

The

SCAM

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CAUTION: This Family Newsletter
may contain Adult Content.





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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

After nearly six years as your Editor, and having now produced 70 issues of The SCAM, one of the things I continually marvel at is the sheer power of words. In writing, and in editing, I find more and more that the choice of words is everything.

Does this mean I rank myself among the master wordsmiths of all time? Hardly. As anyone who reads these pages on a regular basis can readily attest, I am at best a rank amateur. Yet, I have come to realize and appreciate the power of words. I should also like to point out that this power is especially present in common everyday words we use in our modern language.

This month, I would like to reflect on the power of two such common words we use all the time: “Family” and “Adult”. What do we mean when we utter these two words? It is certainly common knowledge that a family normally means a group of people bonded by kinship brought about by common genetics and/or marriage.

We also know an adult is someone who is no longer a child, generally accepted as one who is past the age of 18 (or 21); he or she remains an adult for the balance of his or her life. Yet these meanings are just the “official” ones; what do we *really* mean by “adult” and “family”?

Please allow me to digress for a moment or two, so I can give some insight as to my reasons for engaging in this discussion. One

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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.

The June issue of the *Mensa Bulletin*, under a section entitled “*The Best (and Worst) Advice. . .*” paraphrased the crux of a chapter of my book *The Toilet Tractate*. The book is out of print. I am working on a revision which I hope to complete some time this year. For those of you whose interest has been piqued by the entry in the *Mensa Bulletin*, the following is a copy of the relevant chapter. Enjoy.

A LAVATORY IS A PLACE TO WASH

In other chapters I have discussed such excruciatingly important subjects such as the name of a private room, the positioning of toilet seats, who was Crapper, the difference between Oriental and Occidental toilets, the position of females when urinating, the various terms for excrement, and how to hang toilet paper.

Now I am going to get even more personal. Those of you who prefer not follow me on this journey should read no further.

We are being exhorted more and more to wash our hands after using the toilet. Even so, a 1996 a survey found that only 60% of the people using the public toilets in Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central Station in New York washed their hands afterwards. Two years ago the survey was repeated. The percentage went down to 49.

The American Society for Microbiology and other groups have campaigned for us to wash our hands. At first it was only a mild admonition, then it became signs in restaurants directing employees, after that signs appeared in other public toilets for everyone, electronic devices appeared to monitor conformance with directives (*Information Week*, May 25, 1998), no doubt, soon there will be laws mandating the practice.

This chapter is addressed to men because it is the only first-hand experience that I have.

Why all this hype and pressure? Is a man’s penis dirtier than other parts of his body? Let’s examine the facts and see where it leads us.

Let’s take you as a typical American male. You awaken in the morning, use the toilet, and take a shower. At that point in time all parts of your body are equally clean. You dress, pick up the newspaper from the lawn in front of the house where who knows how many

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dogs have urinated and defecated, and have breakfast.

You get into your car and on your way to work you get some gas using the same hose that everyone else has used and then give your credit card to a clerk. He handles your card with his bare hands the same way that he has handled the cards of a dozen customers before you.

You enter your office by turning the handle of the door which has been touched by every employee that preceded you to your office. You probably shake hands with several of your coworkers as you enter. Before starting work you decide to urinate. So, off to the office men's room you go. There you either push open the door with your hand or turn a knob to get in.

Then what do you do? If like most men, you belly up to the urinal, unzip your trousers and pull out your penis, and do what you must do. Then you put your penis back, zip up your trousers, and on your way out you see a sign suggesting that you wash your hands before returning to work and as a conscientious employee you do.

Whoops, what's wrong here? Has your penis, which has been under your clothing since you took your shower this morning, somehow soiled your hands which have been every where and touched everything? How did your penis manage to dirty your hands? Unless you urinated on you hands, which I most emphatically doubt, but even if you did, but that is a subject for another essay, there was no transfer of dirt from your penis to your hands, but rather from your hands to your penis. Then why are you told to wash your hands after you urinated but not before?

The outside of your penis is no more laden with bacteria and viruses than the rest of the skin on your body, in fact, under the described scenario, less so.

But your penis is "dirty" people will say. Is that true? "Dirty" has at least two meanings. It is obvious from the above scenario that your penis is cleaner (in the sense of contamination) than your hands. But since most Americans are imbued with the Victorian concept that sex is "dirty" then it follows that any part of the body that is directly involved in the sex act is "dirty" and, like Lady Macbeth's hands, can never be washed clean. The moral "dirty" has been transformed into the unsanitary. Thus we are admonished to wash our hands after touching our "dirty" penises.

Part Three: Destination Korea

The next morning the ship was underway, and the following sun told us that we were heading west. When we were out of sight of land, out in the Sea of Japan, an important announcement came over the ship's intercom. We were en route to Korea, but not to Pusan as we suspected, but would be participating in an assault landing at Inchon, Korea! Individual units were instructed to assemble for appropriate briefing. But we were not yet a unit! Just a bunch of individuals comprising a replacement draft. Not equipped for combat (782 gear). I asked several senior officers for advice. Where do we get the needed 782 gear? Who leads our group? and what is our assignment? I was the senior officer in our replacement group, but I knew almost nothing about the military, going from civilian life into combat without the benefit of boot camp.

I was advised to have our group report to the 1st Medical battalion which should have landed by the time we went ashore. Again, I guess I was the leader. 782 gear? The troops had brought their own and the ship did not carry any such stock. We would be subject to enemy fire without benefit of a helmet or a weapon. One officer offered a simplistic solution: There would be casualties as we hit the beach, so "pick up a helmet, weapon, ammo and whatever else you need from one of the casualties!"

As we approached Inchon in late afternoon, we passed a number of ships including a battleship (Missouri) that would be firing salvos of 16 inch rounds over our heads into enemy positions. The ship slowed and dropped anchor and we could see and hear the firefight going on in Inchon. The scuttlebutt was that the Marines had already taken Wolmiwdo island (15 Sept) and were already in Inchon. We were assigned stations for debarking. But there was a lot of confusion as light faded into darkness. Then the announcement: "*Debarking has been delayed to 0600 hours.*"

The next morning things seemed a little better organized. We assembled on deck in our assigned area and waited, waited About two hours later it was our turn and we were led up to an area where a cargo net had been thrown over the side. No instructions - just "*Over the side!*" So, like insects caught in a massive spider web, we clung to the net with both hands while feet searched for the interstices below. A landing craft bobbed in the water below us. Near the

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bottom, someone grabbed my foot and placed it on a flat section of the craft, then helped steady my body as I almost fell backward. Wasn't long before we were packed like sardines, except that we were vertical in the container. The roar of the engine drowned out any thought of conversation, as we all wondered what kind of greeting would be there for us at landing. Suddenly, the craft ran aground and the front flopped down in the water. And then a short walk through shallow water and we were on land. Scars of recent shelling were evident. One large building was still burning. All around us men were coming ashore, most armed and ready for combat. And near a docking area there was a growing mountain of equipment and supplies. A Marine with a clipboard seemed to be in charge, giving directions. He responded quickly to my question. *"First Med battalion is down that road left hand side, bout a quarter of a mile."* In the distance we could hear intermittent cracks and booms of the continuing fire fight. And some of it was coming from the direction we were headed.

A small compound of tents turned out to be the 1st Med battalion headquarters. Our group reported and within minutes I was talking with Commander Johnson. He said, *"Stewart, we just had a battalion surgeon hit by mortar fire, has a compound injury of the shoulder. Gather up your gear and a driver will take you up to replace him."* I explained that I had nothing except minimal personal gear, had no 782 gear. So he directed me over to a supply tent where I was issued the battle gear. One problem was that the carbine handed to me was still in its closed sheath, imbedded in a generous coat of cosmo line. It would take a lot of work to make that weapon serviceable. A Marine standing nearby noticed my look of consternation and said, *"Here, let's swap. You may need this pretty soon."* With that he handed me his immaculate M-2 carbine and he took the package I was holding. He added several clips of ammo and a bandoleer of spare ammo.

Next month: **Good Fortune**

Quiet week here. After sending out the first update on Monday, I decided to lay down for a short nap. Slept from 3 pm. till 3 am. Must have needed it.

After stopping by the university yesterday to drop off my receipts from the Shenzhen trip, I caught a cab to Old Town section at the far end of the Bund. Turns out the Bund is all torn up with construction on the street so it took about 20 minutes to do the last mile. Shanghai is hosting the World Expo next year so I'm guessing they are trying to get everything perfect before then in the tourist areas.

Old town is actually just a big area of shops selling tourist trinkets. In addition to the shops it seems like every other person who walks past you mutters in a furtive voice: *"Hello. Buy a watch? Very cheap."* The next person: *"Hello. Buy a watch? Very cheap"* and so on. I will shop later but went yesterday primarily for a little sight-seeing and as a starting point for a 6 mile walk back to the apartment.

Stopped at the Bund's riverfront park on the way back to snap some pictures of the Pearl Tower and a couple having their wedding with the Pearl Tower as a backdrop. Each time I stopped to take pictures a guy would try to strike up a conversation in English. I hate being rude but started walking each time because every time a person tries to start an English conversation in a tourist area, it means they're up to something that will cost more than \$100 U.S. They typically want to stop to get coffee or a beer to converse and practice their English, but the places they take you charge several hundred RMB, typically more than \$100 USD for that cup of coffee or beer. It's usually young girls that do the luring but they must have been busy today because it was guys instead.

The Bund is a stretch of buildings and a park along the Huangpu River and is one of the major tourist sites in Shanghai. The buildings are from the late 19th and early 20th century, western architecture that formerly housed major banks and businesses from European countries.

The Pearl Tower is actually a 1500 foot tall TV and radio tower but has spherical bulbs at different levels with observation decks and a restaurant. There is a museum of Shanghai history at the

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base of the tower. It is one of the major tourist sites in Asia.

I was at first surprised to see so many Chinese tour groups at the Bund, but then it made sense. Shanghai to the Chinese is much like NYC is for Americans. The Bund and Pearl Tower are major landmarks so it makes sense that Chinese tour groups would be visiting the area.

Went out for a ½ hour walk last night that turned into a 2-hour walk instead due to some unplanned exploratory turns. A lot of curved streets in this part of Shanghai and it is easy to get turned around. I had made a note of a couple buildings with an ugly olive color when I started my exploring and thought I could use them to guide myself back. Couldn't find them (a) because of all the other tall buildings that block the view, and (b) because they are painted white instead of olive green on the other two sides of the buildings. Who would think of looking over their shoulder to see if a 20-story building is different colors on the back sides? Oh well. It was an interesting walk. Now that I know how to get back from there I followed that road instead of the main road to get home from this morning's walk.

This morning I wandered down to a big discount shopping area for Chinese people that I read about in a magazine but which is not mentioned in any of the normal city guides. Only one store that sells American-sized clothes, or so I was told by a guy who followed me all the way down the block trying to get me into the store. I crossed the street at the end of the block, only to find his partner hounding me all the way back in the other direction. I wasn't looking for clothes. Just exploring.

Decided to stop for a haircut on my way back. Rather than stop at a place on the main street, I decided to seek out a barbershop on a side street near the apartment. Found a place with a barber pole and two chairs inside with a woman getting her hair cut in one so I knocked on the door and pointed toward my hair. The woman barber said something in Chinese that I did not understand so I motioned as to whether I should go or stay. She opened the door and pointed to the empty seat. In hindsight, I think she was telling me that she was working on the other customer and it would be about 30 minutes.

I sat patiently and looked around while she worked on the other customer. After being there a few minutes, I wasn't sure it looked

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Welcome to SCAM and Mensa:

Tristan Kahl
Christopher Moss

Welcome Back:

Stephen Dumolt
Paula Fields-Beckner
James Tomor
Alan Zimmerman

JULY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

4th	Chari Fry	23rd	C. Scott McBride
9th	Michael Zielinski	27th	Paul Hargraves
14th	Ellen Lee Owen	28th	Thomas Wheat
18th	Colin Foo	28th	Pepper Stevens
20th	Mary Kay Dailey	30th	Jason Harris
20th	Jeffrey Barbour	31st	Greer Maeder

AUGUST BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

2nd	James Vanaman	15th	William Lamoureux
4th	William Armstrong	15th	Jeffrey Engel
5th	Michael Lawley	22nd	Shirley Jones
11th	Cypryan Klish II	26th	Ronald Wallace
12th	Robert Petrie	29th	Chester Young
13th	Ronald Gaynor	30th	David MacMakin

ANNOUNCING A NEW SIG!

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.

SCAM Calendar of Events for August 2009

5th - 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 Paterson in Indialantic.

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

22nd - Saturday 7:00 PM

SOCIAL

George and Barbara host an evening of socializing to which our recent prospective members are also invited. There will also be a round table discussion for ideas to improve our social calendar, so bring some ideas with you. With any luck, the evening will degenerate into a games night. Light refreshments will be provided. No kitty.

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

25th - Tuesday 7:00 PM

BASEBALL GAME

Join us at Space Coast Stadium in Viera for a night of baseball. Find us along the aisle just to the right of Home Plate. Admission is \$7, Parking is free.

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

29th - Saturday 6:00 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1411 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

Contact: *George, 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.*

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like the cleanest place in town (was sure it was closer to the dirtiest, actually) and was wondering how obvious I would look if I picked up my jacket, slid by them and back out the door that I didn't know how to open. Decided to just stay.

Watched in the mirror as she was cutting the other woman's hair with a comb and straight-edged razor. Had never seen that before. When she finished cutting it, she pulled two large tubes out of a box. Squirted about 6 ounces of green goop into a bowl, and then about 6 ounces of white goop. Mixed them together with a comb to make light green goop. They stylist (can I call her that?) then put a couple plastic covers over the woman customer's ears, making her look like a Chinese Princess Leah, and then used a comb to work the light green goop thoroughly into the woman's hair. I tell you, this stop was worth it just for the entertainment value. From the ammonia-like smell of the goop I'm guessing it was hair coloring but the woman appeared to have Chinese Black hair before the goop was applied.

Then the barber decided to work on me while the goop was setting. It was time for the other woman to watch me in the mirror while the two of them talked. This was not the cleanest place I've ever been into, and certainly not up to U.S. standards, so I was a little worried she might use the same razor and goop covered comb on me. Instead, she pulled out other tools and gave me the best haircut I've ever gotten in China. Will have to go back for another before I return home. Cost 10 RMB, about \$1.35 U.S.D.

When I got back to the apartment the maid was here. Thank goodness because I was nearly out of clean dishes, socks and underwear. Was going to work on the computer but then she started to mop the floor so I decided it was a good day to eat lunch out rather than have something here. Went to the noodle place the guy showed me last week but had curry chicken and rice instead of noodles.

Was also running out of heavy shirts and layers to wear. The temp here is still high 30s to low 40s at night and about 50 – 55 during the day.

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of the perks of being Editor is that I am on the mailing list for all the local group newsletters throughout Florida. They vary in size and content. As time has progressed, I have noticed changes in some of the newsletters.

Most significant to me was a change introduced in one particular newsletter a year or so ago, when it began to proclaim: “*Our Monthly Family Newsletter*”. I wondered: Why was that change made, and what did its Editor mean by this new proclamation?

Outside of the “official” meaning of the two terms, what do the words “family” and “adult” mean to us? Let us start with “adult”. Over the last thirty-some odd years, “adult”, when used as an adjective, has come to imply something explicitly sexual or pornographic. It saddens me to see such a term as “adult conversation” which used to mean anything grownups chose not to discuss in front of their children (examples: work and economic issues, medical issues faced by a loved one, or, for that matter, any topic of discussion deemed beyond the understanding of young kids) degenerate to mean only matters of a pornographic or similarly inappropriate nature.

Likewise, it appears that “family”, when used as an adjective, now seems to apply to only those subjects likely to be approved by a fundamentalist preacher for discussion in the presence of six-year-olds in his Sunday School class. When did these two words become euphemisms for concepts totally unrelated to the original meanings ascribed to them? Perhaps, one of our members would like to tackle this as a subject of a future column.

This brings us back to *The SCAM*. If you take “adult” to mean a grownup, *The SCAM* is explicitly written for an adult audience. With roughly 9 out of every 10 members of our group being an adult, it would seem like the obvious thing to do. So, in this sense, *The SCAM* is adult literature. As for our younger members, it is our intent to allow their parents to exercise their discretion as to suitability of content. That’s why these newsletters are mailed “To The Parents of...”

Yet, if you take “family” to mean persons bonded to one another by kinship as I stated above, *The SCAM* may be considered a family newsletter as well.

As for me, I consider the current connotations given to these two words an unfortunate corruption of their intended meaning, and certainly an egregious example of abuse of the power of words.

I work in a cubicle farm.

For those of you who may have been living in a cave for the past 40 or so years, a cubicle farm is an office environment consisting of partially enclosed workspaces, separated from neighboring workspaces by partitions that are usually five to six feet tall.

One of the consequences of working in a cubicle farm is that you tend to see the same people over and over again during the course of a typical day. And like as not, there is a very high probability that you will be exposed to the OARS pandemic.

And what exactly is OARS?

Funny you should ask.

OARS is a pervasive inclination to utter essentially meaningless rhetoric, generally actuated by the proximity of another individual.

F'rinstance: "*Hihowareya?*"

Hihowareya (one word) is an inane sound uttered in the general direction of anyone within hearing distance to acknowledge the existence of the other person, bereft of content. The last thing the utterer wants to hear is how you actually are. Heaven forefend should you respond with something like, "*Well, my back is acting up again and this damp weather is wreaking havoc with my arthritis and just last week I had to take Daisy, my three-legged llama, to the vet's because she'd developed the worst case of shingles I've ever seen in a camelid...*" This will evoke a look of panic and is virtually assured to provoke a flee response: "*Err... yeah... well... I really gotta go.*"

The expected acknowledgement to "*Hihowareya*" is "Good (or great or swell or hunky-dory), how are you?" In fact, so conditioned are we to this automatic exchange of blather that oftentimes my answering grunt will interpreted as having provided the scripted response and the person will continue with the rote acknowledgement "I'm doing great, thanks," and be merrily on his or her way, having fulfilled the protocols associated with this particular mandated mundane muttering.

If I'm feeling particularly curmudgeonly, my riposte to the "*Hihowareya*" blurt will be "*What are you, the beneficiary to my in-*

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urance policy?” Having thus departed from the scripted response, this will usually elicit a look of confusion and a stuttered “Whaaa??”

Most often; however, my standard reply is an enthusiastic “*Stinkingly wonderful!*”

I did not originate this phrase. I had a co-worker, lo these forty or so years ago, who unfailingly used this answer and achieved particularly satisfying results with it, so I took the liberty of “borrowing” it and have been eminently pleased ever since. For, you see, a cheerful “*Stinkingly wonderful*” creates immediate confusion. Is this a favorable reply or an indication of misfortune? As the perplexed OARS victim sputters, I am able to make an opportune exit.

Then there’s the ubiquitous “*How’s it going?*”

My standard response is “*How’s what going?*”

Occasionally, I will substitute “*Depends on the antecedent to ‘it.’*” Most OARS sufferers don’t know what an antecedent is and will rush off in pursuit of a latte at this point. Of the few who do happen to know the term (required knowledge back in the day when students learned to diagram sentences), it will cause them to do a mental *Ctrl-Alt-Delete* reboot as they search for meaning amongst the meaningless. In either case, I am left to freely go about my business.

Finally, we come to the parting felicitation: “*Have a good one!*”

Upon close examination, we find the absurdity in this phrase when considering the circumstances. We’re at *work* for goodness sake! It’s too late to have a good one. We’d settle for a short one, the quicker to be over it. A good one would be totally out of the question. Preposterous! An exercise in moving hot air.

There is only one proper response to this inanity: “Have a good one *what?*” On special occasions, I am also known to reply with: “If it’s really good, can I have another one?” Either way, the conversation (such as it is) ends abruptly.

In case you haven’t noticed, I’m not a big fan of programmed response. If I ask you how you are, it will be in the context of an actual conversation in which I am expressing an interest in your well-being, not as an expulsion of air through my vocal chords intended merely to fill the auditory void between us.

Well-meaning though most people may be when they exhibit their OARS symptoms, I nevertheless just can’t bring myself to con-

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As I write these words, the most recent political scandal is the recent disappearance and sexual affair of the well-married Republican Governor of South Carolina, Mark Sanford. This event gives me yet another opportunity to point out another example of hypocrisy among the “social conservative” Republicans, whose main purpose is to court the Fundamentalist vote.

As concerns this most recent chain of events, suffice it to say this is another example of that hypocrisy. I have addressed this subject before, most notably concerning former Congressman Mark Foley and our own State Senator Bob Allen. By now it is obvious that this topic is not new.

Yet, there is more to be said. In all fairness, Republicans are not at all alone when it comes to such moral lapses. On the Democrat side, who can forget former President Bill Clinton’s “Monica Saga”? Most recently, New York Governor Eliot Spitzer was forced to step down due to his taste for expensive call girls. So, this is definitely not uniquely a Republican malady by any means. Yet, in my columns, I have never addressed these affairs when committed by a Democrat. Is this because I turn a blind eye when it is a party that I seem to favor more?

Let me assure you this is not the case. I generally regard the Democrats as the “lesser of two evils”; I am not an ardent fan of theirs. There is, however, a distinction between the parties as concerns this issue. So, why do I do it? An explanation is in order.

The truth be known, I really do not care what any individual does in his or her personal life. I believe questions of morality are personal in nature and, in general, none of anyone else’s business.

So, why do I point out Republicans’ moral indiscretions when politicians from both parties are guilty of them? In general, the Democrats do not make personal morality issues part of their political platforms, while the Republicans do. I do not believe our leaders should be making rules that they themselves are not willing to follow.

Regardless of one’s politics, I believe that most reasonable people would agree that neither major political party has a lock on personal morality. Thus, it is disingenuous at best for candidates and elected officials to enter into any sort of debate on such issues. Given the

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performance of our political leaders in this area, it is hardly advisable to look to any of them for moral guidance.

Instead, I call on Republicans to stop trying to win over the electorate by debating moral issues. The hypocrisy is obvious. It is also unnecessary. What, then, should they talk about? I have a suggestion.

As the party of “family values”, and, until recently, the party in power for a dozen years, why not talk about how their policies (and policy proposals) have benefited—or would benefit—American families? Our economy is in the tank. Many are now unemployed as a result. Lack of available health care continues to be a problem for millions of Americans. I could go on. How about a real debate on these issues? Are they not “family values”?

I have often stated it before, and I will state it again: the Republicans consistently hide their true agenda behind their pretended moral superiority and outrage. If the Republican agenda is indeed the correct one for our country, why not just come out and say so? Why not explain how our country and all Americans would benefit from such policies? I would be interested in what they’d have to say. But, until they can make their case before the American public, I suppose we will continue to be stuck with their fake moral agenda.

My Summer Vacation:

OARS

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form to this Stepford salutation scripting. Needless to say, after a few encounters, most people tend to identify me as being somewhat eccentric and eventually overcome their conditioned impulse, refraining from initiating a valueless exchange of words with me at all. Some won’t even make eye contact. A few have been known to seek alternate routes to avoid me.

Maybe if I started wearing my aluminum foil covered colander on my head, they’d leave me alone altogether.

The George

Eons ago, when I was in junior high school, one of my teachers had suggested to the class that it would be worthwhile to read the obituaries in the newspaper. His reason was that often obituaries were a brief story (or snapshot, if you will) of the life of the newly deceased. In a rare move, I actually followed this teacher's advice; reading obituaries has been a habit I retain to this very day.

Several years ago, I even had occasion to write an obituary for a family member who had just died. What follows is my second attempt in writing an obituary, this time for someone I have never met. Admittedly, I have never been a fan of Michael Jackson, who, as of this writing, is about to be buried following his sudden death.

True to my teacher's words, this is a snapshot of Jackson's life. Much has already been said about his undeniably successful music career, so I choose a different story. One aspect of his rather charmed, albeit unhappy, life is his brush with the law in 2005 where he had been accused of molesting a preteen boy at his Neverland Ranch. After two years at trial, he was finally acquitted of the numerous criminal charges he had faced.

In that trial, I choose to believe the jury acted properly, as they evidently they found reasonable doubt in the prosecution's case. With his great wealth, Jackson was afforded the best defense money could buy. Does this mean he did it but got off? I don't think so. Had he not had the resources, might he have died in prison possibly for crimes he never committed? The thought of such an injustice is a rather scary one.

Some of you may remember Paul, the subject of my column that ran in *The SCAM* about a year and a half ago. At that time, Paul had lost his job and his wife when he was arrested when his then-stepdaughter accused him of molesting her in retaliation for confiscating her laptop computer and cell phone. Paul had sold all his assets to bail out of jail and pay for legal representation. His case is still pending, but he has run out of resources. Will he be able to count on the same results that Michael Jackson was able to - or is he not wealthy enough to matter?

I do not begrudge the high quality defense Jackson received; such should be available to anyone accused of a crime. This aspect of Jackson's life is truly a cautionary tale.

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of great conversation in the hospitality suite, lots of games, and in general a good time was had by all. If you weren't able to make this one, plan to attend next year's AG in Detroit.

I've also attended my first AMC meeting as RVC, and was impressed with the level of discussion (and civility) that was displayed. It's going to be a great two years.

See you at Broward County's Suite Tooth RG Labor Day Weekend.

Until next month,

Mel Dahl
RVC-10

SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 5/31/2009:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$745.35
Post Office Acct.	85.63
Reserve Fund	2116.19
RG Fund	50.00

Total Funds Available:
\$2997.17

<u>Deposits</u>	
Mensa Funding:	\$156.10
Interest Income	0.09

<u>Withdrawals</u>	
Postage	52.58
Printing	158.54
Picnic Supplies	95.00

—Bud Long, Treasurer

SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 6/30/2009:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$777.01
Post Office Acct.	20.27
Reserve Fund	2116.27
RG Fund	50.00

Total Funds Available:
\$2963.55

<u>Deposits</u>	
Mensa Funding:	\$173.80
Interest Income	0.08

<u>Withdrawals</u>	
Postage	65.36
Printing	142.14

—Bud Long, Treasurer

There is much to report this month.

First, pending approval by the AMC (which should happen at the October meeting), I have appointed two assistant RVCs: Terri Culbertson of Panama City to be Assistant RVC for Northern Florida, and Thomas Thomas of Tampa to be Assistant RVC for Southern Florida. Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or needs, but also feel free to contact either of them if for some reason I'm not immediately available. Thomas' email address is fardlebear@gmail.com and Terri's email address is terriculbertson@hotmail.com. Each of them brings a unique skill set and I'm excited to be working with them.

Second, three of our local groups cleaned up at the Annual Gathering Award Luncheon in Pittsburgh. The Northwest Florida group received an award for best Web site (medium group), Web site overall entertainment, and member recruitment. Northwest Florida's newsletter, the Owl, also received special mention. The Tampa Bay group received the award for best Web site for a large local group; and the South by Southwest Group (Fort Myers area) was awarded a PEP rally. I will be in contact with their LocSec within the next few days to make arrangements for it. (A PEP rally is like a regional gathering only with national subsidizing it for local groups too small to host an RG.)

Next, speaking of Web sites, Region 10 has had a not-well-publicized and not-much-utilized Web site for several months. Our Webmaster, Eddie Truelove, has done a good job with it but unfortunately nobody seems to know of its existence. I want the Region 10 Web site to be a place where all of the local group newsletters are published so that anyone in the Region who wants to know what is happening in any other local group can go there to find out. I'd also like to have forums where people can talk to one another about things of interest, both Mensa-related and non-Mensa related, as well as have news from the national office. I'm going to be meeting with Eddie in the next few days or weeks; watch for an announcement about our new Web site in next month's column.

Finally, I wish that all of you could have been at the AG in Pittsburgh. Our Region 10 meet and greet was a great opportunity to meet other Florida Mensans, and much information about upcoming events was exchanged. There were a number of great speakers, a lot

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Minutes of the ExComm Meeting:

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, July 1, 2009. Called to order at 5:46 pm by LocSec George Patterson. Members present: George Patterson, Terry Valek, Joe Smith, Karen Freiberg and Bud Long. Welcome Guests: None
Minutes for the June 3, 2009 meeting were approved as published in the July 2009 SCAM.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: Bud submitted the Treasurer's Reports for May and June. The June balance was \$2963.55. Bud will meet with the Audit committee to perform the annual audit, following this ExComm meeting.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported that no candidates were tested in June. Nine prospects were contacted for the 1st time, 13 other prospects for 2nd or 3rd time. A test session was scheduled for July 18, at the Central Brevard Library. Hank will check with the library staff to see about the alternative facility for our future testing.

Old Business: Terry's suggestion that we work on the Bylaws at this meeting was effectively tabled (*can you table a suggestion?*) by not being brought up. Let's see if we can do better next month.

New Business: Terry brought to our attention a notice from National about August being Open House Month. Local groups are encouraged to host an event that is "open to the public" in order to "encourage prospects to try out a Mensa event" before taking the test on Mensa Testing Day - Oct. 17. We attempted to decode this message and concluded that whatever National meant by "open to public" we would have such an event and have it open to prospects whom we would invite based on proctor coordinator's list of same. George volunteered to host such an event on August 22 and to manage the publicity. National will provide \$5 off coupons for the test fee. Generous.

Some aspects of the 2010 RG were discussed. Volunteers for the RG committee would be greatly appreciated.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm. Next meeting will be at **George Patterson's** house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, **August 5, 2009** at 5:30 pm.