The wait is over....
ARRR-R G!
2007

Is finally here!
Details inside...

Tampa Bay Sounding
A PUBLICATION OF TAMPA BAY MENSA
VOLUME 32, NO. 4
MAY 2007

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Tampa Bay Sounding

Sounding Editor: Erica Rogers
Calendar Editor: Dana Groulx
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Publisher: Sylvester (Les) Milewski

April 2007 Contributors:
Maxine Kushner, Thomas Thomas, Bob Topper, Maggie Truelove, Pat Tuley, Sylvia Zadorozny

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Submission Guidelines

Tampa Bay Sounding encourages submissions from all members. Submissions must be signed, but names may be withheld or pseudonyms used if requested. All letters to the editor will be subject to publication unless the author specifically requests otherwise. All material submitted will be considered but publication of material and the editing thereof, shall be at the discretion of the Sounding Editor. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Articles, casual essays, opinion pieces, poems, short stories, puzzles, and artwork are all encouraged.
- Personal attacks and bigoted, sexist, hateful, or otherwise offensive material will not be published.
- E-mail submissions are preferred, saved in a Word readable format. Computer printouts and typewritten pages are also acceptable. Hand written submissions will be considered.

You may send your submissions by either of the following means:
1. E-mail: TBMEditor@gmail.com
   Please reference Mensa in the header.
2. U.S. Mail:
   E. L. Rogers
   520 11th Ave N. #4
   St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Unless otherwise specified in the calendar, the deadline for unsolicited contributions is the tenth day of the month preceding the cover date.

A PUBLICATION OF
Tampa Bay Mensa

Tampa Bay Sounding (USPS 305-830)
Tampa Bay Mensa
9091 St. Andrews Dr
Seminole, Fl 33777

Mensa is an international society whose sole qualification for membership is a score at or above the 98th percentile on a standard IQ test. Mensa is a not-for-profit organization whose main purpose is to serve as a means of communication and assembly for its members. All opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors, and not necessarily those of the editors or officers of Mensa. Mensa as an organization has no opinions.

Tampa Bay Sounding is the official newsletter of Tampa Bay Mensa. Tampa Bay Mensa serves Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, and Sumter counties.
WELCOME TO TAMPA BAY MENSA!

MENSAVERSARIES

* Karl J. Bambas
* April R. Brown
* David Cansler
  Kathleen Marie Cotter
  Donald Davis
* Josh DeFamio
* Don Delehant
  Stephen John Hatcher
* Roscoe Howes IV
  Sandra Jean Kischuk
  Reiser Mayne
* Matthew G. Sizemore
* Mary A. Stoltz
* indicates New Member; others are moves in, preferences in or reinstatements

42 Years  Cynthia DeBerry Fisher
37 Years  Dr. Allen F. Garber
30 Years  John E. Evan
27 Years  John W. Woerner
26 Years  Christopher J. Clement
23 Years  Capt Bruce Keith Bohnker, MC USN
22 Years  Dr. Charles L. Lardent, Jr.
21 Years  Sylvia Zadorozny
20 Years  Penny Ann Levin
18 Years  Gerri Almand
17 Years  Janet Carol Darmanin
16 Years  Rudolph Brian Jacques
15 Years  Roland A. St. Marie, Jr.
14 Years  James H. Brower
13 Years  Richard F. Bruckart
12 Years  Richard C. Hardy
12 Years  Col. Rick David Craig
10 Years  Anne T. Murray
9 Years  William David Gilmer
8 Years  Chris Hachey
7 Years  Audrey W. Silver,
  Ltc Jon R. Smith
  Kristie Woeckener
6 Years  John D. Cattel
5 Years  James B. Clack
4 Years  Charles Godfrey
3 Years  Joe Jenkins
2 Years  Carl R. Regenhardt, Sr.
1 Year  Larry Paradis

MAY BIRTHDAYS

05/01  Sabrina Foley Puentes
05/04  Donald Hooley
05/05  Ferdinand P. Pointer
05/06  Thomas Andrew Timberlake, Sr.
05/08  John Charles Beaumont
05/11  Paul Wartenberg
05/12  John Stanley Keeling, Jr.
05/14  Debra F. Hartland
05/17  Michael S. Harris
05/20  Allison Jirsa
05/22  Dr. Kenneth Maliq Louis
05/25  Todd Richardson Jennings
05/28  Sean Dobes
05/30  Sandra Jean Kischuk
05/31  John Russell Sims
05/20  Jack Crepeau
05/23  Joseph Hudson Lucas
05/25  Phil Caraway
05/28  Michael S Demko
05/31  Susan Gardner
05/29  Sheldon J. Livingston, Jr.
05/30  John MacKay
05/31  Christopher V. Orozco
05/29  Pamela Lynn Dodge
05/30  Lee D. DeCesare
05/31  Dr. Jay Andrew Nelson
05/31  Kathleen Marie Cotter
05/31  Jonathan Laurence Kessel
05/04  John Charles Beaumont
05/05  Thomas Andrew Timberlake, Sr.
05/06  John Charles Beaumont
05/08  Paul Wartenberg
05/11  Debra F. Hartland
05/12  Michael S. Harris
05/14  Dr. Kenneth Maliq Louis
05/15  Todd Richardson Jennings
05/17  Sean Dobes
05/20  Sandra Jean Kischuk
05/22  Jack Crepeau
05/23  Phil Caraway
05/25  Michael S Demko
05/28  Susan Gardner
05/29  Sheldon J. Livingston, Jr.
05/30  John MacKay
05/31  Christopher V. Orozco
05/29  Pamela Lynn Dodge
05/30  Lee D. DeCesare
05/31  Dr. Jay Andrew Nelson
05/31  Kathleen Marie Cotter
05/31  Jonathan Laurence Kessel

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May 2007  3  Tampa Bay Sounding
Here is an interesting tidbit for you: As part of the MIL budget process, Stacey Kirsch did an analysis of all the national Mensas and their dues rates, converted to British pounds for comparison sake, as well as the testing costs. UK was at the top of the list for dues, charging 45 pounds. US is 9th on the list, charging the equivalent to 29.89 pounds. For testing costs, Canada was at the top of the list, charging the equivalent of 44.31 pounds. US is 7th, charging the equivalent of 17.24 pounds. I am probably as surprised as you are to see how many other national Mensas actually charge more than American Mensa does for both dues and testing, but 'tis true.

American Mensa is growing well! The membership numbers are up, retention is up, to the point that we almost hit the 55,000 mark in membership by the end of the fiscal year, which coincides with the end of the dues year, March 31.

There is another special promotion for testing going on in May. Please do spread the word to friends you think are qualified, as this would be a good time for them to save a bit of money. During the month of May, Home Tests will be sold for $13 (as opposed to the usual $18). Then returning the Home Test before June 30 earns a coupon worth $5 off the Mensa Admission Test, valid until August 31.

Janice Johnson of Palm Beach Mensa is helping me organize a Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) for this coming fall, probably in November. Current plans are to hold it in the Orlando area, based on its central location in the state. Questionnaires were sent to officers and others around the state, inquiring about areas of interest and need, but that doesn’t mean that those are the only members able to attend. If you have any interest in learning more about being an active Mensan, please do consider attending. More information will be forthcoming; for now, just keep it in mind.

Have you checked out www.mensaforkids.org yet? Sponsored by the Foundation, this website is for young Mensans and other bright kids everywhere. There are games and activities, learning activities, and all sorts of child-oriented things. So check it out yourself, or let the bright kids in your world know about it! Spread the word!

See you Memorial Day Weekend at ARRR-G (Tampa Bay’s RG), 4th of July in Birmingham (the Annual Gathering), and Labor Day Weekend at Florange a Trois (Broward’s RG).

Maggie Truelove
RVC, Region 10
rvc10@cfl.rr.com
Our annual spring picnic has come and gone. We had a very healthy turnout at Anderson Ford Park in Lithia, and everyone seemed to have a good time. I know I did. We enjoyed good eats, interesting conversation, and a lively walk of at least a couple miles around the trail. There was also that long, long (did I mention long?) walk in search of a bathroom... but we survived and lived to tell the tale, right Steve?

It’s RG, excuse me. ARR-RG month at last. Honcho Thomas Thomas and the rest of the RG gang have put together what I know will be a terrific weekend for all of us. There’s still time to register at the $75 rate (until May 12), though you can show up at any time through the Memorial Day weekend. I always say the same thing, but that’s because it’s always true: our RG is always a fun weekend. If you’ve never attended one, you’re missing out on some of the best times to be had in Tampa Bay Mensa. If you’re shy, don’t worry, you can do as little or as much as you want, and you will be more than welcome wherever you go. Take advantage of this wonderful group you’ve joined! Online registration is available at: (http://www.tampa.us.mensa.org. You can see the hotel here: (http://www.stpetehilton.com).

I was very pleasantly surprised a couple weeks ago to be chosen as ABC Action News’ Head of the Class recipient for teachers. If you’d like to see the two minute clip, follow this link: http://www.abcactionnews.com/content/segments/headoftheclass/default.asp (or, http://www.abcactionnews.com, select “segment” then “head of the class”)

Until next month,
Maxine
That is one pathetic looking grapefruit tree. One half of the crown is missing leaves and appears completely dead, the other half looks stunted and has black smut all over. I can see rotting spots along the base of the trunk aptly called rotten foot. This is so different from the appearance of the full and vigorous tree I have known for all the years my parents lived in their home here in Florida. Year after year the tree gave an enormous bounty of gorgeous grapefruits, huge and luscious with thin skins and few seeds. The juice from these grapefruits was the sweetest ever, and no tree around could match that extraordinary flavor. I have photos of my much younger parents standing behind mounds of grapefruits and, from later on, my son standing behind similar mounds. That tree was prolific every year, so much so that I thought it would never stop. Yet here it is today, ailing, and awaiting the consequences of my decision; remove it.

The arborist told me that my tree had received a double whammy; the first being root shock from the drought a few years ago, and the second from salt spray from the hurricanes. Apparently salt spray acts like a herbicide and the part of the foliage that was exposed is the part that got killed. Old age is responsible for the rotten foot, and with all this taken together, the arborist felt we could never bring the tree back to anything like its former vigor and the kindest thing was to let it go with dignity.

It may sound strange to be talking about the dignity of a tree but anthropomorphosis aside, ancient cultures often believed in the spirit of the tree. The druids honored the spirit of the oak. Uganda is the home of the Nakayima Tree which is said to hold the spirit of a former king. Russia has Ulitsa Sezam, Japan has Kodama, Burma has Akathaso but that is an evil tree spirit, and China has the Pinghou tree spirit, but they eat theirs, they say it tastes like dog. India has the Tree of the Sun and The Moon spirits, the Slavs have Leshy and even some religions believe trees are the home of tree spirits such as the Hindus. The green man is almost ubiquitous and quite ancient. The green man is usually a carving of leaves forming a face and such faces have been found on tombs, temples, cathedrals, homes, in fact the face-of-leaves has been found to decorate just about everything. Some form of green man is found throughout Europe, and the idea of green man can be recognized in the Middle East and into Africa, and the egalitarian Hawaiians describe a green woman. It is thought that the green man represented the natural cycle of life,
birth, death, decay.
The Greeks brought the idea of tree spirits up to a well-populated pantheon of dryads, hamadryads, meliads, and other variously named nymphs. The ash, laurel, fig, oak, vine, and fruit trees were all thought to have tree spirits dwelling within. The spirits had a very interesting lineage in that it is said that when Chronos the Titan castrated his father Uranus, the blood from the wound was taken in by the earth Gaia who bore the meliads, and nymphs from it.

Today there are tree spirits in faerie mythology similar to the dryads and hamadryads from Greek and Roman mythology. The spirit is bound to the tree where it was born for the life of the tree and for that reason the killing of a tree was a punishable offense. We ourselves carry the superstition of knocking on wood to ward off bad luck which is a carryover from knocking on the tree to awaken the tree spirit within so the spirit could intercede with the gods on our behalf.

Watching the arborist take down my tree limb by limb I feel a connection to ancient cultures who appreciated trees because we all share some kind of thought that a tree is something more than just wood and greenery, that there truly is a kind of life that resides there. I see my tree as almost eternal, abiding, strong, and, as Shel Silverstein said, a giving tree, and I am grateful for its bounty for all the years.

I have a new tree ready and I kept a bit of the old tree to plant with the new one so the spirits can mingle and I can feel that I have honored the spirit of my lovely old tree. I plan on hugging the new one, too.

Back to the earth, my faithful tree. You are hidden, but your roots remain And it is time to let them go and be reclaimed.
May the spirit that kept you wonderful and strong Find the kind of peace in the earth That the old and wise can find when they are no longer at their toils.

For you, my powerful spirit, there will be new toils Because new trees will be coming soon, And their little spirits will be ready to let your old strength Help them until they too are grown and strong on their own. So be at peace, and patient, Because what is old will become new. And the cycle will continue. So mote it be.

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CRYPTOPOEM

By Sylvia Zadorozny

SE NEX PUWCTO DEO UIOGM YPEQTOY,
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    RGAT FT U ROUST-U FUN SUN,
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     --ERSTW WUYP,
"PTOT QT RE KXGTVMN WXVY GW FUN"

SOLUTION TO APRIL CRYPTOPOEM

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind, but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine;
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest;
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.
--John Masefield, "The West Wind"
There’s a lot of arguments going on these days about immigrants, mostly from Mexico, that are not speaking English here in the United States. While the following won’t relieve the bi-lingual battle, it should give Americans a stake in their language.

Part of the problem is tied up in the currently preferred name for our language, “English”. If an American should visit the countryside of England, he or she would find it quite difficult to understand a lot of the words spoken there, in the home country of “English”. So is it really English we speak?

Worse, lets tinker with history for a moment; It’s the revolutionary war and England, in a surprise move, invades Mexico with plans of opening a second front in the war by attacking the colonies from the south. Meanwhile, Spain ups its backing of the colonies by supplying huge numbers of Spanish troops and support groups directly. The end result is the same, England is repelled and the colonies are free. Except, because of the large numbers of Spanish, the native language is now Spanish. Meanwhile, England holds onto Mexico.

So here we would be today, speaking Spanish and complaining about the huge influx of English speaking Mexicans that refuse to learn our language.

The United States as a country is not one ethnic group, but a conglomerate of peoples from all parts of the world. Most all, if not all, brought with them words from their native language that have become “Americanized”. For example, “I sat in my sauna on my patio drinking beer and feasting on pizza and hors d’oeuvre s”. (Finnish, Spanish, German, Italian, French) Words like these are just a sampling of thousands more.

Let’s change one thing immediately. Let’s think of the language spoken in the United States as a language that matches its population, a “conglomerate” of the languages of the world. So let us call it American, not English. We can then define the "American language" as a continuously evolving composite of many of the worlds languages.

Once we can get Americans to accept that there will always be language evolution here in the U.S., perhaps they will be more receptive new words and gradual changes that follow different immigrations. Obviously, this doesn’t directly impact the movement to bilingual languages going on, but it might point out that there will be changes in the American language tracking the changes in its peoples. So take the first small step; SPEAK AMERICAN!!
You know, I can’t remember that many things specifically that we talked about but we sure had a good time. I know we talked about cats as we nearly always do. SYLVIA ZADOROZNY has a monster ... nearly 20 pounds and THOMAS THOMAS has two kittens, Harley and Bond, who are still confined to his bedroom until they become calmer and closer to him. He has gotten them each a “tree” to climb and is amazed at the muscular way in which they manage to ascend. They are truly relatives of jungle cats. DAN McCANN and I have 2 normal size housecats and 2 truly huge (but not fat) ones. We had 5 but had to put one down in January because he was so senile his behavior had become completely unacceptable, not just to us but to the other cats ... he was attacking them viciously. MARIE ELSTON has several cats.

We also discussed the prevalence of urban legends and how they often spring from articles in the paper, printed as facts. Thank goodness we have now got urban legend explosives online to blow them apart. For instance, did a woman REALLY put her poodle in the microwave to dry it after a bath? And did people REALLY put DRY sponges in their microwaves and nuke them to kill the bacteria? Well, that one I can believe. I even heard a doctor on the Dr. Phil show say that he occasionally nukes his underpants and has NEVER had a yeast infection (he was joking). I’d be afraid it would melt the elastic even if done only for a few seconds but haven’t tried it.

Apparently one of the interesting things at the RG this year will be a display of miniatures. Now I don’t know if this is all miniatures such as dollhouses, jewelry, sculpture, etc. or what so you’d better show up at the RG and find out! BOB TOPPER was headed for New York for Passover and to see a new great-grandbaby. There was a third reason but I can’t remember what it was. He had recently returned from his winter home in Mexico. He had some jokes to tell but I can’t print them here.

I had to miss last month’s meeting and RICHARD MANNO had graciously agreed to host it for me but hadn’t gotten a write-up into the Sounding in time. Those in attendance were himself, SYLVIA ZADOROZNY, RONNIE DUBS, THOMAS THOMAS, and PAUL SHARP. He said they discussed Extraterrestrials, Sasquatch, Sumerians, Email scams, National ID cards, Metal munching termites, Metal munching moon mice, traveling to Peru and Ireland. WELL! I’m sure sorry I wasn’t there. One thing I do know about monsters that you can’t be too careful about annoying dragons for you are crunchy and taste good with
Paddy Flynn staggered home very late after another evening with his drinking buddy O’Leary. He took off his shoes to avoid waking his wife, Mary. He tiptoed as quietly as he could toward the steps leading to their upstairs bedroom but misjudged the bottom step. As he caught himself by grabbing the banister, his body swung around and he landed heavily on his rump. A whiskey bottle in each back pocket broke and made the landing especially painful.

Managing not to yell, Flynn sprung up, pulled down his pants and looked in the hall mirror to see that his nether regions were cut and bleeding. He managed to quietly find a full box of Band-Aids and began putting a Band-Aid as best he could on each place he saw blood. He then hid the now almost empty Band-Aid box and shuffled and stumbled his way to bed.

In the morning, Flynn woke up to find searing pain in both his head and his rear and Mary staring at him from across the room. She said, “You were drunk again last night weren’t you?”

Flynn said, “Why, how could ye be sayin’ such a mean t’ing?”

“Well,” Mary replied, “it could be the open front door, it could be the broken glass at the bottom of the stairs, it could be the drops of blood trailing through the house, it could be your bloodshot eyes, but mostly ... it’s all those Band-Aids stuck on the hall mirror.

Well, that’s my story and I’m stickin’ to it. See ya next time!
# May 2007

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ARRR-R G CONTINUES!

ARRR-R G BEGINS...
Calendar Events

Mensa events are open to all Mensans, their spouses, and accompanied guests. A party at a private home is a private event, and who may or may not attend is at the complete discretion of the host. While kitty amounts are mandatory, hosts often spend far more than the specified amount. Donations in excess of the kitty amount will be appreciated.

Dana Groulx (813-996-5552) is the Calendar Editor. Please e-mail your calendar event notices to llama@sports-pac.com, or visit www.tampa.us.mensa.org/cal for complete instructions. Your deadline for the following month’s calendar is the 12th of the preceding month.

**Hosts:** Please remember to mention any special concerns about your location, such as limited access for the handicapped, smoking restrictions, or presence of pets.

**Guests:** If you have special needs or restrictions, it is prudent to discuss them with your host before attending an event.

**Wednesday, May 2**
7:00 PM Reading Group
Location: Perkins on South Dale Mabry
Notes: We meet twice per month (on the first and third Wednesday) Our meeting location is Perkins on Dale Mabry, just north of Kennedy. Bring along books you’d like to exchange or give away.
Ronan Heffernan - 813-732-2310 - ronansan@gmail.com
Perkins Restaurant - 612 N. Dale Mabry Hwy, Tampa

**Thursday, May 3**
12:30 PM Lunch Bunch
Notes: We meet at Piccadilly Cafeteria, on 11810 North Dale Mabry Highway (next to Barnes and Noble Bookstore), in Tampa. For directions, descriptions, and/or encouragement to attend, call:
Jim Perry - 813-837-3473 - philart@gte.net

**Saturday, May 5**
7:00 PM Card Night
Notes: Either bring a card game that you like to play or we will play Hand and Foot (a type of Canasta, played with partners. It's great fun!) Please make sure that you RSVP at least two days in advance.
NEW LOCATION & PHONE #:
Bay Town Villas, off Philippe Parkway in Safety Harbor
1140 Thayer St, Safety Harbor, FL 34695 Phone: 727-726-1188
Kitty: $2
Thursday, May 10
7:30 AM Breakfast Gathering
Notes: Breakfast Gathering, Village Inn at Walsingham Road in Largo, 7:30 AM, 2nd Thursday of every month. Gather for food and conversation. Please call Lori Puterbaugh at 727-399-2419 for directions and so we have a headcount.

12:30 PM Lunch Bunch
Notes: We meet at Piccadilly Cafeteria, on 11810 North Dale Mabry Highway (next to Barnes and Noble Bookstore), in Tampa. For directions, descriptions, and/or encouragement to attend, call:
Jim Perry - 813-837-3473 - philart@gte.net

Monday, May 14
1:00 PM Second Monday Luncheon & Optional Movie
Location: Spring Hill
Notes: Join us in Spring Hill every second Monday at 1p.m. for lunch at Perkins Restaurant, then optional Movie at Spring Hill 8 Cinema. Movie price $2.50 Reservations are not needed, ask for the "Mensa Table".
Host Victoria Foust, 352-596-8242, kfouyst@tampabay.rr.com
Perkins Restaurant, 4685 Commercial Way, Spring Hill, 352-596-2223
Spring Hill 8 Cinema, 2955 Commercial Way Spring Hill, 352-686-5661

Wednesday, May 16
7:00 PM Reading Group
Location: Perkins on South Dale Mabry
Notes: We meet twice per month (on the first and third Wednesday) Our meeting location is Perkins on Dale Mabry, just north of Kennedy. Bring along books you'd like to exchange or give away.
Ronan Heffernan - 813-732-2310 - ronansan@gmail.com
Perkins Restaurant - 612 N. Dale Mabry Hwy, Tampa

Thursday, May 17
12:30 PM Lunch Bunch
Notes: We meet at Piccadilly Cafeteria, on 11810 North Dale Mabry Highway (next to Barnes and Noble Bookstore), in Tampa. For directions, descriptions, and/or encouragement to attend, call:
Jim Perry - 813-837-3473 - philart@gte.net

Friday, May 18
7:00 PM NTN Trivia
Notes: NTN Satellite Trivia is a nationwide contest held in assorted restaurants and bars in our region. Three short rounds of five questions each are interspersed with breaks for conversation and socializing. We have moved to Carrollwood to yet another trivia-friendly sports bar, this one being Prime Time Sports Grill (this one puts the trivia games on a BIG screen!) Look for the table with our mascot, Owlbert. Come join the party! Thomas Thomas - 813-994-3981 - FardleBear@aol.com
Saturday, May 19
7:00 PM Card Night
Notes: Either bring a card game that you like to play or we will play Hand and Foot (a type of Canasta, played with partners. It's great fun!) Please make sure that you RSVP at least two days in advance.
NEW LOCATION & PHONE #:
Bay Town Villas, off Philippe Parkway in Safety Harbor
1140 Thayer St, Safety Harbor, FL 34695
Phone: 727-726-1188
Kitty: $2

Sunday, May 20
3:00 PM FSM
Notes: TBA

Thursday, May 24
● Events
12:30 PM Lunch Bunch
Notes: We meet at Piccadilly Cafeteria, on 11810 North Dale Mabry Highway (next to Barnes and Noble Bookstore), in Tampa.
For directions, descriptions, and/or encouragement to attend, call:
Jim Perry - 813-837-3473 - philart@gte.net

Friday, May 25
● Events
3:00 PM ARRR-R G
Location: St Pete Hilton Bayfront
Notes: The ARRR-R G opens at 3pm on Friday at the St Pete Hilton Bayfront and continues through the weekend, ending at noon on Monday.

6:00 PM Fourth Friday Madness
Notes: Come party on down with us every fourth (not necessarily last) Friday at the Olive Garden Italian Restaurant, 6700 U.S. 19 N. in Pinellas Park from 6pm to whenever. This is just southeast of Gandy Boulevard. RSVP to Phoebe McCann at (727) 546-4030 or theboogiewoman1@yahoo.com

Thursday, May 31
● Events
12:30 PM Lunch Bunch
Notes: We meet at Piccadilly Cafeteria, on 11810 North Dale Mabry Highway (next to Barnes and Noble Bookstore), in Tampa.
For directions, descriptions, and/or encouragement to attend, call:
Jim Perry - 813-837-3473 - philart@gte.net

DON'T SEE AN EVENT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND? HOST ONE!
Just submit your event to the calendar editor. We'll include it in the Sounding and post it to the online calendar.
April Solution:
Originally I had intended to produce an April Fool's Sudoku, which would have no solution. But then I lost the courage of my convictions and gave it a solution after all, although it wasn't fair (in April Fool fashion). The clue was in my "Wise Guy" column, regarding Cast Nines: '9=0'. Making this substitution, the puzzle was merely evil, not impossible.
I remember my first word of Spanish “estupido” my first sentence “Renaldo es estupido” I wasn’t discouraged and thought I could build on this. I soon had many new adjectives to work with: retardado, idioto, and imbécil. Years later at another school, I butchered the French language equally well and they were even more emphatic in their criticism of my linguistic skills. Several years later, at lessons held in a library in Houston Texas, my Spanish was getting better and I had two realizations: the first was that girls and gay men are just naturally better at learning languages, and the second was that many of the people who were best at these languages never had the courage to actually use them in public. I was never afraid, and used my skills everywhere I could Spanish Harlem, Little Havana, Puerto Rico, Mexico, from job sites to jail cells. Now here I was, running around Lima Peru hailing cabs, making small talk, ordering meals and room service, telling jokes, and arguing politics. All in Spanish. Not bad for a guy whose first word was estupido.

This Trip was from Gate1 Travel, the 7 day Peru Inca Special.

Wednesday at 7 AM, we were met in the airport of Lima, Peru by our guide, Juan Carlos, who was on time, polite, and well dressed. He escorted us to our bus for the trip to the Miraflores, district of Lima, and our hotel the Casa Andina Miraflores Centro. We were free for the rest of the day and I made the best of it walking the boulevards, hitting bars, shops, bars, and restaurants along the way. I soon found myself on high Bluff overlooking the Pacific an incredible view. I lingered there before moving on, finding a very nice local restaurant and then making my way back to the hotel.

Lima sits right on the Pacific but gets little rain. It is a dry coastal Plateau with very moderate weather. Lima is the nation’s capital, preferred by the Spanish who needed ocean access to the land. One third of Peru’s population of eight million people live in Lima, which is relatively poor by USA standards with salaries averaging 150 to 250 US dollars per week. There seemed to be many buildings in permanent disrepair, one never knows if they are going up or falling down and the Latin penchant for splashing political slogans on walls with paint and big block letters (leaving them up year after year) doesn’t help the appearance of the place. Most people seemed happy though, children always seemed to laugh and play, and education is compulsory. People moving about the city waved at our bus on occasion and freely made eye contact with us and
smiled. Color coded buses were there to help the illiterate and small private cars and hoards of taxis choked the streets in the morning rush hour; they're mostly used Korean and Japanese re-sales.

The Miraflores area we were staying in is quite nice. After a short nap, I went out again. Walked the streets of Lima, just looking around and shopping, getting a feel for the place. I went several miles through different neighborhoods and never felt unsafe, I became disorientated at one point and was given directions back in Spanish by a Police officer. I ended this day’s journey in the Central Plaza with some homemade Ice Cream and lots of Cerveza (beer). A few prostitutes provided an amusing diversion. They were beautiful, as were many women there, but I resisted and headed back to the hotel.

Thursday morning we were on our way to the airport for a flight to Cuzco, center of the Inca Empire in the Andes mountains of Peru. Clouds cleared during flight and showed the most immense area of wild uninhabited mountain highlands I had ever seen. We landed in Cuzco and the air was thin at 13000 feet, almost 2 miles high and you could feel it. As we boarded our buses for the Hotel, we were set upon by a woman selling souvenirs, bags of coca leaf and balls of Lime, which must be chewed with the leaves to release their alkaloid properties. I bought 3 bags of leaves, a lime ball, a bag of coca candy and a post card.

We were met at our hotel and
greeted with coca tea, which we were told, would be good for altitude sickness. Coca tea seemed to be the chicken soup of the Andes, good for whatever ails you. We were then told we should rest up to acclimate to the altitude, which wasn’t very easy after all that coca leaf. The hotel was the Mabey Palacio Imperial Hotel of Cuzco Peru, not extravagant but very nice and clean, and the staff were just incredible.  

The Inca Empire lasted barely a century, between roughly 1438 to 1532 AD, and while the Inca were not the only people to have lived in the region, their incredible building projects and tenacity against the Spanish Conquistadors has left them the representative culture of the region. Other cultures that inhabited the region include the Chavin, Moche, Wari and the Nazca who left all that graffiti stretched across the rock-strewn plains of Southwest Peru. One does not have to go very far in Cuzco to find the archeological treasures we came to see, they are part and parcel of the City itself. We saw Inca stone architecture which includes what is called the Royal style of building large stone blocks, some weighing many tons and carved to incredibly tight tolerances. The stones above are cut to interlock with the irregularities in the stones below them and all are held together without mortar. Most of these walls are still standing and you can not slip a credit card between any of these stones. We see 17th and 18th century Spanish buildings interspaced with both brick and adobe modern structures. Everyone seemed to have electricity.  

The people were even more friendly and curious then those of Lima, with many still wearing the authentic colorful clothing and hats as seen in many photos of the region. We saw many more people here of native Indian heritage as opposed to most of Spanish descent in Lima. We were given a tour of central Cuzco which took us to Old Town, the city center, the Plaza de Armas, the Santo Domingo convent, and Dominican monastery which was built atop an important Inca site, the Koricancha Temple of the Sun and a Cathedral named oddly enough “The Cathedral”. It is the second largest Cathedral in the Americas and quite ornate by any standard.  

We returned to our hotel, after which I returned to the Plaza later with some friends to a gourmet restaurant they had seen in a tour book. We enjoyed a fine meal, including Alpaca steaks and locally caught fish, for roughly 15 dollars each, after this we chewed some more coca leaf and found a strange store catering to Peruvian Shamanism full of exotic hypnotic hallucinogenic herbs and elixirs from the nearby jungles as well as assorted charms, crystals, incense, literature and pipes. We walked off our fine dinner in the Plaza, enjoyed a few more Cerveza Grandes and headed back to our hotel for tomorrow. We needed an early start for Machu Picchu.
Friday and a 5 AM wake-up, the hotel supplied breakfast and we were ready to board the PE-RURAL train by 6 and take the 6 hour trip to Machu Picchu. The ride was long but the sights incredible, from the back streets of Cuzco itself through farming villages mountains and dense jungles. The only way in was to hike the Inca trail or by Train. From the final train stop, we were taken another half hour by bus up mountain slopes to the site itself. You want words here and I have none. The site was just awesome, spectacular, magical, amazing, spiritual —I could go on and on but there is just no way to describe this incredible place, the scenic beauty of the steep jungle covered mountains surrounding the place, combined with what it must have taken these people to build this incredible city is just astonishing. After a short-guided tour we had just 5 short hours to explore the site and there was lots of serious climbing ahead. The Inca may be gone but you could still feel their presence. It all ended way to soon and we were back on the Train to Cuzco.

Friday night, after a short well-deserved nap and a wad of coca leaf, I was up again and on the way to the central Plaza. I found a nice restaurant and had a great meal and another Cerveza Grande for 6 dollars right on the plaza. The Latin’s seem to have a slightly different lifestyle then we in America. Mornings are kind of slow, work hard during the day, lunch is a big meal, the evening dinner is late and the plaza is always alive with people till very late. I could get used to this. Throughout the trip there were always street vendors trying to sell us things from beads to paintings. They are generally polite and will leave you alone if you ask them firmly. In the Plaza, a young man of about 12 years of age, offered me some paintings. I refused and refused and refused, and he finally said to me in English, “OK, how about next year?” I said, “OK, next year.” He then said, “Don’t forget me. My name’s Bill Gates.” I told him I was Che Guevara, and me and this smart aleck 12 year-old shared a good laugh in the streets of Peru.

One should never judge another’s intellect by their race, age, or gender. I arrived back at the Hotel very late and it was locked up. The cab driver that dropped me off, and was already paid, politely waited until I was let in before driving away.

PART II of Travelog: Peru will be printed in the June issue of the Sounding.

Your article could be here! Contribute to the Sounding by e-mailing your items or article ideas to TBMEditor@gmail.com.

Unquestionably, there is progress. The average American now pays out twice as much in taxes as he formerly got in wages.
—H. L. Mencken
Tampa Bay Mensa’s Regional Gathering
May 25-28, 2007  (Memorial Day weekend)

Seek Hidden Booty in the Trolley Treasure Hunt!
Perform Feats of fearless fun in The Plank Show talent contest!
Share Tales of Bravado in the Hospitality Pirate Galley!
InvaDe the local museums, restaurants and bars!
Match Wits in Games, Tournaments, the Trash Bowl and more!

St. Petersburg Hilton Bayfront
333 First Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
www.stpetersburg.hilton.com

Special Mensa rate is $82 (+ tax and $5 parking) for a double plus $10 per additional person. Visit the special hotel registration site for our event online at http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/sptshhf_men/index.jhtml or call (727) 894-5000 or (800) 445-8667, mentioning that you are part of the Mensa group. Last day to reserve at this special rate is May 11, 2007.

ARRR-R G! Registration Form

Prices:  $75 before May 12  Meals included in registration!
         $85 thereafter

Make check payable to: Tampa Bay Mensa
Mail check to:  Kathy Crum, Registrar
               7164 Quail Hollow Blvd
               Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

Name:  ____________________________________________ Nametag(s):  ______________________________
Address:  _______________________________________
Phone:  ___________________________ E-mail:  ___________________________

(Choose a pirate name for your nametag at http://www.piratequiz.com !)
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