

The

SCAM

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SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



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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's column is a departure from my usual fare. As most of you no doubt are well aware, my column, "*From the Village Idiot*", is my customary forum for airing my political views. For this reason, I normally refrain from political topics in this, my official Editor's column. However, this month I do find it necessary to discuss politics here.

As Editor, I am well aware that there are differences of opinion among our members as to whether a local newsletter should even carry a political column. When I became Editor 8 years ago, *The SCAM* had already featured political columns for a number of years. My column (under a different title) had already been running for about a year.

My decision was (and is) to continue carrying political columns, including my own. My rationale is that, regardless of our individual views, even as to whether politics should even be discussed, we are all inescapably involved in politics. This is true even for those who will not, or cannot, participate in the political process.

While, as a columnist, I do use *The SCAM* as a medium to express my views, I assure all that it is NOT the intention of *The SCAM* to be a political propaganda tool for the furtherance of my views. One of the objectives of my column is to provoke discussion with divergent viewpoints on the featured topic.

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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.

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Why do I choose to write about this now? Recently, I received an e-mail from one of our contributors stating he had encountered a rejection message when he tried to submit a column to me. As the column was on a political topic, he became concerned that his column might have been turned back because I did not approve of the content. I assured him that nothing could be further from the truth.

Now let me assure you that The SCAM welcomes all views on any topic that might be discussed within these pages. This includes politics. As Editor, I believe that if The SCAM is to publish any works on any given topic, then The SCAM should be willing to air ALL views on that topic. As long as I am Editor, this will continue to be the policy of The SCAM.

If it seems from time to time that some views appear to predominate these pages, it is because no one has submitted a column with another view. My position is that this state of affairs is easily corrected. Send in a different view. I will publish it.

I am also well aware that many of our readers would like to see more material on topics other than those political in nature. I agree. Write the column. Send it in. I'll publish it. It's really just that simple.

Finally, the e-mail address I use for newsletter submissions is not set to filter content. I do not know if American Mensa filters anything sent to its domain. In the case of the specific author, it is still a mystery to me why his e-mail containing his column was initially rejected.

A GOOFY CRYPTOGRAM**© Jamie Glatt**

A Goofy Cryptogram for your amusement. Standard rules apply: each letter represents another letter; no letter represents itself.

One letter is given to get you started. Good Luck! Given **D=G**

GFAPPZCD BELJQCQR VC UZL GANIEZHH BL UJ

NVCQJPOHBQJLQUJ PJBCZCD VW HZWJ, Z'HH LBR

QUBQ UJ LOJBIL ZC OHBQZQAGJL.

The Wikipedia definition of inflation is “a rise in the general level of prices of goods and services in an economy over a period of time“. Other sources and dictionaries give similar definitions. Some definitions include the corollary; inflation is the reduction of the value of money. “Money” in that definition pertains to fiat money, that is, money not backed by any commodity. If the amount of fiat money available is controlled by government, why do governments allow it, or cause it to grow, thus effecting inflation?

The American government gets its revenue essentially from two sources, taxes including duties and fees, and inflation. Only in some communist and socialist governments do governments own productive operations like farming, manufacturing, or financial enterprises that produce wealth. We do also, but the amount is relatively very small.

Inflation provides a substantial income to the U. S. government. Here are a few examples, there are others.

The United States has an outstanding debt of approximately 15 trillion dollars. The average interest paid on that debt in the 2010 budget was 197 billion or approximately 1.3%. In an inflationary period most commodities advance in price, a few may remain stable, and even fewer may decline. The general trend is toward advancement. That is why you now pay \$2.25 for loaf of bread when not many years ago it was 25 cents. The loaf of bread is essentially the same now as it was then. The increase in price is a result of the increase in cost of everything that goes into the loaf of bread such as fertilizer, fuel, construction, transportation, electricity, construction, labor, and taxes.

Efficiencies in any of those factors mitigate the effects of inflation. All of the increases are ultimately tied to inflation. There is no change in the relative value of any commodity to other commodities, only a lessening of the value of the dollar. Eventually, as inflation continues, we will be forced to adjust the value of the dollar by dropping zeros from our currency and ledgers. That is why we now have dollar stores when we used to have five and ten cent stores.

I was living in Greece when three zeros were dropped from its currency. To see what must eventually happen in the U. S. a few years hence, think back to when your wallet contained ones, twos, and fives to accommodate most of your purchases. Now it is tens, twenties, and hundreds. Drop

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two zeros from every expression of money in you ken; house prices, mortgages, car prices, food prices, salaries, savings, doctor's bills, U. S. debt, movie tickets, etc. You will be back to about 40 years ago with relatively little difference. In other words, nothing much has changed except for technological advancement, manufacturing and farming efficiencies, and inflation. Without inflation, prices should have dropped.

So, how does the government earn money from inflation? By cheating the taxpayers. It is a simple case of keeping two sets of books. From about 1940 to the present, the annual U. S. inflation rate has varied between 0 and 10%. Of course, those inflation rates are moot. Government calculated inflation rates are computed to provide the result that the government wants.

For example, COLA, the cost of living (inflation) figure used to adjust Social Security payments is not the same as the U. S. Government's CPI (Consumer Price Index), a measure of inflation used by the government for other purposes. There was no increase in payments to Social Security beneficiaries for 2009, 2010, and 2011 because COLA for the preceding years was zero. The CPI cumulative inflation rate from January 2008 to January 2011 was 4.33%. Thus, each year without a cost of living adjustment for Social Security, the government pays less to Social Security beneficiaries.

Another example. Let us take 4% as an average inflation figure. Your government borrows \$15 trillion. It pays interest at 1.3% each year. It pays back that loan with dollars worth 4% less that year. Thus the government is earning $4 - 1.3\% = 2.7\%$ on its borrowed money. 2.7% of \$15 trillion is \$405 billion. That's quite a nice racket. It is worse in many other countries.

Yet another. Because inflation is a constant and income tax rate brackets are fixed, each year many Americans are moved into higher tax brackets without any change in their earning or purchasing power. Thus, they pay more in income taxes on the same purchasing power.

Still more. Another aspect of how our government uses inflation to cheat the taxpayer is capital gains. If you had \$10,000 in January 1969, you would have been able to purchase a certain amount of goods and services with it. If, instead, you bought some commodity, such as property, and held it for forty-two years, its value would now be about \$50,000 because of inflation. The \$50,000 now equate to the \$10,000 then in purchasing power. Yet, the IRS says you have had a \$40,000 capital gain and taxes you on that amount. Thus, your present purchasing power is reduced by the tax. You do not have a capital gain, you have a capital loss. Tell that to your

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The dog days of summer have prevailed and carried on into September, leaving me with little to report in the way of accomplishments. We of the ExComm have come up with a replacement for our retiring treasurer, Bud Long, for whose efforts over the past -- OMG, I just looked it up -- six years, we are most grateful. That must be how long I've been on the job as well. Too long. Time to let someone else take over. Perhaps there is a way. Our projected replacement for Bud is a name, if not a face, familiar to us all. George Lebowitz, pen name *The George*, has volunteered to join the ExComm, though not as treasurer. This months non-minutes will explain. When we can scrape up a quorum, he will join us, and since no one else wants to be treasurer, it looks like it's up to me to fill in. I will use this as a bargaining chip to persuade one of our other glorious leaders to step forward as LocSec. See next months minutes for results.

As a new topic, next year, if you haven't noticed, is 2012, a dreaded even numbered year, which according to the Aztec calendar, is a year in which Space Coast Area Mensa will self-destruct unless it can find a volunteer to take on the task of RG chairperson. (not to mention at least seven or eight additional helpers.) You, dear readers, will be bombarded with pleas for the next few months. The pleas will stop in February and be followed by either applause or recriminations. And the Aztec death threat hangs over our heads. No volunteers, no RG. I hope that doesn't sound too severe. Bless you all. Hillary for President!

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friendly IRS. There are others, but this will suffice to illustrate that the government is deliberately fostering inflation for its benefit rather than for ours.

In many political speeches, talk is made of controlling inflation to a "reasonable" level. Translated, that means keeping inflation low enough to keep the peasants from revolting, but high enough for the government to profit. No politician says eliminate inflation.

Governments will continue to foster inflation as long as they can profit from it, that is until the populace threatens to, or does, overthrow them. *"That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it"* - Declaration of Independence

Do you sometimes wish for those kinder, gentler days of yesteryear when things were straightforward, uncomplicated, and personal? Well, if you – as sometimes do I – pine for those days gone by, what follows isn't going to help you a damn, just make you as pissed off as I am.

I loved when the Age of Electronics brought us the miracle of the Remote Control. No more standing up to turn the channel or adjust the volume. Made being a couch potato into a true art form. And the remote was simple: on/off, volume up/down, channel up/down. Wasn't even so bad with the VCR, just: on/off, TV/VCR, record, play, pause, fast forward, and rewind. Piece o' cake. Have you checked out your DVD player's remote lately? Mine has 44 buttons. I have absolutely no idea what the vast majority of them are for. I can't even imagine features that would require so many buttons. Why do I need a +10 and +100 button? Plus ten and plus one hundred what? Mode? Zoom? Shuttle? Title? Angle? A-B? Display? Memory? Recall Memory? Command? Chapter? All's I need are the same ones I had on my old VCR remote, less the rewind button.

Then there's something everyone is familiar with: Customer Service. Your frammissdoodle won't flocculate your fnarfle any more; it just buzzes and squirms on the floor whenever you turn it on. You call the Customer Service number on the back. Of course, we start with the insulting need to press 1 for English, which I feel should be a capital offense against any company. Then there's the dizzying array of menu options (which have – of course – changed). And in the unlikely event that you actually achieve your goal of talking to a human being, you'll find that you have to tell them virtually all the information you've entered already: name, address, zip, telephone, email, account number, validation number, password, account validation password, your high school gym teacher's middle name, your grandmother's neighbor's best friend's butcher's baker's candlestick maker's dog's rabies vaccination tag number.

All the while listening to the inane announcement about how easily and quickly you can solve all your woes by going to <http://www.goodluckfindingyourwayaroundthiswebsite.com>, which is where you started in the first place, only to get so confused you decided to run the menu option gamut to try to fix your poor, woebegone frammissdoodle. Then the friendly Customer Service Rep has an accent that you couldn't decipher with a secret decoder ring. Which doesn't matter anyhow, since they're only reading from a script (*if "A" then "B" else if "C" then "D" else...*) which doesn't

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cover your malfunctioning frammisdoodle, although you don't find this out until you've reset and rebooted and restarted every electrical device within a four-mile radius. FWIW, here's a hint on how to cut through the "Press 1 for..." or "Please enter your..." requests: Just press the pound sign several times no matter what they want from you; this virtually assures you'll be speaking to a human being much faster than if you jump through the hoops. Of course, they're still not going to tell you how to get your frammisdoodle to flocculate your fnarfle again. For that, you'll have to find a neighborhood 8-year old.

I have sleep apnea. This means that I stop breathing several (actually, more than 70, in my case) times each night. That's a bad thing. So my breathologist hooked me up with a CPAP machine, which blows air up my nose at night to keep me breathing. That is a good thing. Also it has eliminated my raging bull elephant snoring, which is a very good thing, especially for my lovely wife. Ennywaze, the plastic thingie that goes into my nose drills got pretty worn out from use and I calls the plastic thingie people like I have done in the past for a new one. Usually no problem: they check my insurance and pack one up and it arrives on my doorstep the next day, sometimes the day after. Not this time. My insurance has changed I'm now on Medicare. They gotta call the doc. Couple days later I get a call from them telling me that the doc sez I haven't been there in a bit (turned out it was five years ago) and he'd like to see me before he authorizes a new plastic nosepiece thingie. Okay. So I call the breathologist's office for an appointment. Three weeks. Sigh. I show up, wait my required hour so I can see The Man for all of 45 seconds after which he tells me not only will he authorize a new thingie, but he's going to replace my whole CPAP machine on accounta the one I have is antiquated. Terrific! So I'm waiting for a call to tell me I'm good to go on my new stuff and I'm waiting and I'm waiting. After three weeks, I'm getting very antsy so I call the breathologist to find out what's what. He's out of town. Couple days later, I call back; he's back and turns out he authorized me for my new stuff THE SAME DAY I saw him! Only nobody bothered to tell me that. Bother! I call the equipment people to ship me my new stuff. Nope. Can't do it. Got to make an appointment to have a representative come out and show me how to use it. And when would the earliest appointment be? Hold on... never mind... I ask if I come in there today and have my lesson can I walk out with my product? Yes! So I trundle myself down. The nice lady who greets me is on the phone. For a long time. Then she takes me into a back conference room and proceeds to start filling out forms. Lots of forms.

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One last try at what? Well, last week I tried to provoke a reader response by challenging our poets to best my feeble efforts. My editor tells me that no poetry was forthcoming. Now a last attempt to induce a brief essay, preferably humorous, to appear. Again I offer an example, easily bested.

How to do an essay? Pick a subject -- something that pops into your mind as you read the newspaper or watch a TV commercial -- anything at all, for instance, how trivial can a peeve be before it is not allowed to be counted as a pet. One of my trivial but pet peeves is the role played by glassine in our current economy.

Glassine? A word out of the past. I had to look up its spelling. And I learned something. "A thin, but tough, glazed, nearly transparent paper, used for the windows in envelopes, etc." (Webster's New World) Paper? I would have thought plastic. But then, I remember it dates from earlier than my childhood, so it can't be plastic. Webster adds an "etc." What other use are they aware of? I've never encountered it in anything other than the windows in business size envelopes we so often receive in the mail.

Why do people invest in the extra cost of using an envelope with a window? I deduce it is because they can save the cost of printing the address on the envelope. It shows through from the enclosed material. Well played Mauer. Why a peeve. Because of the tough part. Grasping the offending piece of mail, presumably from an auto dealer or hearing aid sales person, firmly in both hands, I attempt to tear it in half. I am stopped half way through by the tough glassine window. I mutter a silent curse and try harder. The envelope comes apart in two sloppy halves. I throw it in the trash.

I ask myself, "Why do they do it?" They could have used a glassine windowed envelope with a less tough form of glassine, apparently a modern invention. Maybe every fourth such envelope tears easily. Clearly they wish to dissuade me from my tearing ways. Can it be wise for an advertiser to induce cursing in a prospective customer? TV advertising tempts me to answer yes. Is this peeve too trivial to mention? Yes, unless you need a hand essay topic.

See, easy! *Now let's see you do better.*

A **bittersweet September** befell the group known as First Friday's at Hooter's Special Interest Group. We should really decide upon a name. Apparently, using part of the group's name rather than the full name confused at least one SCAM member. Hence the bitter portion of the month starting the night before the much anticipated September First Friday at Hooter's SIG meeting. Said SCAM member responded to a general invitation/organizational update email, "If I am in town, I would come to First Friday, but I will not frequent Hooter's. Nor do my friends frequent Hooter's. I am surprised that Mensa even considers supporting Hooter's. Blessings, ".

Right off I could figure out three things from those three sentences. Said SCAM member travels a lot, said SCAM member drinks, and said SCAM member and me are never going to be friends. Oh yeah, I also speculate that "Blessings" thing is part of an auto-generated signature.

I understand the offense has something to do with female exploitation and how Hooter's only hires attractive young women to be servers, mostly. To my knowledge they are all keepers but I haven't been to every Hooter's in the world, yet.

So First Friday rolls around and I am feeling uneasy about this whole exploitation thing. I mean, obviously, I don't care, but should I care? I genuinely enjoy the ladies we have come to know at Hooter's and I would not wish them to think I dine there only to peer at their pulchritude. They undoubtedly know that's why I'm there by now, anyway. I feared I had ignored exploitation and perhaps women really did object to being objectified. I decided to ask the women I knew their experience with exploitation.

With several hours remaining before the meeting start time I thought I should consult my beloved wife first regarding exploitation of women. I found her on the sofa in the living room.

"Sweetheart." Says I, with that lilting Ward Cleaver kind of voice. Silky you might call it.

She didn't reply. In fact she didn't stir to any noticeable degree at all. I like to think it a testament to the Bose noise-canceling headphones she wore over her ears and not an abject disinterest in anything I might have to say. She says it's hard to hear the TV over the grandkids crying without the noise canceling kind. I looked at the TV screen to determine what program

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SCAM Calendar of Events for October 2011

5th - Thursday 6:00 PM

EXCOMM MEETING

This is our monthly business meeting. See back page for location.

7th - Friday 5:30 PM

FIRST FRIDAY AT HOOTERS SIG

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.*

29th - Saturday 5:45 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at the Miyako Restaurant, 1511 S. Harbor City Blvd., Melbourne.

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

29th - Saturday 7:00 PM

EG (EXTRA TERRESTRIAL GATHERING)

Hosted by the Freiberg/Starke Alliance. Join us at their home in Rockledge for a gathering that should prove to be out of this world.

Contact: *Karen 633-1636.*

Calendar Updates

ATTENTION SCAM MEMBERS!

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

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, rokitsci@cfl.rr.com*

Membership Notes for October 2011

WELCOME TO SCAM

Lawrence Messmer

WELCOME BACK!

David Cape

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

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

MENSA TESTING

Oct. 15 at Central Brevard Library, 308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa. Please arrive by 9:45 am, as testing begins at 10 am. \$40 fee and photo ID required. Reservations encouraged but not required. Candidates must be age 14 or older. Testing next month Nov. 19.

Contact: Hank Rhodes, mensatest@cfl.rr.com, for details.

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.**

The “Labor Day” holiday is now behind us and, as I write this, President Obama will address the nation about jobs and the economy later this evening. I expect the president will make proposals that are largely designed to appease the Tea Party Republicans; and, of course, once again, we will witness another disaster.

To me, it is clear that having a sustained unemployment rate of nearly 10 percent is a problem. Certainly the Republicans are correct to demand that we focus more of our national attention on this issue. Yet, what do we do?

If we are to solve the problems facing us today, we need to see them as they really are. For many years, we have been lead to believe that if we are to return to prosperity, we will need less government. Lower taxes, fewer burdensome regulations and embracing the “free market” would fix us right up. The Tea Party movement, since its inception a few years ago, has consistently advocated this course. Within the Republican Party, this has now evolved into a litmus test of sorts.

Is this really the solution?

If the Tea Party position with regard to government is the correct course, it seems we should be in a period of unprecedented prosperity. We have less regulation now and our taxes are lower than at any time I can remember, yet for us there is little or no prosperity.

Quite a bit of lip service is paid to the assertion that we are in a recession. While many, if not most, of us are experiencing difficult times, this is not entirely accurate. While we are expected to believe that business is hanging on by a thread, the daily stock reports tell a different story. Over the last several months, the Dow fluctuated between 11,000 and 12,000. While this does not match our all-time high, one would do well to remember that it was not until well into the 1990s that we broke the 10,000 mark during what was regarded as prosperous times.

Business is doing well indeed – and they are hiring. They’re just not hiring Americans. So, what do we do? As a stopgap measure, all American manufacturing companies must make the goods here, in the good ol’ USA. No more importing labor by operating facilities overseas. On a longer term basis, we need to rethink how we conduct trade agreements. All parties should be on a level playing field. Labor standards in the country we propose to trade with should, at a minimum, be equal to our standards. The

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same principle should apply to environmental standards. Finally, and most importantly, the citizens of such a country must be able to enjoy the same basic freedoms that we Americans take for granted.

While my recommendations are by no means a “one size fits all” solution, I believe if they were adopted, we should see some measurable improvement almost immediately.

My \$0.02 Worth:

LEGALLY PI

Charles M. Knight

As I go through my middle years desperately trying to fight off the onset of boredom, I will at times be engaged in surfing the Internet. I will also, from time to time, receive e-mails on political trivia such as where our current President was actually born and speculation as to whether it is true that the local school teachers conspired to sabotage our social order by demanding a living wage and health care benefits.

Once in a great while, I might even find something rather interesting. Such is the case here. It seems that a while back, the State of Indiana decided to enact a law to establish the numerical value of Pi as 3.2.

Yes, you read it right. Here is an excerpt of House Bill 246:

“(Section 1) Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Indiana: It has been found that a circular area is to the square on a line equal to the quadrant of the circumference, as the area of an equilateral rectangle is to the square of one side...(Section 2) ...that the ratio of the diameter to the circumference is as five-fourths is to four;”

This bill, upon being introduced, was referred to the House Committee on Canals and then to the House Education Committee. Representative S. E. Nicholson reported the bill out of committee “with the recommendation that the bill do pass.” The bill passed the House unanimously.

The bill was then introduced to the Senate, where it was referred to and reported favorably from the Committee on Temperance. Then a Purdue University professor named Waldo intervened, effectively getting the legislation derailed.

Does this remind you of the Tea Party Republicans manifesting their well-known contempt for education and knowledge? Hardly. This one took place back in 1897.

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But what is weird is that she's not asking me any questions, just filling out form after form. Interrupted, of course, by many phone calls. Seems she's the receptionist as well as the customer equipment trainer and official form filler-outer. So I'm there for over half an hour before she finally pulls out my new machine and starts fussing with setting it up. It's much more sophisticated than my old machine, thus has many, many more options, none of which I need, of course. Finally, it's time for my "training." There is one button on the top. Push to turn the machine on. Push again to turn it off. Any questions? Almost two months from my first phone call. Sigh.

My lovely wife is a schoolteacher. Although she receives a pittance for a salary, every once in a while, someone takes pity on schoolteachers and offers them some sort of benefit. Turns out that as a member of the Brevard Federation of Teachers, she's eligible for a 15% discount off our wireless bill from AT&T. Excellent! I call AT&T (*see above for this process*) and am told that, geeze, they'd love to give me the discount, only except that *she* is eligible but it is *I* who am listed as responsible for the account. We must make her the responsible party. No problem; she does the bills in our household anyhow; changing the name at the top doesn't affect us in the least. So how do I go about switching the wireless account from me to her? Welp, they tell me, I must request the change (*online, of course*) and she has to accept the request, and then fill out a credit application. Credit application? Why? Same household, different name. But that's how it is; rulez is rulez. Okay, I go to where they told me to go on the website and, of course, there's no hide nor hair of anything that remotely looks like what they told me to click on and I waste a goodly amount of time chasing down the sub-sub-option that finally gets me to request a change of financial responsibility - a simple check box - which, I'm told, is causing an email to be sent to see if my lovely wife will accept. I race to my wife's computer to check her email but there's nothing from AT&T. I kill some time, check again, and there's this message telling her about the request and if she accepts responsibility, click here. I click here and am transported to a full financial disclosure page which needs to know whether her best friend's mother was right or left handed, if she's ever committed a felony using a rubber chicken, and would she like to contribute to AT&T's CEO's Save the Sea Slugs Foundation? I manage to fake all the answers to the satisfaction of the audit routine and press send, receiving notification that my application has been submitted for approval. Great. Time passes. I call AT&T (*see above, again*) to find out the status of the transfer request. Takes 9 - count 'em NINE! - different agents to find out that I had

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could have her so engaged. A young fellow with a physique such as Adonis might envy and only a satin sheet draped over his loins, filled the big screen, and they make them pretty big these days, in high definition. It's pretty near like the guy is sleeping in my living room. I couldn't hear the words but the scene had something to do with this Adonis guy and a stunningly beautiful woman he shared the bed with. Something about the magic they'd shared and how forbidden a repeat would be unless they do it right after the commercial break.

I figured I could compete with Adonis wannabe so I took off my shirt, stood in front of the screen, and twitched my eyebrows real sexy like the guy on the TV.

You have never heard such swearing in your life! Thank goodness Bose designed their headphones to be well cushioned. The last time I heard words like that I'd just joined the Navy and mistakenly made coffee for the officers with sea water instead of fresh water. Essentially, she told me if I didn't get my overstuffed, don't know muscle tone from dial tone, man-boobs and mammoth-belly out front the television right then and there she would drop me where I stood. She already arranged the evidence. It's on DVD and YouTube. The kids would back her up. They nodded in unison. I could tell she was serious this time. I returned to my home office.

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My Summer Vacation:

NOTHING IS EASY ANY MORE

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somehow managed to request that our AT&T internet and cable service be transferred to her, not our wireless service. Which is quite an accomplishment since both those services are bundled together. Now what, I ask? Oh, no problem sir, just have your wife go to the nearest AT&T store, have her request a change of financial responsibility, then show her proof of employment for the 15% discount on your wireless bill. So simple.

Nothing is easy any more.

The George

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I solved some world crisis or other back in my office and lost track of the time. Realizing my tardiness, I took the keys for my car from my daughter who lets me use it on First Friday's. I got to Hooter's about 5:40. My faithful friend Gary had arrived before me and wisely chosen seats in an area that can easily be arranged to handle from one to ten guests as necessary. Remember, the previous month nine guests were in attendance. I placed our placard prominently at the end of the table.

Our server for the evening would be Amanda. She's studying to be a pediatric nurse. Their featured drink special that evening happened to be Samuel Adams. Coincidentally I happen to be fond of Samuel Adams, the beer, I'm still studying up on the statesman. Anyway, Amanda returned with our drinks. The manager, Chris, stopped by. He asked where everyone might be. We explained that they would surely be along soon. Gary negotiated a special price on his O'Doull's. You gotta watch that Gary. He describes himself as a hustler. Seriously, you do have to watch him, though. Just kidding, he's the best.

So Gary and I go ahead and order some items from the menu. The food comes. The food goes. Finally, Amanda asked if it would be OK for her to separate the two tables we occupied since it looked as though no one else would be joining us. We sat and said "Sure" with a far off look in our eyes. That's because there were some really cute ladies behind the bar and we had to strain a bit to see them clearly.

This is where the sweet part comes in. Gary's table choice stood in the low table section of the restaurant. If you come to Hooter's for the exploitation, this is the section to get. The servers must bend over to deliver your drinks and what not. Many of the ladies Gary and I have come to know through the months came to greet us. When they found that our once great and powerful special interest group had been returned to a not especially interested group they comforted us with hugs and tender pats. They also asked us to buy some t-shirts and stuff but that's just because they only need two more to win a trip to Miami. How can you deny an innocent young girl something like that, much less a Hooter's girl? I try to be supportive. Amanda received bonus points for the Samuel Adams I drank that night. Lots of bonus point, Amanda received.

I told Gary that I should like to ask the Hooter's girls if they felt exploited. Who should know better, right? He agreed. Amanda returned with a

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beer for me and another O'Doull's for Gary. I asked her candidly if she felt exploited. Now Amanda is a pretty tall young lady and I mean pretty and tall. And if you are so inclined you would say she was well proportioned by her creator. So she bends over to answer us because Hooter's becomes rather raucous later in the evening and serious conversation comes difficultly. I got my trifocals on and I am looking her square in the eye as I wait for her response. This takes far more concentration than you can imagine, unless you are a man. Out of the middle trifocal I could see the sincerity in her eyes. On the periphery through the top trifocal I could see she had spent a lot of effort making her hair look nice. On the periphery through the bottom trifocal I could almost see what looked like a spectacular rack. But I held my gaze directly at her eyes as she replied to my question, "Well, sometimes it bothers me when people look down my shirt."

Geez Louise, talk about a buzz-kill. We thanked her for her opinion and she turned and left. When she turned, I sneaked a look at her cleavage. It was spectacular. Seriously, it was spectacular. Sad to say, it was spectacular beyond the guilt I feel for being a dirty old man because I know that I am not alone. Gary was there with me. Tara stopped by again to check on the t-shirts. Tara generally gets the smoking section, if you know what I mean. I asked her about the exploitation issue. In explaining the issue and how some people think her sex appeal brings in customers I casually motioned toward Tara's cleavage which drew my eye toward Tara's cleavage. She gave me a very well-considered response but I have no idea what it might have been. Few people know Tara once kept a king cobra mesmerized for three hours with her cleavage alone. The deadly serpent slithered away only to return an hour later, with a pair of eye glasses. Snakes have very poor eyesight, you know.

So Gary and I resume dismissing every major scientific finding since Newton, and while so doing I notice a young lady sitting at a high table across from us accompanied by a gentleman to her right, her escort I believe, and a gentleman across from her. I say gentleman but remember we are at Hooter's. The standard here is not as stringent as elsewhere. That "young lady" description might be a bit of a stretch, too. What caught my eye about her, aside from the cut of her dress, no, it was pretty much the cut of her dress. At a minimum her attire rivaled the Hooter's girls uniform in modesty and she wore it well. Anyway, I thought her opinion on women's exploitation might be significant.

I casually approached their table on my way to the men's room. I apologized for interrupting and explained my concern over women's exploitation.

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I informed them that if at any time they found my questions out of line to just say so and I would leave immediately. I proceeded to ask my question which could probably best be paraphrased as, "If these Hooter's girls are being exploited by dressing as they do, why are you doing it for free?". Her escort immediately asked me why I was noticing how his girlfriend was dressed. I momentarily couldn't think of a good answer that didn't seem pretty obvious to everyone in the place.

I said, "It's OK dude. I'm in Mensa, see the glasses." I tipped my eyeglasses and pointed to the Mensa placard. The escort found no amusement in me.

"You should probably go now." The gentleman sitting across the table said.

I could sense my charm would not save me here and as that sums my entire arsenal of defense I chose to take the advice. Upon my return trip from the men's room I chose the opposite path back to the table and happened upon three nice young ladies sitting at a table alone.

I engaged them with my question about exploitation. They seemed anxious for conversation. But when I've had that many Sam Adams beers I figure most everyone is anxious for conversation. Many an airplane passenger has unknowingly given off false talkative signals only to regret it later, not much later. These were cutish girls in their mid to late twenties. These girls had lasting qualities. Boobs come and go but what's inside has to get you through. I asked them about their revealing outfits and how can it be exploitation when they go out dressed like that as commonly acceptable attire. The girls were flattered by my charm and charmed by my mature good looks. That's about the time my daughter showed up.

Amanda suggested I might want to call her. The two of them I believe are Facebook friends now. They see each other about once a month. My daughter comes in and apologizes to most everyone in the bar and certainly anyone within listening distance of my table. She takes good care of me. She's a keeper, too.

In the car, I gave her directions to "The George's" favorite bar, Ashes, on Wickham. He graciously invited me to join him after the Hooter's meeting. I did. This is a great place. I should mention the name of the place is Ashes, it is a cigar bar. People smoke there. If smoking offends you, you

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are going to be offended. That's your own personal choice. Certainly a step or two up from Hooter's and the friendliest patrons I've seen in one place in quite a while. I asked some young ladies if they felt their beauty lead toward exploitation. I only spoke with them briefly for fear I bore them. They all responded emphatically and with the same voice. Unfortunately, I wasn't keeping good notes at that point and I have no idea of their words. "Get him away....", faintly echoes in my recollection but that could be from anywhere. None of them threatened me with violence and at the end of the evening I believe I left without constabulary encouragement.

My daughter picked me up and apologized to everyone exiting the bar as it was closing time but her words fell on deaf ears. Literally, I hadn't realized it was a hearing impaired cigar bar. No wonder no one seemed offended. I make a lot of sense if you can't hear what I'm saying. That was I hope obviously meant to be a joke. The bit about my wife was meant as a joke. When I took my shirt off and stood in front of pretty boy she just laughed, and laughed, and then suddenly she started sobbing. I can't imagine what thoughts were disturbing her so deeply. She still gets a bit weepy when I ask about it.

So anyway, said SCAM member found offense not only in the location of our monthly meeting but it could be surmised offense was found in a couple of email replies I sent requesting an open discussion of the issue. Said SCAM member resigned and I am truly sad about that. See you real soon!

A Mensan in the Workplace?

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

I just came back from a magnificent RG in Fort Lauderdale in which I spent a weekend with Mensans doing fun things together and enjoying one another's company. Fort Lauderdale put on a smash hit RG and great kudos go to the organizers and volunteers.

Then I got home to find that a Mensa e-list I'm on is on the verge of collapse because three people, who don't like each another very much, have been engaging in a non-stop flame war that has driven most of the other participants away. It's a shame, too, because a great many interesting conversations used to take place on it.

All of which shows that spending time with Mensans can be enormously rewarding, or a huge pain in the neck. *(I realize the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.)*

Fortunately, in my time as RVC, I have not often had to deal with problem members of the disruptive variety. Such few incidents as there have been, have been minor and quickly resolved. Other RVCs have not been so fortunate. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members in my region for what has, for the most part, been a peaceful and harmonious tenure as RVC.

At the same time, nobody is loved by everybody; each of us has a personality that somebody else finds less than optimal. And when that happens, I would urge everyone to try to view the other person in the best possible light rather than the worst possible light. Try to see their point even if you don't agree with it, try to understand that they are a product of their past, and above all, try to remember that very, very few people are really and truly evil. Good people and evil people exist in the movies; in real life most of us are a mix of both and it's a bit more complicated.

I love being in Mensa because it has allowed me to meet and work with some of the best people I've ever known. If you think of other people in that light, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Mel Dahl

Non-Minutes of the September ExComm Meeting.

All dressed up and no place to go. Or nothing to do. Alas, three of our five members had last minute complications of one sort or another and so we were left, the two of us, without a quorum. Which was a pity because we had two guests, Wynn and Suzanne Rostek, who dropped by to see what their ExComm was up to.

In addition, we had a volunteer to take the place of Bud Long who will be leaving the ExComm, due to other heavy commitments. George Lebovitz, known to many as "The George," and henceforth referred to as George L. is ready to step in as soon as we can gather a quorum to appoint him. Bud's departure means we will have to reorganize our various responsibilities. I plan to take over as Acting Treasurer because no one else wants the job, and continue as LocSec unless someone else wants the job.

George L. has volunteered to be Recording Secretary which he plans to do in his own inimitable style. Dennis, Karen and Terry will divide up Member-at-large, Assistant LocSec, and I Don't Want To Be Treasurer posts. At our next meeting we will appoint George L. to replace Bud and rehash the assignment of tasks. By tradition, all specific ExComm positions (see inside front cover) are by general agreement, which has been working out OK for the last decade or so.

Those of us who were there continued to fret over getting the annual audit done, and a somewhat less than diplomatic email exchange over our Hooter's venue, which remains on the calendar. Also we took note that there is a 2012 RG LOOMING over the horizon and that efforts to form an RG committee and acquire leadership for same will begin as of now. Note that the 2010 RG was handled by a very small and dedicated staff that cannot be expected to do it again all by themselves. With that, we all non-adjourned.

The October ExComm meeting will be at Karen Freiberg's house at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL, 32955, on Thursday, October 6, 2011 at 6:00 pm.

George Patterson - LocSec