



B.E. Pete Bostwick, Jr.
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MARCH MEETING -- WED MAR 12, 2014

WHERE: "The Egg & I" at 6909 Menaul Blvd NE (just East of Louisiana)

Sign in and order lunch 1100 Hrs - Call to Order NLT 1145 Hrs - Adjourn 1300

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Will there be an outside speaker? Well, maybe, maybe not. If not, it won't be for lack of effort; Mike Ford has been trying for weeks to nail someone down. One prospect had another commitment, and a second one hasn't responded, yet. Keep your fingers crossed; otherwise you may be in for tales of derring-do (or idiocy) in Southeast Asia.

Last month's meeting went well, and we thank Rich Sullivan sincerely for an enlightening overview of the security clearance process. Even though most of us have been through it, I learned a lot about the complexity of the process and its management, and those are well worth understanding (thanks, Rich!). On balance, it's not too hard to see how Snowden fell through the cracks, though I view it as an inexcusable failure. There's no silver lining to this breach, but I'm heartened by the fact that US Investigations Services—responsible for the Snowden lapse—is not only being censured, but is under investigation for fraud, and for allegedly filing *"...more than 660,000 flawed background investigations--40% of the cases it sent to the government over a four-year period."* [Wall Street Journal, Jan 22, 2014]. That is absolutely mind-boggling and perhaps criminal, and makes me wonder if the same company performed some of the reportedly mishandled DHS clearances.

The Intelligence kerfuffle of the moment would, of course, be Mr. Putin's armed assertion of Russia's right to dictate the allegiances of the Ukraine, and to demonstrate Moscow's willingness to enforce his views. Did we see this coming? Do we have any idea how to deal with it? Washington's responses, so far, reassure Mr. Putin more than they reassure me. Are we really prepared to meet challenges of this magnitude, going forward? It can reasonably be assumed that the Intelligence Community assessed our adversaries would welcome the impact of "sequestration" on the Defense Department and the rest of government. That was on target, if not understated. I assume that China, Russia, Iran, Syria, and others—not to mention our friends and allies—are parsing our actions and intentions with renewed fervor, and are either heartened or dismayed by what they see. We'd best be careful about where and how we cut resources, as this is a high-stakes game. Sequestration, which does not appear able to grasp the consequences of mostly blind cuts, could seriously undermine our (the IC's) ability to provide credible guidance to our forces and policy makers.

OTHERWISE...

As noted before, the opportunity approaches for a changing of the New Mexico Chapter guard. Elections will be held at the April meeting, so all interested parties (that's everyone) should be prepared to provide input on

the direction and leadership of this chapter. We are smaller than we were, but there are still avenues available to increase the membership. All it takes (notice how blithely I say “all...”) is a little time and energy. AFIO is, in my view, more than worthy of our support, but we need to achieve a little more recognition around the state, and in the media. [I know, I know; don’t get me started on the quality of media coverage.] Please come to this meeting with some ideas about refreshing our leadership, growing the chapter, and enhancing our image in the community. Many thanks for your support up to this point – don’t quit now.

Respectfully yours,

Pete Bostwick