



American Mensa Committee Highlights ...

Thomas G. Thomas - RVC 10

Happy New Year! In January, Mensa Connect expanded its reach to all members via Local Group Communities. Previously, Local Groups had to specifically request their own Communities on Mensa Connect (<https://www.us.mensa.org/connect/mensa-connect/>), and half of our local groups had done so, with three of those in active use. Now all groups have access, and all members are automatically part of the Local Group Communities. The default setting for all members is Daily Digest, so you would only receive one email per day. If you wish, you can change your setting by going to the link above and selecting your community, and clicking the Settings box next to the Community title. There you will be able to change the email frequency to Real Time (so you'll get all messages as they come in), or No Email (which would still allow you to see any messages by logging in to your Community directly). You can also designate a different email to receive messages, if you wish.

The Communities are a useful tool, with the ability to set up Events and Libraries for local group documents such as Local Group bylaws or meeting minutes. Access to these are limited to active Mensa members assigned to your groups, with the option of adding other members at the discretion of the Community Administrator, which is by default the Local Secretary/President. Non-members are not permitted access to the Communities, so make sure you renew on time!

Tools such as these are only valuable if they are used, so I encourage everyone to make use of this resource. Let me know if you have any questions.

While local groups put their upcoming events on their calendars, some require more advance notice. For instance, CultureQuest XXXI is coming! Registration opens on February 3, with the event itself taking place on May 3. Local Groups can have as many teams as they like, though teams are limited to five participants each (with two alternates). CultureQuest is often inaccurately referred to

as a trivia contest, but it relies more on common knowledge than most trivia. It was inspired by the book "Cultural Literacy" by E.D. Hirsch, which posits that most cultures have general knowledge used in communication, regardless of whether the people have specific knowledge about the topic. (For example, almost everyone in Western Culture will understand when you call someone Sherlock or Einstein, even if they've never read A.C. Doyle or picked up a physics book.)

Some local groups are VERY serious about this (Central Florida's "Tragic Kingdom" team has taken the first-place prize for the last six years running!). Others have more fun with it, coming up with the funniest responses they can think of if they don't know the answers – some of which are read out during the Awards ceremony at the Annual Gathering. And some groups have AfterQuest parties where the whole local group is invited to participate in answering the questions after the official event is over, to see if they would have gotten questions the teams had missed. However your group approaches it, I hope we can get at least one team from each group this year. Also looking ahead, I encourage you to participate in National Volunteer Week in April, the Tampa Bay Mensa RG in May, and the Annual Gathering in July. I've run out of room to provide more detail, so that will come in future columns.

Until next month (or until I see you online), 

Election Results ...

The SCAM Executive Board met on Jan. 14th and, in a closed cage death match, made the following determinations as to "positions" ...

LocSec *Jim Fitzgerald*

AsstLocSec *George Rasley*

Treasurer *Theresa Valek*

RecSec *Elizabeth Lay*

Let's say "thanks!" to the outgoing bunch, and "huzzah!" to the new meat ...

Can we pick 'em, or what?

Space Coast Area Mensa Group

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Cape Canaveral Schedule

Amazingly vague for the next few weeks ...

Atlas V 411 | Solar Orbiter
United Launch Alliance
Wed, Feb 5th, 2020, 11:27 PM EST

Falcon 9 Block 5 | Starlink 4
SpaceX
Fri, Feb 14th, 2020, TBD

Falcon 9 Block 5 | Starlink 5
SpaceX
February, 2020, TBD

Falcon 9 Block 5 | SpX-DM2
(Demonstration Mission 2)
SpaceX
February, 2020, TBD

Atlas V N22 | CST-100 Starliner Crewed Flight Test
(Crewed)
United Launch Alliance
February, 2020, TBD

Atlas V 551 | AFSPC-12
United Launch Alliance
February, 2020, TBD

Falcon 9 Block 5 | SpX CRS-20
SpaceX
March, 2020, TBD

Bugging a U.S. Embassy's Typewriters ...

IEEE Spectrum excerpt > 12-2019

Recounting a lengthy struggle by Charles Gandy, an electrical engineer at the United States' National Security Agency, to uncover an elaborate and ingenious scheme by Soviet engineers to intercept communications in the American embassy in Moscow during the Cold War in the late 1970s.

American spies were being arrested, and how they were being identified was a matter of great concern to U.S. intelligence. The first break came with the accidental discovery of a false chimney cavity at the Moscow embassy. Inside the chimney was an unusual Yagi-style antenna that could be raised and lowered with pulleys. The antenna had three active elements, each tuned to a different wavelength.

What was the purpose of this antenna, and what transmitters was it listening to?

MENSA College Scholarships

Hello members,

Please encourage any local college students you know at accredited schools to apply for the scholarships offered for non-members by our local chapter and national, and also the members-only national scholarships. The announcement has been sent to FIT, Indian River State College, and Eastern Florida State College.

Big thanks go to Hank Rhodes and Libby Wilder for serving as scholarship judges. There were 26 submissions to consider for the local student scholarship award. Winners are usually announced sometime in May.

Details regarding eligibility:

An applicant must be intending to enroll in a degree granting accredited college/university the academic year following their application. Students just need to become enrolled and provide documentation of enrollment if they receive the award.

For more information - read the scholarship FAQ: www.mensafoundation.org/what-we-do/scholarships/us-scholarships/

Thank you,

Julie S. Costopoulos, Ph.D.
Space Coast Area Mensa (S.C.A.M.)
Scholarship Chair

Testing:

All testing conducted at Central Brevard Library, Cocoa, Florida (633-1794) unless otherwise noted. Testing starts at 1000. (Proctor arrival approx 0930, Candidate arrival approx 0945.)

Feb 15 Proctor – Julie Costopoulos. 

Welcoming Efforts ...

New member bios & info

Nancy Hollo - "I'm 65 years old and newly retired. I moved to the Space Coast from Ohio one year ago to be closer to my aging parents. I've lived in Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Tulsa, Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska, as well as my hometown, Cleveland, Ohio. I'm enjoying the Space Coast and its many opportunities to hear live music, from jazz to opera."

"I'll check out the Facebook group – Thanks!" 

ExCom – Two New Special Interest Groups

George Rasley - Ass't LocSec

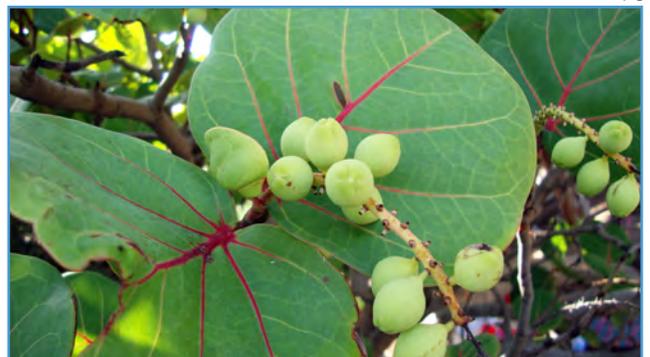
During its first meeting SCAM's newly elected ExCom commissioned Assistant LocSec George Rasley of Vero Beach to explore two new Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Rasley volunteered to coordinate exploratory meetings for BLAMs, a nationally recognized SIG on the history, science and safe operation of firearms, and a local SIG devoted to wine tasting for Space Coast Area Mensan oenophiles – or those who simply enjoy the company of their fellow Mensans and the conviviality of a glass of wine.

Rasley announced that the first meeting of the SCAM BLAMs would take place at FrogBones shooting range, 404 S Harbor City Blvd, Melbourne, FL 32901 on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 10 a.m. Owning a gun is not necessary to participate in BLAMs; first time shooters, novices and experienced shooters are all welcome. Rental guns are available from the range and for the first meeting of BLAMs, Rasley, a certified rifle and pistol instructor, is bringing a selection of handguns for participants to try. At the conclusion of the shooting event participants are invited to meet for lunch at a nearby restaurant to discuss the future of a regular SCAM BLAMs meet-up.

Future BLAMs events anticipated include an opportunity to learn about and shoot the historic battle rifles of World War II, an introduction to riflery, an introduction to America's favorite rifle, the AR-15, a Dinosaur hunt and a free certification class for Mensans who wish to obtain their Florida concealed firearms permit.

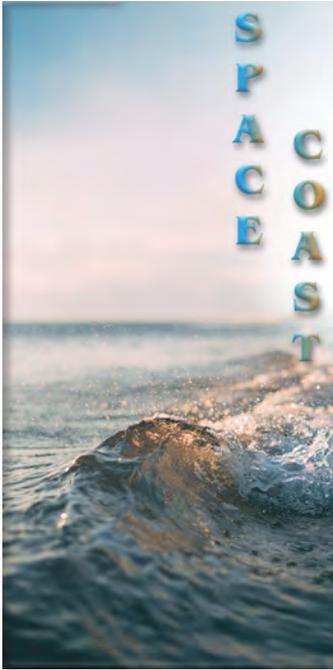
The date and location of the exploratory meeting of SCAM Oenophiles has yet to be determined, but Rasley, a former Director of Les Amis du Vin, advises that as of the deadline for the Feb. issue of *The SCAM*, discussions are underway with several area restaurants to host a "Shrimp & Chardonnay" wine-

Cont. on pg. 4



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE



Be Safe Gang

Embassy's Typewriters – Cont. from pg. 2

After tens of thousands of fruitless X-rays, a technician noticed a small coil of wire inside the on/off switch of an IBM Selectric typewriter. Gandy believed that this coil was acting as a step-down transformer to supply lower-voltage power to something within the typewriter. Eventually he uncovered a series of modifications that had been concealed so expertly that they had previously defied detection.

A solid aluminum bar, part of the structural support of the typewriter, had been replaced with one that looked identical but was hollow. Inside the cavity was a circuit board and six magnetometers. The magnetometers sensed movements of tiny magnets that had been embedded in the transposers that moved the typing “golf ball” into position for striking a given letter. 🍀



Special Interest Groups – Cont. from pg. 3

tasting event sometime in mid to late February. Invitations to the event will be issued as soon as arrangements are finalized.

As a final note, Ass't LocSec George Rasley advises that, out of respect for the potential enthusiasm of SCAM Oenophiles participants, BLAMs and SCAM Oenophiles events would not be hosted on the same day. For more information, or to volunteer to help, please contact Ass't LocSec George Rasley at geerayz@aol.com or cell: 239-682-6922. 🍀

