl (*The Flame*, Orlando) is our new RVC for Region 10. Congratulations, Mel! I will update his info on Page Two when I receive it.

No doubt you will notice that a few regular items are missing from this issue. This would include our Birthday List and our

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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.

In going through my income tax reporting for this year, while looking for exemptions and credits that I may apply on my Form 1040 to reduce the amount of tax that I am obliged to pay, the same thought occurred to me that occurs to me every year. This tax is unfair. But an additional thought also occurred to me. All taxes are unfair.

I have yet to see a tax structure in the U. S. that is truly fair and that includes the proposed “Fair Tax”. Each tax formula contains some exemptions. Tax authorities decide how much money they need or want. If an exemption or credit is provided, the required tax revenue is not reduced, the burden of paying for that exemption or credit is shifted to the non-exempt.

Without going into a discussion of the worthiness or reasonableness of these exemptions or credits in our tax codes it is well to remember that for every exemption or credit given, every one else, not in the privileged class, must pay more to make up for the revenue lost by the exemption or credit.

It applies to income tax, government grants, duties, welfare payments, however disguised, and bailouts to banks and private corporations.

INCOME TAX

The U. S. income tax is the most notorious unfair tax. It is so riddled with exemptions and special interests that it takes over 600 pages of closely written text and 893 forms to cover it, most of which is devoted to exemptions, credits, and other benefits which apply to limited numbers of people, industries, organizations, or corporations. It is so complex that tax professionals and even the IRS cannot fully explain the tax code. When you call to get an opinion of a tax point from the IRS, the IRS will tell you that the opinion given is not authoritative.

Some of the exemptions or credits incorporated in the income tax code are

Educator's expenses

IRA deduction

Blind (Why just blind? Why not deaf?)

All-electric and hybrid cars

IRA savings

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SALES TAX

There are many exemptions to the sales tax. Some of these are:
Prescription drugs. These are exempt because they are considered to be necessary medical expenses. I take aspirin daily under my doctor's orders. Since aspirin is purchased over the counter, and not with a written prescription, a sales tax is charged, yet aspirin is as much part of my medical regimen as are the prescription drugs for which no sales tax is imposed.

Professional services

Rents

Property purchases

Hair cuts

REAL-ESTATE TAX

Real estate taxes are supposed to pay for the services provided to the property owner by the taxing authority; police, sheriff's office, fire protection, and so forth. A person living in a McMansion pays more than one living in a hovel, the assumption is that the person living in an expensive house is richer than one living elsewhere. It's a form of income or wealth tax. Churches and schools are exempt.

SCHOOL TAX

Whether you have or ever have had children in the public school system you pay the school tax, directly if you are a homeowner, indirectly if you are a renter. Think of retirees who come to Florida after their children and grand children were educated in New Jersey.

GASOLINE TAX

The gasoline tax is supposed to provide for the construction and maintenance of roads and highways. A car that gets 40 miles a gallon pays half as much as a car that gets 20 miles a gallon for the same miles driven. And what about all-electric cars? They pay nothing towards the construction and maintenance of the roads that they are using.

DUTIES

Duties and customs are taxed on goods imported into the U. S. There are many exemptions and reduced rates that are listed in the code. Some are from developing nations

Antiques and works of art

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Onions

Frozen semen (non-frozen are charged)

Coking coal

Medicines

Information technology software

Shoulder pads

Laptops

SUBSIDIES (A short list.)

Ethanol

Sugar

Tobacco

Dual-fuel cars

How did the exemptions and credits get into the tax codes and why do we have grants and bailouts? Article I of the Constitution says in part “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging free speech . . . [or] to petition the government for a redress of grievances”. A Supreme Court decision gave corporation protection under Article I. It is because of the legislator’s desires that the credits or exemptions are put into law.

Before I go any further, let me examine what drives a typical legislator, a newly elected Congressman. A congressman is elected for a two-year term. The first priority of any elected official is to be re-elected. A Congressman may have only two years in which to convince his electorate that he is worthy of staying in office. He also has only two years in which to make his fortune for retirement if he doesn’t get re-elected. This is six years for a senator and four years for a president and his cabinet and appointees.

Money is the answer to their basic requirements. If you or other constituents want him to propose or vote on some legislation, what is the likelihood of him listening to you if there is a well-heeled lobbyist also trying to get his attention?

The influence of the lobbyist comes in three forms.

1. *Bribery*. Meals, trips to vacation spots, campaign contributions, cash, sex.
2. *Intimidation*. Threatened loss of power and perks by non-support.
3. *Propaganda*. Control of public opinion by news leaks and editorial content of the media, often buried in news reports.

How can the individual constituent or group of constituents

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Part Two: Off to War

The following morning we boarded a troop train headed for Travis (Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base). In the group were three doctors (Graves, Leuhrs and I) and about 90 Marines and Navy corpsmen. At Travis, we had a long overnight wait; sitting sprawled on the floor against a wall or resting against bags of personal gear. Some time the next afternoon, we finally were herded aboard a DC-6 for transport "overseas." As the list was checked it was noted that I was the senior officer in our replacement group (earlier date of rank than the other two LtOg)s so the crew let me sit in the cockpit and watch the colorful sunset over a solid cloud layer. In the middle of the night we landed at Shemya Island next to last of the Aleutians for refueling. Not much there - a single long airstrip with a few buildings on one side and a pile of rocks on the other.

It was mid morning when we landed at Haneda airport in Tokyo. As I walked into the terminal on my way to a check-in desk~ my legs felt wobbly and I almost fell. Within seconds it was over and I realized that I had been in an earthquake. Others around me muttered about this being a little one! !

The group was transported to Yokosuka Naval base where we were issued Marine fatigues, canteen & metal mess gear . We were housed two nights and then put aboard a Japanese sleeper train (upper & lower bunks, small & narrow and closely spaced) for an overnight trip to Osaka. From there we were transported to Kobe to a large warehouse where we waited along with a bunch of cargo for loading onto a ship already docked and loading (USS Thomas Jefferson, AP A 30). As we waited, a big muscular Marine (let's call him Frank) came up to me, almost in tears and asked if I had any pain medicine. Said his rear end hurt real bad. Here was a man who could tell many war stories, undoubtedly a veteran of many previous Marine campaigns. I had him drop his pants and lean over a crate. The cause of his pain was apparent. He had a large blue thrombosed hemorrhoid hanging at the anal verge. With the help of a couple of corpsmen, we opened a few boxes marked medical supplies. First on~ was a huge one containing nothing but Boric Acid ointment - no help. After a time we found a syringe and needle, some Novocaine, a knife and a couple of hemostats. We leaned him over the crate

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again, lanced the hemorrhoid and evacuated the clot. Relief was immediate and complete. Later, in Korea, Frank showed his gratitude many times by looking out for me. Somehow he could get needed items that supposedly weren't available, although we sometimes provided a bit of medical alcohol for him to barter. In spring, I sometimes had a problem going out into the bright sunshine after a session

in the operating room. This Marine happened to hear me mention it. Next day he handed me a new pair of sunglasses, aviator issue. I asked where in the world he found them, but he smiled and said, "Don't worry. They're free."

We were herded aboard ship and shown to a large room full of stacked bunks, typical of troop transport facilities. The scuttlebutt was that we were headed to Pusan, Korea to reinforce the troops holding that small section against the North Korean army. But we were not scheduled to get underway until the next day.

Several enlisted men in the group came to me to complain that they had tried to leave the ship on liberty for a few hours, but were told that no one was allowed ashore. I checked again with the ship's crew to make sure that we would not be departing until the next day. I figured that these men who would soon be in a combat zone needed some diversion, so I went along with a few dozen to the talk with the Marine sergeant guarding the main gate. He reiterated the "no one ashore" order. I asked to speak with his commanding officer. He tried a call on his telephone, but couldn't reach anyone. So I played the rank card, pointed out that these men in my charge would soon be in a combat situation, and that I was granting them four hours liberty, which I had the authority to do unless he could countermand it with higher authority.

With that he relented, and I joined the men in a beer joint just outside the gate, where we downed several beers and began to get acquainted. Later in Korea I found many of these men in E Medical Company, and I realized that this group had been requested to form the nucleus of a hospital company being created. After a couple of hours, I had had enough. I got up to leave and was quickly joined by what appeared to be the whole contingent, for the walk back to the ship. Suddenly I was a "leader of men." Back at the ship a check revealed all present and accounted for.

Next Month: Destination Korea.

Went for a short walk last night and noticed that the grills that prepare dumplings and pastries in the morning are used to cook skewered foods at night. In Beijing those sellers tend to congregate on one street but here they are found 2 – 3 on each block in this area. The skewers have small chunks of meat, tiny land or aquatic animals and small body parts of animals (yes, use your imagination). I came home and made some scrambled eggs rather than risking the skewers. Maybe on a Monday night when I have a week to recover from any possible mal effects.

Discovered some new areas this morning, though not necessarily on purpose. Cut through a couple small neighborhoods and decided to follow a road next to a canal that took me back to my neighborhood yesterday. Turns out there are dozens of canals in this part of Shanghai. Oh well. I discovered some interesting new neighborhoods. Many of them have the small, old buildings with laundry hanging on bamboo poles outside like flagpoles adorned with underwear and shirts. Finally found a familiar looking street and made it back to my neighborhood.

On my way back I purposely decided to check out the neighborhood behind my apartment complex. The buildings are slowly being demolished and it was kind of apparent why. That neighborhood is not just in the past century, but perhaps a couple centuries behind. The roads are too narrow for motor vehicles but that didn't really matter because it didn't look like anyone had cars anyway. Saw a couple people brushing their teeth in the street outside their front door, women on the street doing the laundry in a bucket with an old-fashioned washing board, and several others carrying their chamber pots down to the neighborhood chamber pot dumping station. Apparently no indoor plumbing in the buildings. This neighborhood is right next to a development of 8 buildings over 30 stories high with the underground parking garages and outside areas packed with new autos. Makes one appreciate how much we have and marvel at the contrasts in China.

Friday Evening

The briefing for the international students was actually quite informative. After lunch they even got each student a card to use with the transit system (subway, bus or taxi) and took everyone to campus on the bus so they would know which bus to take and how to

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get to the classroom building when they get off the bus.

One thing I did learn as part of the briefing is that the accounting program at the university, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFE), is rated #1 in all of China. No added pressure there. ;-)

After the meetings and tour of campus I had to come back to the apartment to finish preparing for classes. They did not have some of the materials I needed until I picked up the CD on campus this afternoon so I had extra work to do today. Still have a bit more prep work then time to get a good night's sleep for two days of classes and flying to and from Shenzhen.

March 23, 2009

Back from two long days of teaching. It was a good weekend for many reasons.

First, it is such a joy to teach here because the students are soooo enthusiastic and cheerful. I was a little worried that the international students might be more assertive and take over the class participation compared to the locals, but the Chinese students are just so enthusiastic about learning that there is no chance of that. The Chinese are not just attending classes to get the MBA, but also to absorb as much knowledge as they can and are so joyful and enthusiastic about it.

Second, having these two long days helped me get adjusted quickly to China time and get over jet lag. Traveling forced me to stay up until at least 10:30 each night and this morning I slept until 5 a.m. Yea!!! The thing about a 12 hour time difference and less than 3 hours of sleep per day is that it leaves you feeling as if somebody injected your entire body with Novocain leaving it numb all over. It's nice to have my body back and be on a regular schedule.

After classes Saturday they had a taxi waiting to whisk me to the airport. Checked in, cleared security and made it to the gate at 6:00 p.m., just as the plane was starting boarding for a 6:30 departure. Arrived in Shenzhen around 9:00, then had the taxi drive into the city, arriving at the hotel after 10:00. It's 800 miles away, about like traveling from Washington, DC to Melbourne. I fell into bed at 10:30 and slept until 4 a.m. After class on Sunday I took a taxi back to the airport for the return trip, fell into bed here around 10:30 and got a good night's sleep.

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While days are warm in Shanghai, it can still be in the 40s at night and in the early morning. The low nighttime temperature in Shenzhen is around 75 degrees with daytime highs in the 90s. Shenzhen is on the mainland side, right next to Hong Kong. Was sweating when I left Shenzhen but had to pull my jacket out of the bag when I got back to Shanghai last night.

Had a big traditional lunch with the students in Shenzhen. The food is all tasty but it is always interesting to see some of the dishes and tastes in China. One of the dishes had a chicken that was apparently boiled. The whole chicken, including head, feet and everything but feathers, was put on the plate and chopped into pieces with a meat cleaver or large knife. The dish was clean by the end of the meal. There was another plate of what appeared to be deep fried fish, about the size and appearance of just coming out of someone's aquarium but with sharp prongs on the fins. That plate was also empty by the end of the meal. I'll try to get some pictures on the next trip. The other dishes were mostly delicious vegetable dishes and meat dishes.

* * * * *

Just returned from the morning walk. Explored deeper into the short-building neighborhood behind my apartment building and found a whole market of fresh vegetables, animals, fish and eels, much like the neighborhood market near the apartment in Chengdu.

On the other side I found a huge park. People in China make good use of their parks. At 7:30 in the morning there were a couple groups doing ballroom dancing, some women exercising with fans, another group doing karate exercises, hundreds of people doing simple body stretches and exercises on their own, old men flying kites high in the sky, other retired men who brought their caged birds to the park to sing to each other while the men talk, and various other activities. The Chinese people use their parks most of the day for exercise at all ages.

The walk was much longer than I anticipated due to a few unplanned exploratory turns. That's a positive spin on getting lost. I just enjoy wandering so it didn't really bother me. Finally decided to admit defeat after two hours and pulled out the card with the address of the apartment building. But when I got to the corner to hail a taxi, I noticed the park directly across the street! Backtracked through the park and finally made it home.

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counter the lobbyist's influence? Only by hiring and paying for lobbyists with enough money to counter the millions of dollars that many lobbyists have at their disposal. Thus our elected officials, bar none, are perverted by lobbyists. It is not democracy. It is a system of government more similar to Medieval justice whereby each party would have a champion knight. The party with the most money would hire the most renowned champion and supply him with the best armaments and weapons.

The only true fair taxes were the poll tax, whereby if you wanted to vote, particularly to vote on tax matters, you paid a fee regardless of race, wealth, or other consideration; and the head tax, where each person paid the same tax. Both of these forms of taxation are not used in the U. S. today.

If anyone proposes a "fair" tax or even a "fairer" tax he or she is deluding him/her self. Unless that tax has no exemptions and no possibility of latter adding exemptions, those exempt will reap a benefit and the rest of the taxpayers must take up the slack.

Inside the Pocket Protector*Continued*

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Membership Notes. The July birthdays will be listed in the August issue (along with the August birthdays). This month, I will use this column to welcome the following members to our Local Group. We welcome two new members: Laura Melnick and Shea Minter.

Mary Erdmann has reinstated her membership: Welcome back!

Finally, Katherine Berkenbile has moved in; she is now a member of SCAM. Welcome to all of you.

SCAM Calendar of Events for July 2009

1st - 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.

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

21st - Tuesday 7:00 PM

BASEBALL GAME

Join us at Space Coast Stadium in Viera for a night of baseball. Admission is \$7, Parking is free.

Contact: *George Patterson, 777-3721 for more info.*

25th - 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.*

Calendar Updates

ATTENTION SCAM MEMBERS!

Every effort is made to bring to you an accurate up-to-date Calendar of Events. However, last minute changes can and do occur past newsletter deadline. For up-to-date info, visit spacecoast.us.mensa.org and click on "Calendar".

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.*

My lovely wife and I have finally arrived at a point in our lives where we are enviably comfortable. We're not rich, nor are we yet retired, but we are happy. Our lifestyle suits us and we are financially sound enough to be able to afford pretty much anything we really need and most of what we really want. Admittedly, our preferences tend to be sedentary and conservative, but that's the way we like it.

Our three dotters; however, don't get it.

Recently, we were up in Jacksonville to attend a concert with our youngest femchild. Whilst driving to the venue in St. Augustine, my dotter happens to glance over and notices my watch.

"Dad? Is that duct tape on your watch band?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you just get a new watch band?"

"Well," I explain, "ordinarily, I would; however, this watch band is integrated into the watch and isn't replaceable."

"So, why don't you just get a new watch?"

"Because there's nothing wrong with the watch (a cheap Timex). It's just the plastic watch band that aged, got brittle, and broke."

"But you're wearing a watch band with duct tape on it."

"And? Your point..."

"You can certainly afford a new watch."

"Sure, but I don't need a new watch. This watch keeps excellent time. And besides, I know how to work it. I know which button gives me the date; which button produces that eerie, greenish glow so I can tell what time it is if I am inadvertently buried alive; and what sequence of buttons I have to push twice a year to correct the time change. Plus if I got a new watch, it probably wouldn't match the tan lines from this one."

She sighs. She doesn't get it.

I have clothes older than my children. Eldest femchild often remarks that she has seen me wearing particular items of clothing for as long as she can remember (she will imminently be 30).

"Why don't you get some new clothes?"

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Now it's my turn to sigh. This conversation has taken place before. "Because I don't need new clothes," I tell her.

"Yes, but your clothes are old."

"And? Your point..."

"Well, you can certainly afford new clothes."

"Yes, I can; however the clothes I have suit me just fine. They're still serviceable. They fit. They're comfortable. They're familiar; I know how they feel. And I don't really care much about having the latest styles, so why should I get new clothes?"

"Because they're old."

She doesn't get it.

Middle femchild recently returned from a fabulous excursion to New Orleans and when she told us about it, it sounded like so much fun that we decided we would take our vacation there this year. Neither of us having been there and hearing tales of phenomenal eats, we were eager to plan our N'walins holiday. However, as we discussed scheduling, figuring in a buffer period afterwards to just chill and relax before returning to business as usual, the more we came to the realization that we were more enthusiastic about the prospect of loafing at home than the excitement of The Big Easy.

Middle dotter asks, "So, when are you going to New Orleans?"

"Errr...", I extemporize whilst frantically trying to figure out a way to explain. "Actually, your mother and I have been thinking about it and we're considering changing our plans."

"You're not going to New Orleans? I thought you were excited about it. So, where do you plan to go instead?"

"Err..., well, actually..., we weren't thinking of going anywhere."

"You mean you're not going to take a vacation this year?"

"Err..., umm..., ahh..., not exactly."

"Whaddya mean 'not exactly?'"

"Well..., ahh..., umm..., you see, we were thinking of just staying at home."

"WHAT?!!, You mean, you'd rather stay at home than go to New Orleans?"

"Yes."

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In today's society almost everyone believes he is entitled. Entitled to everything whether he is working or not.

Let's take a realistic look at compensation. At the end of the week when Joe Sixpack gets his check he is even. Even? Joe worked his required hours and did the job he was supposed to do. The employer received Joe's services that made the business run profitably. They are both even. What Joe was paid for extras of health insurance, pension plan, social security, free cafeteria, etc. is part of the "even".

Many employers publish work standards and what an employee is entitled to if he is honorably terminated. These include so many weeks of compensation, health care and other benefits. Again, part of the "even".

Now people think their employer is required to continue their pay whether they work or not. You are a bad guy if you feel the employer is making a profit so he can stay in business.

Washington does not realize what is going on in the real world. Seventy-five percent (75%) of all U.S. business have 20 or less employees. That is 4.5 million employers providing paychecks to more than 45,000,000 folks every week. Many times the boss goes home with nothing because payroll comes first.

Remember Microsoft started in Bill Gates garage and he struggled those first few years just like everyone does starting a new business.

Now the give-away artists in Congress are pandering for votes by promising you won't have to work or even look for a job because they are going to see you get unemployment check every week forever. That really means those who are working are paying for those who stay home.

No, I am not against unemployment compensation. But it should not be so people can maintain their current life style. They can get along without a cell phone and a second car and going to the beauty parlor weekly and having pizza delivered, etc, etc., etc.

We have been spoiled into thinking we must have a certain kind of job. When you need income anything will do while the search continues for that special employment.

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There is nothing wrong with minimum wage when it is a choice of that or no wage at all. Depending on your previous job you might have to start over at the bottom in another profession. Much better than watching TV at home and feeling sorry for yourself.

Your employer is a working man just like you. He doesn't want to lay off anyone, but is limited by the amount of business that comes in the door.

Every day the newspapers list thousands of jobs. They may not be what you want, but they can fill the gap of what you need now.

A positive attitude will carry you through. You can be proud of yourself no matter what the occupation.

You may receive Al Thomas' investment letter that profited 10% in 2008 at no charge for 3 months on the web site www.mutualfundmagic.com Never lose money in the stock market again. His book "IF IT DOESN'T GO UP, DON'T BUY IT!" has become a classic. Copyright 2009. Williamsburg Investment Co. All rights reserved.

A Mensan in the Workplace?

Are 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*.

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I feel like this is my first free minute since arriving. Seems like I've been swamped with the meetings, trips to the university and police station, last minute preparations, and then teaching all day and traveling. It feels nice to finally have a moment of free time. It is cold here today, though, with the high probably around 50 degrees. Good walking weather.

I uploaded some photos to: www.myspace.com/stanhelm

They are in the Shanghai 2009-1 album. You can double click on any photo to enlarge it.

A Mensan in the family?

Are 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?

ANNOUNCING A NEW SIG!

C# Java C#

Join the Computer Science SIG. Any Computer Science topics from work or school are welcome. To join email Michael Zielinski at mikez23@aol.com or compscisig@yahoogroups.com.

Silence.

“Why? You can certainly afford a vacation.”

“Yeah, sure, we can afford it. But we just like the idea of a ‘staycation’ better. Look, we’re really comfortable here. The only thing we don’t have is time. Time to do the fun things we enjoy doing. So if we just take time off from the regular routine, we can hang around and do the things we want to do: read, laze in the pool, go out to eat every night, nap whenever we want to, play with our ‘toys’ (no, you nasty-minded readers, not *those* kinds of toys: crafts for her, computer for me), go to a matinee, basically do whatever we feel like doing whenever we feel like doing it.”

“And you’d rather loaf around the house than go to some exciting place and have fun?”

“Yes.”

Silence.

She doesn’t get it.

And then there’s our cars. My wife and I both drive cars that would qualify as borderline antiques if they weren’t so dilapidated. All 3 femchids are unified in a persistent tirade concerning our vehicles. If reluctantly relegated to riding in one of our cars, the inevitable first question is always, “When are you going to get a new (or, at least, *newer*) car?”

To which the answer is always the same: “Why?”

“Because your car looks like cr@p!”

“And? Your point...”

“Well, you can certainly afford new cars.”

“Yes, we can; however, we don’t *need* new cars. Our cars run. They have radios and A/C that work. Everything else is a bonus. We don’t have car payments and we’re waaaaay past the stage where our transportation is a reflection on either ourselves or our lifestyles. When one of our cars dies, we’ll replace it. In the meantime, they suit us just fine.”

They just don’t get it.

But, eventually, they will!

The George

Recently, I have come across an essay critical of Islam where its author opined that it is the patriotic duty of Americans to engage in a “USA Civil War Against Islam.” “Why?”, you may ask. Well, according to the writer, “Islam is a political ideology of violence. The origin if Islam is that of violence.” He likens Islam to other enemies of democracy such as Nazism and Fascism.

What disturbs me is not so much the author’s anti-Islamic views, but the fact that some nations ruled under Islamic law are indeed totalitarian dictatorships, hell-bent on imposing their rule – and their version of Islam – worldwide. What also must be taken into account, however, is that Islam has indeed been born of violence.

Let us now consider some statements of religious doctrine here.

“Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”⁽¹⁾

“...You shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them...lest they teach you according to all their abominations...”⁽²⁾

“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of this city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious...’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones...”⁽³⁾

These are just three of the many quotations of a sacred text where one could conclude the religion is based on violence, even to one’s own kin. Do we really wish to accept any religion whose tenets would advocate this sort of violence? Is, then, the Qur’an - the very basis of Islam - actually an advocacy of violence as the above quotes seem to indicate? Maybe.

There is, however, one slight detail we might be tempted to overlook. The above quotes were not extracted from the Qur’an, but from the Old Testament of the Holy Bible. If we are to indict a religion on the basis of these three statements (and there are so many more...), we actually would indict two: Judaism and Christianity. So much for our great nation’s so-called Judeo-Christian ethic!

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So, if we were to engage in a “Civil War Against Islam,” should that war not also be against Judaism and Christianity as well? Most, if not all, world religions do include violence in some form in their tenets, so would the patriotic thing to do be to declare war against all religion? Somehow, I do not believe that would fly.

There is a better way. The idea is not new; in fact, the issue of religion is effectively dealt with in the U.S. Constitution - not once, but twice. The more familiar provision is embodied in the First Amendment: “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;...*”. There is, however, yet another provision: Article 6, which states in pertinent part: “*The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.*”

From the above, two principles should be evident. First, The United States never has, and never will have, an official religion. Second, all people under U.S. jurisdiction are guaranteed the right to worship as they please. Of course, this freedom, like any other, is not absolute. Since religious freedom is the right of all, the limit of such freedom is that no one has the right to interfere with the same right of others. All religions are (and should be) welcome here, but only to the extent that it does not threaten anyone of any other (or no) religious belief. It is time we strictly enforce those limitations to protect the rights of all.

Sources: (Note: All are from New King James Version)

1. Deuteronomy 19:21
2. Deut. 20:16-17 (in the context of conquering certain cities).
3. Deut. 21:18-21.

Earlier this evening, while watching the local Mickey Mouse News – albeit this time, fully awake – I came across a mildly interesting story. The question raised in this segment was whether localities were issuing more speeding tickets as a means of raising revenue in these lean times.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the question is never answered. The newscaster reports that there is, indeed, stepped up enforcement of speed laws taking place. The local official maintains they are doing this to save lives. One statistic is now thrown at the audience: there are 200 fewer traffic deaths this year. What we don't know is if this statistic is local or statewide, or what the life savings can be attributed to (like maybe less traffic).

At this point, the newscaster interviews a driver who just got a speeding ticket. The driver states that, with these hard times, the ticket will cut into his family's budget. He then asserts his belief that the increase in ticketing for speeding is to raise revenue.

Instinctively, I believe the driver may be on to something. Times are tough, and Florida is the site of a tax revolt of sorts. The nagging question; how do we know it's true? The story is not very informative, as it offers no clues. The town official denies it, the driver says it is so. Who do we believe?

We, of course, need some additional information. First, are there actually more speeders? If so, that might account for the increase in tickets: More people to ticket, and a possible indication of a problem indicating the need for a crackdown.

My second question is in two parts. Part A: What was the average clocked speed of violators before the increase in citations? Part B: What was the average speed of the violators after that point? If the average in Part B is lower, this might indicate the driver is correct in his assessment.

Question #3: It has long been the practice of law enforcement officers to not issue speeding tickets if the driver is not driving more than five or ten miles an hour over the limit. Thus, are there more tickets issued for violators who drive only a few miles an hour over the limit? If this is the case, it might corroborate the "revenue" argument. Additionally, if this is the case, it certainly would not explain the additional lives saved on the road, as the

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rationale is the faster you go, the more likely you will wind up involved in a traffic fatality.

Any good investigative news report would have explored these questions and more, bringing us closer to the truth of the “safety vs. revenue” debate. But that will never happen here. Mickey (ABC to those who don’t know) is not about facts, he is about entertainment and selling his sponsors’ wares. And that’s too bad...



<i>ExCommunication</i>

Continued

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erence to those who prefer this approach.

Terry raised the question of revising the Bylaws. It was agreed that some serious work would be done on same at next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53. Next meeting will be at George Patterson’s house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, July 1, 2009 at 5:30 pm.

I want to thank the voters of Region 10 for entrusting me with your representation on the AMC. My opponent is a good, decent and honorable man who would have done a fine job as RVC, and I'm sorry both of us couldn't have been elected. I plan to spend the next two years honoring the trust of those who voted for me, and earning the trust of those who didn't.

There's going to be a Region 10 meet and greet at the AG in Pittsburgh, and I hope many of you will stop by. It's a great way to meet other Florida Mensans from outside your local group. There are still some Florida Mensans I haven't met yet, and I hope to remedy that situation in part at the AG.

The AMC, Mensa's national governing body, will be meeting at the AG, and all members are welcome to come and observe. Most of the action in Mensa happens at the local group level, and sometimes it's easy to forget that Mensa is also a corporation with 50,000 members and a multi-million dollar annual budget. If

you want to see the nuts and bolts of how Mensa is governed, please stop by the AMC meeting, at least for a while. (It's a six hour meeting so unless you have masochistic tendencies you probably won't want to stay for the whole thing.)

Nominations have been announced for annual awards for local newsletters, and as is usual the 4-M, the newsletter for the Manatee/Sarasota Counties group, is in line for several awards. Congratulations to editor Edgar Coudal and his group of volunteers.

Finally, I plan to visit every local group at least once a year, and will start visiting local groups in September. If your local group is having an event that you would specifically like me to attend, please let me know. I look forward to meeting and visiting with many more of you as I travel throughout the state.

Until then, if anyone has any questions, problems, issues, or (especially) good ideas, please let me know. Until next month,

Mel Dahl

Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, June 3, 2009. Called to order at 5:25 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

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

Welcome Guests: None

Minutes for the May 6, 2009 meeting were approved as published in the June 2009 SCAM.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 for the purpose of seating the new ExComm.

The new ExComm was called to order at 5:28 by LocSec George Patterson.. All positions on the new ExComm are as before, all members expressing satisfaction with that arrangement. It was noted, for the record, that the full ExComm was re-elected, in the May voting, by the nearly unanimous vote of 12 voters. Also for the record, it was an uncontested election of five people for five positions.

Officer Reports:

LocSec: Bud was unexpectedly sent out of town on business before completing the May Treasurer's report. (We are not concerned.) His meeting with the Audit Committee will be rescheduled either later in the month, or after the ExComm meeting next month.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported that one candidate was tested in May. He learned of Mensa from the recent "CBS Sunday" TV segment. Five prospects were contacted for the first time, and 15 others for the second or third time. The next test is scheduled for June 20 at the Central Brevard Library. Hank also reported that the library may no longer be available after September 30. Situation is under review.

New Business: George moved that all appointees be reappointed, except for the RG Committee chair. Seconded by Terry. Approved unanimously. (See page 2 for current appointees) Joe Smith volunteered for the position of RG Committee chair and was approved by a vote of 3-0 with Joe himself abstaining, in def-

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