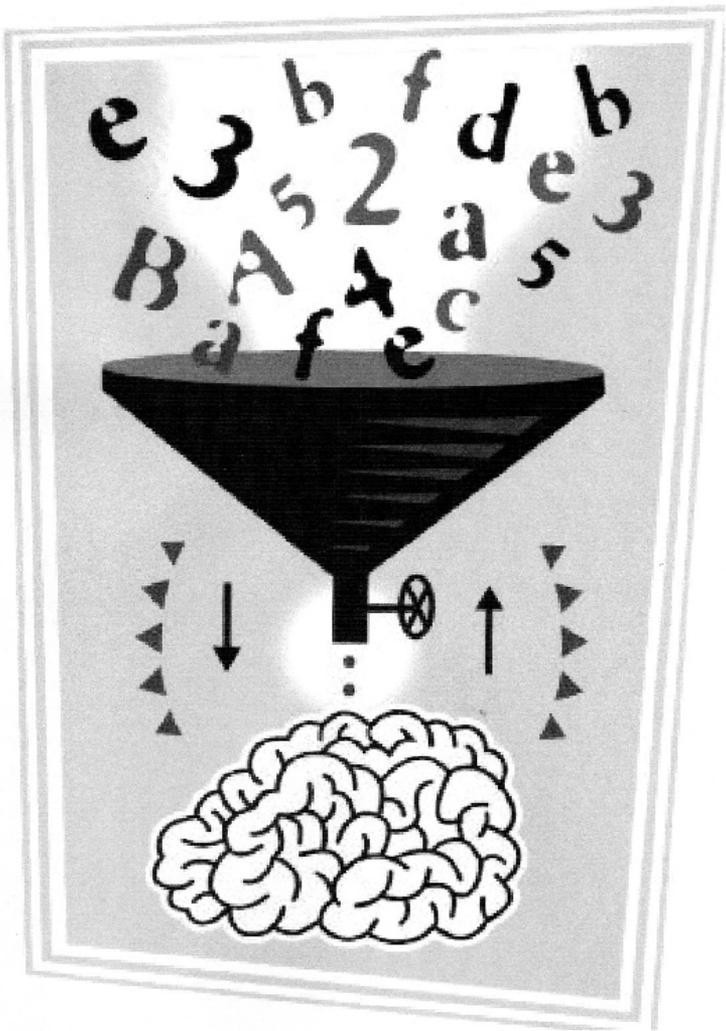


The

SCAM

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SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



Website: www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)

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All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 10th of the month preceding publication. Please allow extra time for mailed submissions, which may be **typed** or **legibly handwritten**. Whenever possible, we prefer submissions via e-mail. They may be in **e-mail text** or any of most **word processing** formats. All submissions should be sent to the **Editor**, whose contact information appears on Page 2.

Inside the Pocket Protector

Mike Moakley, Editor

This month, you may notice the newsletter is a little slimmer than usual. Let me assure you that, even in times as tough as these, this is not the result of an austerity budget. Rather, there were fewer items to publish.

So, while you are reading these pages, you may wish to contemplate on how we can fatten the next issue. If you have (thus far) undiscovered talent for writing, I have good news for you. You can get exposure for that great work you were just waiting to publish. While our audience may not be that great in number, you must already know that our audience is second to none in intelligence.

Will you help fatten the next issue of *The SCAM*?

In other news, life as Editor can sometimes be quite interesting. In the past month or so, I received a rather lengthy e-mail from a former Mensan. Although I never met the gentleman, I do know he is a former member because he was ejected from his Local Group, and later from American Mensa. He is now seeking status as an "International Member".

For reasons unknown to me, the purpose of his message was to plead his case before me. He states he has sent the message to "thousands" of other interested members as well. Yet, the nagging question remains, "Why me?"

Yes, I am listed as a Mediator, but only for SCAM. At most, I

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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.

To the SCAM Membership and ExComm:

The Audit Committee has examined the records and documentation of the financial transactions of Space Coast Area Mensa for the period of June 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010.

Examination of all journals, receipts, bank statements and Treasurer's reports revealed no discrepancies.

Account balances as of May 31, 2010 were as follows:

General Fund -	\$652.51
Reserves Fund -	\$1,617.20
RG Fund -	\$572.24
Post Office Acct -	\$214.20
 Total funds -	 \$3,056.15

Additionally, the Audit Committee commends Bud Long for his diligence and meticulous records.

July 7th, 2010

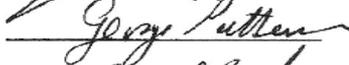
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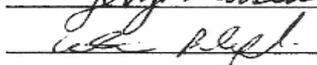
Joseph Smith



GEORGE PATTERSON



ARTHUR B. BELMONT



Inside the Pocket Protector

Continued.

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might be asked to help in a Regional dispute. I do not remember how long ago I accepted the job as Mediator, but I have never been called upon to act in that capacity. Besides, his issue does not involve Region Ten. Besides, in his message of many pages, he does not once give any facts which might form the basis of his case.

He might have read a column where I criticized AML for one reason or another. While I stand behind my words, and do have a difference of opinion with some AML policies, I do not believe that AML is always wrong. Perhaps he is trying his case "in the Court of Public Opinion." Sorry, I do not preside over such a court. Yes, as an appointed officer, strange things like this sometimes do happen.

I cannot remember a time when this country has been so apathetic. We have so many issues going on that need to be addressed and resolved and yet it seems that no one is interested enough to disrupt their hectic daily schedule of breakfast/lunch/dinner, work, TV, and sleep to raise the alarm. There's an elephant in the room and no one is willing to tell the Emperor that he is naked (yes, I know I've mixed my metaphors, no need to tell me, TYVM).

Let's start close to home.

I've been writing this column every month for a bit over three years, yet in that time no one has ever questioned my nom de plume. I'm not counting the gent who objected to my writing "anonymously" as he was disapproving of my use of a pseudonym at all. Has the name "The George" never struck (stricken?) any of you as a tad unusual? Apparently not unusual enough to ask about it. Similarly, the title of these monthly rants is "My Summer Vacation." Wot the hell? What's that all about? To the best of my recollection, none of my articles has contained the vaguest reference to any vacation I've had, summer or otherwise. So why the title? Again, apparently nobody cares.

Now, I know that this mild reproof is not going to incite any of you out there in Space Coast Mensa land to put finger to keyboard and suddenly flood our beloved editor with inquiring emails (more clever writers than I have tried to encourage your participation and I don't pretend to be more capable than any of them). But I would like to think that maybe – just maybe – it might get you to contemplate why you haven't responded to anything in The SCAM. After all, virtually every issue has something controversial in it and it really doesn't take very much time or effort to compose some sort of short electronic ms. Plus aren't we Mensans supposed to be ornery, opinionated, and vocal? Apparently not.

Moving right along...

We face what may turn out to be the largest man-made ecological disaster of modern history with the 20 April 2010 BP oil spill. It has been months since the incident happened, during which British Petroleum (BP) has demonstrated their ineptitude in containing this spill and our government stands idly by.

Doesn't anybody care?

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Those of you who are old enough might remember the Ixtoc oil spill of 1979. At the time, it was the second largest oil spill in history, dumping an estimated 30,000 barrels of oil a day into the Gulf of Mexico when there was an explosion at the well, after which the blowout preventer failed to cap the leak (sound familiar?). The drilling was being done by a company named Sedco, at a depth of 3 km (1.9 miles) in waters 50 m (160 ft) deep. Various measures were instituted to stop the flow of oil. Chemical dispersants were being spread across the spill and a mile-long boom was laid in front of the path of the oil to try to contain it (sound familiar?). An attempt was made to place a giant cone over the leak (sound familiar?), however, that plan also failed. They also tried shooting metal spheres into the leak, as well as cement (sound familiar?). Neither method was successful. After nine months, two relief wells were completed, relieving the pressure on the leaking well and allowing engineers to finally cap it.

It is interesting to note that Sedco became Transocean, the company doing the drilling in the BP disaster. The same techniques which were used 31 years ago to try to contain the leak in the Ixtoc spill in 160 ft of water were equally unsuccessful in the BP spill in *5,000 ft of water!*

I just don't understand why after repeated failed attempts by BP to plug the spill, we didn't assemble a task force of expert hydrologists, marine biologists, petroleum engineers, oceanographers, and anyone else who could provide relevant ideas to come up with a solution that might actually work. Not a committee, mind you, but a working group. Identify a viable solution, implement it, and then send the bill to BP.

FWIW, I will not buy gas at a BP station. Hell, I won't even get a cup of coffee there. It's my small way of protesting what I think is an unconscionable action by an arrogant, powerful multi-national company which has strong influence on our government and thinks they can get away with what is practically a criminal action. I can only hope that my miniscule act of defiance – perhaps in concert with other like-minded citizens – will be the proverbial straw that sinks the ship (yes, yes, I know I've mixed my metaphors again).

I can only imagine the devastation should a tropical storm or hurricane come churning through the Gulf, pick up oil-laden water, and dump it onto whatever unfortunate target lies in its path. Even

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without such a catastrophe, the damage from just the spill is only now beginning to be estimated.

Doesn't anybody care?

Once upon a time, there were some crooked mortgage brokers who made very bad loans, knowing that these loans were bad. But they didn't care because they were making lots and lots of money by bundling the loans into packages, giving them some sort of snazzy name like "Integrated Investment Fund," and selling them back and forth to each other for enormous profits. Like all pyramid schemes, the ones at the top were making all the money while the ones on the bottom bore the entire burden. Unfortunately – again like all pyramid schemes – eventually the base that held up the structure collapsed and the whole house of cards came tumbling down.

"*Boo hoo,*" cried the now broke brokers, "*if our government doesn't bail us out of this mess, the country will be devastated.*" Panic ensued. Senators and Congressmen were seen running around Washington, D.C. crying "*The sky is falling!*" Emergency measures were instituted to provide the poor broke brokers some ready cash. Despite *widespread public opposition*, Congress eventually approved the bailout package: **seven hundred billion dollars**. If they'd only given the money to the poor folk who'd been evicted from their homes, they could have paid off their mortgages, making the brokers solvent, and everyone would have lived happily ever after.

And what did the now happy brokers do with all this money? Why, they handed out bonuses to their top executives! Worse, nobody was accountable for where the money went! In December of 2008 the Associated Press contacted 21 banks that received at least \$1 billion in government money and asked four questions: *How much has been spent? What was it spent on? How much is being held in savings, and what's the plan for the rest?* None of the banks provided specific answers. In a 2008 interview with Elizabeth Warren, the head of the US Congressional Oversight Panel, empowered to assess the impact of spending to stabilize the economy) she is asked, "Where's our money?" referring to the bailout money which Congress gave to the big banks and Wall Street investment companies. There is a dramatic pause and Warren replies, "*I don't know.*"

Doesn't anybody care?

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost us \$12.2 billion *a month* over and above our normal military budget. We have spent more

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SCAM Calendar of Events for August 2010

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 Paterson in Indialantic.

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

6th - Friday 5:30 PM

"FIRST FRIDAY SIG"

Come join us for fried pickles, beer and fun at the Melbourne Hooter's, 877 S. Babcock Street. Please see the "minutes" elsewhere in this issue of The SCAM.

Hosted by: *Dennis Logan, 501-7547.*

7th - Saturday 7:00 PM

DISCUSSION AT WYNN'S

New Event! Join us at Wynn's, 3456 Willis Dr., Titusville to discuss the current state of American politics. It will NOT be about an individual's or party's performance, rather it is a discussion of on the impact of recent changes such as the Tea Party or Coffee Party, or the changes in the California primary and whether these are significant or just another passing fad.

\$3 Kitty. Drinks and snacks provided.

Contact: *Wynn, 267-9391 or (321)626-3670.*

28th - Saturday 5:45 PM

SNORT

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1511 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

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

Of CABBAGES and Coffee:

(Our Regular Events)

C.A.B.A.G.E.: **Every Monday at Books-A-Million**, Merritt Square Mall
6 p.m. Host: *Karen Freiberg, 633-1636*

GO!: **Every Sunday at Books-A-Million**, Post Commons, Melbourne.
Host: *George Lebovitz, 259-3070, rokkitsci@cfl.rr.com*

Membership Notes for August 2010

WELCOME TO SCAM

Charles Satchwill

WELCOME BACK!

Jeannine Stein

AUGUST BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>4th</i>	William Armstrong	<i>15th</i>	William Lamoureux
<i>5th</i>	Michael Lawley	<i>22nd</i>	Shirley Jones
<i>11th</i>	Cypryan Klish II	<i>26th</i>	Ronald Wallace
<i>13th</i>	Ronald Gaynor	<i>29th</i>	Chester Young
<i>13th</i>	Emma Smith		

The "Fine Print" for Calendar Events:

Membership in American Mensa, Ltd. makes you eligible to attend SCAM social functions. Escorted and invited guests of a member or host are welcome. Adult family members of Mensans are encouraged to participate in SCAM activities, as are well behaved children. However, attendance at any social function in a **private home** is subject to the hospitality of the host. Compliance with published house rules is required, and "Kitty" payment is **not optional**. As a courtesy, notify the host if you plan to attend. Announced hosts should attend their events or arrange for a stand-in if unable. When reservations are required, you may not be able to participate if you fail to call.

S-Smoking; **NS**- No Smoking; **SS**-Separate Smoking Area; **P**-Pets in the home; **NP**-No Pets present; **BYO**-Bring Your Own: **_**Snacks, **_**Drinks, **_**Everything.

than \$700 billion in Iraq alone since the war began; it will easily cost American taxpayers \$1 trillion before we leave there. Tens of thousands of Afghan civilians and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians died because we went to those countries; they can't do worse if we leave.

Doesn't anybody care?

The BP oil spill will cause devastation yet to be recognized and despite public furor over the ineptitude being displayed, nothing is being accomplished. The broker bailout was wildly unpopular to the public, yet Congress passed it anyhow. Public opinion is overwhelmingly against our military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and although our current administration promised us that we would be phasing out of these "wars," they are actually escalating.

Doesn't anybody care?

People, it's time to be heard. IMHO, I think we should throw all the bums out. It's obvious they don't care about our opinions or us, so the only solution is to replace them with people who will listen to us. It's time to oust the professional politicians and substitute lawmakers and defenders of the Constitution who will do what is best for the country, not what is best for the party or for their re-election. I say, toss out *all* the incumbents!

Let's get a fresh group in there and see if they can come up with a better idea. We already know that the experienced politicians can't do the job. How could some new faces with new ideas do any worse? Let's throw some Independents into the mix. Maybe even some of my own Libertarians.

This coming November we have the opportunity to make a change, to let Congress and the President know that we won't be led meekly to the slaughter. If we don't stand up for what we believe, we can expect more "business as usual" where the folks at the top of the pyramid are fat and happy while most of us at the base are bearing the burden.

Doesn't anybody care?

The George

When you listed your address,
You did not itemize it.
Perhaps innocence overtook you.

I saw no mention of the road
Breaking off abruptly, at Vail's,
Or bending with the tree, at
Cagle's.

Nothing was said of the depth
And softness, of the sand
The road becomes.

No mention of the pier
Taken out
By the highly charged Camille,

Or of the grapefruits
That litter everything.
Just a nuisance.

Do boys still ride
Alongside hi-way 1,
As we did, when

Dozers were leaning
Into the sand trying
To compress the freest soil ?

If you take a hard right
To the west off 1,
Is it still a sand road ?

A sudden drop of a hundred
years,
Into quarters and gar filled
ditches,
Like a tunnel ?

The Post Office was gone,
Along with the boxes
And their glass front doors.

The last I was there.
I wonder where they hang
The **FBI** wanted posters now?

Does Canaveral Grove tower
Still look out,
Over all that occurs,

Like an omnipotent eye
Judging only fire ?
So many fires...

Daniel Land

In a departure from my normal columns, I will open this one by posing a question: *Where is one permitted to seize \$300,000 to settle a debt of \$800 due him?* Evidently, one answer is Frisco, Texas. Texas???. Texas, that bastion of Republican conservatism? Texas, that champion of property rights -- and the originator of the so-called “Castle Doctrine”? No, dear readers, I did not stutter. Yes, I said Texas.

Texas, like here in Florida, is home to many residential communities that are governed by homeowners’ associations (HOAs). I have always considered HOAs the bane of a homeowner’s existence. A HOA’s often Draconian restrictions imposed on its “members” are nothing short of legendary (“*You can paint your home any color you wish - as long as it is from our approved list*”). I have always found it rather odd that home ownership, the American Dream, symbolizing the ultimate in freedom for the everyday American, might reconcile with these communities governed by HOAs. Suffice it to say at this point that the terms “*home ownership*” and “*homeowners’ association*” is one prime example of an oxymoron. Of course, in order to implement their restrictions, HOAs assess their “members” dues -- which is where this story really begins.

Meet Capt. Mike Clauer, serving in Iraq as a battalion commander of an Army National Guard unit assigned to escort convoys. Mike and his wife, May, have a \$300,000 home in an upscale subdivision near Frisco, Texas. The Clauers own the home outright, one of the few families not to be burdened with a mortgage. Life was good - or so it seemed.

One day last year, the good Captain received a frantic phone call from May. They were in the process of being ousted from their home. Their Homeowners Association had begun foreclosure proceedings against the Clauers because they had missed two dues payments, amounting to \$800. To make matters worse, Texas is one of 33 states whose laws provide for nonjudicial foreclosure proceedings, so no judge would hear the case. In Texas, one can be evicted through foreclosure in less than one month - the quickest of any state.

At any rate, the Heritage Lakes Homeowners Association took possession of the Clauers’ \$300,000 home and promptly sold

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it for \$3500 - enough to settle the \$800 debt together with the accumulated legal fees. The new owner, in turn, resold the house to another buyer for \$135,000. A “win-win” situation for all, so it would seem, of course, except for the Clauers. According to Texas law, this sequence of events is perfectly legal - and not all that uncommon.

What makes the Clauers’ situation unique, and may turn out to be a silver lining in their cloud, was that these events occurred during Mike’s deployment to Iraq. A federal law enacted to protect deployed troops from certain legal proceedings back home might come to the Clauers’ rescue here. Will this law apply in this case? We will not know until early next year when the Clauers’ lawsuit on this matter is scheduled to be heard in court.

This all leads back to the basic question: Is it right to seize \$300,000 to settle a debt of \$800 (we will assume this is a just debt)? Or even \$3500 (to cover legal costs)? I think not. Yes, there is a word for circumstances such as these: *Theft*.

<i>The Tenth Story</i>

Continued

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amend the bylaws failed. I am therefore going to petition to have it put on the ballot for the membership to vote on next year. I need 250 signatures and I will be sending petitions to all loc secs and editors so that anyone who wishes to sign can do so. Or, if you'd like to sign, you can email me directly and I'll see that you get a copy of the petition.

And yes, I am running for re-election. So far, unopposed. Filing deadline is August 15.

Best,
Mel Dahl

First off, congratulations are in order for five Region 10 winners from the Annual Gathering. *The 4M* - Manasota Mensa's newsletter, won a PRP award for outstanding newsletter for a medium group. "*The Mensa Black-Tie Sauna*" by Miami Mensan David Frost won the PRP award for best fiction. Northwest Florida Mensa's Web site took the prize for best overall presentation. Tampa Bay Mensa won the Name that LDW award for holding a Secret Mensa World Domination Techniques Workshop. And finally, W. John Haywood won a Culture Quest prize for *Conjaxure*. I was hoping my own RVC column would win, or at least be nominated for, a Pulitzer Prize; maybe next year. Congratulations one and all.

The AG was great fun and I wish you all could have been there. In the final analysis, it isn't so much about programs or hospitality as it is about seeing old friends and making new ones. I was tied up in business meetings the first couple of days but got to enjoy three science programs and meet several new people. Information about next year's AG in Portland is already on our Web site.

A column or two ago I mentioned that a governance task force has been appointed to review how we do things and make recommendations about how we might be able to do things better. We had hoped to have a report from them at the AMC meeting in [Detroit](#), but they have been hampered by scheduling issues and we now hope to hear from them at the next AMC meeting in Texas this Fall. It's apparent to me that there are some major differences of opinion in what kind of a governance structure will work best for Mensa; I have my own ideas but I'm going to wait to hear what the task force has to say.

In the meantime, I announced in last month's column that I would be moving to amend the by-laws so that it would be clear that any member who has been sanctioned by a hearings committee would have a right of appeal to the AMC. There have been cases in the past where it was not clear, and I think in the interest of fairness, so people know what their rights are, it should be clear. Further, I think the answer should be that there is one appeal as of right; we don't have that many hearings and it's not that burdensome to us to be fair and listen. However, a majority of my colleagues on the AMC didn't see it that way and so my motion to

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Minutes of the ExComm Meeting.

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, July 7, 2010. Called to order at 5:56 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Attendees: ExComm members George Patterson, Karen Freiberg, Terry Valek, Bud Long, and Joe Smith.

Welcome Guests: Wynn and Zane Rostek.

Minutes for the June 2, 2010 meeting were approved as published in the July 2010 SCAM.

LocSec Report: George reported that this meeting would be followed by a meeting of the RG committee and that would be followed by the Audit committee meeting with the Treasurer to perform the annual audit.

Treasurer: Bud submitted the Treasurer's Reports for June. It showed a final balance of \$3416.29. He said that the Post Office had changed its reporting procedures and he now needed to be informed by someone of the monthly mailing expenses and the account balance. George said that as the current newsletter circulation manager, he would take care of this.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported via email that three individuals were tested in June. Also, 11 candidates were contacted for the 2nd or 3rd time.

A test was scheduled for July 17 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa.

There was no new or old business.

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 4, 2010 at 5:30 pm.