

The

SCAM

space coast area mensa

**Our RG happens this month.
Are YOU registered?**

SCAN-O-WEEN!

Space Coast Area Mensa is proud to present our
special Halloween themed RG scheduled for the
weekend of October 29-31, 2010 in
Cocoa Beach, Florida

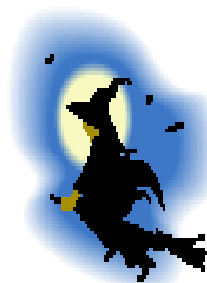


The theme for this year is
“Back to the Future”
Costume Party!!

To be held Saturday Oct 30th

Prizes awarded for most creative costumes.

Games, programs, and of course, our famous hospitality suites!





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(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

Well, finally, this is it. Later this month, we are hosting our SCAM-O-WEEN RG. If, at this late date, you have not registered to attend this RG, you can still contact our Registrar, George Patterson at 777-3721. He will be happy to help you with your arrangements.

For those of you who may still need a topic to write about for that article you're putting together for *The SCAM*, I would like to see, for our December issue, one or more reviews of our RG.

Another topic for those who may be so inclined: Since the theme of our RG is "Back to the Future", here is the question to be addressed: Will "time travel" ever become possible? Why or why not? Tell us your thoughts.

And...speaking of time travel...Where will we be in the future? I'm sure if you are a regular reader of *The SCAM*, there are names in this issue that you cannot help but recognize, even if it is through sheer repetition. Let's see how observant you are...For example, how many times does George Patterson's name appear in any given issue? Five points for a correct answer...

My larger point, however, is simple. It always seems to be the same people that keep our local group running as smoothly as it has. No matter how good we are, nothing lasts forever. When it is our time to finally bow out, who will grab the baton? Will it be *you*? Our future may well depend on it.

***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.

With Stephen Hawking coming out and saying God did not create the Universe and NPR coming out with an article on one of the most beautiful equations in mathematics, it reminded me why I believe in a Creator. I thought I would give my reasons for believing in God. It has to do with mathematics which as a former college teacher of mathematics I find beautiful. That is my main reason for believing in a designer of the Universe. Mathematics is beautiful in many ways. One of the simplest ways it is beautiful comes from arithmetic:

The fact that any number that can be divided by nine evenly with nothing left over can be decided by a simple rule: Add up the digits of a number and keep adding up the digits till you get to one digit. If the number is divisible by nine then the number you get will be nine. One example is 18, add up 1 and 8 and you get 9. Another example is 729, $7+2+9=18$, $1+8=9$. To my mind this simple arithmetic fact is elegant and beautiful.

The equation that NPR mentioned as one of the most beautiful expresses a relationship between the fundamental numbers of logarithms, trigonometry, zero, one and the square root of -1. The equation is $e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$. e comes from logarithms, i from trigonometry and i the square root of -1. It is simple and relates some of the most common numbers in mathematics. It is also unexpected. Why should e and i be related especially in such a beautiful way? There are many such unexpected results in mathematics and they express beautiful truths because they are elegant and simple.

It is because mathematical facts are true anywhere and the mathematical facts are true as long as the universe has existed that I believe that the Universe was designed by someone who established the laws of mathematics and physics. I call that entity God.

Why do I believe that God is good instead of indifferent? I believe that for two reasons, my main reason is that mathematics is so beautiful and I don't believe that someone indifferent would have such beautiful theorems. Also, stealing from C. S. Lewis, most of the major religions have the same ideas of goodness and most of them include taking care of the poor and people with no status. In the old testament it was widows and orphans. Islam has the idea of charity too as do other religions such as Buddhism.

This flyer was sent to other Florida groups to encourage their participation. Hopefully, it will do the same for ours.

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Space Coast Area Mensa is proud to present our special Halloween themed RG scheduled for the weekend of October 29-31, 2010 in

Cocoa Beach, Florida

The theme for this year is

"Back to the Future"

Costume Party!!

To be held Saturday Oct 30th

Prizes awarded for most creative costumes.

Games, programs, and of course, our famous hospitality suites!

Also featuring the 2nd Annual Cocoa Beach Air Show with

The U.S. Air Force "Thunderbirds"

Make your reservations now.

Comfort Inn & Suites Cocoa Beach- 3901 N Atlantic Ave

Standard Room (1-4 people) 94.00 Efficiency (1-4 people) 104.00

Make reservations at 800-247-2221 or 321-783-2221

www.comfortinncoconutbeach.com

Go to "Group Reservations" and enter code - 2010Mensa

More information at www.scam.us.mensa.org/rg/index.html

Fellow Mensans – We are going to have a bang-up RG later this month and there are a few additional things you should know. NASA has announced a shuttle launch date of Monday, Nov. 1. That's both good and bad. It's good that you can stay another day or two and see a launch close-up if you wish. It's bad in that it complicates the reservation situation. As of going to press we had about a dozen rooms still open for our group, available until the end of September. If they fill up before the end of the month we will try to get more, but if the launch stays on schedule this is problematic. Also their non-groups rates will go up as the launch nears. So don't count on the availability of rooms at the last minute. 'Nuf said. Hope to see you there.

Well here it is, last article before the RG – it went by fast.

So, as usual...*blah...blah....blah....blah...* anything you can do to help.....*blah....blah....blah...* my cell phone # is 266-2310...*blah....blah....blah...* it's folks like you that make these event fun and memorable for everyone...*blah....blah....blah...* there are many levels of help...*blah...blah....blah...* a little can go a long way....*blah....blah....blah...* it would be a big help to know ahead of time who I might have available to help me ...*blah...blah...blah.*

So enough with the *blah...blah...blah's* – I know I'm asking for some of your most valuable and unrecoverable possession – your personal time, I would be truly appreciative if I could get a phone call to help me plan for your support.

Cell Phone # 321- 266-2310

Thanks to everyone – this is going to be great!!!!

Joe Smith

**FOOD,
FRANKENSTEIN,
TOILETS
and
anything else mentioned in**

***SCAM'S
THE GOURMET'S
GUIDE***

Arthur Belefant will be at the RG.
Look for him there. He will be at a table or
in a corner if you want to discuss, debate, or
deride him.

Last month I threatened/promised to reintroduce my proposal to help eliminate one of the abuses of our electoral system. I keep my promises.

With the primaries over and the general elections coming up, we are facing several more weeks of vituperation and criticisms of one candidate by another. Each candidate and supporters will again attack and criticize opponents in the general election. Whether true or not, these criticisms do affect how some people vote.

Voters may be classified many ways. One is by the criteria they use in voting. One of my friends is a self-classified liberal. He says that he is a “knee jerk liberal”. He is intelligent and politically knowledgeable, yet he will vote for the Democratic candidate regardless of his knowledge of his candidate’s history of corruption and abuse. To him, any Democrat is better than any Republican. There are many voters like him on both sides of the fence. Such voter is irredeemable and can be ignored in any political campaign.

Another category is of those voters who vote only by name recognition. Some years ago, one of my friends, John Vogt, ran for public office. He had no previous political experience but he won his election. He told me that he won because of his name and his campaign slogan “Vote for Vogt”. That explains the plethora and size of the campaign posters on our roadways. No mention of issues or experience is noted, only the name. Media ads are much the same. The more ads, the more votes. The governing rule is; the greater the name recognition, the greater the number of votes received. Each vote obtained is paid for by the advertising dollar. Each vote is bought as surely as if the money was put in the voter’s pocket. Bought votes. Money talks.

There is nothing we can do about those two categories of voters. They are lost political souls.

Another category is of those voters that analyze the issues and the characters of the candidates. Some of them make rational choices and vote for against a candidate. Those voters

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

are to be commended.

Ignoring those of the electorate that vote solely by party adherence, single issue preferences, and name recognition, that leaves a large portion of the voters that consider the candidate's overall competence or lack thereof as the basis for their vote.

In the last category of other voters are those who analyze the candidates and decide that they don't want either of them. It is to those voters that I address my solution.

Many of those voters opt for one candidate over the others because one candidate is the "lesser of evils". The voter would rather not have any of the candidates, but he is limited to voting "for" only one candidate on the ballot. A smaller number of voters like more than one candidate but is also required to make a choice.

I know of several registered voters who did not vote in some campaigns where they did not like any of the candidates. Perhaps this is why we have a generally lower turnout for voting than many other countries, the voters just prefer not to vote rather than vote for any of the ballot candidates. Truly wasted votes.

A suggestion of how to see a voter's dislike of the candidates to be expressed is to allow the voter to vote for "none of the above". That option would not solve the problem. It would effectively eliminate the ballot of any elector who chose that option. It is the same as not voting at all.

A major defect of the present system of selecting among candidates is that a candidate who is undesirable to the majority of voters could still be elected if one candidate received more votes than the other candidates. This has happened several times in the past.

The way out of that problem is to ask each voter to vote for or against each candidate, just as is done with initiatives and referenda. The same election rules would apply; in order to be elected the candidate must receive more positive than negative votes. This voting scheme would allow those voters that object to a candidate to have a voice equal to those who desire that

(Continued on page 14)

I recently received an email entitled “Ponderisms” which contained inane questions such as: *Who was the first person to look at a cow and say, “I think I’ll squeeze these dangly things here and drink whatever comes out?”*

Now, this is patently absurd since obviously people have long observed mammals suckling their young and were well aware that some sort of nutritious fluid was being ingested. A more appropriate question would have been who thought to actually try it, since there are only rare and exceptional instances where a mammal of one breed will drink the milk of another.

However, the list of mostly ridiculous “ponderisms” reminded me of things that I have actually wondered about. Nothing of great import, mind you, but stuff that we all seem to take for granted yet never question. Since the guy ogling the cow started off this stream of consciousness, I’ll begin my own ponderisms in a similar vein.

Lobster

I have wondered about the first guy who decided to eat a lobster. I have this mental image of Oomak, wading through the shallows, looking for some finny feast with which to feed his family. He’s got his trusty spear or knife or rock or maybe just a stick (depends on Oomak’s era, of which I have no idea) and he keeps dunking his head into the water in search of a slow swimmer. Suddenly, he encounters this formidable looking creature with wavy-goobly eyestalks, a pincer that looks capable of crushing a VW, and a shell that looks like it could easily withstand an anti-tank missile, and thinks to himself “Hmmm... I think I’ll eat that thing.”

Now, I don’t know if Oomak was a homo erectus (sounds vaguely obscene, doesn’t it?), Neanderthal, or a full-fledged sapien, but I know for a fact that this dude had one helluva set of cojones! Assuming he could catch this beastie without incurring serious injury, and putting aside for the moment the issue of whether or not he had fire with which to boil water (and something to boil it in), he – for sure – did not have drawn butter! And Old Bay seasoning? Fuggedaboudit! Don’t know about you, but the idea of lobster sashimi doesn’t sound particularly appealing to me.

Towels

Why do we wash towels? Are we not supposedly clean when we

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

use them? So why not just dry them and be done with it? Aren't we wasting energy by repeatedly washing clean towels? Oddly enough (or maybe not so oddly if you know me at all) I have been obsessed with this question since I was a young lad, first posing it to my mother. She didn't really give me a satisfactory answer, nor has anyone since.

Stop Signs

I am a law-abiding citizen and attempt to perform my due diligence with respect to established regulations, but I just don't get the thing about stopping for a stop sign when there's nobody there. Of course, if other cars are even remotely visible, one should obey the stop sign without hesitation. But given that you can see for miles and miles and miles and there's nary another vehicle in sight in any of the four directions... what is it exactly that you are stopping for? A jaywalking armadillo, p'raps?

This automatic behavior is especially dubious at night. You approach the familiar intersection that you have been through thousands of times, knowing that the road is as straight as a politician's promise in all directions, at dead-of-night-thirty. It is pitch black. No lights, particularly headlights, can be seen anywhere. You near the stop sign. Why on earth do you need to stop? If some maniac is barreling down the cross street at breakneck speed with no lights on, he's going to pulverize your vehicle whether you stop or not since you won't be able to see him irregardless. (Please, no condescending comments about irregardless not being standard usage. I submit to you that when the National Guard of Erie, Pennsylvania is called to active duty to serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, or even Bithlo, that action leaves Erie guardless. [Badump!]) The only possible excuse for stopping at the stop sign at night is to avoid the ticket that the cop in the patrol car hidden behind the azalea bush is going to give you. But you can fight that one in court on the grounds of entrapment. I think.

UFO's

Am I the only one who finds it odd that in this era when virtually every able-bodied citizen carries a self own capable of taking pictures (and even video) that the flurry of UFO sightings so prevalent in the '60's and '70's has so diminished?

I'm on the fence about aliens visiting us Earthlings. On the one hand, with all the billions and billions of stars and galaxies out there, isn't it really somewhat self-centered of us to think that we're

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

alone in the great cosmos? On the other hand, why in the world would aliens capable of traversing the vast distances involved be concerned with a little Podunk planet like ours? On the third hand, if we assume that some of the earlier sightings may have had some validity, why – oh why – are our visitors being so circumspect? Come on down and say ‘Hey!’ We won’t hurt you. Well, actually, we’ll probably try, but with your vastly superior technology, what in the world could we have that could cause you serious damage?

Sliced Bread

What is so wonderful about sliced bread that some things are considered to be the best things to have happened since? When I was growing up, we used to buy our bread as a whole loaf and slice it ourselves and it wasn’t that big a deal. Of course now, we’re talking rye bread. Try to slice a loaf of white bread and you end up with a cutting board full of crumbs and mush. In fact, just about the only thing white bread is really good for is to chink between the logs to keep the wind out. From what I understand, it’s nutritionally bereft. I find it essentially flavorless and get annoyed at the way it tends to fall apart when used in any sandwich of substance, like with salami or roast beef. No thank you. I’ll stick with my rye. And I’m even willing to slice it myself.

The Golden Years

Great concept: After clawing your way to the top, raising the kids, making your contribution to society, and setting new world speed records for weaving pork loins, it’s finally time to sit back and enjoy the Good Things in Life that you so richly deserve. Unfortunately, just when you should be cashing in, you’re starting to cash out because whoever coined this phrase was off a couple of shades on the color scale. It’s not the Golden Years. It’s the Rust Years.

It’s a Dog’s Life

As I understand it, this term is supposed to imply a miserable and unhappy existence. Well, except for some poor abused canines or maybe even some working dogs, I would absolutely love to lead a dog’s life. Most people I know spoil their dogs. Heck, most people I know don’t even consider their dogs as pets. They’re “fur children” getting love and attention in exchange for a little patronization.

Okay, back up a couple of topics to the UFO’s again.

ZzyXRptl and FlbGnDtL are advanced scouts of the fleet from

(Continued on page 17)

SCAM Calendar of Events for October 2010

1st- Friday 5:30 PM

“HOOT LIKE AN OWL”

Come join us for drinks, open discussion and food (latter two optional) at the Melbourne Hooter's, 877 S. Babcock Street.

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

6th - 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.*

30th - 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.*

October 29th - 31st

SCAM-O-WEEN RG!

This is the event we've all been waiting for. It is at the Comfort Inn, Cocoa Beach. See ad elsewhere for details.

Registrar: *George Patterson, 777-3721.*

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 October 2010

WELCOME TO SCAM

Michael Patton
Gregory Ashburn

WELCOME BACK!

Joseph Janson

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>1st</i>	James Staal	<i>17th</i>	Rudolph Hardick
<i>4th</i>	Robert Barber	<i>17th</i>	John Tuer
<i>8th</i>	Rex Repich	<i>23rd</i>	Barbara Byrnes
<i>8th</i>	Christopher Buccieri	<i>27th</i>	Maximo Salinas
<i>9th</i>	Philip Devlin	<i>31st</i>	Colette Zahm
<i>14th</i>	Frank Tremaine		

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 **S**Smoking Area; **P**-Pets in the home; **NP**-No **P**ets present; **BYO**-Bring Your Own: **_S**nacks, **_D**rinks, **_E**verything.

(Continued from page 8)

candidate, thus making the process more democratic, and more nearly representative of the wishes of the electorate.

No vote would be “wasted” even if the elector voted against all candidates. His “against” votes would add to the total negatives of each candidate and would counter an equal number of “for” votes. Two situations may arise that would require special rules.

1. Two or more candidates receive more positive than negative votes. In that case the candidate with the higher score (*positive votes minus negative votes*) would be the winner. This situation occurs now when two propositions on a ballot directly contradict each other.
2. No candidate receives more positive than negative votes. Then a second election would be held with the original candidates barred from participating.

The effect on candidates could be immense. There would be an immediate indication of how every candidate stood with the electorate. A candidate who received barely more positive votes than negative votes would be hard pressed to claim overwhelming support, and he would be aware that any slim majority could slip away by the next election.

The whole tenor of elections, and particularly the selection of candidates, would change because, and this is most important, under positive/negative voting a candidate could lose to himself regardless of how the other candidates do. What would that do to political campaign strategies?

I don't suggest that this method of voting would eliminate all the abuses and corruption in our elected officials, but it would go a long way to doing that.

Let us first understand that global warming has not been proven and the cause of is not known. There are hundreds of scientists worldwide who claim they know the answer as well as an equal number who say they don't know what the "experts" are talking about.

No one has yet proven that it is carbon gases are the reason most of the "experts" claim. Pseudoscience at work. Others say it is a reduction in sunspots with the sun giving off more heat and all the planets in our solar system gaining the same amount of temperature rise as our Earth (even though they don't have any SUVs). And there are various other reasons advanced almost daily that do not agree with the majority. The arguments will not be settled by what is written here.

What is written here is irrefutable.

The mad scientists maintain the earth is warming because we are burning more fossil fuels causing a CO₂ layer to form that radiates back the heat from the sun. In order to stop this, according to this theory (and it is still theory), is to burn less fuel and create less carbon gases. Sounds good if everyone would do it. If everyone alive on the planet today agreed it would not help.

Why?

Back to the basics. Today we have a world population of approximately 6.3 billion. It is projected by 2050 the population will increase about 50% to 9.5 billion. If those extra 3 billion don't even light a match each time they take a breath they will be giving off carbon gas. These new souls will need food and shelter both of which require energy. By 2050 do you think it is possible to have the world running on solar and nuclear energy? Not if the politicians are in charge.

The solution is to halt the increase in world population. Nationalism will not allow that – or the church. A country must maintain a birthrate of 2.5 or it will be taken over by its immigrants or break into geographic entities.

We might get lucky and get hit by a large meteor that might kill off 50% or more of the entire world population. How about a nice friendly plague? There is no logical solution. Studies have been done with mice showing the outcome of overpopulation. As I recall they all eventually die. Not pleasant.

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

Our fearless (wrong word) self-centered leaders in Washington only care for themselves and refuse to act intelligently to produce energy with nuclear and solar methods.

The fight is just beginning and will not become frenzy for another 20 years. Global warming, if there is such a thing, cannot be stopped unless the world population can cease to expand.



SCAM Treasurer's Report

As of 8/31/2010:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$802.96
Post Office Acct.	45.08
Reserve Fund	1617.62
RG Fund	1328.53

Total Funds Available:

\$3794.19

Deposits

Mensa Funding:	\$175.85
Interest Income	0.14
RG Income	477.14

Withdrawals

Postage	54.13
Printing	51.19
RG Expenses	209.00

—Bud Long, Treasurer

ExCommunication

Continued

(Continued from page 23)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 pm.

Next meeting will be at George Patterson's house at 301 Sand Pine Rd., Indialantic on Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at 5:30 pm. It will be followed by a meeting of the RG committee.

(Continued from page 11)

planet PryDqsnw due to arrive Earth orbit in a few weeks. They need to get the 411 on what's going on so that when their leaders attend State dinners with our leaders that they don't use the wrong fork or execute some other equally fauxish pas. So they decide to observe a typical human for a while and chance on Roger in Peoria, IL and his dog Leroy.

Roger arises to the jangle of his alarm clock, bleary-eyed. Leroy sleeps. Roger ablutes, dresses, and cobbles together some breakfast, towards which Leroy shows some interest. Roger saddles Leroy up for his morning walkies at which time Leroy is fully awake and showing exceptional excitement. On the walk, Leroy is virtually dragging Roger along, sniffing at every leaf, bush, tree, and post while Roger tries to keep up. Leroy finally finds "the spot" and does his duty. Roger dutifully scoops Leroy's "duty" into a baggie and they return home.

Roger is off to his daily toil. Leroy settles in for his morning nap, rising occasionally for a bit of kibble or a drink of water until Roger's return in the evening. Off for evening walkies, a repeat of the morning performance, then a shared dinner which Roger has prepared for the two of them. Roger muddles through the evening watching a bit of TV, doing this and that while Leroy takes his evening nap. Finally, off to bed where Roger must contort himself uncomfortably to avoid disturbing the already peacefully sleeping Leroy.

When Grand Master AarpFnRngl arrives with the Fleet, ZzyXRptl and FlbGnDtL present him their report. The Grand Master immediately proceeds to Earth and pronounces the classic line, "Take me to your leader."

To Leroy, of course.

The George

For those among us who regularly follow politics (and for those who might occasionally turn on their TV sets), it has been all but impossible to avoid hearing about the latest political phenomenon, the Tea Party movement. To the casual observer, it appears this movement is a backlash of the angry white middle class that seems to blame our current elected officials for everything that is wrong with our economy.

For a while now, I have been trying to find out what the Tea Party movement is all about. As obvious it may seem to some, for me it was no easy task. One of the unique characteristics of the movement is that it does not seem to have a centralized leadership nor does it seem to have much in the way of a unified set of principles. There are, however, two issues that appear to be common to most (if not all) of the Tea Party groups - They believe we are being taxed too much (The TEA in Tea Party stands for "taxed enough already"), and that our federal government's budget is running much too high a deficit.

Initially, what I found a bit curious is the tax protest. Our current taxes are, thanks in large part to the prior Administration, at an all-time low. Contrary to what many might believe, our current leaders have not raised taxes. The other big issue is the concern about the deficit. Since raising taxes would become necessary to resolving this problem, and (see Issue #1), since this is out of the question, where do we go?

Taking the latter concern first (the deficit), it would seem that deficit reduction should be achieved by drastically reducing federal spending. But, where? Other than citing "government waste", the movement as a whole does not say. What about the tax issue? This is where things begin to get interesting. When former president Bush had his way with Congress several years ago, a large package of tax cuts was passed. As a compromise measure to allay the fears of the "budget balancers" among them, written into the tax cut legislation was an expiration date: January 1, 2011.

Unless our current Congress either extends these cuts or makes them permanent prior to January 1, our taxes will revert to the pre-"tax cut" level. Since most of the benefit of the tax cuts went to our wealthiest portion of the population, these same people stand to lose the most if our current Congress fails to act.

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

In researching the Tea Party movement, some within the movement describe the Tea Party as “libertarian”, although there is far from a consensus on that point. Since, in my (much) younger years, I was involved with the local Libertarian Party, I do have some knowledge of libertarian principles. The question (to me), then, is do any Libertarian principles apply to the Tea Party?

To test this question, I went to the Libertarian Party (LP) website (www.lp.org) and pulled up their 2010 platform that contains their Statement of Principles. I reviewed the two known principles that all Tea Partiers appear to have in common: “Taxed Enough Already” and “Balance the Budget”. Anyone with at least a basic grasp of mathematics would instantly realize these two goals are not compatible unless the real goal is to drastically reduce the size of our government. This, of course, would mean equally drastic cuts in government services. But, from where would these cuts come?

The Libertarian Party platform contains a few proposed solutions. Listed below are some positions enumerated therein. At this point, I strongly suggest the reader read the entire LP Platform.

First, the LP agrees with the Tea Party’s unifying principles: Lower taxes and a balanced budget. In fact, the LP calls for the repeal of the income tax and abolition of the Internal Revenue Service. (2.4)

The LP advocates that parents, not society, determine their children’s education. Further, the LP states that it is the responsibility of the parents to pay for their child’s education. (2.8)

The LP has long opposed Social Security, stating it is each individual’s responsibility to provide for his own retirement. (2.10)

The LP asserts that help for the poor is not the responsibility of the government, rather such help should only come from voluntary charitable donations. (2.10)

The LP opposes many of the laws currently on the books, some of which we take for granted. Some examples include minimum wage, workers’ compensation, and various anti-discrimination laws. (2.1)

The above solutions proposed by the Libertarian Party (*the numbers at the end of each paragraph refer to the relevant LP Platform section*) certainly are consistent with the stated Tea Party principles. I would conclude that, at least to a limited extent, the Tea Party is a libertarian movement. My answer to the question I posed above

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

would be in the affirmative.

To put all of the above succinctly, Libertarians oppose all government regulations as an infringement on the rights of individuals. A more careful reading of the Platform reveals that Libertarians oppose *government* infringement of individual rights, while businesses, by virtue of “liberty of contract”, are free to infringe on those very same rights (since all business transactions - like holding a job) are deemed “voluntary”.

Of course, it is tempting to ask yet another question: Who stands to benefit the most if we, as a country, should begin adopting libertarian principles? It is quite obvious to me that the very wealthy, especially those who control our largest corporations would be the primary beneficiaries. This brings us to the rest of the story - who is really behind the Tea Party movement?

A bit of prodding has revealed that the Tea Party is in reality not a “grass-roots” movement at all. It is bankrolled, for the most part, by Charles and David Koch, who head the country’s largest privately-held corporation. You may or may not have heard of them. Their names briefly cropped in my article in the September 2009 issue of The SCAM, “*Hard Work = Success?*”, wherein I listed the Forbes list of the top ten richest people in the United States (Charles and David were ranked (equally) as 9th and 10th in the Top Ten). The Koch brothers much prefer to work behind the scenes, as “invisible” puppet-masters who pull the strings of the Tea Party movement.

Both Koches are ardent Libertarians; David was the Libertarian Party’s 1980 vice-presidential candidate. However, the driving force encompasses more than political ideology. For them, the Tea Party movement, with its anti-government stance, is seen as crucial to their goals of preserving and expanding their already grossly unfair advantage over the rest of us (including the average Tea Party participant).

I am aware, of course, that some who read this column (*or throw it down in disgust*) favor some of the points made by the Tea Party protestors. To everyone, especially to those people in particular, I would like to pose a few questions:

1. How many of you collect Social Security, or anticipate collecting benefits in the next few years? Are you aware of the Tea Party’s solutions posed for what many view as a Social Security problem?

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

2. How many of you have children in school? How many of you would like vouchers to send your kids to private school? Are you aware of the Tea Party's position on how your child should be educated (and who should pay for it)?
3. How many of you must work for a living and struggle to make ends meet? Are you aware of how proposed Tea Party solutions would affect you?

It may be unfair of me to characterize all Tea Party participants as libertarians. In fact, there are many who are better described as conservatives. But, in a free market economy supported by libertarians and conservatives alike, there is one common rule: Money talks. Put another way, He who pays the piper calls the tune. Charles and David Koch are paying this piper, be assured they are also calling the tune. Tea for Two?

As for the rest of us, be careful what you wish for - you just might get it.

Sources for this Column:

While I did not include any direct quotes from any source material, I have relied on several sources to form the factual basis of my column. I strongly suggest that the interested reader check my sources for himself and thoroughly familiarize himself with the material contained therein.

1. Rich, Frank, "The Billionaires Bankrolling the Tea Party", the *New York Times*, August 28, 2010 (Online Edition, www.nytimes.com/2010/08/29opinion/29rich.html).
2. Goldman, Andrew, "The Billionaire's Party", *New York Magazine*, July 25, 2010 (Online Edition, nymag.com/print/?/news/feature/67285/)
3. Mayer, Jane, "Covert Operations", the *New Yorker*, August 30, 2010 (Online Edition, www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa_fact_mayer?printable=true)
4. Gillespie, Nick, "The Official Koch Industries Reply to The New Yorker Hit Piece" *Reason*, August 25, 2010 (Online Edition, reason.com/blog/2010/08/25/the-official-koch-industries-r/print)
5. Libertarian Party Platform (as adopted in Convention, May 2010, St. Louis, Missouri), (www.lp.org/files/platform-2010.pdf)

I want to start this month by giving a plug to **Space Coast Area Mensa's RG**, which will be held on the beach Halloween weekend, October 29-31. The registrar, George Patterson, can be reached at george3141@cfl.rr.com. One of the pleasures of being RVC is that I get to attend all the local RGs, and I've always appreciated the effort that SCAM puts into their RG. SCAM may be a small group, but it's a good group, and if you've never been to the space coast their RG is well worth coming for.

Which brings me to the point of this column: Smaller local groups. I think there's a perception that larger local groups have all the fun, and in my experience that just isn't true (or at least doesn't need to be). It's true that if a group has lots of members, there are more people from which to draw a crowd for a dinner event or a games night. But it only takes one or two people to put together an event in a smaller group that can turn into something quite special.

Down in Fort Myers we have the Southwest by South Florida Mensa, one of the smallest groups in the state. Their loc sec is a biker who started a bikers vs. brainers trivia contest that raises money for charity. I got to be one of the brainer contestants last time I visited them, and it was a lot of fun, it gives Mensa, positive publicity, and it cross-pollinates two groups that have more in common than one might think.

At the other end of the state is the Jacksonville local group, also one of the smaller groups in the region. They have a great monthly potluck with interesting speakers and great food and good company. If I lived closer to Jacksonville, I'd go every month.

The next group over, Tallahassee, does fun things like have science outings. I went to one of their events where they went to the IMAX theater to see a movie about deep sea ocean life, followed by a trip to the planetarium, followed (of course) by dinner.

And on the subject of fun RGs, the Northwest Florida Group's annual Valentine shindig is worth your Mensa membership all by itself.

You don't need to be the biggest group in the region to have fun. You only need somebody willing to put an event together and make it happen. If your local group doesn't have enough of the activities you're looking for, it's probably because everybody's waiting for you to do it. Let me know if I can help.

Minutes of the ExComm Meeting.

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, September 1, 2010. Called to order at 5:43 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

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

Welcome Guests: Wynn and Zanne Rostek.

Minutes for the August 4, 2010 meeting were approved as published in the September, 2010 SCAM.

LocSec Report: George reported that this meeting would be followed by a meeting of the RG committee. George reported that he had asked Mel Dahl to inquire of National, on his behalf, as to whether it was possible to appoint a non-Mensan as Gifted Child Coordinator, with the parents of the young Mensans in mind. National replied that they could not background check non-members. Their reply continued:

In the absence of an official GCC, the LocSec is supposed to fulfill that function. Young members (and their parents on their behalf) should be able to organize activities and have them put on the local group calendar. GCC activities are meant to be family activities, so there should be lots of adults in attendance, as well as the young Ms. Such activities fulfill the requirements of a GCC event: At least, one M in attendance and more than one adult present.

There are a number of open questions here but the matter will be pursued. (G.P.)

Treasurer: Bud submitted the Treasurer's Reports for August. It showed a final balance of \$3,794.19.

Testing: Hank Rhodes (proctor coordinator) reported via email that no individuals were tested in August. Six candidates were contacted for the 1st time, and three for the 2nd or 3rd time. A test was scheduled for September 18 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa. A question was raised as to why so few are tested relative to the number contacted and it was suggested that we ask Hank if he had any suggestions as to how we might improve the numbers. George said he would follow up.

There was no new or old business.

(Continued on page 16)