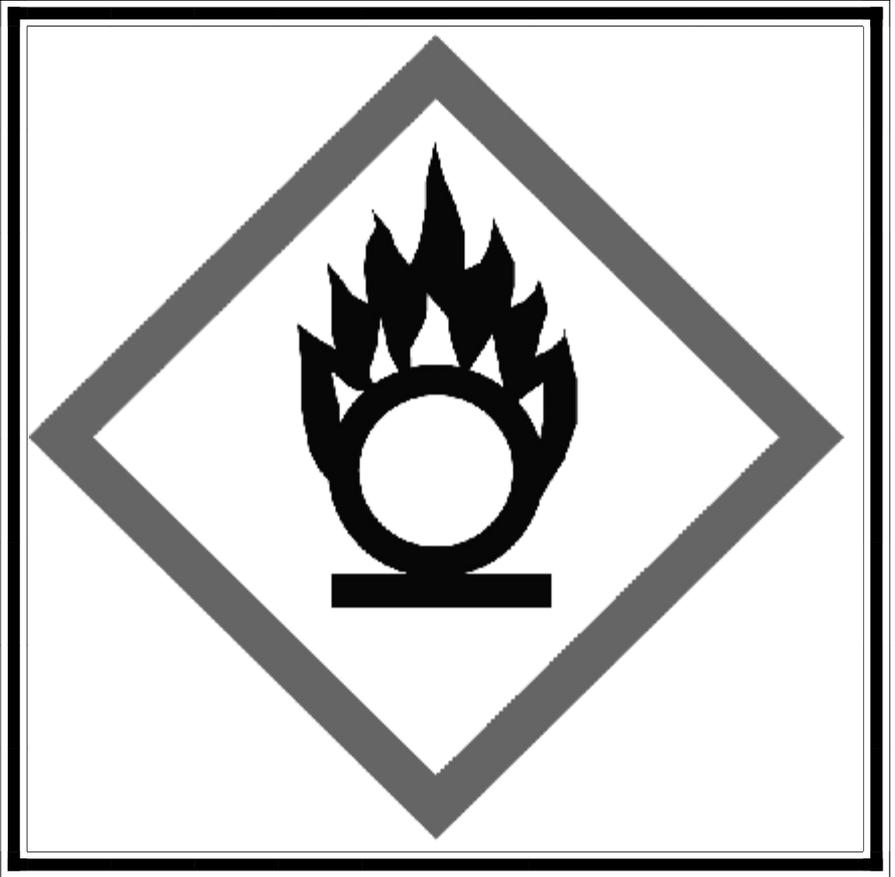


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# SCAM

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Volume 32, No. 1

January, 2014

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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*

**Happy  
New Year  
to all!**

**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.

I'm thinking way ahead and systematically figuring which resolutions will have already been broken by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month---January, that is. New Year's resolution diets never last longer than a week and usually no longer than an hour or so after they're made because of leftover snacks and holiday candy that is still lying around just about everywhere.

Smoking? You can't be serious! Chances are the ones most resolved to quitting will be smoking more than ever because of increased guilt. Other resolutions such as sticking a boot up your brother-in-law's butt the next time he interrupts you to say that he knows better or telling your mother-in-law what she can do with her whining will still fit into next year's resolutions. Now, I expect a little better success since my resolutions are not quite as demanding and I shouldn't have as much trouble sticking to them.

First---is never to let my machismo turn my hands into hamburger by trying to nail through metal that is colder than a witch's---*ahhh*---private part and who happens to live in the Klondike. And if, for some obscure reason, I do happen to pulverize my thumb and index finger when they are so cold as to be at the point of disintegration, I resolve never to continue the insanity by trying once again to pound by holding the nail between my pinkie and ring finger thereby turning what, only five seconds before, had been a useful appendage into something only Salvador Dali would recognize.

Now, this brings me to number two---which, by the way, is the result of number one.

I resolve never to eat fish assholes again. Now, you might say to yourself, "he must be insane, not wanting a batch of succulent fish assholes." The truth is that sorting fish assholes from fish cloacae can be a demanding job and with a mangled hand--- well, you can see how mistakes would occur. Just one cloacae in the batch can turn a delicious meal into a thing of loathing. It can leave you with memories that can make you barf at the very thought of eating Fish Assholes Prima Vera or Martha Stewart's favorite, Cajun Candied Fish Assholes with Louisiana Sauce. I had plans for a super Thanksgiving dinner of Mongolian style fish assholes with a game of ring toss if there was any leftovers after the meal but, not knowing the purity of the batch, I had to substitute twice eaten eel offal instead. I'm afraid that I will never again enjoy a delectable meal of mouthwatering fish assholes, all thanks to one or two errant cloacae that managed to slither through my mangled fingers. I've had several f.a. lovers ask me to teach them to sort or to write a program that would allow lovers the world over to enjoy this delicacy. There is no need for a prolonged explanation for sorting. The rule is simple, it is the actual sorting that can prove difficult. Fish

*(Continued on page 7)*

**I**n over 250 articles that I have had published in this and other magazines, not once have I written about myself. Oh yes, I have expressed my opinion on many subjects, and in some ways all my articles have been about myself because I choose to write about things that interest me, but I have not written about me, except for now. However, this article is about you. As I write this it is three months since I came down with Shingles.

**Shingles** is a viral disease characterized by a painful skin rash with blisters in a limited area on one side of the body (left or right), often in a stripe. The initial infection with varicella zoster virus (VZV) causes the acute, short-lived illness chickenpox which generally occurs in children and young adults. Once an episode of chickenpox has resolved, the virus is not eliminated from the body and can go on to cause Shingles—an illness with very different symptoms—often many years after the initial infection.

After the initial episode of chickenpox resolves, the varicella zoster virus remains latent in the nerve cell bodies without causing any symptoms. Years or decades after the initial infection, the virus may break out of nerve cell bodies and travel down nerve axons to cause viral infection of the skin in the region of the nerve. The virus may spread from one or more ganglia along nerves of an affected segment and infect the corresponding dermatome (an area of skin supplied by one spinal nerve) causing a painful rash. Although the rash usually heals within two to four weeks, some sufferers experience residual nerve pain for months or years, a condition called postherpetic neuralgia. Exactly how the virus remains latent in the body, and subsequently re-activates, is not understood.

Throughout the world, the incidence rate of herpes zoster every year ranges from 1.2 to 3.4 cases per 1,000 healthy individuals, increasing to 3.9–11.8 per year per 1,000 individuals among those older than 65 years. Over a lifetime, a large fraction of people develop herpes zoster, though usually only once; a 1965 16-year British study proposed that, of those individuals living to age 85, 50% would likely have had at least one attack, and 1% had at least two attacks.

The Shingles vaccine is considered the most effective way to reduce incidence of herpes zoster and post-herpetic neuralgia, and to reduce severity of any outbreak. Antiviral drug treatment is considered a second-line approach, but can reduce the severity and duration of herpes zoster if a seven- to ten-day course of these drugs is started within 72 hours of the appearance of the characteristic rash.

The earliest symptoms of herpes zoster, includes headache, fever, and malaise. These symptoms are commonly followed by sensations of burning pain, itching, hyperesthesia (oversensitivity), or paresthesia ("pins and needles": tingling, pricking, or numbness). The pain may be mild to extreme in the affected dermatome, with sensations that are often described as stinging, tingling, aching, numbing or throbbing, and can be interspersed with quick stabs of agonizing

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

pain.

In most cases after one to two days, but sometimes as long as three weeks, the initial phase is followed by the appearance of the characteristic skin rash. The pain and rash most commonly occurs on the torso, but can appear on the face, eyes or other parts of the body. At first the rash appears similar to the first appearance of hives; however, unlike hives, herpes zoster causes skin changes limited to a dermatome, normally resulting in a stripe or belt-like pattern that is limited to one side of the body and does not cross the midline.

- Abstracted and condensed from Wikipedia Shingles

My pain came in three varieties. The pain is in the left upper quarter of my face, surrounding my left eye. There was a severe constant pain that decreased slowly over time. This background pain increased and decreased for periods of hours in each day. Then, there are the occasional, usually several times a day, surges of pain to a higher level for some minutes at a time. It started as the highest level of pain, but these surges also decreased in intensity over time. The initial pain was severe, but the pain surges were even more so severe that all I could do was double up in pain. For several days after the onset of Shingles, all I could do was sleep or nap for most of the day. The sleeping time decreased gradually as did the pain. I am now on my before Shingles schedule. My appetite also was lost and gradually came back. Several weeks after the onset of Shingles, I lost almost ten pounds. The duration of Shingles is considerably variable. One of my doctors said his lasted two weeks. My cousin's lasted many months. I am in my third month.

As I said in the beginning of this article, this article is about you. It is an admonition for you to get the Shingles vaccination. You don't want to get shingles. It is very unpleasant and debilitating.

Get that Shingles vaccination now!

#### SIDEBAR

One phenomenon that I discovered, the more pain the less intelligence. At one extreme end, when the pain was at its worst, and I was doubled up with

(Continued on page 7)

**A**ny interest in a **CHES SIG**? Time and place to be determined. Please call Ron Turan, 321-355-0875 or e-mail me at [ron@artbyturan.com](mailto:ron@artbyturan.com). I'm in the Cape Canaveral area.

*(Continued from page 6)*

the pain, I could not think or act. When the constant pain was the highest, I could think only a few moments at a time until the pain forced me to drop what I was doing and concentrate on the pain. As the background constant pain gradually lessened, I could think or work for longer periods of time. My thinking became clearer. At first I could not easily recall things that should have been in my memory bank. I was clumsy, knocking over water glasses on my dining table, tripping over slight deformities in the floor, being easily distracted, and not finishing things that I started. Which was as if I had become stupid.

Our minds are like computers. I, and everyone else, have a certain amount of processing power. The more processing power, the more intelligence. It also has inputs from various sensors; sight, sound, taste, temperature, and so on. It also has inputs from other parts of the brain; memory, reasoning, etc. The brain can handle only a certain amount of input. The pain of Shingles is another sensory input. When the pain is severe, it displaces some of the other sensory inputs and overloads the processing power. That is why I felt so stupid, uncoordinated, and sleepy early on.

*(Continued from page 4)*

assholes are tiny round openings surrounded by sphincter muscles with the consistency of rubber. On the other hand, cloacae are tiny, rubbery "O" ring shaped openings that are capable of ruining a batch of fish assholes.

Third—is to get my butt down to the theater and see if Golum will save the King. I'm betting on Golum.

(HmMMM—I'm just wondering that because Golum might be amphibian, he could possibly have a ---ahhhh! NO! No way!)

Fourth---is never to mention fish assholes ever again. *Happy Holidays!*

## SCAM Treasurer's Report

July 31,  
2013

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$874.38
RG Fund	533.24
Reserve Fund	1607.67
<b><u>Total Funds Available:</u></b>	<b>\$3015.29</b>
<b><u>General Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$721.21
Mensa Funding	153.17
Newsletter Printing	0.00
Newsletter Subscription	0.00
Ending Balance	<b>\$874.38</b>
<b><u>RG Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$533.24
Ending Balance	<b>\$533.24</b>
<b><u>Reserve Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1607.60
Interest	0.07
Ending Balance	<b>\$1607.67</b>

## SCAM Treasurer's Report

**Aug 31,  
2013**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$1046.65
RG Fund	533.24
Reserve Fund	1607.74
<b><u>Total Funds Available:</u></b>	<b>\$3187.63</b>
 <b><u>General Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$874.38
Mensa Funding	160.27
Newsletter Printing	0.00
Newsletter Subscription	12.00
Ending Balance	<b>\$1046.65</b>
 <b><u>RG Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$533.24
Ending Balance	<b>\$533.24</b>
 <b><u>Reserve Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1607.67
Interest	0.07
Ending Balance	<b>\$1607.74</b>

**F**or the past 40 years—most of my life as a registered voter—I have heard many dire predictions relating to the future of Social Security. Most commonly, these predictions center around the aging of the Baby Boomers: First, it is because there are so many of us, second, because our generation’s reproduction rate is less than that of previous generations, and that (statistically) we are living longer than our parents and grandparents.

One related statistic often used is the changing ratio of workers paying in to Social Security to those receiving benefits. For example, in 1960 the ratio was 5 workers for every recipient; in 2010 the ratio was slightly less than 3:1. The argument is that, with fewer workers per recipient, either workers will have to pay more taxes to support the recipients or the Social Security benefits will need to be reduced. While the change in worker to beneficiary ratio has, indeed, gotten smaller (my numbers are from the Social Security Administration’s website), this argument is deceptive.

One reason for my contention is that Social Security is taxed as a percentage of a worker’s earnings. Were it simply a matter of number of workers paying into Social Security, that would imply that such a tax be charged per capita, that is, a certain amount of money per person regardless of level of earned income. In that situation, a part time minimum wage worker would be taxed the same amount as the owner of the company employing him. This is clearly not the case. The Social Security tax is the closest we have to a “flat tax” that is deemed by many conservatives to be the ideal in taxation.

For the great majority of the American workers whose annual earnings are less than \$114,000, everyone pays (employee and employer combined) 12.4% of his earnings. For those who are fortunate enough to earn more than that amount, the tax is 12.4% of the first \$113,700; he is not taxed on any earnings in excess of that amount.

I have found there is much dispute concerning the prognosis of Social Security as we progress through this century, but I believe there is somewhat of a consensus that, if we do not make adjustments to Social Security in the near term, there will be long term difficulties that may wind up with disastrous consequences to all concerned. Most agree that Social Security is running a surplus at the present, but as more of us age the surplus will turn into a major deficit over the next several years.

So, how do we save Social Security? For starters, I believe most of us agree that this is a money problem. There are three ways to resolve a money problem: Bring more money in, spend less money, or a combination of the two.

*(Continued on page 19)*

**W**ell folks, it's a brand new year, and things are moving right along here in SCAM. We will have submitted our new bylaws to national for approval by the time you read this.

The wife and I should be hosting an event in the near future, the first of several this year we hope. At this first event, I'll be demonstrating some of the advancements in technology that make being your own manufacturer practical. Stay tuned for an announcement as to when this will occur.

We need volunteers for the NomElCom for this year's election. It's a very easy task, and shouldn't take more than about 20 hours of your time scattered over the first half of this year. Getting three volunteers for this committee is critical as anyone serving on this committee is NOT eligible to run for office in SCAM. If ExComm members have to fill otherwise empty NomElComm seats, we're going to have a very empty ballot.

As always, we're on the lookout for ideas for events we can hold for SCAM, so keep those cards and letters coming. :-)

### 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.

# January 2014

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2		4 GO!
5	6 C.A.B.A.G.E.	7		9	10	11 GO!
12	13 C.A.B.A.G.E.	14	15	16	17	18 GO!
19	20 C.A.B.A.G.E.	21	22	23	24	 GO!
26	27 C.A.B.A.G.E.	28	29	30	31	

## SCAM Calendar of Events for January 2014

### 3rd - Friday 5:30 PM

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.*

### MENSA TESTING

**Jan. 18** 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 will be Feb.15.

**Contact:** Hank Rhodes, [mensatest@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mensatest@cfl.rr.com), for details.

### 8th - Wednesday 6:00 PM

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

### EXCOMM MEETING

### 25th - Saturday 5:45 PM

Join us for some Japanese cuisine at The SCAM's best attended event at our new venue, **Hioki's**, 3200 NE Dixie Hwy. (US 1) in Palm Bay. It is about 2 miles south of US 192.

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

### Of CABBAGES and Coffee: (Our Regular Events)

**C.A.B.A.G.E.:** Every Monday in the Food Court, Merritt Square Mall  
**6 p.m.** Host: Karen Freiberg, 633-1636

**GO!:** Every Saturday at Books-A-Million, The Avenue, Viera. Hosted by  
**1 p.m.** the Space Coast Area GO Association.  
Host: George Lebovitz,  
[the.rokkitsci@rocketmail.com](mailto:the.rokkitsci@rocketmail.com)

## Membership Notes for January 2014

### WELCOME TO SCAM AND MENSA

Jordan Robertson

Frank Stockman

### WELCOME BACK!

Jim Lee Fitzgerald

### JANUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

2nd	Rose Marie Martinez	21st	Diane Mullinax
4th	Vito Jimenez	22nd	Laurie Bunker
4th	Joseph Richardson	22nd	Melissa Rabano
10th	Dennis Logan	23rd	Michael Mustard
12th	Arleigh Sharpe	28th	Jeffrey Lineweaver
14th	Barry Signorelli	28th	Galan Murphy
14th	Lee McLamb	28th	Joseph Carrier
14th	Gary Tower	30th	Jeffrey White
18th	Daniel Land	31st	Joanne Ricker-Abowitt
19th	Lynette Johnson		



### **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.**

I thought I would start off the new year with the birthday of a mathematician who presented a list of unsolved mathematical problems for the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of them were solved in a short time. Others have been discussed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and this century. Some continue to this day to remain a challenge.

David Hilbert [Da; vit Hil- bet] a German mathematician, was born January 23, 1862 in the area once known as Prussia and died February 14, 1943. He is considered to be one of the most influential mathematicians of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He discovered and developed such a broad range of fundamental ideas in mathematics, that it is difficult to imagine only one person could have thought of all these topics! They included invariant theory, axiomatization of geometry and the Hilbert space (a foundation of functional analysis). He was one of the few to defend Georg Cantor's set theory and transfinite numbers concept. He developed tools in modern mathematical physics that were useful to Albert Einstein and others.

Among his 69 PhD students at the University of Gottingen were such names as the brilliant Herman Weyl, Richard Courant, Hugo Steinhaus, and Otto Blumenthal. All of these made significant contributions to the field of mathematics. Among Hilbert's closest associates were Herman Minkowski (*who actually helped Einstein develop the mathematics for his General Theory of Relativity*), John von Neumann (*one of the developers of computer theory, game theory, and calculations for the construction of the atomic bomb*), and Emmy Noether (her theorem explains the fundamental connection between symmetry and conservation laws). Upon hearing that one of his students had dropped out of his PhD program to study poetry, Hilbert was heard to reply, "Good. He did not have enough imagination to become a mathematician". (*Which I consider unfair. They both deal in imagination. One in numbers, the other with words*).

Hilbert was present during the purge of many faculty members at the University of Gottingen in 1933 by the Nazi Party. That action removed Germany from being the world's number one academic institution for mathematical training and discoveries. The university never recovered its fame in mathematics after the idiotic and infamous pursuits of the Nazis. Hilbert was attending a banquet and was seated next to the new Minister of Science and Education, Dr. Bernhard Rust (a zealous Nazi). Rust asked Hilbert, "*How is mathematics in Gottingen now that it has been freed of the Jewish influence?*" Hilbert replied, "*Mathematics in Gottingen? There is really none anymore.*"

Hilbert proposed a list of 23 unsolved problems at the International Con-

*(Continued on page 18)*

## SCAM Treasurer's Report

**Sept. 30,  
2013**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$1205.56
RG Fund	533.24
Reserve Fund	1607.74
<b><u>Total Funds Available:</u></b>	<b>\$3346.54</b>
 <b><u>General Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1046.65
Mensa Funding	158.91
Newsletter Printing	0.00
Newsletter Subscription	0.00
Ending Balance	<b>\$1205.56</b>
 <b><u>RG Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$533.24
Ending Balance	<b>\$533.24</b>
 <b><u>Reserve Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1607.67
Interest	0.07
Ending Balance	<b>\$1607.74</b>

## SCAM Treasurer's Report

**Oct. 31,  
2013**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$1370.57
RG Fund	533.24
Reserve Fund	1608.08
<b><u>Total Funds Available:</u></b>	<b>\$3511.89</b>
 <b><u>General Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1205.56
Mensa Funding	165.01
Newsletter Printing	0.00
Newsletter Subscription	0.00
Ending Balance	<b>\$1370.57</b>
 <b><u>RG Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$533.24
Ending Balance	<b>\$533.24</b>
 <b><u>Reserve Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1608.01
Interest	0.07
Ending Balance	<b>\$1608.08</b>
 <b><u>Post Office Account</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$100.38
Funds Added	0.00
Postage Costs	55.09
Ending Balance	<b>\$45.29</b>

(Continued from page 15)

gress of Mathematicians in Paris in 1900. It is considered by many as the most successful and deeply considered compilation of open unsolved problems to be produced by an individual mathematician. He presented half of them at the Congress. He extended the number in further publications.

Hilbert and his cohort mathematicians were committed to the attempt to support axiomized mathematics with definitive principles, which would banish theoretical uncertainties (*there is no math problem that cannot be solved, no math issue that cannot be proven*). Unfortunately, that idea was doomed to failure by Kurt Gödel (we may see him later in 2014).

Gödel demonstrated that any non-contradictory formal system, which was comprehensive enough to include at least arithmetic, cannot demonstrate its completeness by way of its own axioms (basically, sorry Hilbert... some aspects of mathematics can NEVER be proven). In 1931, his Incompleteness Theorem showed Hilbert's grand plan was impossible as he had stated it. However, Hilbert's work had started logic on the course of clarification in mathematics; the need to understand Gödel's work then led to the development of recursion theory and mathematical logic as separate disciplines. The basis for theoretical computer science and the research of Alonzo Church and Alan Turing (remembers Alan in *The SCAM* last year?) came directly out of this debate.

From his interest in physics, Hilbert worked on putting rigor into the mathematics of that scientific field. While dependent on higher math, physicists tended to be 'sloppy' in its application. To pure mathematicians like Hilbert, this was "ugly" and difficult to understand. Hilbert was known to have said, "Physics is too hard for physicists", implying that the necessary mathematics was generally beyond them.

When Hilbert died, he requested the following be placed on his tomb: "Wir müssen wissen, Wir werden wissen" (*We must know, We will know*). Sounds like a war cry of a bunch of Mensans at a Colloquium. This epitaph was taken from lines he spoke at the conclusion of his retirement address to the Society of German Scientists and Physicians in 1930. The words were given in response to the Latin Maxim: "*Ignoramus et ignorabimus*" (We do not know, we shall not know"). Which sounds like the normal session of the U.S. Congress?

### **References:**

1. Grattan-Guinness, Ivor, 2000. *The Search for Mathematical Roots 1870-1940*. Princeton University Press.
2. Gray, Jeremy, 2000. *The Hilbert Challenge*. ISBN 0-19-850651-1. Reid, Constance, 1996. *Hilbert*, Springer, ISBN 0-387-94674-8.

*(Continued from page 10)*

Most of the solutions that I have been aware of over the years deal with strictly reducing expenditures. While there is no “one size fits all” solution, I believe there is a better way. What follows are some of my ideas.

First, let us get rid of the cap (now \$113,700) on earnings subject to Social Security taxes. While the wealthier among us would experience a tax increase, this is not a “soak the rich” scheme. The “rich” would simply be paying the same percentage for Social Security as the rest of us; what could be fairer than that? Some estimate that if this idea was adopted, it would resolve 80% of the projected shortfall. While I am sure that many would dispute this figure, for the sake of this article, I would come up with a “compromise” savings of 40%.

Second, let’s enact a “living wage” law nationwide. Not only would this be a great help to those in the bottom of the working class, “living wage” would bring in more Social Security taxes. A “living wage” is about 50% more than the current minimum wage; thus 12.4% of a living wage would likewise be about 50% higher than 12.4% of minimum wage.

Third, we need to crack down on employers that use “Form 1099 employees”. In past columns, I have spoken of the “Form 1099 employee”. This is the term I use to describe people who are designated as “independent contractors” instead of employees. Let us briefly look at the difference between an employee and a true independent contractor.

An employee normally works exclusively works for his employer. The employer sets the wages and work hours, duties of the employee, and generally controls conduct while at work. There are laws, such as minimum wage, non-discrimination, and workers compensation, that govern the employment relationship. Taxes, such as Social Security (where the employer pays half) are withheld from the employee’s pay.

An independent contractor is someone who is in business for himself. He is not subject to an employer’s rules. He sets his own standards including prices, business hours, and what goods or services will be offered. The independent contractor pays his taxes in, usually quarterly and pays ALL of his Social Security taxes. Finally, he is NOT protected by any labor laws.

A “Form 1099 employee” works for one employer who sets his working conditions like any normal employer, but designates him to be an “independent contractor” in an effort to avoid being subject to labor laws. His argument is that the person working for him is in business for himself, while the worker most often regards himself as an employee and is often unaware of his designation as an independent contractor. This type of relationship is blatantly illegal,

*(Continued on page 20)*

(Continued from page 19)

but there is little government effort to prosecute offenders. Most “Form 1099 employees” are paid well below minimum wage and are thus desperately poor. One consequence is that when IRS comes to such an employee to collect the Social Security taxes due, he cannot afford to pay. Strict enforcement of existing law will increase Social Security tax collections.

Fourth, we need to address the unemployment problem that has persisted since 2008. Another serious problem that our country is experiencing is the literal crumbling of our infrastructure. Our roads and utilities are falling into disrepair due to age and neglect of necessary maintenance (much of it due to prioritizing tax cuts for the politically powerful). If we do not begin to address these problems, the Social Security problem will be very minor in comparison.

If we DO make a serious effort to repair and upgrade our infrastructure, we should have enough quality employment to virtually eradicate the unemployment issue of today. This would help in a number of ways. First, and most obvious: more workers, more money going into Social Security (unemployment compensation is not subject to Social Security taxes). The unemployment issue of today is recognized by many as having a secondary problem – the long term unemployed. Often, those who are still jobless for an extended period are not counted in the official unemployment stats, as their benefits have expired.

Many of the unemployed are older; they are not too far from the minimum age to get “early” Social Security benefits. Thus, it is not too much of a stretch to see that many who are laid off from their job at age 60 might simply let their unemployment run out and apply for Social Security at age 62. Meanwhile, if we could find quality jobs (such as my infrastructure example), these 60 year olds might wish to work until age 65 or 70, as Social Security benefits are much more generous than at age 62.

If we make a serious effort on all these counts, everyone wins. Working people are better able to support themselves and thus will contribute, rather than drain, our economy. Wages, rather than unemployment, will increase the funds used for Social Security. Likewise, higher wages mean more money in Social Security. Better jobs mean not only less unemployment, but more people delaying retirement which will slow Social Security expenditures. More jobs will most likely translate to fewer people claiming disability benefits.

Finally, even the “losers” (*those who must provide the better jobs and better wages*) will also benefit. Infrastructure improvements means better services that business, as well as individuals, depend upon; more customers (meaning more real profits) as they have more money to spend. The reality is, everyone wins.

## SCAM Treasurer's Report

Nov. 30,  
2013

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General Fund	\$1593.04
RG Fund	533.24
Reserve Fund	1608.14
<b><u>Total Funds Available:</u></b>	<b>\$3734.42</b>
<b><u>General Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1370.57
Mensa Funding	222.47
Newsletter Printing	0.00
Newsletter Subscription	0.00
Ending Balance	<b>\$1593.04</b>
<b><u>RG Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$533.24
Ending Balance	<b>\$533.24</b>
<b><u>Reserve Fund</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$1608.08
Interest	0.06
Ending Balance	<b>\$1608.14</b>
<b><u>Post Office Account</u></b>	
Beginning Balance	\$100.38
Funds Added	0.00
Postage Costs	55.09
Ending Balance	<b>\$45.29</b>

**THE TENTH STORY**

***Continued***

*(Continued from page 22)*

[games.org](http://games.org). Regional Gatherings are a great way to immerse yourself in the Mensa experience, and I hope to see you there.

*Thomas George Thomas, RVC10@us.mensa.org*

**T**his past month the American Mensa Board of Directors met in Palm Beach County, and while several motions were passed, rather than give any of them short shrift I will leave it until the official minutes are released to discuss them in detail. However, there were also some interesting presentations and discussions, one of which resulted in a new motion at the meeting to establish a Local Group Revitalization Task Force, on which I will be serving.

The topic of struggling Local Groups was raised based on events over the past few months in which chapters were no longer functioning according to their own bylaws, and all attempts to bring them back on track had failed. In one region, an RVC had to fire and replace an entire dysfunctional Executive Committee. In another region, a chapter of over 300 members simply did not have enough people willing to take on leadership positions, and their membership was reassigned to two different neighboring groups.

All regions, including ours, have similar struggling local groups, just as all regions have thriving groups. This is not always clear at the local level: some large groups with active calendars, healthy treasuries and copious volunteers complain about not having enough, while other small groups who fail to put out their newsletters or hold regular business meetings or elections claim to be very happy just as they are (*even though the newsletter and meetings are part of the required charter for every group*). In practice, every group is different. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to the well-being of a local group, nor even common approaches for equally-sized groups. On the other hand, it can be perplexing for a member who moves from one group to another where it feels like they're in an entirely different, alien organization because local practices are so different, yet both are part of American Mensa.

The purpose of the Local Group Revitalization Task Force will be to identify those groups which truly cannot continue to function as they have been, and find ways to turn that around. If you have concerns about your local group, or suggestions on how a struggling group can thrive once again, I'd be happy to hear your views at [RVC10@us.mensa.org](mailto:RVC10@us.mensa.org).

In my column last month I mentioned several ways of participating in policy or general Mensa discussions. I missed one: the official Region 10 eList that Elissa Rudolph established in January 2006 fell into disuse in mid-2008, but still exists. I'll be inviting all current Region 10 officers to join this list, but anyone else who is interested in joining can subscribe by visiting <http://www.lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/region10>. If you do not provide your name, or if your email address is not the same as the one in the AML directory, I may ask for more details before I approve your request.

Don't miss the Central Florida "Sun-N-Games" Regional Gathering on Jan. 17-19 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando/SeaWorld! Details can be found at [sun-n-](#)

*(Continued on page 21)*

**T**he ExComm met at the home of Karen Freiberg at 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955, on Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, called to order by LocSec Wynn Rostek at 6:14 pm.

**Members Present:** Wynn Rostek, Karen Freiberg, Terry Valek, Dennis Logan, and George Lebovitz.

**Guests:** George Patterson.

The minutes of the November, 2013 minutes were approved.

**Officer/Committee Reports** (details may be found in the footnotes):

**Treasurer's Report**<sup>1</sup>. The annual financial report for American Mensa is due by April. The annual audit is still outstanding.

**Testing Coordinator**, Hank Rhodes, reported via email<sup>2</sup>.

Wynn distributed (via email) a copy of American Mensa's model bylaws for review. With minor modifications (*primarily: the addition of a Recording Secretary [that would be myself] as an ExComm officer, the ability to make and second motions and then vote on them electronically, and the stipulation that uncontested elections need not publish a ballot or count votes*) they should serve adequately for SCAM; however, they will first be reconciled with a copy of SCAM bylaws which was drafted in 2007. All members of the ExComm were invited to participate in the reconciliation.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at the home of Karen Freiberg, 876 Buxmont Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955 at 6:00 pm, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm.

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1. General Fund: \$15,093,04, RG Fund: \$533.24, Reserve Fund: \$1,608.14, Total Assets: \$3,734.42.

2. Contacted 0 candidates for the first time, 8 candidates for the second or third time; tested 0. Next test session is January 18, 2014 at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa.