

# Sunflower Seeds



OCTOBER 2018

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
SUNFLOWER CHAPTER OF AMERICAN MENSA,  
WICHITA, KANSAS

VOLUME 45, NO. 10

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# THIS MONTH'S SATURDAY EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
OCT 6TH	MONTHLY PIG OUT	THE SWEET SPOT W CENTRAL <a href="http://thesweetspotwichita.com">HTTP://THESWEETSPOTWICHITA.COM</a>	8448 12:45 PM
13TH	STATED MEETING AND GUEST SPEAKER	WATERMARK BOOKS, BASEMENT 4701 E DOUGLAS <a href="http://watermarkbooks.com">HTTP://WATERMARKBOOKS.COM</a>	2:00 PM
20TH	FOOD FOR THOUGHT	WATERMARK BOOKS, BASEMENT 4701 E DOUGLAS <a href="http://watermarkbooks.com">HTTP://WATERMARKBOOKS.COM</a>	11:00 AM
27TH	BANTER AND BOOKS	BARNES & NOBELS, REAR EATING AREA 1920 N ROCK RD <a href="http://stores.barnesandnobles.com/store/2319">HTTP://STORES.BARNESANDNOBLES.COM/STORE/2319</a>	7:00 PM

## Editor's Note:

You may not have noticed, but the Seeds has permanently returned to a once monthly format. The majority of the group's membership felt that a monthly publication was preferential to quarterly and would be of the most benefit. We will keep on experimenting until we get a publication of interest and utility to all our members. As always, your feedback is welcome and appreciated. You are encouraged to submit any original work to be published and shared by all.

The Seeds will be accepting advertising in future issues to help offset the costs of production. This should begin with the November issue, just in time for the holidays. Ads will be either quarter, half or full page, in full color. The cost will be \$15/quarter page, \$25/half page, \$40/full page. Circulation is roughly 120 members via either print or electronically. Contact myself or Gordon for more information. Depending on the quality of future submissions, subscriptions will be offered to non-members, rates to be determined.

For those of you who missed my presentation on the lost city of Etzanoa as July's speaker, the PowerPoint is now available at the following secure link: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/r6lvjtnjm0i1hpi/Etzanoa.pptx?dl=0>

Klaus

## Last Month's Guest Speaker:



For our September Program Meeting, James Zongker, a member of our Kansas Sunflower Mensa local group, spoke about higher dimensional spaces: their fundamental properties, how to model or visualize them, the geometry of regular shapes, and how this can be used to understand math and physics in a new way. James is not content with three-dimensional space, or even four-dimensional, he goes for n-dimensional. He dropped in from some n-dimensional space, gave his talk to those of us who inhabit three dimensions, and then disappeared back into who-knows-where. You can view the slides of his presentation on our Kansas Sunflower Mensa web site: <http://www.kansassunflower.us.mensa.org>



## October's Guest Speaker:

"This is Homa Homa. I'm going to talk about adventures/observations/statistics from a certain cat-shaped country close to my heart, including things I think an American audience would be interested in. There will be an opportunity for Q & A. Humor is a feature, not a bug. Thank you to Bill for the invite, and I am honored to be a guest."

## Executive Committee Meeting

An Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting was held on September 8, 2018. Most of the discussion had to do with the Sunflower SEEDS. The most important result that came out of the meeting was to return to monthly SEEDS. There is still a major question about controlling costs while we attempt to produce quality monthly SEEDS, but we hope to be able to accomplish the task. One way of offsetting costs is to hopefully attract advertising. By charging modest prices, perhaps we'll be able to keep the ship afloat, and we have enough in our bank account to weather a storm or two.

## Sunflower Mensa Financial Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter [April 1-June 30, 2018]

**Diane Powell, Treasurer**

Balance April 1, 2018	\$3, 889.43
SEEDS Printing	- \$54.81
SEEDS Postage	- \$75.02
Screen/Projectors [3]	-\$64.50
Program Speakers	- \$40.00
National Funding	+ \$298.65
Balance June 30, 2018	\$3953.75

## LocSec Korner

This is my first LocSec Korner column, and I would like to focus on the activity of Kansas Sunflower Mensa (KSM) that I enjoy the most: our Pig Out activity the first Saturday of each month. The activity was started by the late Cole Carland. I think I have that correct, but I wasn't involved with KSM at the time. There is an amazing variety of restaurants in Wichita that meet our basic criteria: modest prices, and the ability to put all of us around one big table or tables pushed together, and preferably in a side room if possible. After several years of attending these events, I am impressed with how cosmopolitan Wichita is. In the years that I have been attending, we have had our Pig Out at Italian, Chinese, Mediterranean, Lebanese, Moroccan, Mexican, Thai, BBQ, Japanese, Korean, Peruvian, and American (whatever that is) restaurants. Cole didn't mind us calling him the "Head Pig": our current Head Pig (I don't think he'll mind me calling him that) is Mike Dickson, who does a bang-up job of finding interesting new places to dine at. Our October Pig Out will be at The Sweet Spot, which sounds like a place that would specialize in bakery items, ice cream, or something similar, but rather it has an eclectic menu (maybe that makes it American). I'm looking forward to the Philly cheese steak. I hope to see you there!



Larry D. Paarmann

## **Executive Committee Meeting**

September 8, 2018

The Sunflower SEEDS is the official publication of Kansas Sunflower Mensa and is also the group's archival record of activities.

We are required to hold a regularly scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee once per quarter, something that we have not been doing.

Each issue of the SEEDS should routinely include:

- (1) The date of the next Executive Committee meeting, as applicable, and to solicit agenda items from the membership.
- (2) A brief report of the previous Executive Committee meeting, as applicable.
- (3) A financial report, posted once every quarter.
- (4) A list of upcoming meetings/events.
- (5) A brief report of each program meeting from the previous month.
- (6) The Facebook and KSM web site addresses.
- (7) Other articles of interest, puzzles, etc.

The SEEDS should be mailed and posted on AML well in advance of the beginning of the month, so that members will have the issue prior to the beginning of the month.

## **Nominating Committee Report**

Members of the Kansas Sunflower Mensa (KSM) Nominating Committee, having been appointed by the KSM Executive Committee for the Election Year 2018, met in person on 7/14/2018 at the Watermark Bookstore. Present were John Prechtel and Igor Ponomarev. They unanimously decided to nominate (Susan Pung agreed via email) the following Mensa members and for the following positions:

Larry Paarmann – to that of Local Secretary;

Bill Barnett – to that of Deputy Local Secretary;

Diane Powell – to that of the Treasurer;

Ron a/k/a Ronnie Lee Ingle – to be the Member at Large;

All in accordance with Mensa Bylaws.

## **Election Progress**

The Nominating Committee has posted its slate of nominations on the following page. You still have the opportunity, if you wish, to add addition nominations by petition, but each one must be received by the Nominating Committee no later than November 15th, and each one must be supported by ten signatures of members of Kansas Sunflower Mensa.

## Gatherings by: Rich Alcott, Region-7 Vice Chair

September's peak harvest time here in the Heartland Region, from sorghum on our south side to sugar beets up north; corn, soybeans and truck crops everywhere. The farmer's market pickings (including Colorado's famed Palisades peaches) have been glorious.

True to the time of year, **Central Iowa Mensa** will host their annual *Harvest Regional Gathering* in Des Moines on October 4-6. I went last year, had a fine time, met some good people and enjoyed my best bowl of chicken'n'dumplings in a long time. Those folks know how to lay out a table. Contact Michelle Herring ([herringmichelle@johndeere.com](mailto:herringmichelle@johndeere.com)) for more information.

Which got me thinking about the word "gathering" and how Mensa has **Gatherings** instead of conventions, conferences, meetings and such. Sure, our ExComms have meetings and many Local Groups do Meet-And-Greets, but our Monthly, Regional and Annual Gatherings are peculiarly Mensan. Why is that?

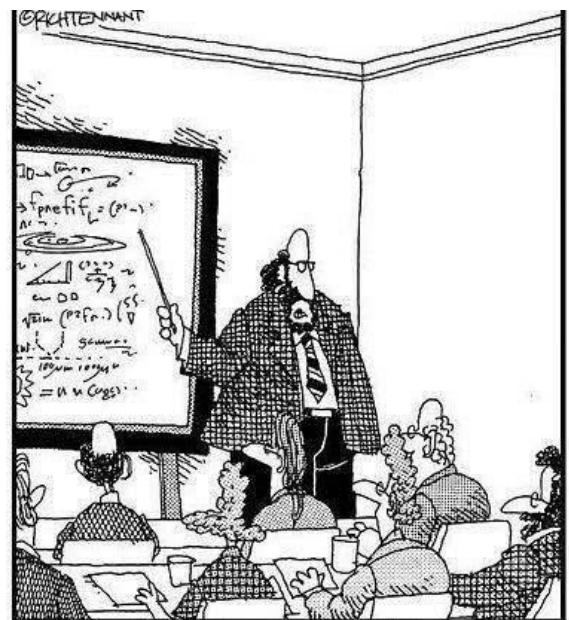
I've got a theory. Meetings and conventions are formal occasions with intent to do an organization's business. However, the word "Gathering" carries the feeling of people being drawn towards each other. Impelled, even. That definitely fits with my experiences. Mensans just seem to connect with each other in a way that doesn't happen so easily elsewhere. If you're one of our many members who hasn't yet shown up for a Local Group event, do that. Once you've learned that you truly belong here, I think you'll come back again.

Lots of things to be proud of in Region 7 this month. **Mid-America Mensa's** Wes Benson was the featured artist in the July 2018 *Bulletin*, copping both the issue cover and the illustration for the Table of Contents page. Two of our Heartland Region CultureQuest® teams placed in the Top 20 for the 2018 competition. Out of 107 teams, the **Plains&Peaks** "Peak of Perfection" posse came in at #13 and the **Nebraska and Western Iowa** "You Go Girls" group finished at #18. And at the Omaha LDW\* I had the pleasure of awarding two more RVC Service Awards in recognition of many years of hard, effective work for Mensa – to Diana Dyer of **Mid-America Mensa** and Beth Anne Demeter of **Denver Mensa**. Congratulations, everyone.

\* - If you're curious about what went on at the Leadership Development Workshops, all the presentation materials are posted online at [region7.us.mensa.org/The\\_Nuts\\_and\\_Bolts\\_of\\_ExComm\\_1.htm](http://region7.us.mensa.org/The_Nuts_and_Bolts_of_ExComm_1.htm). ~ ~ Rich



Figure 1: Which of these bottles will be the first to fill up?



"Along with 'Antimatter,' and 'Dark Matter,' we've recently discovered the existence of 'Doesn't Matter,' which appears to have no effect on the universe whatsoever."

## Big Brutus



Big Brutus, the Bucyrus-Erie model 1850-B electric shovel, operated in the 1960s and 1970s in coal strip mining outside of West Mineral, Kansas, about 160 miles southeast of Wichita. Fabrication of Big Brutus was completed in May, 1963, after which it was shipped in 150 railroad cars to be assembled in Kansas. It operated until 1974, when it became uneconomical to mine coal at the site. It was considered too big to move, so it was left in place. It is the largest electric shovel still in existence. It cost some \$6.5 million to produce. It weighs over 9 million pounds. Big Brutus was designated as a Regional Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark in 1987, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

## ANSWER TO THE PROBABILITY PROBLEM STATED IN THE PRIOR ISSUE OF SEEDS

We briefly restate here that the problem has to do with drawing cards from a standard 52 deck one by one, and opening each drawn card, trying to make it more likely than 50% on average (over multiple randomly ordered card decks) that your next (yet unknown) card is red. After you have opened first several cards, you might discover that you have obtained more black cards than red ones, and this would seem to be the time to say "stop" in order to profit from the fact that the rest of the deck has obviously more red cards. (The card drawn immediately after saying "stop" is the one that determines the outcome). Intuitively, this might be a good strategy to improve your chances of drawing a red card from the deck (we should remember that this card can only be one of those that has not yet been opened). On the other hand, it might happen in some cases that you have been drawing a lot of red cards, thus decreasing your chances that the next card (out of all remaining in the deck) is red.

**I claim that no strategy will improve your chances.** My opponents counter that one has to keep going until you have gone through more black cards than red ones, and it might seem intuitively that this should happen sooner or later. **One simple observation is contrary to this argument.** The loosely described strategy above will yield the same result if you always draw the last card from the deck. Indeed, once you have established that there are more black cards among the ones you have drawn out, you are certain that there are more red cards than black ones among remaining. Notice that any of the remaining cards will now be more likely to be red, and equally so. That is because the cards come in random order. Thus we can always take the last card out of the remaining ones, without worsening our average outcome. This is also the last card in the deck, and it does not change.

Why not just always take the last card in the deck without first looking at any cards prior to that? That will give us exactly 50% chance of getting a red card on average, and this will not be worse than any other strategy. The described argument is too implicit for some. There is a chain of reasoning that allows to explicitly calculate the probabilities of drawing a red card (using the best possible strategy) from a deck of  $n$  cards of which  $m$  are red. By using mathematical induction, one can prove that such probability is  $m/n$ . Those interested are referred to the author for further explanation.

Igor Ponomarev

\*An elderly man goes into a brothel and tells the madam he would like a young girl for the night. Surprised, she looks at the ancient man and asks how old he is. 'I'm 90 years old,' he says. '90?' replies the woman. 'Don't you realize you've had it?' 'Oh, sorry,' says the old man. 'How much do I owe you?'

^anon

## Mike Dickson submits the following interesting facts:

- 1) The first person to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge was a professional high diver who “wanted to demonstrate that people do not die by simply falling thru the air”. He proved himself correct by falling 135 feet safely thru the air, only dying when he hit the water.
- 2) There is a pass in Wyoming where a stream splits and half of the water drains into the Pacific Ocean and half drains into the Atlantic.
- 3) During prohibition, grape farmers would make semi-solid grape concentrates called wine bricks, which were then sold with the warning: “After dissolving the brick in half a gallon of water, do not place the liquid in a jug inside of a cupboard for 20 days because it will then turn into wine”.
- 4) The term “groggy” originates in either the British or U.S. navies. These sailors drank grog, which was a mixture of rum, water and citrus juice, which warded off scurvy. Someone who is dazed or sleepy might feel that they imbibed in too much grog, thence making them “groggy”.
- 5) Leonardo DiCaprio bought an entire island off of the coast of Belize over 10 years ago, building the worlds first eco-restorative resort that claims to “restore” the islands decimated fisheries, coastlines and forests.
- 6) There is enough water contained in lake Superior to flood the entire landmasses of North and South America to a depth of a foot. It holds an estimated 3 quadrillion gallons of fresh water.
- 7) There is an indoor lettuce grower in Japan that produces up to 10,000 head of lettuce per day, but uses only 1% of the water needed for a conventional outdoor field.
- 8) The city of Albertville, France’s electricity is generated by Beaufort cheese. Whey, a byproduct of the manufacturing process is inoculated with a special strain of bacteria so that it produces large quantities of biogas. The gas is then used to heat water to generate 2800 megawatts of electricity per year.
- 9) A Texas man was asked not to dive off of the dock in a marina due to the earlier sighting of an alligator. While yelling “fuck that alligator” the man leapt into the lake. He was mauled and killed almost immediately.
- 10) There are 5 huge subterranean cisterns located beneath downtown Tokyo. They are used to hold excess rain water that might otherwise flood the city.
- 11) Since 1940, 85% of the people who attempted to break the water speed record have died trying.
- 12) The Amazon river spews such a massive amount of fresh water into the Atlantic Ocean that the surface water is drinkable up to 200 miles out to sea.
- 13) Captain Christopher Jones of the Mayflower was forced to land early at Plymouth Rock because of the ships dwindling supply of beer. Before pasteurization began in 1864, beer was much safer to drink than stored water because the alcohol killed off many of the pathogens.
- 14) There is a Catholic saint of beer. Saint Arnold of Soissons saved the lives of many villagers by urging them to drink beer instead of water, thus reducing the spread of disease.

## ARE WOMEN AS SMART AS MEN?

I used to think so. However, recently I looked at the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) that I took in college, and with which I got into Mensa. It gave the various scores that a standard group of college seniors received, and which percentile each score would put one in. I expected that women would do better on the VERBAL questions, and men would do better on the QUANTITATIVE questions. I thought that would average out and, in total, they would do about the same. Not so.

On the verbal questions, they did about the same. A score of 720 would put both in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile (meaning that they did better than 98 % of those taking the test). A score of 500 would put a woman in the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile of women and a man in the 56<sup>th</sup> percentile of men. That means that women did slightly better, but only slightly better. A score of 380 would put a woman in the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile of women, but men in only the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of men. Thus, on the low end, men did a little better.

The QUANTITATIVE part of the test was different. Men did much better than women. A score of 640 put a man in only the 91<sup>st</sup> percentile of men, but put a woman in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile of women. On the low end it was similar. A score of 380 would make a woman higher than all but 19% of women, but would put a man ahead of only 10% of men.

However, women, don’t feel bad. We still love you, but not only for your brains. There are other reasons.

^anon

**The Editor Squeaks:** Why are we a Mensan? The membership dues, though not outrageous are more than inconsequential. The mainstream media usually portrays almost any intellectual as a nerd or evil scientist. We need to turn those attitudes around and start making it cool to be smart. Our very future depends on it.

Let's face it, without intellect and the technology it spawned, our species would still be bipedal savannah apes scurrying about to scavenge a meal, blaming our own inadequacies on some distant, imaginary god. Genius and intellect should be lauded as the highest state that a human might attain, rather than being mocked by the mindless minions who fear us because we can understand what they can never hope to. Remember, it is the few who actually create for the many. It is time to revere the researchers, scientists, teachers, authors and artists, not some dim-witted movie star or athlete.

For most of us membership is simply bragging rights that we belong to an elite organization whose members are superior to 98% of the other humans that inhabit this planet. Many of us find "normal" people to be boring and predictable, preferring the occasional company of those who are worthy of having deep discussions/debates with. How many of the ideas that would change the world were inculcated during informal gatherings of like-minded thinkers?

\*We desperately need more member participation. Especially the submission of articles, stories, jokes, artwork or any other item of interest to the intellectual. Come to an event on occasion, it won't kill you. We don't bite (much).

\*A testing proctor is sorely needed! We all should have recently received an e-mail stating that each member would be given a certificate to be used by anyone they choose to take the Mensa entrance examination. With a little planning, our chapter could conceivably recruit a dozen or more new members. Come on people, we are talking a couple hours every few months. Surely you can spare that much time to help out your organization. After all, mileage & expenses are probably tax deductible anyway.

\*I have given much thought into how to actually facilitate our groups growth, direction and purpose, which I feel has stagnated. My four-point plan to increase member participation, community visibility and membership numbers will be elucidated in detail in the next month's seeds and presented to group and the board . ^Klaus

