

SUNFLOWER SEEDS



Next Pig-Out:

Saturday August 5th, 12:45pm. The Olive Tree, 2949 N Rock RD.
Zoom meeting following at 4pm.

Guest Speaker and outdoor gathering:

Saturday, August 12th, 12:30pm. Bill Cather's retreat. No Zoom.

Kansas Sunflower Mensa Virtual Meetings:

Times: 12:30 PM CST. Every week on Saturday. Alternate zoom meeting times may be in place after other posted events.

Join us at the on-line **Zoom Meeting:** (cut and paste the following address)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72081034487?pwd=aWdKUStzbEVhNktjRzF0VEYxQTISQT09>

Meeting ID: 720 8103 4487

Password: 8T0Jrt

Details regarding events are on page – 3.

August 2020, Volume – 48, Issue # 8
Kansas Sunflower Mensa Newsletter

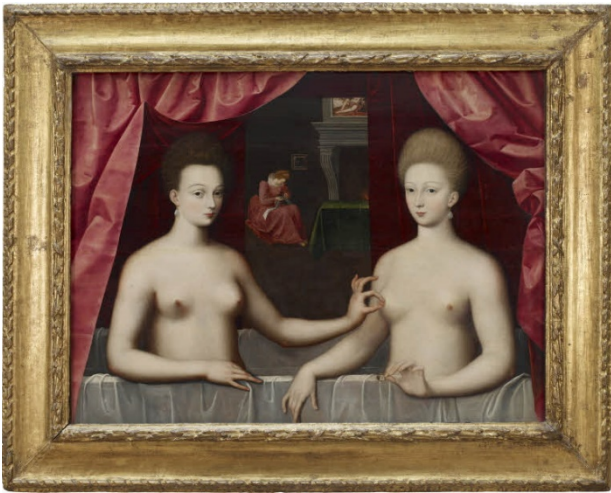


Figure 1: Louvre Portrait of Gabriella D'Estrees and a sister.

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Contributions may be submitted at any time, but for publication in the next issue, it must be received by the 20th of the preceding month. All contributions must be signed but may be published anonymously or under a pseudonym.

Paid advertising is accepted on a space-available basis at \$40 per full page, \$25 per 1/2 page, \$15 per 1/4 page. All ads must be renewed prior to each month published. Rates are double for non-members.

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All material to be published must conform to established criteria. Print copy of requirements is available from the editors.

The Editors have total discretion to reject or edit submissions and advertisements according to style, propriety, taste, and space requirements. Though the decisions of the Editors may on occasion seem capricious, they are always final.

All opinions expressed herein are solely that of the editor and/or contributor unless otherwise specified and in no way reflect the attitudes or opinions of other members of this chapter or of Mensa.

This publication is intended for mature, intelligent audiences and content herein may not be appropriate for some minors.

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Pig Out details as follows:



**Chef Owned,
Chef Driven –
Since 1979**

For over 40 years, we have had the opportunity to host celebrations with menus of almost any type of cuisine you can imagine. Our chef owner teams with our event planner to understand what cuisine will connect the most with the guests. We understand that deep down this cuisine carries a special place in your heart, so extra care and attention goes into our preparation.

Give us a call to discuss the plans that you may have for your event. We are ready to perform whatever catering you desire for any special event. Whether you choose our event venue that Olive Tree has to offer or have a different destination in mind, our professional caterers, bartenders, and event planners are here for you so you can enjoy your special event as stress free as possible. We look forward to speaking with you and are excited for what is to come!

Guest Speaker and Mensa Gathering:

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we will give it a go again this month. Our first guest speaker in many months will be the lawyer and environmentalist Bill Cather, who is also active in the Sierra Club.

The gathering will be on his private land, located directly south of Mulvane, on the sandy shores of the Arkansas river.

Please bring your own folding chairs, drinks, and munchies. We will be getting together out of doors so plan accordingly.

There may also be a short nature hike involved for those who would like to see the flora and fauna of the Arkansas river bottoms.

Address: 1199 Old Goat Ranch RD, Mulvane.

Gore township – 37.42836N x 97.23097W



Editorial: Last month I choose to run an article that I was sure would be controversial, and I presumed might invoke some meaningful discussion. It was felt that considering the racial tensions extant over the last several months, an in-depth analysis of pertinent and current issues by intellectuals might prove of value.

A fellow Mensan told me something that struck me as rather profound. He said, “it ruins the soup if you don’t stir the pot once in a while”. That has been a mantra regarding the Seeds.

I knew allowing the article to be published might “ruffle a few feathers”, but wanton and unbridled emotionality fueling violence and rage was unexpected and inappropriate.

It is conceded that the article was rather poorly written and lacked any supporting evidence to justify any of the assertions made. All future submissions will be compelled to adhere to tougher literary standards.

Even after reading the article several times, it could not be construed as being generally deemed offensive simply because it asked questions that in this current society would be considered politically incorrect.

Though the views he expressed may not be commonly held, or even be shared by the editor, they are legitimate opinions and were presented as such. If the article had been deemed to be intended solely to enflame, incite, harass, or harm any member, it would have been flatly refused.



Heartland Mensa Region 7



Almost every photo calendar I get in the mail has a blah picture for September. February may rate a calving glacier, April may feature baby critters, June may have a view of soaring mountains, but September always gets an old

barn or a cliché maple-clad hillside. I've long wondered why but I think I've figured it out. The editors are taking revenge on the start of the school year. It goes back to when things made sense and school started the day after Labor Day. Since then September has always carried a faint flavor of chalk dust.

School this year, who knows? Full-time, part-time rotating, online-only, open immediately, open deferred to time certain, we'll let you know when or even if – and the plan seems to change every week. It's enough to make kids want to go to school just out of orneriness. Except maybe Mensa kids, who dive into stuff on their own and often way before the school system is ready for that. If you're one of those or if you know one or two, tip them off to what the Mensa Foundation and American Mensa's Gifted Youth Programs Manager Jamie Uphold have put together at us.mensa.org/featured-content/at-home-learning-resources-for-kids/. All kinds of interesting links and material there for kids. For grown-ups, too, especially if they want to keep up.

Grown-up Mensans shouldn't be surprised that the texture of the Mensa experience is changing. Not because we want to get creative, but because we have to – here in the Age of Covid the environment just doesn't sustain our traditional event structure. To the folks who can still gather with appropriate precautions in outdoor locations, ¡salud!

For the rest of us it's print media (bless our newsletter and *Bulletin* editors!) and getting together on the internet. You or your Local Group officers can organize online video gatherings with the resources listed at us.mensa.org/lead/localgroupresources/stay-engaged-with-your-members/. Zoom, GoToMeeting and their competitors listed there make it easy to set up a meet-up. Beyond your local area, take your pick from all the Special Interest Groups listed at us.mensa.org/connect/sigs/sig-listing/ or the growing number of interesting nation-wide "virtual speaker meetings" that some of the larger Local Groups have begun hosting. We're still figuring out how to advertise them – I expect Mensa Connect will be a good source for that.

~~ Rich

Sunflower Seeds Submission Guidelines

Effective immediately, any articles or material submitted to this publication will adhere to and be subject to the following mandatory guidelines:

- 1) Any statements made and presented as being accepted fact must provide and list at least one academically acceptable reference (for instance published in a peer reviewed journal) to back up each separate assertion. This applies to all non-fiction material presented as a "non-artistic" or "studious works".
- 2) Any paper submitted that is deemed "potentially inflammatory" will not by default be forbidden but must adhere to a higher standard of excellence than the average works. (as determined solely by the editor) "Exceptional claims warrant exceptional proof" is a fair ethos.
- 3) The editor will absolutely refuse to elevate any subject to a status where it may be insulated from any sort of observation, dissection, analysis and if necessary, criticism. The editor is resolutely inflexible on this point, as he thinks any other lover of Democracy, free speech and personal freedom will feel the same as well.
- 4) Submissions to this periodical will be limited to members of Kansas Sunflower Mensa in good standing or any member in good standing with any other recognized chapter, including Mensa staff and officials. There will be no exceptions except as detailed below.
- 5) On occasion and at their sole discretion, the editor may choose from time to time to allow submissions from non-members if they conform to all other requisites. These will be placed in the special "letters to the editor" section, which is normally reserved for member submissions, but may contain other works that the editor finds exceptional or deems to be of interest to the general group membership.
- 6) All submissions must conform to all legal requirements applicable to the location of publication. All submission must also conform to Seeds, local chapter, and Mensa National/International guidelines. There will be no exceptions to this specification.
- 7) Any submission deemed to have no apparent redeeming qualities, and which appears to be intended to solely cause harm or distress to any member will be flatly refused consideration. This is in no way to be construed that "controversial" or "politically incorrect" subject matter is to be avoided or be in any way regulated. (see also section 2)

- 8) Submissions made from officers and/or officials of Mensa or their representatives will be presumed to be following all requisites. It should be noted that they will assume full responsibility for any material submitted.
- 9) Submissions deemed to be predominantly political in nature will be eschewed. Politics are utterly subjective, and in the end, degenerates into little more than my troop hooting furiously, flinging feces and tree branches at your troop, ad infinitum. There is little to be learned here.

Further information, disclaimers, contacts, and additional requirements if any, are published every month on page 2 of each Sunflower Seeds.

Definitions:

“non-artistic” articles will be defined as works that are presented primarily to disseminate an idea, opinion, or viewpoint. They will be considered “argumentative” works meant to change opinion. These sorts of works can be incredibly unique and perceptive in non-traditional but fascinating ways. They are useful but can also be misused if firm rules of acceptable quality data are not adhered to.

“studious works” are studies that are original, or copies published elsewhere in what are commonly accepted as legitimate sources. They will be considered “informative” works meant to educate and enlighten. All pertinent references and credits must be included. These works are meant primarily to convey information in a reasonable unbiased manner. Articles retrieved from any prominent publication like Nature or articles downloaded from PubMed, or NIH are empirical examples.

“artistic works” are projects meant to primarily entertain even though they may at times contain controversial messages, lessons, and subject matter. This category includes all graphics. Poems, artwork, short stories, quizzes, memorable sayings, and quotes would be typical.

“letters to the editor” is a special section that will be devoted to just that. Addressing any letters, concerns, or questions about the Seeds will be its primary function. On occasion, works deemed exceptional or of special interest that has been proffered by outsiders may be considered, but must adhere to all applicable standards.

“editorials” will be articles of interest to the group that have been written or created by the editor personally. All material presented in this area will conform to all codes to the same degree as any other submission.

“potentially inflammatory” is material that would cause the average, intelligent and sane American or Kansan to react in a manner that would cause undo distress or induce overly and excessively disagreeable mind states to be invoked. This is no way precludes the presentation of material that may produce the above reactions if it is integrally necessary to prove a salient or pertinent point.

The above listed requirements are not intended to be all-inclusive or cover every possible eventuality. Rather than being treated as a legally binding contract, these guidelines should be used as just that, guidelines. These “rules” are not “etched in stone” but are intended to give direction when conflicting views might arise regarding the material presented, and to help prevent destructive emotional confrontations between members who might have disparate opinions.

Final Note: As harsh as it sounds, in my eyes, censorship is much akin to the heinous, brutal, and ultimately unforgivable crime of murder. Once it is embraced and that tenuous boundary crossed, there is no turning back or chance to do things over. You are forever, inexorably changed. When the slippery slope is traversed, each trip makes it just a bit easier and more painless to transgress. Soon the rare and special occurrences become the norm, and the slope becomes so steep, the pit so deep that there is no return or chance of redemption.

The editor abhors censorship in any of its foul and dreadful guises for very personal as well as ethical reasons. He will fight for the right to the equal and unencumbered dissemination of information to all peoples, races, and creeds. Defending that precious privilege against any enemy of liberty, with his life if need be.

Science, Christianity, and Morality

The connection between science and Christianity is an interesting one. And the connection between morality and Christianity is perhaps even a more interesting one and is related to science as well.

There are at least three reasons for attributing the rise of modern science to Christianity. First is the historical one. While some advances in science are historically observed in ancient China, in ancient Greece, and in middle ages Islam, and perhaps others, science clearly only took root in Western Civilization. The church, at least up until Galileo, supported and encouraged the growth of science, as it was also a patron of the arts. The conflict with Galileo was an unfortunate one, inasmuch as the church had misunderstood the Bible in believing that the earth was the center of the universe (or solar system, as they did not distinguish at the time the difference). The Roman Catholic church at the time held to the then strongly held “scientific” conviction that the Ptolemaic model of the universe with the earth at the center was correct, that had been developed by the Alexandrian astronomer and mathematician Claudius Ptolemy in about 150 AD. The church had accepted it as science for centuries prior to Galileo, even though it is not explicitly taught in Scripture.

Christianity has always insisted that all truth is God’s truth, and therefore there cannot ultimately be any real conflict between the finding of science and the doctrines of Christianity. That gives us our second reason for attributing the rise of modern science to Christianity.

No conflict is assumed or anticipated, and the church upholds all truth, from wherever it comes. The conflict with Galileo raises a remarkably interesting observation. Sometimes the pronouncements of science are wrong. In fact, science is always correcting itself as new data are obtained and new theories are investigated. The church's error in the late middle ages was accepting the then established scientific Ptolemaic model of the universe, which was proven to be false by Galileo.

A third reason for attributing the rise of modern science to Christianity is that Christianity provides a worldview that supports scientific investigation. The Christian scientist thinks that he is thinking God's thought after Him. That is, since the Christian God is transcendent, He is not part of the physical universe, but He created the universe. As we may learn something about an artist by studying his art, or we can learn something about a design engineer by studying the things he has designed, an architect by his buildings, etc., we can learn some things about God by studying the universe that He has created. The Bible presents God as reasonable, immutable, the great artist, the One who has given meaning and purpose to it all. Therefore, the physical universe gives another means of discovering things about God. Many of the founders of the various branches of science were devoted Christians for such reasons. A good introduction to this topic may be found in the book by Nancy Pearcey and Charles Thaxton, *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*, Crossway Books, 1994: https://www.amazon.com/Soul-Science-Christian-Natural-Philosophy/dp/0891077669/ref=sr_1_7?Adv-Srch-Books-Submit.x=24&Adv-Srch-Books-Submit.y=16&dchild=1&qid=1597090863&refinements=p_27%3ANancy+Pearcey&s=books&sr=1-7&unfiltered=1

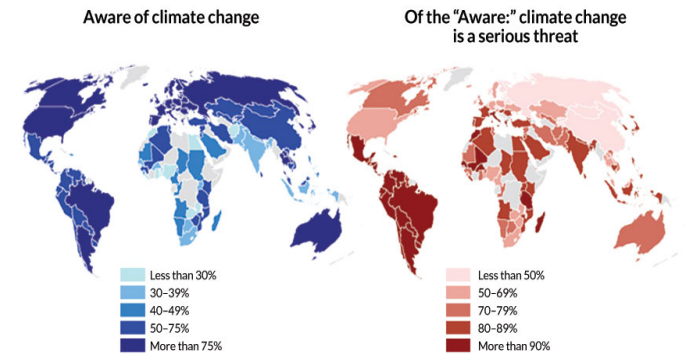
It is true that morality is necessary for the proper pursuit of scientific studies. Often it would take a large amount of money and access to sophisticated laboratory instruments to duplicate and confirm the data and findings in many scientific studies. Therefore, a great deal of trust in and deference to scientists is given, especially those with impeccable credentials. However, as has been shown, often the pressure to publish and raise more research money, and the assumption that no one will check, has led to the downfall of some. We should always check data and results, but it is often that no one does or has the means to do so even if they wanted to. Often, we must trust the morals of the so-called experts, and as we see more-and-more, this trust can often be misplaced.

And even in the cases where no moral infractions have occurred, perhaps the data have simply been misinterpreted (as in the Ptolemaic model).

A recent book has been published on the foundations of morality: James Davison Hunter and Paul Nedelisky, *Science and the Good: The Tragic Quest for the Foundations of Morality*, Yale University Press, 2018. The subtitle really should be *The Tragic Quest for the Naturalistic Foundations*

of Morality, as that is really what the book is about. Since the beginning of the Enlightenment philosophers have attempted to provide foundations for morality without reference to God. The authors conclude that although many have attempted to discover such foundations, more and more in the field of ethics believe that no such foundations exist, and they have embraced moral nihilism. It would seem that moral nihilism is the position that one should conclude, if conscience and Christianity and God are ruled out. I have written a review of this book. It will appear in the September/October issue of *Modern Reformation* magazine. This will be my first article in a Christian publication. As it will appear in *Modern Reformation*, it is a slightly edited version of what I sent them, primarily to reduce the word-count some. You may view or download the review as I sent it at the following URL: http://evansig.org/RReviews/Hunter_and_Nedelisky.pdf

Larry Paarman



Puzzle Prize Winner:



Igor posted a difficult puzzle challenge last month.

He gave Gordon the \$20.00 prize money promised, because he had solved the puzzle – the only person to do so.

Those figures behind him in the picture symbolize the people who gave up and could not solve the puzzle.

After Death, What?

A psychologist a few years ago decided to study life after death. He found about one thousand subjects and hypnotized them. He then asked them: "What were you doing in your past life?" When he got an answer to that, rather than ask for details about it, he immediately went to their death, and asked, "tell me about dying." Surprisingly, the answers he received were very similar. He recorded them in a book: *Journey of Souls*. Here is a summary of what they said.

I was in another place, much like Earth, with the same people, but it was different than on Earth. We could see each other, talk to each other, and travel around, but things were not materialist, as they are on Earth. We had a few close friends. Most of them were also close friends in our Earth visits.

We stay in this in-between place an average of fifty years before returning to Earth. We have all gone back and forth many times, hundreds of times. When people die on Earth, they come to this non-materialistic place again. Everyone comes here. There is no punishment place. There is nothing like a hell.

However, we do get lectures on how we could have done better, back on Earth. Eventually, when we feel like it, we request to go back to Earth to begin another life. We chose what that life would be, but again, we do get a lot of advice. When ready, we enter the chosen child's body. That is usually about the third month of pregnancy.

New people are being made all the time. There is this big glob of spiritual stuff there. One might call it god. We are all made totally out of that.

In each journey to Earth we learn things, thus becoming more advanced. As time goes on, some of the more advanced souls become guides and teachers. Others just disappear. We don't know where they go.

Coming back to Earth is actually optional. There are other planets to go to, but most chose Earth. They feel that the combination of good and evil here provides the challenges that are most helpful for continued learning and development.

At least that is what his patients told him.

-Anon



A comparison of the stress responses of Pan troglodytes and Homo sapiens.



It never fails to amaze me how the emotional responses of humans are so utterly similar in mode and intensity to our more "primitive" primate cousins. For instance, let us compare the reactions of both species to moderate stress situations induced by frustration.

When a human engages in an argument/debate and realize that they are hopelessly outmatched, or a chimp grasps the reality that what it may want at that moment in time is unobtainable, the results are the same.

The increase in frustration is almost palpable in that facial expressions, body posture and outward attitudes change abruptly from the resting state following a predictable progression.

Level one: Failure induced frustration. Both species will blindly and viciously lash out at the individual that they feel is causing their discomfort. Chimps will engage in threatening and aggressive facial gestures intent on punishing those that would not pander to their every little whim. Humans, true to their nature as "apes with car keys" will act remarkably similarly in that their expressions will markedly change, and they will scowl and tense up.

This is the point where manimals will start name calling and attempting to insult their advisory. They know their case is absolutely lost by this point and have nothing to lose by making a desperate attempt to salvage "face" by debasing their obvious superiors. If chimps could talk, they would do the same thing.

Educated Humans call this an ad "hominem attack", and view such actions as demeaning, low-life and wholly inappropriate. When the human is too weak to elucidate their own views and these views become untenable and indefensible, they have no other apparent recourse than to try and injure the one who made them look foolish. If you are a loser at attacking an idea, perhaps an insult will help assuage your inadequacy, and make you undeservingly feel better.



Level two: Ramped up aggression. When implied threats and intimidation is insufficient to turn the tide in their favor, the levels of helplessness and frustration noticeably escalate to pathological and dangerous levels. In chimps this level is typified by hooting and other loud vocalizations along with increased bodily animation. They will jump to and fro, pounding their chests staring intently at their adversary hoping that the object of their consternation will miraculously back down and give in to the tirade.

Much like a toddler's temper tantrums. Humans will follow the same behavior patterns, save that they rarely pound their chest. I have witnessed a violence addled hominid pound his chest like a Gorilla during a heated argument. It was as demeaning and embarrassing for me to witness as it was to the actual participants.

Level three: Physical threats of violence. When all else fails, the killer ape instincts kick in. First are threat displays. Along with the aforementioned behaviors, chimps will start charging at their adversary making as much noise and furry as they can. At this point nearby objects are used to intensify the violent displays such as shaking shrubs or brandishing branches in a threatening manner.

Humans engage in similar threat displays. Upon intense frustration a manimal will stare you down, jump out of its seat and pound the table, keeping in line with its innate primate instincts.

At this point both species are so hormone addled that they would react blindly and with utter violence even though such behavior would be abhorrent when in a normal state of mind. Again, remarkably like an infant having a fit. Such a creature cannot be dealt with using rationality, logic, or compassion, they are well beyond that point and are to be considered extremely dangerous. This is the threshold of injury, maiming or death, a mindless state where neither flavor of animal can control their primordial proclivities. Just like their apish brethren, Humans are totally unable to ideate in any semblance of rationality and will behave like the savage beast that they are only slightly elevated from.

Level four: The violence is done and now it is time to face the repercussions. The inevitable next step is the curse of societally instilled guilt.

This state in Humans can be exemplified by a simple parable. You are in a bar with your best friend when for whatever pretense he engages in a fight. Your buddy has studied the martial arts extensively and gets the best of his opponent. Like a mindless, rabid animal your friend keeps screaming and pounding the other guy's head and you are forced to drag him off lest he literally murder the guy. The next day when he finally sobers up and has access to a clear mind, your friend is shocked and abhorred by his behavior the night before. He thanks you profusely for intervening, not only for keeping him out of jail but for saving someone's life. He decides then to give up drinking, joined the priesthood, and lives happily ever after. Would it not have been better to simply control our passions lest they in the end control us. If one behaves like a rabid animal, one will be treated as such, and deservedly so.

To be "out of one's mind" simply means that they have mentally regressed into a much more primitive primordial state. A state of consciousness where the mind is riddled with stress hormones and excess neurotransmitters, survival instincts become paramount and higher reasoning and impulse control are quelled or non-existent.

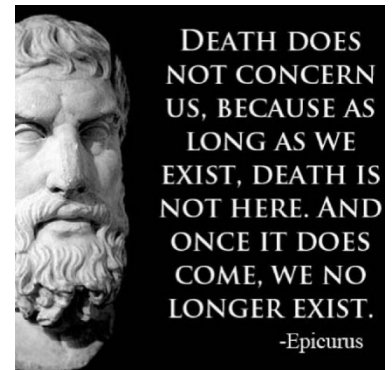


To be a mindless killing machine, feeling no pain, incapable of meaningful foresight does serve an evolutionary advantage by aiding survival in dangerous situations. This sort of reaction to stimuli is however incompatible with civil interaction and must be crushed at any cost lest our fragile society collapse back to a "survival of the fittest and most violent" condition.

Ver. 1.6, 03/06

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**Continued on
the on-line
Version.**



The Great Maarieda Epic Continues:

By Bill Barnett



...It had been a long day and they were all ready for sleep and an exciting tomorrow.

Maarieda, September 37, 0004

After an early breakfast Sam, Doug, and Terri headed for the forest with a rover and portable sawmill equipment. It was five clicks to the edge of the forest.

“Wow, this is a nice forest.” exclaimed Terri. “It is growing much better than the other forests.”

“Better climate for trees.” said Sam. “They are growing really big here.”

The forest had been planted in single file rows so the mature trees could produce seed for more trees. The forest was now two hundred meters wide and spreading. Two dozen species had been planted and it seemed all, or most were doing well. When they got to the middle of the forest the trees were two and a half meters in diameter and almost a hundred meters tall. The trees had thinned themselves out with the weaker trees dying and falling in between the stronger trees.

“This is excellent.” said Sam. “Bob will be pleased with this.” He made notes while Doug and Terri were making photos and video.

“No way we can use these trees for lumber.” said Doug. “They are too big. They will not fit the saw.”

“Right.” said Sam. There are some smaller trees closer to the edge of the forest. These must be almost a thousand years old. First, we need to take an inventory by species to see which trees are doing the best. Take the rover and make notes of each grove of trees. Be back here early this afternoon.”

There were twenty-four groves of trees. Grove 1 was healthy and spreading. It was a pecan grove. The ground was littered with pecans, but only a few were not rotten. They checked each grove.

When they returned they had six more groves counted. Four looked healthy and were spreading. One had small trees but was spreading. One had good size trees but did not spread.

“Time to cut a tree.” said Sam. “We will cut this one.” pointing to a tree closer to the edge of the grove that was about

half a meter in diameter. “Then we will gather as many pecans as we can.”

The tree made a crash as it hit the forest floor. Doug and Terri had not seen anything like it before. Always they were trying to protect trees for the planet.

“It seems strange killing a tree.” said Terri. “We are always working so hard to grow them and now this one is dead.”

“Don’t worry.” said Sam. “This one grew on its own. The forest is growing trees faster than we could cut them down. As long as that happens the forest will be okay.”

“The pecans are good.” said Doug and Terri. “Really delicious. Are there more trees like this here?”

“Yes, there are walnuts and cherries.” said Sam.

“I think we saw the cherry trees.” said Terri. “They are full of pink blossoms way in the tops. How could we get them when they are ready, but so high?”

“There is always a way.” said Sam. Now let us saw the tree lengthwise before we go so it will not split. We will finish tomorrow.”

At the same time Michael, Lisa, and Linda headed to the shore with a rover and a small boat. At the shore they launched the boat to see what they could find.

“We will never see anything if we stay close like James said.” said Michael.

The cove they started in was still. The water was shallow, and they dove into the water looking for signs of life. There was seaweed everywhere, but no fish to see.

“Hey, it’s alive here.” said Linda. “It’s really alive. We did not see this in other places.”

“I bet we can find some fish if we go out farther.” said Michael as they got back into the boat.

“James said to stay close to the shore.” said Lisa. “There are strong currents here.”

“Don’t worry.” said Michael. “I have got this. We have been in the boat before and no problems.”

“But what about the currents?” demanded Lisa.

“I’ll be careful.” said Michael trying to be authoritative.

They headed out of the cove and around a point of land. Further out they dropped an anchor and dove in again. Again, all they saw was seaweed. And returned to the boat.

“See, I told you it would be okay.” said Michael. “Stop worrying. Let us go farther. There have to be fish somewhere.”

They headed out along the shore and continued to dive looking for fish. All they had were videos of seaweed and samples of seaweed. The seaweed that was part of the terraforming of the sea, so it was nothing new. The ocean only had algae from its beginning.

“We can head out around that point of land and see what is there.” said Michael.



“He won’t listen.” thought Lisa to herself with a grimace. Linda did not look concerned.

As they rounded the wide point of land a couple hundred meters out the current hit them. Now they were going faster and faster. Michael turned the boat toward the shore and turned the motor faster. They hit seaweed. The motor was tangled in seaweed. The boat twisted and turned from seaweed to seaweed. The motor only turned the boat more in random directions.

“Uh-oh.” sighed Michael.

“I told you so!” shouted Lisa.

“Do something!” shouted Linda.

“Cut the seaweed loose!” shouted Lisa.

“Okay, okay.” replied Michael as he grabbed the knife and started to get out of the boat.

“Don’t get out!” shouted the girls. “You will be swept away.”

Knowing they were right Michael sat back down and sighed. “What do we do now?”

“Tie the rope on you so we can pull you back in.” said Lisa. Not the brainy one she always had the commonsense answer. “Make it short!”

Michael tied the rope around himself as instructed, grabbed the knife and dove in. After much trouble he cut the boat free from the seaweed. Now he was being pulled around by the current and could not climb back in.

The girls pulled him in, and he gasped in relief. Linda started the motor and the boat would go nowhere. The drive was jammed, and the boat just drifted in the current.

Saying nothing Lisa gave Michael the ‘I told you so’ look. He understood and said nothing.

“Now what?” cried Linda.

“Start paddling. There is one more point of land. Maybe we can make it.” said Lisa and thinking ‘These geniuses cannot figure out anything.’

They grabbed the paddles and paddled like crazy for the shore. There was one last point of land and then an open ocean. Almost delirious from paddling they were getting close.

“We are too far away.” said Lisa. “Michael, tie a long rope on you and swim for shore.” ordered Lisa. “Do it now!”

Michael obeyed and swam for all he was worth for shore as the girls continued to paddle. The surf carried him into shallow water, and he was able to anchor himself in the sand. The boat rotated around his position as he struggled for shore and grabbed a big rock. Exhausted he just hung onto the rock. The girls pulled the rope and were able to get into shallow water with the boat and pull it on shore.

“We’re safe.” sighed Linda.

“And going to stay close in shallow water going back.” said Lisa.

“Exactly.” sighed Michael. Again, his little friend was right.

After resting they tried to clean the motor, but it did not help. They opened it but could not repair it.

“Call James.” ordered Lisa. “We have to.”

Reluctantly Michael did as he was ordered. “James, the boat does not work. We are fifty clicks down the shore. We need help.”

“Give me Lisa.” ordered James authoritatively. When Lisa was on the communicator James asked: “What is happening?” knowing where to get a straight answer.

“We went out away from shore in deep water. A current carried us away. The boat was caught in seaweed and now the motor does not work. We are on the last point of land before open ocean.” replied Lisa. “There is a strong current here.”

“Stay there. Do not move. We will come get you tomorrow. It is too late today.” said James.

The teens dragged the boat way above the high tide line and turned it over for rain protection. They had minimal water and food and only each other to stay warm.

Sam, Doug and Terri made it back by supper time. Meanwhile James was organizing the trip. He planned to take a rover and travel until it was too late. That way he could make it to the point of land the following evening. He took Sam with him.

They made ten clicks by midnight and stopped. The terrain was just too much for the dark. At the top of a sharp drop off they had no idea where to go in the dark and stopped to sleep. The teens would be okay. They were tough and it was a learning moment.



Maarieda, September 38, 0004

At first light they were up and scouting the way. The drone video showed a weakness in the cliff line 4 clicks inland and two clicks backward. The gully was not as deep there, and the sides were not vertical. The rover could make ten clicks an hour on smooth level ground, but there was never that. There were gullies, rivers, and rough terrain all the way. They backtracked two clicks and headed for the path down the gully.

The teens slept late clinging to each other to try to stay warm. They were wet, it had cooled off, and rained all night. When Tigri, their star was warm and high they crawled out from under the boat and warmed themselves in the warm rays and wished they had something to eat.

“Look, a coconut on the beach!” exclaimed Lisa with excitement.

“Look, there are four of them!” replied Linda.

“Let’s go!” said Michael as he sprung up and ran to the coconuts.

Each one grabbed a nut and wanted to open it. Linda and Michael were puzzled as to what to do with it.

“What now?” said Michael desperately.

“Don’t you remember what we learned in class?” touted Lisa. “Get a sharp stick, drive the stick in the ground with the sharp end up and beat the nut on it to remove the husk.”

“I don’t remember.” said Michael. His little friend was ahead of him again. “Get some driftwood. There is a knife in the boat.”

Soon they had the nuts open and were drinking the water inside.

“Yummy. We need more coconuts.” said Lisa with joy.

“Lots more.” said Linda.

Soon all four coconuts were empty, and they had a driftwood fire going to dry their clothes.

“I wonder when they are coming?” questioned Linda.

“We could take the boat and see.” replied Michael.

“NO!” shouted the girls. “They are bringing the rover.”

“Let’s look for more coconuts.” said Lisa. And they were off combing the beach for more nuts. There was one more. “It will do.” said Lisa.

There was no forest anywhere near and no more coconuts. They did find a stream with some water. So, they just had to wait. Late in the afternoon the drone flew over them and left.

“They found us.” said Lisa.

About dark the men showed up with the rover and food and a tent. It was a good meal and they would be back the next night.

Maarieda, October 2, 0004

It is Lisa’s fifteenth birthday. A party day and a rest day. All the building materials were ready. Tomorrow they could build the shelter. Linda and Kristy made a cake. The men gathered wood for a fire. They had not had a campfire here yet as they were working too hard. Terri was making Lisa’s favorite food. And they had a surprise for her. More coconuts. It seemed a few always washed in from Ambrosia and a search of the beach would find a few. There were also some old coconuts that started to sprout and died in the winter weather.

After partying all day and playing on the beach they were a different kind of tired. Relaxed and refreshed they went to sleep. Lisa had a wonderful birthday.



Maarieda, October 3, 0004

It is time to build the shelter. It will be a start of part time habitation here. The plan was small, four by six meters, enough for storage and a place to sleep. The agribots were mixing mortar from the cooked ground limestone and sand and bringing it to the people. As they put down a layer of mortar the agribots brought them blocks cut from the rock. It was a hybrid of human and robot labor. Doug was programming the agribots to do the work. It would be too high for the agribots to finish. Sam had one agribot cutting boards from the trees they brought here from the forest. That was going to be slow too as the machines did general work and were not specialized for this. But at least the machines could work twenty-four hours a day.

Maarieda, October 13, 0004

The shelter was finished. It was crude, but weather tight. It even had a fireplace, something new to the teens. Everything was a hybrid mix of technology and primitive bush crafting.

Maarieda, October 14, 0004

Sam, Michael, and Linda took two boats and headed west staying close to the shore. No one had to tell them to stay close to the shore this time. With two boats they could self rescue if one of the boats failed. The first island would be Divana, the second biggest island in the chain. It would take a full day to get there and they would arrive the next morning. The boats were tied together with one towing the other and the second one on two thirds power. This way no one would be lost. Michael was in the aft boat. They voted and he lost. They followed the coast to the down current side of the island so the current would take them directly toward the next island. It would be an uneventful trip as the current was helping them and they would not be fighting it.

Bob, Doug, Kristy, and Terri took two boats and headed east to Belladonna. They followed the coast and planned to stop along the shore of Coronis to take samples and sleep. And then cross to the other island. It would take four days to get there. They had the boats tied together for safety.

James watched the boats leave. This was the first time they divided the group for exploration. The teens were older, but that only made them more able to get into trouble on a sea exploration trip. The shore exploration showed that a few days ago. Now it was time for Lisa to climb her mountain. There was a five-thousand-meter-tall extinct volcano eight days away and it did not have a toxic looking lake on top. One side of the peak was washed out, so it held no water on top. "Let's get ready to go." said James to Linda.

"I'm packed." said Linda.

"Good. We need to get the rovers ready and packed with gear. We will take a month's worth of food, climbing gear, saplings, and the birds that the others did not take."

Lisa was off getting everything ready, excited to get to climb the mountain. "Here is the climbing gear." said Lisa. "You need to show me how it works." Obviously, she wanted to know everything now.

"Did you read the Mountaineering Book?" asked James.

"Twice." said Lisa.

'At least she has the sense to not think she knows everything,' thought James.

"Here is a harness. Put it on like pants, make sure the straps are doubled back and pulled tight. But not too tight." He watched as she put on the harness. It had been more than two decades since James had been climbing. The satellite photos showed some steep parts, but they would have to be there to really know how hard the climb was. "Now tie the rope to the harness." said James wondering what she would do with that command. She tied a perfect figure of eight knot. "You practiced?" questioned James.

"Yes, I practiced everything." replied Lisa with a big smile on her face.

"What do you do with this?" asked James as he handed her a belay devise.

"You tie this end onto your harness." said Lisa as she handed him the end of the rope. And then she played out four meters of rope, fed it correctly through the belay devise, found a locking carabiner, and connected the belay to her harness correctly.

James inspected it and everything was correct. She had practiced more than once. "Now what do I do since I am tied into the rope?"

"You take these and put them on your harness." said Lisa as she handed him some cams and quick draws. When you get scared put a cam into a crack and then clip the quick draw to your harness and the rope. When you fall I will catch you with the rope." They went over each piece of gear. In theory she knew them all. It would be different when she was hanging from a rope.

"Finish packing." said James. And soon the rovers were ready.

One last thing before we go. We need to release some of the birds and insects. The insects we released the other day seem to have blown away. They turned two dozen birds loose, filled a feeder and headed upwind. Five clicks away they released more insects and turned toward the mountain. In the evening they came to a sheltered valley with the last trees they would see until they returned. After making camp and eating they released another two dozen birds and more insects. There were a few insects from the original terraforming but they never did well. This time they hoped to have a better match for the climate.

To be continued in the next issue -