

Space Coast Area Mensa



NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, Issue 8

August 2022

From Your LocSec

It is August. The summer has been hot with not very much rain. There have been a lot of launches as well, which is what being on the Space Coast is all about. Last month I asked for everyone to shoot me a quick email and let me know they are getting the newsletter. I got a grand total of three responses which was disappointing given the effort that goes into creating this every month. But, I am confident it reaches most of the membership, so that is good.

Tom Lempicke has volunteered to be our Ombudsman. Thank you Tom. In other volunteer news, **Tom Lempicke** and **Julie Costopoulos** have both volunteered to be on the Nomination/Election committee. Together with **Ann Carter**, they can decide amongst themselves who will chair their committee and we can get down to ExComm nominations and elections. Following my philosophy of being totally transparent, I will not be seeking reelection. I will also be stepping down as Newsletter Editor, Discord Administrator, Social Media Chair, Calendar Coordinator, and Area Coordinator for Brevard County. I have already closed down the Discord server due to a lack of participation on the server. **Please see page 2.**

Upcoming activities: Your ExComm has been working diligently on planning the zoo event. More details on page 6.

The newsletter is longer than normal this month thanks to member submissions. I mentioned last month that future printed newsletters would be in black and white so I am sticking with that. My last newsletter will be the October edition which I will finalize prior to my resignation date of September 30th. That edition will be in color to support all the pictures I will be taking of members at the zoo event. Hope to see you there!

Jim Fitzgerald

RVC10—Thomas G. Thomas

The quarterly meeting of the American Mensa Committee (AMC) was held on Thursday, July 7, 2022 at the Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks, NV. There were eleven motions on the published agenda, plus one additional motion added at the meeting. Six of the motions passed, while the other six were referenda to be passed to the membership at the next election.

The first motion was the Consent Agenda, which covered the routine business of accepting quarterly reports and appointing action committee members. Following this was the motion for the AMC to confirm certain Committee Chair roles and other individual appointments, as required by our ASIEs (Actions Still In Effect, AKA ongoing policies).

The next motion was to accept the Audit. This is routine business, required before the financials may be published to the membership at large. Since the motion passed, the audited financials can now be found online at <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/financials/>

After the acceptance of the Volunteerism Task Force report, a motion was presented to add Volunteerism to the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. This is now the fourth Key Initiative Focus under the Value priority. The Strategic Plan can be found at <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/planning/strategic-plan/>

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RVC10—Thomas G. Thomas

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At the March 2022 AMC meeting, the revised Information and Privacy Policy (Appendix 15 of the ASIEs) was adopted. Subsequently, a housekeeping motion to amend the Membership Data Agreement was passed at this meeting to bring it in line with Appendix 15. This is the agreement all local group officers have to sign in order to protect member information.

In response to the requests of several members for clarification on the matter, a Statement of Member Rights and Responsibilities was compiled from the existing ASIEs and other governing documents. The full text of this Statement was included in the Agenda, which included bracketed references to each of the existing policies. At the meeting, some amendments were made, allowing for this Statement to be updated as needed when policies change, along with a couple of other minor changes. These are outlined in the Mini-Minutes of the meeting, which can be found along with the Agenda at the 2022-07-07 — Sparks, NV dropdown at <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/amc/meeting-reports/>

Not included in the published agenda was a clarification on Testing Sessions for minors, which stated that while parents could accompany their children to a testing session, they could not be in the room while the testing took place unless they were also taking the test. This policy was already in place in the Proctors' Handbook, but had not been adopted in the ASIEs until this motion was passed.

There were six Ombuds referenda being considered, but because the election is still almost two years away, there was no urgency in getting these passed at this meeting, and in order to get it right the first time it was decided to table these motions until September to spend more time working on the wording. One of the referenda did pass to ballot, to shorten the term of office for the Ombuds from six years to three. As our previous National Ombuds stated at the meeting, six years can seem a very long time for a single term.

In addition, the Treasurer and Executive Director gave presentations before the business of the meeting, and the Treasurer gave additional "Education by The Treasurer" following our business. The two bookended Treasurer presentations were provided to address some misunderstandings that a few members have expressed about our financial position. These presentations will be available at the meeting reports link provided above, along with a recording of the meeting for members to review.

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

Thomas George Thomas

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Call for Nominations

It is time to hold elections for all Executive Committee positions. If you are interested in running for Ex-Comm, please send your name to any of our volunteers on the Nomination/Election Committee shown below. Your submission must be received by 20 Aug for me to get ballots prepared in the September newsletter. Please include a short paragraph as a personal introduction and why you wish to be on the Executive Committee or what your goals would be for the Chapter if elected. These will be included in the September newsletter to be read by our members to help them cast a more informed vote.

Ann Carter: anncarter@rocketmail.com

Tom Lempicke: tom@lempicke.com

Julie Costopoulos: scholarship@scam.us.mensa.org

Last month we learned about the Internet of Things, or IoT. This month we will focus a bit on the security of IoT devices. To repeat from my article last month: *IoT is actually a bit of a misnomer because IoT devices don't actually connect to the Internet. Instead, they connect to other devices which are connected to the Internet.*

With the plethora of devices available that are IoT, claim to be IoT, or whatever, the security of all of them falls to two components; your home router and your smart phone. Your router connects to the Internet through a modem or other Internet Service Provider (ISP) gateway device and your phone can connect to the Internet via cellular or through your home network's wifi.

We've talked a bit about home network security in past issues so this month we will focus more on phone security and delve into what IoT devices are doing with your data.

Many IoT devices are accompanied by an application for your smart phone. Last month we discussed permissions related to apps on your smart phone. Those permissions are critical to the security of your data and it is essential that you understand, at a minimum, what data is being collected (stored) by your devices and where that data is stored.


I have a smart doorbell made by Ring, which is connected to my network and, because it provides video and two-way communication, it needs more bandwidth than my other IoT devices, so I have it on my 5GHz network. The doorbell is accessible on my video-capable Alexa devices and on my phone through the Alexa app and the Ring app. I can view the video from the doorbell on my TV or Echo Show devices by stating, "Echo, show me the front door". The doorbell also captures video whenever it is activated by motion within the range and shape area I've defined. This video is stored in the cloud and I can retrieve past video on my phone.

For a simple doorbell, there is actually a lot going on here. I have two applications on my phone and three Echo devices that can view the doorbell and the video is saved to the cloud through Ring. From a security perspective, we can break it down into two realms; 1) The security realm I am responsible for, and 2) the realm I have no control over.

For the first realm, I am responsible for securing my doorbell and all the apps/devices that can access it. The second realm is the cloud. While I can view, share, download, and delete saved videos, I don't have any actual control over the cloud storage itself. If the cloud system used by Ring is hacked, then my data is vulnerable to theft and could be used to exploit me in some way. I know, it's just a doorbell but the concept is the same across all IoT devices that have related applications and/or store data in the cloud.

The Ring doorbell is more than just a motion-sensing video capture device however. It can provide notifications from 'neighbors' which is a social media feature. It is also capable of using "Amazon Sidewalk" which attempts to make 'connected communities' by allowing your network and neighbors' networks to share bandwidth. If your neighbor's network is offline, their sidewalk enabled devices will try to find other sidewalk enabled devices from neighbors and connect to them. If you've learned anything from all of my articles on IT security, you know I am not a fan of this fea-

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August 19th is World Photography Day. Celebrated globally only since 1991, this day is set aside to commemorate the importance of cameras and photography. 4.7 billion pictures are taken every day with around 3.2 billion of those shared online. That's a lot of pictures!

The Internet of Things—Security

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ture. Did you know that you should opt out of using sidewalk?^[1] Some of the greatest risks to our network security comes from new features added to applications that you have to opt out of. I would love to see a law passed that prevented vendors from automatically enrolling me into something and forcing me to opt out after the fact. Once you are 'in', your recently updated application could access your personal data and send it to the manufacturer's cloud storage. Even if you opt out immediately after installing the update, it may be too late. Never underestimate the value of your personal data^[2] to a tech company. Your name, address, phone number can be a profit point for someone else.

Sidewalk is not limited to the Ring doorbell either; it is available on all of your Alexa devices. You can opt out at the account level though so at least you don't have to do it for every device. Speaking of Amazon accounts, when you are connecting a new Alexa device to your network, you have the option to store your network name and password to, you guessed it, Amazon's cloud. This is another feature you have to opt out of during that set up process. Always read everything on the screen and don't just speed touch your way through all the prompts. You need to look at what options vendors have already enabled because they decided for you that you wanted it. Storing your network password on Amazon is one of the worst things I've ever heard for IT security. As careful as I am, I missed seeing that the option was already selected to allow it and my network information was uploaded to Amazon. When I ordered another Show device, it came pre-configured for my network. That makes set up easy and that is how they 'sell the feature' but I was appalled that it even happened. I logged into Amazon and eventually found where I could delete my network information and opt out of it being stored. The next Show I ordered did not come preconfigured. But, I had turned this off before on my account so why did it happen again? Easy, when you order an Alexa device, the option to "Link device to your Amazon account to simplify setup" is checked for you. If you don't uncheck that box, when you get your device and connect it to your network, your network name and password will be sent to Amazon. Why? Because you allowed it by not removing that little check mark. When you order your next device, it comes pre-configured for your network.

People trust Amazon. It's just a fact but, with well over one million employees and the largest corporate network in the world, we should not just blatantly trust them or any other online resource. If you don't believe me, read the article from wired.com^[3].

Applications for IoT and even the devices themselves receive frequent updates. After every update to one of your devices or associated application, you should see what new features have been installed and opt out of them if you feel they compromise your personal security in any way or if you simply don't want to use it. A new feature might be innocuous at first and become nefarious with a later update. Once you've stepped into the IoT realm, you must be wary of updates and make sure nothing is changing that you didn't expect. Shared accounts, where more than one person has access to perform updates, could mean an update was accomplished without your knowledge. You should regularly check features available in your IoT apps to make sure nothing new has shown up that you need to opt out of and that nothing has changed for things you remained opted in on.

Let's talk just a bit about cloud services, or more specifically, cloud storage. Storage costs money and a lot of storage costs a lot of money. All storage hardware needs to be refreshed from time to time and traditional spinning disks can fail. To protect storage, you can buy additional storage and run in a RAID configuration which will allow losing one disk or element of the array with no data loss. When the disk is replaced, the data is rebuilt onto it. Storage only grows because data is always coming in and people do a poor job of cleaning up files that are no longer needed. With storage always growing, costs are going up proportionately. Storage also takes up space. In a traditional data center, such as colocation or multi-tenant data center (MTDC), companies are paying for rack space they consume along with power and bandwidth. That is a significant savings over creating your own data center, however it is more expensive than just placing a server and a storage array in your office somewhere. When a company outgrows their local space, they may opt to move to an MTDC. We have one near my house actually on the corner of Viera Blvd and Holiday Springs. Once a

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The Internet of Things—Security

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company has moved computers and networking away from their local business site, risks spike substantially. The company is no longer 100% responsible for their own physical and information security. They have moved all of that to the MTDC. If they virtualized their servers onto data center hosts, their risks go up even more because physical security will be lessened. Backing up data just became more difficult as well. The company may have had Iron Mountain coming to their office every week to return and pickup tapes in a standard backup rotation. With the MTDC, a company is going to offload backups to the cloud. Risks skyrocket at this point, because, other than storing and retrieving their data, the company has no other control whatsoever of the storage they are using. If the company is a large one, they will see a real cost decrease moving to the cloud which makes it a very attractive option. To provide cloud services, you need to have substantial assets. In the end, storage is on flash drives (Amazon S3 tier) or spinning disks (Amazon Glacier) or to tape/DCD through robotic automation. If the company has virtualized their servers, they now only have a 'presence' at the MTDC. No physical hardware, no flash drives, no disks. It is a commitment because they can't just show up at the MTDC some day and say they are there to move their equipment out since they don't have anything physically there. So what is the difference between cloud storage you might use versus what a corporation uses? None really. Everyone is using cloud storage from companies that provide cloud services. It is pretty much all the same, though businesses may use a higher tier level of storage which guarantees a certain bandwidth or uptime.

Virtualization is one of the most incredible innovations I've seen in my 40 years in and around IT. It is truly impressive and the positive impact made globally from virtualizing servers can probably never be calculated. It was a game changer the way that term is supposed to be used. But, I digress...

With our example company now storing all of its data in the cloud, they are relying on that cloud services company to provide solid security for their data. Sadly, that is not always the case and security takes personnel and has real costs associated with it. Please read the article from [expertinsights.com](https://www.expertinsights.com) for more information^[4].

Cloud storage can be found so cheap that most companies have started using it. That is important because many of the businesses you deal with locally and maybe all that you order from online, are using cloud storage now and you don't have the luxury of telling them how to handle your personal data. Trust is implicit for everything online; from banking to social media. At least in a traditional store you can walk in and see what locks they have on the door, security cameras, signage, etc. A site online shows you only what they want you to see and you can learn virtually nothing about their information security practices. The best defense is to limit your online footprint as much as possible. The fewer places that have your information means your information is more secure. Even the brick-and-mortar store with great physical security may be using cloud services for all their credit card transactions. If they don't use cloud, you still are not risk free. There are several incidents easily found online where patient records have been found in dumpsters or landfills. I was in a store once when a customer called and the store clerk wrote their credit card number down on a post-it note right in front of me. The lesson to be learned here is that nobody is going to protect your personal information better than you and you should have serious doubts that they even have the ability or desire to protect your information. You aren't getting all those spam emails because someone guessed your address.

References:

- 1) CNN article, "Why you should opt out of Amazon Sidewalk—and which devices it's on": <https://www.cnn.com/cnn-underscored/electronics/amazon-sidewalk-wireless-network-explainer-opt-out>
- 2) techcrunch article, "Amazon's Ring Neighbors app exposed users' precise locations and home addresses": <https://techcrunch.com/2021/01/14/ring-neighbors-exposed-locations-addresses/>
- 3) wired.com article, "Amazon's Dark Secret: It Has Failed to Protect Your Data": <https://www.wired.com/story/amazon-failed-to-protect-your-data-investigation/>
- 4) expertinsights.com article, "50 Cloud Security Stats You Should Know in 2022": <https://expertinsights.com/insights/50-cloud-security-stats-you-should-know/>



Event Announcement

Your ExComm has been working diligently behind the scenes to bring you a fabulous event at the Brevard Zoo. In 2020, the Brevard Zoo was ranked 5th overall out of some 2,400 zoos in North America. With over 900 animals from 195 species, immersive exhibits and one-of-a-kind animal experiences, it is easy to see why they earned such a high rank.

Space Coast Area Mensa has partnered with Central Florida Mensa to bring you this exciting opportunity. Both chapters will be subsidizing 50% of the admissions cost for members, immediate family, and significant others.

When: Saturday, September 17th, from 9:00 AM to closing

Who: Members, immediate family, significant others

Cost: \$8/guest

What is included:

- Admission all day
- Lodge access for 4 hours
- Lunch
- Free train rides
- Two large animal encounters
- Scavenger hunt (designed by your devious LocSec)
- Discounted kayak adventures
- Discounted Tree Top Trek adventures

I will send more information out related to registering for the event and other details as they shape up. For now, the above is what we are certain of.

So mark your calendars! Reserve the date! This is a big event and you won't want to miss it.

At a Brunch with the LocSec event, Ann Carter joined us and mentioned she would soon be traveling to Europe so I immediately asked for a 'trip report' and pictures to use in the newsletter. She remembered my request and, upon her return, she wrote the article below to be shared with all of our members. Thank you Ann! - LocSec

Day 1: Up in the air

When W.C. Fields said not to work with children or animals, he knew whereof he spoke. At a recent performance of the Passion Play at Oberammergau — But that's getting ahead of the story.

Oberammergau was the centerpiece of a 10-day trip through the Imperial Cities of East-Central Europe. Our journey begins at the Orlando airport.

Pre-boarding was more like endless boarding. There were no fewer than 10 passengers in wheelchairs, plus 15 or more families with children — and their strollers! By the time regular boarding began, we were 30 minutes late. I saw why my boarding pass for the transfer in Frankfurt was now for 4:30 instead of the noon on my original itinerary. Frankfurt, the Atlanta airport of Europe, was its usual chaos. My flight landed at a gate that seemed to be fairly close to my next flight.

Signs directing me to Gate A30 took me upstairs, then downstairs, then up an escalator, around corners, down halls and up to Border Control. There appeared to be hundreds of people lined up between stanchions, with the line extending a couple of hundred yards down a nearby hall. A badge-wearing gentleman was off to one side; as someone approached him, he shouted, "No information!" He must have been accosted by everyone who saw his badge. Border Control did move quickly; I was at the front of the line in about 20 minutes.

Now it was time for security — again. The agent spoke soothingly in German as she patted me down. My massage therapist is less thorough.

Another agent looked through my carry-on, telling me something about my liquid items and rearranging them into different baggies, after I had so carefully sorted them. He said something in German, the only word of which I understood: "Eine." I guess my liquids needed to be in one bag. So much for organization.

The rest of the flight was uneventful, setting down in Budapest as the rest of my group was sitting down to dinner. My driver rushed me through the city and I was able to catch up, especially getting a glass of wine.

My day ended in a lovely room in a modern UP hotel.

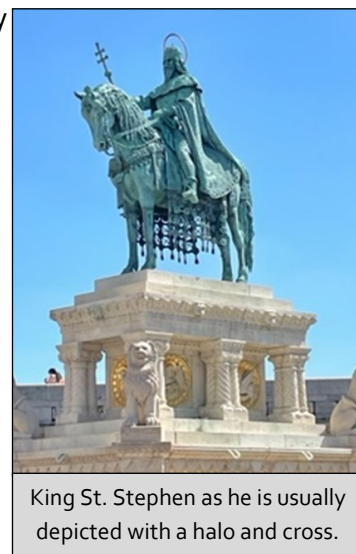
Day 2: Buda and Pest

Budapest was united as one city a few decades ago, but is still treated as two cities by the locals. After a hearty breakfast at the hotel, we headed for Heroes Square, where the country's history is celebrated.

As our bus pulled up, a group of gray-haired ladies got up from benches and walked to us. I thought they might have mistaken our charter bus for a transit bus. How naive of me! The ladies carried bags of crocheted sweaters for sale in various colors, "Not too much," which appeared to be the extent of their English. We gently rebuffed them after politely admiring the handiwork. They followed us into Heroes Square. King St. Stephen is the main hero, usually represented with a halo holding a cross with two crosspieces. The closest set of statues was of the seven tribes of Magyars, who joined to set up the country of Hungary.

As we departed Heroes Square, after a group photo in front of the Magyars, our crochet ladies caught up to us. In the interim, they had learned a bit more English. "\$20." A sad head shake from me. "\$15." Another sad head shake. "OK, \$10." I escaped up the steps into the bus.

We then journeyed to the Castle complex. I didn't catch the explanation for the porcelain tiles that replaced parts of the roofs of these buildings. At one point, we were able to climb a few stairs to look out at the Danube, which while not blue, was beautiful.



King St. Stephen as he is usually depicted with a halo and cross.

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European Vacation

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I didn't sign up for the dinner cruise (big mistake), but enjoyed a sidewalk cafe. I had not exchanged any dollars for Hungarian forint (\$1 is about 300 forint), so charged my lunch. I also had a bowl of gouljas soup, a popular menu item on all our travels. My server told me not to worry about the tip, when I asked the location of an ATM. I found one in a nearby bodega-type store. In looking for a souvenir on which to spend my newly acquired forint, I found a naughty set of shot glasses. I will spare you the photo.

I did turn in early that evening, as the next day was going to be a busy drive to Vienna, via Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.

Day 3: Bratislava

Our tour guide, Katarina, was excited to show us her native country, Slovakia. The landscape was punctuated with wind farms, a few at first and then sections where there were turbines as far as we could see. Solar farms were also apparent, as well as many homes with panels on the roofs.

Our Bratislava guide explained that she would touch on the Habsburgs, but that we would hear much more about them in Vienna.

We started exploring the city with the bridge, built by the Soviets in a fit of whimsy that seems out of character.

We then scattered into the castle and the Cathedral of Saint Martin. We walked through a lot of the complex, and our guide explained a few interesting sights. One house had a cannonball stuck in the plaster near the front door. She said that the cannonball hit the house during Napoleon's march through the country on his way to Russia. The owners decided to petition for tax reduction because the cannonball had affected the structural integrity of the house and it was no longer as valuable for tax purposes. This led others to stick cannonballs in their houses. She told more stories about sights that had multiple stories that might or might not be accurate, such as the little naked man, who ran out of the bathroom to see the king without stopping to put on his trousers.

One sight that wasn't in doubt was the plague monument, a theme in many cities., preparing us for the ubiquity of bubonic plague, leading to the Passion Play that drew us on this trip.

As we walked through the complex — it was like a giant, outdoor Galleria — our guide kept promising to show us the most famous statue in Bratislava. Which turned out to be a tourist attraction, set up specifically as a place to have your photo taken. Our guide explained that he represents a typical Slovak worker. He's poking his head out of a person-hole, but doing nothing. He's smiling because he's using this vantage point to look up ladies dresses.

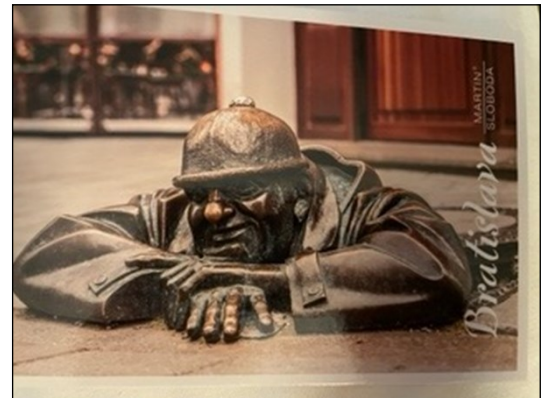
Then back on the bus to reach Vienna that evening.

Day 4: Vienna

The day started at the Schoenbrunn Palace, where we learned SO MUCH about the Habsburgs. This line ruled Austria for more than 600 years, and spent a couple of centuries ruling Hungary and Bohemia, as well as the Spanish Empire. Maria Theresa is the name to remember, as she not only ruled the empire, but had 16 children. While sons were desired to be the royal heirs, daughters were married off in pursuit of power and peace. Such was the case with her daughter, Maria Antonia, who married into the French royal family and became Marie Antoinette. The palace interior was an overwhelming example of rococo decor.

From the palace we went to the city centre, the most interesting part of which was the Spanish Riding School. We missed the training session for the horses while we were learning about the Habsburgs.

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European Vacation

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Our hotel lobby was the epitome of Old World elegance, but our rooms were modern with WiFi, flat-screen TVs and lovely bathrooms. And our rooms opened with a key!

Cathedrals, palaces, monuments ... the day ended with a chamber music program. A string quintet with flute and piano played a variety of pieces by Austrian composers and Vivaldi. For those who weren't fans of such fare, a pair of dancers interpreted the music, with great humor.

Day 5: The road to Prague

Our itinerary promised a tour of Cesky-Krumlov on our way to Prague, but the town apparently scheduled a festival, closing its streets and charging an entry fee, packed with visitors. So we stopped for lunch in the charming village of



The line of open-air cafes in the village of Tabor

Tabor. The town square had a church and shops on one side, cafes on the other. There was food from around the world available. I decided to try Havana Cafe & Bistro, where I ordered a steak, which came with a sublime mushroom sauce, a green salad and a huge bowl of sautéed vegetables. My server said Havana was just the name of the place, no Cuban food.

We had only a couple of hours in Tabor, but it seemed to be the kind of village that dots the countryside of the Czech Republic.

Day 6: Prague

For years, I've heard about how Prague is the best capital in Eastern Europe. I haven't been to all of them, but Prague is special, whether you're interested in history, culture or just a great place to hang out. It was also the first place where I wasn't able to read my daily U.S. newspaper, "due to technology issues."

Heat warnings had been posted, with a forecast high in the upper 90s. Friends had recommended that I join the optional tour of the Jewish Quarter, which I was glad I



Prague's Old Town Square features an astronomical clock: Black for night hours, red for dawn and blue for daytime.

did.

The narrow streets meant the bus had to drop us quite a distance from the historic area. Our local guide repeated that if we were nervous about walking to the Charles Bridge, we should tell her immediately, as there was no vehicle traffic on the bridge. A couple of my fellow travelers decided they wanted to taxi back to the hotel.

The Charles Bridge was quite a landmark, spanning the Moldau, a river immortalized by composer Smetana. A Gothic tower at one end represented where those who used the bridge would pay their tolls. The rest of the morning was consumed with seeing castles, former castles and cathedrals.

The tour of the Jewish quarter began as we entered the area, and our local guide explained that the more modern buildings we passed had been built after the Bohemian king had allowed religions besides Catholicism. The Jewish Quarter was mostly demolished at the beginning of the 20th century and apartment buildings went up with all the mod-cons: heat, elevators, electricity. When the Nazis occupied Prague, they — of course — occupied these lovely apartments. This helped save the old synagogues from destruction, as the Nazis did not want to take a chance on any bombing or burning affecting their homes.

European Vacation

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The Jewish Quarter in Prague explicitly dealt with the Holocaust. In other cities, we had seen Holocaust monuments, but the first synagogue's walls were covered with the hand-written names of the 80,000 Czechs who were killed in the camps. Our guide stressed that there were no death camps in what was Czechoslovakia, only concentration camps, where the Jews were brought to "concentrate" them before further transport. Another exhibit showed the artwork of children who were sent on. Their teacher hid the drawings in two suitcases before the children left. The exhibit included — where known — the child's name, date of birth, date of transport and date of death or if they survived. We also walked around the Jewish cemetery, learning that traditional burial was in layers, one on top of the other.

Day 7: Heading for Oberammergau

An early departure for the highlight of the trip, the Passion Play. Along the way, we stopped for lunch at the equivalent of a service plaza, much smaller than what you see on Florida's Turnpike. If you've traveled abroad, you know that free restrooms are a U.S. phenomenon. At this stop, you had to pay half a euro to get into the area of the restrooms. But you got a paper voucher for that amount off your purchases in the gift shop or restaurant.

The council at Oberammergau controls the hotel rooms in the area, so your group is assigned a hotel. Ours was a charming spot in the town of Garmisch. Lace curtains, a balcony and no air conditioning. Yes, it was warm, but the windows opened, so I was comfortable.

Day 8: The Passionsspiele

This was to be a long day (and it was June 21), so we left for Oberammergau shortly after breakfast, expecting to be out until nearly midnight. We arrived at the parking area near the theater and walked into the heart of the tourist/theater area. There were shops, restaurants, a museum or two. We got our bearings to the theater, where our performance was to start at 3 p.m. There was to be a backstage tour, which turned out to be a meeting with the actor who would play Jesus at that evening's performance. He said that the 20 main roles were cast with two different actors, and the cast was different every evening. He answered questions, telling us when asked about "legacy" performers that his 8-year-old son would be playing the servant at the Last Supper. He said he had discussed his role as Jesus with his son, getting a little wary when he related the scene with the women "taken in adultery" who was to be stoned. The boy was more curious about throwing rocks at someone than what adultery was; the upshot was the conclusion that throwing stones at people was bad. We also learned that men hoping to have leading roles stopped shaving and cutting their hair in May — of the year before the play was to be presented. That's a commitment.

We were free for shopping, then had a group lunch, with reminders about the security precautions. We weren't to carry a bag or pack larger than a sheet of paper, only soft water bottles, no umbrellas (rain was forecast). A sort of checkroom would take your purchases and other belongings. Our guide had told us it cost 2.5 euros. The price had gone up, and was now 3 euros. Inflation everywhere.

We filed into a Quonset hut-like building to our assigned seats. The regional heat wave was continuing; every once in a while, a little breeze would waft overhead. I reminded myself that the actors were wearing layers of clothes and armor, as well as performing, which is always hot work.



Outside the theater in Oberammergau.

(Continued on page 11)

European Vacation

(Continued from page 10)

After nearly 3 hours, intermission. We were directed to our selected dinner spot. We had selected our entrees beforehand, so servers appeared with plates of steak, salmon and vegetable risotto. A bit of a madhouse, but delicious. My fellow travelers felt the steak was raw, but mine was delicious.

The play is presented in German, but we had little booklets of the script in our chosen language(s). While it was daylight, it was easy to follow, but as night fell, reading became more difficult. For most of us in the audience, we knew what was happening by that point.

Like any performance for a crowd of 4,500, post-play was even crazier than pre-play, made more so when a rain shower hit the area. Most of our group's seats were close to the exit, so we were able to depart quickly, retrieve our belongings at the checkroom and get to the bus. The drive back to Garmisch seemed longer than our earlier trip. But we were happy to hit the hay.

Day 9: On to Munich

Our tour of Munich started with Marienplatz. The highlight of the square is the glockenspiel, which played shortly after our arrival, a short of early animatronic display. We prowled the square for a couple of hours, shopping and eating. I ended up at the Ratskeller, which doesn't refer to rodents, but is a traditional eatery near any German city hall (rats haus).

After lunch, we toured the city from our bus. Among the sights were the 1972 Olympic Village and castles and cathedrals. One of the castles was the Castle of Nymphenburg, commissioned by Frederick Maria and Henrietta Adelaide of Savoy after the birth of their son. The royal couple had been unable to conceive, but after a visit to nearby mineral springs, Henrietta was pregnant. This happened three times over the years, leading gossips to call her sons "The Salt Princes."

We had a tremendous dinner at a traditional biergarten before checking into our airport hotel to return to the U.S.



The Glockenspiel is an animatronic music box at one end of Munich's Marienplatz.



The leaders of the seven Magyar tribes reign in Heroes Square in Budapest.

Testing conducted in July

Initial Contacts: 0

Follow-up Contacts: 1

Tested: 0

Next test session at the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa (Catherine Schweinberg Rood Central Library) is scheduled for: August 20, 2022.

Prospective candidates should contact us at mensatest@cfl.rr.com

Future Of Space Coast Area Mensa

On page 2, I have a small notice for the upcoming elections for ExComm. Elections are required annually, though we did not hold elections in 2021 due to the pandemic. As I pointed out in my LocSec article this month, I am not seeking reelection and my last day as your LocSec and my other roles within the group will be September 30, 2022. This year, we absolutely must have an election.

Please consider throwing your name in the hat by nominating yourself for a position on the ExComm.

A ballot will be provided in the September newsletter containing the names of all the nominees. I would like to get 100% participation in the voting process.

If we fail to get nominees, the chapter itself will likely be dissolved before the end of the year because we cannot exist without the ExComm. Thomas Thomas can elaborate on how that process might unfold.

Votes will be counted by the NomEl committee at a place and date of their choosing, but must be completed prior to 30 September. I will announce the newly elected officers in the October newsletter and via email using the 'Email my Members' function on the National site.

Your chapter needs you. There are four ExComm positions; Local Secretary, Assistant Local Secretary, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. All other positions within the group are appointed by the ExComm. All positions I currently fill will be vacant on October 1st of this year. If you don't want the leadership role of ExComm, you may find that one of the other vacancies is to your liking.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM on 7/19/22. In attendance:

Jim Fitzgerald: LocSec

Arleigh Sharpe: Deputy LocSec

Val Valek: Treasurer

Rick Bugado: Recording Secretary

Thomas Thomas: Regional Vice Chair

Discussions and Motions:

Minutes from ExComm meeting held on 6/15/22 were read and a motion was made to accept. Motion passed.

Financial report was provided by Treasurer **Val Valek**. General account contains \$6,503.49 and the reserve account contains \$860.90.

Lengthy discussion was held regarding the upcoming zoo event. Page 6 of this newsletter details the items accepted by the Ex-Comm. Motion was made to accept all discussion points. Motion passed.

Design of the Space Coast Area Mensa member button was previewed and accepted as our official button. LocSec to place order for 200 buttons immediately. Approximate cost is less than \$100.00.

Motion made to adjourn at 7:24 PM. Motion passed.

The title of this section uses a common cipher

7 F J < 3 J > > O F V

What five-letter word inserted downwards completes the five different four-letter words starting with BAR?

BAR ()

BAR ()

BAR ()

BAR ()

BAR ()

Answer is at the bottom of page 16

Newsletter Submissions

To submit articles, events, SIGs, announcements, please email locsec@scam.us.mensa.org

All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Upcoming Events

30 Jul and 27 Aug: Weekend Walkers at Merritt Square mall. We'll meet at 8:55 to start walking in air-conditioned comfort at 9. We'll walk three laps of the mall, then adjourn for calories and conversation to Sunrise Cafe on Merritt Island Causeway. Call Ann Carter, 954-471-5758, anncarter@rocketmail.com with questions, or to let us know to look for you.

6 Aug: Games Night, Indian River Club condominium, 5th Floor Vista Room, 1025 Rockledge Dr. Ann Carter will serve light snacks and beverages. Bring a favorite game or see what we have. Call Ann Carter, 954-471-5758, anncarter@rocketmail.com .

17 Aug: ExComm Meeting: 6:30 PM meeting via [Zoom](#) Passcode: 719659

17 Sep: Brevard Zoo (event for members, immediate family, and significant others)

Picture of the Month

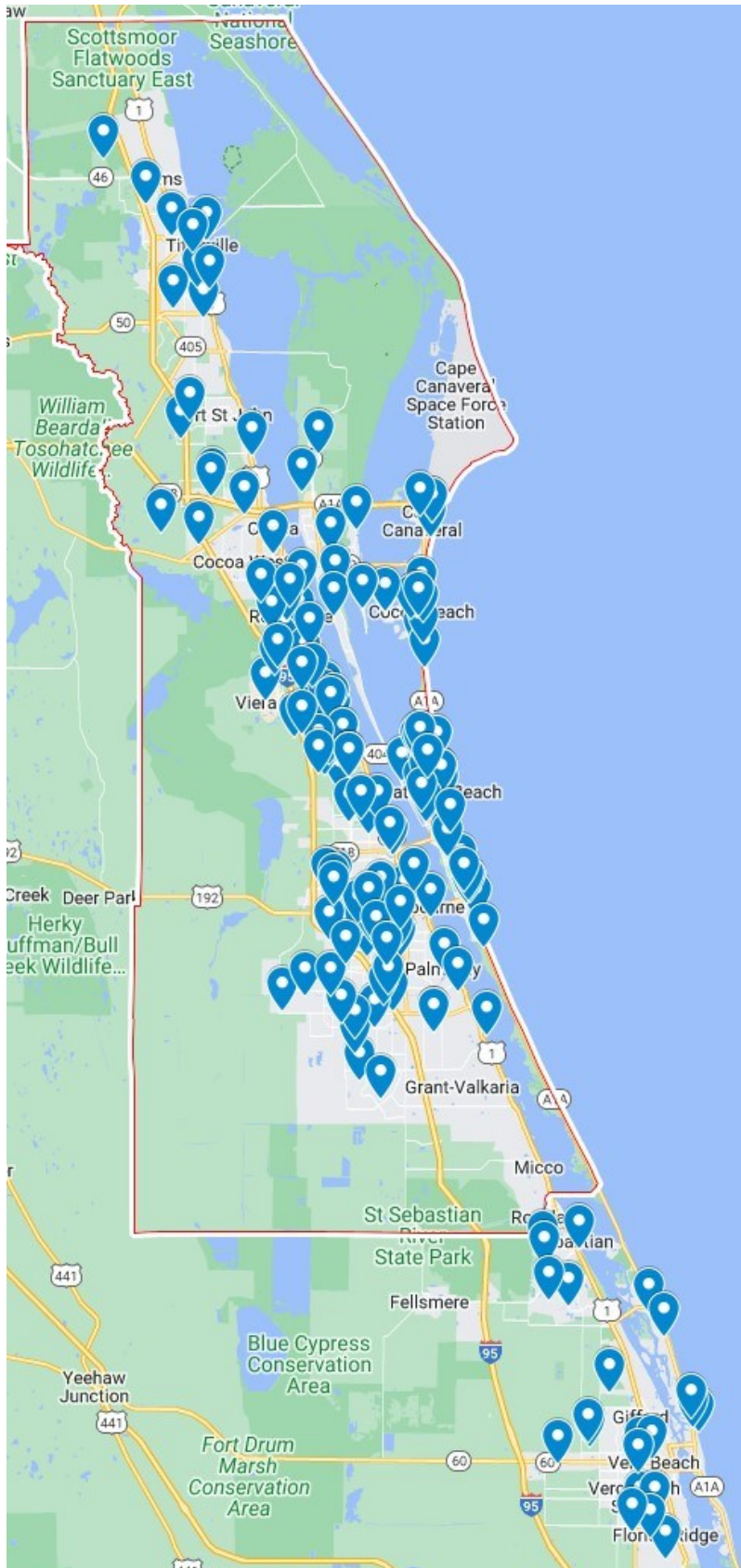


The Hatching

Photo by: Jim Fitzgerald

A Map of Space Coast Area Mensa Members

Ever wonder how our chapter is spread out in Brevard and Indian River Counties? Well, I wondered about that so I made a custom map using Google and the kind of surprising results is shown below.



Space Coast Area Mensa

Officers and Appointees

Local Secretary	Jim Fitzgerald	locsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Deputy Local Secretary	Arleigh Sharpe	asstlocsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Treasurer	Val Valek	treasurer@scam.us.mensa.org
Recording Secretary	Rick Bugado	recsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Area Coordinators		
Brevard County	Jim Fitzgerald	locsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Indian River County	Robert Roth	robverobeach@aol.com
Testing Coordinator	Hank Rhodes	mensatest@cfl.rr.com
Testing Proctor	Julie Costopoulos	
Testing Proctor	Harold (Bud) Long	
Testing Proctor	Hank Rhodes	
Newsletter Editor	Jim Fitzgerald	locsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Calendar Coordinator	Jim Fitzgerald	locsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Webmaster	Karen Freiberg	webmaster@scam.us.mensa.org
Membership Chair	Ann Carter	membership@scam.us.mensa.org
Scholarship Chair	Julie Costopoulos	scholarship@scam.us.mensa.org
S.I.G.H.T Coordinator	Karen Freiberg	sight@scam.us.mensa.org
Social Media Chair	Jim Fitzgerald	locsec@scam.us.mensa.org
Regional Vice Chair (Area 10)	Thomas G. Thomas	RVC10@us.mensa.org
Gifted Youth Coordinator	Vacant	
Ombudsman	Tom Lempicke	tom@lempicke.com

Mensa Links

SCAM Web Site

<http://www.spacecoast.us.mensa.org>

American Mensa

<https://www.us.mensa.org/>

Mensa Connect

<https://www.us.mensa.org/connect/mensa-connect/>

Your Membership Profile

<https://www.us.mensa.org/my-mensa/my-membership-profile/>

Receiving the newsletter electronically is easy. Just follow these simple steps:

1. Go to <https://members.us.mensa.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=CommPref>
2. Edit the top box "Publication Preferences" and set 'Local Group Newsletter' to "Electronic" and click 'Save'
3. Done. Told ya it was easy and you save our chapter print costs. Win-win.

Answer from Page 11: **BENDS** (barb, bare, barn, bard, bars)
The cipher used in the title of this section is called Pigpen and translates to **Gray Matters**. You may run into this in an escape room.