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# SCAM

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Sighting of Santa?

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# SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



Website: [www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org](http://www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org)

(All Area Codes are 321 except as noted)

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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*

**A**s I write this, another year is drawing to a close. As 2011 begins, I am sure people, like myself, who follow politics, will be treated to an interesting year ahead.

On our Local Group level, I have learned that we at SCAM pulled off yet another successful and enjoyable RG. Since I was not able to attend, I am still left wondering, since the theme was “Back to the Future,” how much time was spent on the concept of time travel

Here at *The SCAM*, I am gratified to see we are getting a bit more member input. This month’s issue, for example contains a response to some comments I made about time travel in this column back in October. It is well worth the read. To all, keep up the good work!

I would also like to call your attention to our RVC column on Page 18. Mel Dahl touches on that ever-sensitive topic: *Volunteering*. He correctly states that Mensa will eventually die without people continuing to volunteer.

Here at SCAM, our ExComm has been in place for years (*good thing we don’t have term limits*). Our officers would like to eventually be replaced. I have been Editor of *The SCAM* for more than seven years—this is my 86th issue. Speaking for myself, I continue to enjoy being your Editor—but I am beginning to get tired. I am committed to continuing for the foreseeable future, but I will not be here forever.

***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.

**Response to the October “Inside the Pocket Protector”.**

**Q**uestion: Will time travel ever become possible? Why or why not? In discussing time travel, you have the two issues: One is the theoretical considerations and one is the technological consideration. Let's look at some of the historical background first about time travel.

Newton thought that time was like an arrow (time flies like an arrow.. fruit flies like a banana). Once fired from a bow, the arrow travels in a straight line and does not deviate from its path. In its uniform march, one second on earth equaled one second on the moon, or anywhere else.

But Einstein introduced the idea that time was more like a river. It can meander and twist through the universe, alternately speeding up or slowing down as it encounters gravitational fields (planets, stars, black holes). One second on the earth is indeed different from one second in any of these other environments.

And now, we have the idea that this river of time may have whirlpools that close in on themselves or fork into many different rivers. In 1949, mathematician Kurt Gödel at the Institute for Advanced study at Princeton (a friend of Einstein's and most unusual person, he literally starved himself to death from his paranoia) showed that IF the universe were filled with a rotating fluid or gas, then anyone walking in such a universe could eventually come back to the original spot. But it would be displaced in time. Time travel in Gödel's universe would be a fact of life (I have tried to wade through the math that discusses this and I am not of his caliber of mathematician... so I will accept it for argument's sake at this point).

Einstein was troubled by his friend's time machine mathematical description (along with concepts like the Einstein-Poldansky-Rosen bridge) because it meant there could be a flaw in his theory of gravity. Mathematically, wormholes and time machines were consistent with each other if physically impossible.

But since Einstein's death, there have been many solutions to Einstein's equations that allow for time travel and wormholes so that physicists certainly seem to take them more seriously these

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days. So then a time machine may be possible for that sci-fi wish of time travel.

The theoretical problems are endless of course. What if you go back in time and prevent your parents from meeting. Do you prevent your birth, preventing the fact you were born to be able to go back in time in the first place? Or, an old man appears and gives you blueprints for a time machine with the proviso that when you become old you go back in time and give yourself the secret of time travel. So, where does the secret of time travel come from in the first place in that situation? A theoretical way around this is the idea of multiverses. That is, the multiple rivers or pathways ideas that leads to multiple universes, where there are an infinite number of universes with infinite number of possibilities. One where you discover the time travel secret, yet cross over to a universe that does not have one of you that has discovered the idea. And you in turn pass along the idea to yourself in that universe, etc.

Yet mathematicians have come up with some strange configurations such as multiply connected spaces. Which give rise to all sorts of paradoxes that violate our common sense notions of space and time. Although multiply connected spaces sound pretty weird, (once again, even with graduate courses in mathematics it gets difficult to grasp) they are logical if our universe is connected with the much desired sci-fi concept of wormholes. So, theoretical barriers to time travel may be thought around for a time travel machine at some point.

Then let's consider the technological constraints. Just the energy alone is mind boggling. Physicists tell us that the energy scale of space time anomalies is of the order of the Planck energy (10 raised to the nineteenth power) billion electron volts. I think (guessing now, not having the numbers in front of me) that must be at least a quadrillion times the energy they use in the Hadron Supercollider for CERN.

But let's think about Isaac Newton in his day for perspective. If he was calculating how fast it required to escape earth's gravitation (about 25,000 miles per hour), that would seem enormous to him too. What vehicles could he consider for his era of the 1600's? Horse drawn carriages? What do we have for our energy sources today but hydrogen bombs, and rockets? Wouldn't

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Newton be astonished by them as well? Perhaps we will have energy sources in 400 years that astonish us today. It is difficult to predict what technology will accomplish in another 400 years from now (but you can predict that technology will still have us waiting in line for something or other even in the future). But then again, is time travel into the future as possible as time travel into the past? Do you travel into a different multiverse if you travel into the future? That may be even another separate question for discussion on time machines.

I personally think solving the possibility for a time machine could be done on the theoretical level (it seems to have been done so even at this point, if we accept some of the mathematicians and physicists discussions). I think the ‘probability’ of solving the technological requirements may be a lot lower. If we can better understand the four fundamental forces of physics and develop some sort engineering to manipulate or control them (seems far-fetched for now, but escaping the earth seemed far-fetched to Newton), then the technological barriers for time travel may be overcome.

I worry more about the fact that as human beings, we seem less able to control ourselves than we do some of the forces of nature. Nature itself reminds us often that we are not quite as powerful as we may think, nor knowledgeable enough to control forces on the level of time travel. I can hope we develop the wisdom along with the technological prowess for that time travel.

*Stacy Strickland  
Melbourne, FL*

Reference: “*Visions-How Science Will Revolutionize the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*” by Michio Kaku.

**I**n the Western world, three hot beverages dominate our breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus; coffee, tea, and chocolate. Coffee is the most used beverage all day in most of Europe and the Americas. Tea is the major beverage in the British Isles. Chocolate is a distant third.

Before the Middle Ages, only two beverages were generally available, beer and wine. Water was so contaminated that most people would not drink it. Only children consumed milk.

Coffee arrived in Europe sometime in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, probably from Yemen. Tea arrived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Possibly from India.

Chocolate arrived in Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century from the new world. It arrived as a brew, but unlike coffee and tea, which it preceded, chocolate became a food item (candy) more than a beverage, although it is considered as one of our standard drinks.

Chocolate was used as a bitter brew by the native Americans and that is how it was first used in Europe. Only later, when it was sweetened, did it become a popular beverage. Chocolate eventually became a food that exceeded its use as a beverage. Coffee and tea remains as beverages and appear in foods only as flavorings.

Coffee drinking spawned the openings of café s in France, which morphed into small restaurants worldwide. Coffee shops are ubiquitous in the U. S. Teashops are equally common in the U. K. and are not uncommon here. Chocolate-houses, once common and elegant, have disappeared, although for a long while the drinking of chocolate was as ceremonious as the drinking of coffee in Starbucks is now.

To give you an idea of how chocolate was regarded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in France, I quote the following from Charles Dickens *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Monseigneur was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swallow a great many things with few sullen minds supposed to be rather rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning's chocolate could in the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four strong men besides the Cook.

Yes. It took four men, all four a-blaze with gorgeous decoration, and the Chief of them unable to exist with fewer than two gold watches in his pocket, emulative of the of the noble and chaste fashion set by Monseigneur, to conduct the happy chocolate to

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**I've been an ordained minister** of the Universal Life Church for many years. Most folks think it's just a big joke, what with being able to become an ordained minister on-line, for free. I take it rather seriously, however. The ULF has only two tenets: *1. Respect all religions*, and *2. Do the right thing*. Seems to me if you try to follow these two guidelines, you can't go too far wrong.

I'm not a particularly big fan of organized religion, however, I admire people of faith whose religion brings them comfort and security, so I have no problem with number one.

Number two is much harder. I believe most people usually know what the right thing to do is. There's that little feeling, deep down, that lets you know what you should do in virtually every situation, but there are often complications, which keep us from actually doing them.

*Recently, I was confronted with exactly such a dilemma.*

My father-in-law is going through the initial stages of advanced Alzheimer's. It's a very tragic situation. He's a retired Army colonel, a man of bearing and stature, yet sympathetic and never arrogant or domineering. In fact, he's my role model for being as close to a perfect father-in-law as I've ever encountered. I have great respect, admiration and love for the man. Since my retirement, with time on my hands, I've taken to helping my mother-in-law on occasion, relieving her so that she can do chores, errands and whatnot, knowing that he was in caring, capable hands.

Then, a few months ago, I found out that one of my closest friends had contracted prostate cancer. It developed very suddenly and was past the point of treating. I flew out to Tucson to see him and he was doing fairly well, but I could see that he was debilitated. He was approaching the point where he would need some help to get by, but didn't have anyone who could provide that care. He has three ex-wives, none of whom is about to come running to his side. He is currently married to a wonderful lady whom he loves and who adores him, but, unfortunately, they just can't seem to live together in peace, so they live apart from each other. She is very devoted to him and would help out if she could;

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however, she is a child custody counselor (private, not state) and has a crazy schedule, which takes her up to Phoenix (2 hours) and down to Mexico (2+ hours), sometimes in the same day. Plus, she's studying for her master's, which (with luck) she'll get next March. He has a remarkable adult daughter who has taken over custody of her 14-year old half-sister, the product of my friend's unfortunate marriage to his schizophrenic, neurotic, druggie, alkie third wife. He had custody of her, but she was just too much for him to handle: drugs, sex, self-mutilation. He had to remove the doors from her room and bathroom, take away her computer and cell phone, and basically be her warden 24/7. So with the adult daughter working full-time and taking over care of her half-sister, her plate is pretty full. His 80-year old mom is nearby, but is in an assisted living facility and has short-term memory problems. He has a loving sister, but she lives on a mountaintop in Colorado and has a life of her own. The list of potential caregivers is now pretty much exhausted. Then there's me.

*Time to choose.*

In the end I decided by simple math between my rapidly failing father-in-law of 33 years and my declining friend of over 40 years.

Actually there was quite a bit more involved in the decision, primarily that my father-in-law had an established support system available to him while my friend did not. I am extraordinarily fortunate to have an understanding wife who, although not particularly happy with my decision, still supported my choice.

So I packed all my worldly belongings into my vintage Nissan Quest (leaving the middle seat in Florida to accommodate my nine cigar humidors!) and headed west. I wish now that I'd paid more attention in geography class -- never realized that Texas actually extended from coast to coast. Ghastly, long drive. And my days of marathon driving are long past, to say nothing of my deteriorated night vision. However, despite Vegas odds of 7:4 against, both antiques (that would be the cigarmobile and me) made it. Just in time, too.

He stopped being able to drive the day after I arrived, so the timing was fortunate. Otherwise he wouldn't have been able to make his 2 doctors appointments, his MRI, or his endoscopy. He

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## SCAM Calendar of Events for December 2010

**3rd - 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.*

**8th—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. (*The date is corrected from the last issue.*)

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

**Calendar Updates**

### ATTENTION SCAM MEMBERS!

Every effort is made to bring to you an accurate up-to-date Calendar of Events. However, last minute changes can and do occur past newsletter deadline. For up-to-date info, visit [spacecoast.us.mensa.org](http://spacecoast.us.mensa.org) and click on "Calendar". Also, we are putting together a current e-mail notification list of all members who wish to be kept up-to-date on our activities. If you wish to be included, please contact George Patterson at 777-3721 or [George3141@cfl.rr.com](mailto:George3141@cfl.rr.com).

### Of CABAGEs 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](mailto:rokkitsci@cfl.rr.com)*

## Membership Notes for December 2010

### *WELCOME TO SCAM*

Gabriel Shih

### *WELCOME TO SCAM AND MENSA*

Stephen Newman

### *WELCOME BACK!*

Stephen Curtis  
Barbara Ann O'Donnell

### *DECEMBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS*

<i>2nd</i>	David Garutti	<i>17th</i>	Alexander Lauberts
<i>2nd</i>	Jeannine Stein	<i>21st</i>	Parker Allen
<i>9th</i>	Roberta Brock	<i>22nd</i>	Mary Ann Leigh
<i>16th</i>	Christopher Glass		

*Editor's Note: My sincerest apologies to member A. M. Gehringer, whose birthday I incorrectly published as September 29th.. It should have read September 27th.*

### **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.

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Monseigneur's lips. One lacquey carried the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence; a second, milled and frothed the chocolate with the little instrument he bore for that function; a third, presented the favoured napkin; a fourth (he of the two gold watches), poured the chocolate out. It was impossible for Monseigneur to dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men; he must have died of two.

This will give you an idea of how the drinking of chocolate was regarded then. Could your local *barista* match that with a latte?

Now the preparation of a cup of chocolate generally consists of the dumping of the powdered contents of a packet in a cup and adding hot water. Even some of the better restaurants, if they even deign to serve chocolate, do it that way.

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has almost constant pain in his side due to a large tumor attached to his spine and he can't keep much of anything down, vomiting frequently. He starts major chemo soon and will undoubtedly need someone to scoop up the clumps of his abundant, unruly hair, which will be raining down.

Yes, it was a tough call, and it is causing some stress with my wife and three femchildren; however, true to my ministerial doctrine and the feeling in my heart, I believe I did the right thing.

*The George*

**First let's go to the dictionary.**

Socialism has some broad definitions, but Webster is the one that is accepted: "*any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.*"

But so many people have it confused with fascism. It would be a good idea to have that definition also: "*a political philosophy, movement, or regime (as that of the Fascist) that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition*"

There is one more biggy being thrown around daily: Communism: "*a totalitarian system of government in which a single authoritarian party controls state-owned means of production*".

Today there are so many Democrats who now describe themselves into Progressivism. I thought I better get a definition. There isn't one I could locate. All I could find is: "*A Progressive is a person who loathes the Constitution, despises the Bill of Rights, and would not vote for a candidate who declared his faith in the fundamental principles of our Government.*" They are against everything, but what are they for?

Maybe I'm wrong, but it seems that socialism, fascism and communism are all very similar. The Progressives don't know what they want. I am not sure what you call that, but it sounds like anarchy, maybe dictatorship.

Unfortunately, history reveals that the dictatorial types above all end in anarchy. Today we are seeing the beginning of the end of the socialist experiment in Europe. Greece and France are showing anarchy. In both France and Greece the TV has riots and cars burning. The politicians who promised more than they could deliver are now not delivering the freebies. Any second grader who could add and subtract could have figured it when the false promises were made.

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Politicians always promise more than they know they can deliver just to keep their cushy jobs. That is a good reason for term limits with no extra benefits. A country needs statesmen. Men who will serve the people and not themselves. These should be positions of honor and not for profit.

Whatever ism to which you might aspire should be one that helps the people prosper and the country grow. No society that has promised to take care of a citizen from cradle to grave will remain. Each man should be allowed to keep the earnings of his hard work whether it is a small or large amount.

A Democracy becomes unwieldy as it grows larger and larger. A Republic is malleable. Whatever your choice, be sure the person representing you does what you elected him to do.



**SCAM Treasurer's Report**

***As of 10/31/2010:***

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$790.38
Post Office Acct.	143.73
Reserve Fund	1617.89
RG Fund	2651.78

**Total Funds Available:**

**\$5203.78**

Deposits

Mensa Funding:	\$177.77
Interest Income	0.14
RG Income	1570.13

Withdrawals

Postage	55.93
Printing	137.16
RG Expenses	1237.16

—Bud Long, Treasurer

**D**uring Campaign 2010, one key issue driving the recent election is the public perception that the economy went sour because of the “tax-and-spend” policies of the “liberal” Democrats in power. Most of the people we heard nightly were angry, they said, because their taxes had increased after President Obama came to power. The Republican candidates based their campaigns mainly on the premise that if we would change course, that is, cut taxes, then we will, in turn, create jobs in the private sector. This, they argued, would bring us out of our current economic distress and bring America back to prosperity.

I disagree. In support of my contention, let us make some observations. Regardless of political viewpoint, I believe few would dispute that the lot of the average American has not measurably improved. Is this because of excessive taxes? Let’s see.

Since the Bush tax cuts were instituted several years ago, our taxes have NOT gone up, even in the last two years. In fact, additional tax cuts were instituted since Obama became President. Below are two examples.

First, earlier this year when you filed your income tax return, you might have noticed a “Schedule M”. This is the “Making Work Pay” tax credit. If you were not married filing jointly, this amounted to a \$400 reduction in your income tax. Joint filers received an \$800 tax reduction.

Secondly, did you buy a home this past year? If you qualified as a “first time” homebuyer, chances are Uncle Sam paid you \$8000 for your troubles. That credit shows up as “Form 5405” on your tax return. What was especially nice about these credit is that they were (in IRS talk) “refundable”. This means, they show up as “payments”. Even if zero taxes were due (and you otherwise qualified), you would have received the full value of those credits.

Just from these two examples, most Americans effectively received a tax cut amounting to anywhere from \$400 up to \$8,800! We got tax cuts, so what gives? As mentioned before, the average American did not return to prosperity. One could certainly argue that tax cuts are bad policy.

One colleague of mine received the entire \$8,800 in these tax

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## A Mensan in the family?

**A**re you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, The SCAM is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?



## A Mensan in the Workplace?

**A**re you the Mensan at work? Do you work with other Mensans...or...are you the only one? If the latter is true, do your coworkers know you're in Mensa? What about your boss? What are your impressions and experiences at work? Do you have a leadership position? Do you serve in any kind of "support" (formal or informal) role? Does your status as a Mensan have a positive or negative impact on your work relationships? Finally, if preparing a resume, would you include your Mensa membership as an item (or would you state that you qualified to join Mensa)? Why or why not? Let's hear from *you*.

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cuts when he filed his 2009 tax return. Understandably, when he heard the good news, he was quite pleased. However, six months later, as Election Day was drawing near, his pleasure had turned into a burning anger due to perceived overtaxation. Obama, he insisted, was leading America down a socialist path with his tax-and-spend programs. The Tea Party was right. We ought to be listening to Rush (Limbaugh). The Democrats needed to go. There are many other Americans, as evidenced by the election results, who feel exactly the way my colleague does.

So, where do we find ourselves? When President Obama took office, our economy had already been in a free fall (since 2007). To date, we still have not fully recovered. This is despite the tax cuts instituted in the prior and the present Administrations. It is clearly evident the 2010 election results were driven by the anger felt by most of the voters, most of whom, despite the facts, do not believe their taxes were cut over the last year or so.

Thus, I can only reach one conclusion: *Tax cuts are bad politics.*

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*From the staff at The SCAM...*

**Happy Holidays  
To All**

We don't have many Robert Byrds in Mensa leadership – Byrd held the all-time record for Congressional longevity, having first been elected to the US House in 1952 and staying in Congress for nearly 60 years until his death earlier this year. Most Mensa officeholders, from the local editor all the way up to national chair, serve a term or two and then either take another position or go on to other things altogether. You can count on your two hands and have fingers left over the people who stay and stay and stay and stay.

And whether that's a good thing or a bad thing, it's a fact of life. Since Mensa runs on volunteers, both local and national, it is absolutely critical to Mensa's future that there always be a new generation of upcoming leadership. If that ever stops, the organization will die.

We are coming up on the end of the year, when people traditionally make decisions about what kind of volunteering they are going to do for the following year. And I would like to encourage everyone reading this to at least consider the possibility of Mensa leadership. You're here so we already know you're smart enough.

If you have never volunteered for anything, talk to your LocSec. If you've already held local office or been a local volunteer, maybe it's time to think seriously about moving up. Your LocSec is not going to be LocSec forever; I'm not going to be RVC forever. No matter what gifts or talents you possess, Mensa needs them. We'll have a surplus of volunteers right around the time I both win the lottery and get appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

In a few days I'm leaving for Texas for our quarterly AMC meeting. We are taking close to a full day to talk about big picture Mensa governance and leadership issues. Please be part of it.

*There was no November ExComm Meeting.*

