

# SUNFLOWER SEEDS



As much as I hate to say it, this month's report is that there is nothing to report. There were no official Mensa sponsored gatherings or events scheduled for the month.

This does not mean that the members of Sunflower chapter were totally dormant, as there were several on-line conferences as well as outdoor gatherings for a few dedicated members at area parks and nature areas.

Hopefully, some semblance of normalcy will transcend the fear and paranoia that much of America is now inflicted with and will abate soon. One way or another, regular events will resume in June even if they remain unofficial and unsanctioned. Several members have stated that they are ready to start socializing again. For many members Mensa is one of the few interactions with other people that they enjoy and are disappointed at having that pleasure taken away from them.

**Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm will be an informal and unsanctioned gathering of Mensans, family and guests at Chisholm Creek Park, the Oliver entrance to one of the shelters. Bring your own lawn chair, game and a box lunch. Pop will be provided.**

Next month's edition will be more back to normal and include Jokes, Puzzles, a continuation of Bill Barnett's [Maarieda](#) and several excellent member submissions.

May 2020, Volume – 48, Issue # 5

Kansas Sunflower Mensa Newsletter

I really don't get all this  
panic about toilet paper.



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As the lockdown continues, we will not be having any physical meetings in May. For those of us who regularly attend our meetings this is distressing. For many of us these meetings pretty much ARE Mensa for us! The Pig Outs, the Program Meetings, and our other meetings, these are what make membership in Mensa important to us, and probably without them we perhaps would not even be in Mensa. So, this is a trying time. But it will come to an end, and our meetings will resume.

For those of you who do not live near Wichita, perhaps attending our meetings is something that is impossible, or at least impractical. For you, the fact that we are not having physical meetings has little or no impact on you. This is understandable.

But whether you live near or far, we do have other ways to communicate. For example, our Kansas Sunflower Mensa Facebook. This is a great way for us to interact. Another example is our *Sunflower SEEDS*. If you are interested and have some writing ability, why submit an article to Klaus, our editor? I would very much like to hear, either on Facebook or in the *SEEDS*, especially from those of you we seldom, if ever, get to see or hear from, near or far. Give it some thought and jump in!

Although the 2020 Annual Gathering, in Kansas City this year (for once it is close by!), is in doubt because of COVID-19, as of this writing it is still on, waiting to see how things develop with the virus. Perhaps it will be canceled, or perhaps it will happen but with restrictions. The situation is being carefully monitored. We will let you know if changes are made, probably both on Facebook and in the *SEEDS*.



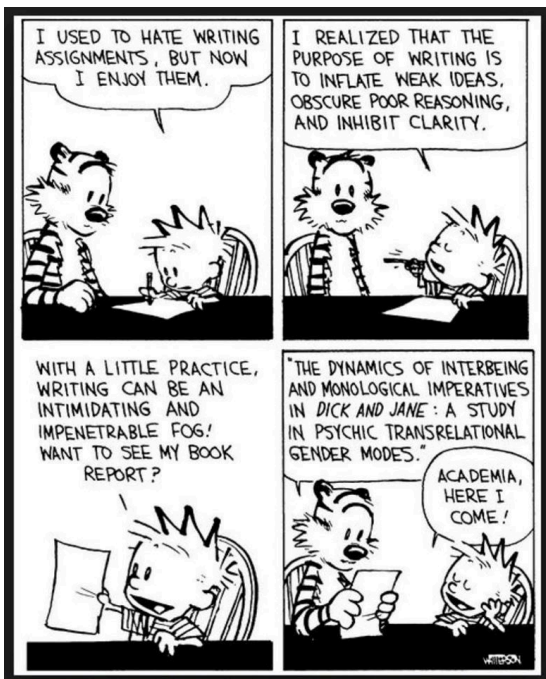
These days we are confronted by change and uncertainty at ever-increasing speed – but May gives us an opportunity to break free of that for a while. Nature’s own slow timetable counteracts the hurry-scurry. Please make me go outside and breathe in pastel skies and floral scents. It will help, I promise.

As I write this in late March, everyone in American Mensa’s National Office (and me in Denver) are working from home under shelter-in-place rules. Those may ease up during April, or not, but in the meantime, we are all doing the best we can over the phone and internet wires. Have patience with us. Over the past couple of weeks, we have had to make some re-scheduling decisions.

The first one, the one that drove everything else, was to extend our membership year out to the end of April. If you’re a Life Member or in the midst of a multi-year membership you don’t care, but Mensans who renew on a year-to-year basis now have until April 30, not March 31, to renew (though we hope you won’t wait). The renewal date ties closely to the CultureQuest® registration deadline. CQ is our nation-wide 220 (about)-question trivia quiz that supports the Mensa Foundation scholarship fund. This year teams of Mensans were to register by March 31 and the test was to be on Sunday May 3. On the other side of the process, the CQ committee would have about 6 weeks to score all those answer sheets in time to announce the winning teams at the Annual Gathering. All that is changed now.

TJ Lundeen, one of CQ’s founders, recently wrote, “When I first set it up, I chose the dates carefully to encourage those who might be on the verge of lapsing to renew and not procrastinate.” Accordingly, the Committee moved the team registration deadline out to April 30 to match the new renewal date. The contest event itself has been postponed to ... we do not know yet, stay tuned. But that is OK because we also do not yet (in late March) know the status of our Annual Gathering scheduled for June 30-July 5 in Kansas City MO. Whether or not that happens will depend on the country’s medical situation; on decisions made by Federal, State and City governments; on testimony from our members and on how the AG Committee balances all those factors. We do not know yet, stay tuned.

One request I have for everyone – if you learn that a fellow Mensan, or you yourself, have fallen in dire straits because of the health emergency, please pass the word to your Local Group’s leadership team. Now’s the time when we need to be together, if only at a distance. Thanks, Rich.



## Editorial:

I was pushing a cart through picked over if not empty aisles at my local Walmart recently when blaring on the overhead speakers was Tom Petty's "Refugee". I could not help but break out into hysterically laughter, much to the puzzlement and apprehension of my fellow shoppers. Being the kind of person that analyses everything, including the words to the song that I knew well, a sort of epiphany welled over me.

*"You believe what you want to believe  
Honey, it don't make no difference to me,  
Everybody's had to fight to be free  
You see, you don't have to live like a refugee"*

The thing that struck me as utterly ludicrous was that right there and then, with restrictions and quarantines, I was living a lot like a refugee. No, I was not forced to survive in a tent city on the scorching plains of Syria, but there were certain undeniable similarities. The barriers and cattle pens that must be traversed to approach the building. The lights, signs, decals and streamers all screamed for my obedience and submission, guiding my every move. Rows of uniformed sentinels lined the way, towelettes and spray bottles at the ready even if they did absolutely nothing against viruses. The illusion of safety that helps keep the herd in line and complacent, I thought.

Dusty, empty shelves, little meat, few soups or canned or packaged goods. Forget about hand sanitizer or disinfectant. Images of cold-war Russia come to mind with long lines of people queuing for all sorts of scarce resources. In grade school the teacher always told us that the plenty and perceived safety of America was what made us better than those god-less commies. How things have changed!

Also reminded me of when the Taliban first occupied Afghanistan. They invaded each town without usually firing a single shot, Koran in hand and proclaiming how they were there simply to help the people. How easily the masses were duped, and how soon until they all realized the onerous repercussions of their foolishly misplaced trust. The Taliban gave everyone who would follow one basic right, the right to life if they gave up pretty much all the others.

Is our society inching its way to the point that to live is our final and, only right? Should those with double digit IQ's be extended the ability to lord over those with ability to think?



## Some words of wisdom from Randy Hamilton

REALLY, REALLY STUPID STUFF I HAVE WITNESSED

To put this in perspective, I will start with a quote from good, old, dead, super genius Albert Einstein. "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity and I'm not sure about the universe."

1- Signs that say "No Engine Braking" were written by idiots because simply lifting off of the throttle in your car causes engine braking. The morons really mean No Engine Compression Braking which happens only on large diesel trucks with the equipment known as Jake Brakes. Jake saves on brake linings expenses.

2- Another common sign, "Slow Children Playing" which makes me wonder where the smart children play. Any clues here?

Now to MATH, my favorite subject.

3- An actual college professor in his class stating that to convert a temperature from Fahrenheit to Centigrade one only has to SUBTRACT 32. A student stated that that did not work and showed him the correct formula. It appears that he could not understand ANY math and restated the subtraction method as the true and correct method.

4- On a billboard that used to stand on the west side of the Interstate highway up by 61st Street North, Wesley hospital stated that their treatments used "300% less radiation" than other hospitals did for the same procedures. Yeah, right!!!! I have always found it difficult (LOL, how about IMPOSSIBLE) to reduce anything more than 100%. The number of people who had to work on that sign had to exceed the population of many small towns. Who wrote it? How many were on the hospital board that approved it? Who did the graphics? Who printed it? Who put it up on the sign? My mind reels at the total possible number of morons (including Doctors) that had to get involved in that specific bit of stupidity. I emailed the hospital, but NEVER received a response, but I like minus 200% poisonous radiation.

5- Westar Energy (an electricity provider that has recently merged with Kansas City Power) sends out a little insert with my bill on a quarterly basis. It did the same thing as the hospital above. The January 2018 edition brags up the use of EVs or Electric Vehicles. "In Kansas, it costs 3.5 times less to power your vehicle with electricity..." I thought to myself "SUPER WOW!" That means that instead of paying \$50.00 or so to GAS UP, I will now RECEIVE \$125.00 every time I CHARGE UP! Since 3.5 times \$50.00 equals \$175.00 that means they will PAY ME the \$125.00 difference! I want an electric pickup truck! Unfortunately, I got it wrong because THEY flunked their grade school math classes. Now the kicker: They title their insert "Westar Wire" and subtitle it "Knowledge is power." I still wonder where or when the "Knowledge" part comes in (if ever).





George Carlin: "Tell people that there is an invisible man in the sky who created the universe and the vast majority will believe you... Tell them that the paint is wet and they will have to touch it to be sure".



## THE POLITICAL VINE

There once was a great forest containing a variety of trees. They were of different sizes and shapes. A few years ago, a vine crept into the

forest. It started to live in the branches of the trees. One day the vine came to a strong young tree and said: "My name is Political Correctness. I am here to help you. Let me live in your branches. May I?"

"Shall I let him in?" the young tree asked an older tree.

"Don't do it," the older tree said. "It will come in as a friend, but when it is moved in, it will dig his tentacles into your branches, and suck the sap out."

"Don't believe him," said the vine. "He is intolerant. He dislikes all plants that are different than him. We all have green leaves and stems. We are all basically the same. Only narrow-minded trees, like him, dislike me. Tolerant trees accept me. You will hardly know I am here, and my green leaves will mix in with yours and will actually make you look better."

"All right," said the young tree, "I will let you move in."

After a while, the tree began to feel weaker. "Nothing to worry about," said the vine, "it's mostly the bad things about you that make you weak. We are getting rid of those. You are actually improving."

"What do you think?" the young tree asked the older tree.

"The vine is sucking the sap out of your branches," the older tree said. "You notice it has no roots of its own. All its nourishment comes from you."

"I think you are right", said the young tree. "He said he would help me become stronger, but I am getting weaker."

"You must go," he said to the vine. "I have become weak. I can hardly bring the sap from the ground up to my branches anymore."

"I won't go," said the vine. "You can't get rid of me either. I am now stronger than you, and I will stay."

The tree became weaker and weaker, and finally died. Meanwhile the vine looked for another strong tree, and eventually found one who did not know what had happened to the other tree. "May I move into your branches?" asked the vine. "I will be good for you."

Author unknown

**Holy shit, Batman, we will soon run out of toilet paper! Do not sweat it Robin, it is just a virus, not Chipotle.**

**Anyone needing 144 rolls of toilet paper had oughta seen a doctor long before the virus hit.**

**To avoid any bad publicity, Corona Especial is changing its name to Ebola Especial.**

**Mom, I am very hungry. Shut up & eat your toilet paper.**

## Sunflower Mensa Financial Report

[Jan. 1 - Mar. 31, 2020]

Diane Powell, Treasurer Sunflower Mensa

Balance JAN. 01 2020	\$4,021.82
SEEDS EXPENSES	\$150.00
[JAN/FEB/MAR]	
SPEAKER	\$40.00
National Funding	
[97.05 + 97.90 +97.75]	\$292.70
Balance MAR. 30, 2020	\$4,124.52



**Because armed people will NOT willingly load themselves into railroad boxcars.**

I am as bored as an Amish electrician.

**Ontario has banned all groups larger than 5. If you are a family of 6, you are all about to find out who is the least favorite!**

**The longer this goes on, the harder it will be to return to a society where pants and bras are required!**

**Today's Weather? .....Room temperature**

**30 Days Hath September, June and November, all the rest have 31 ... except April which had about 8000**

**Smoking pot and skipping school had me in trouble constantly when I was growing up. Now weed's legal and schools closed ... damn kids are livin' the dream!**

**This is stupid. I just tried to make my own hand sanitizer and it came out as a rum & coke!**

**After a few days of not going out, I saw someone I knew walking by on the sidewalk outside. I immediately ran to the window and started yelling to them. Now I understand my dog.**

**If you get an email with the subject "Knock Knock", do not open it. It is a Jehovah Witness working from home.**

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## **Democracy or Dictatorship**

The four words in this title are often used as labels to indicate how a nation is run. However, their meanings and usage change with time, until it is unclear what they mean. Let us make a try at defining them.

Strictly speaking, democracy and dictatorship are forms of government. Capitalism and socialism are economic systems. Democracy and capitalism usually go together, and Dictatorship and socialism often do. However, that is not necessarily the case.

A government system is the method a group uses to decide what – as a group – it will do. An economic system is the method used to decide what to produce, how to produce it, and how to distribute the things produced. What economic system a nation will use is one of the things the government decides.

**Democracy:** First, let us examine democracy as a type of government system. Democracy means that the public will vote on all issues. The majority has their way.

One problem with democracy is that, for most groups, it is not practical for each member to study all the issues, and then vote on them. Thus, most groups, who think the

members should have a say in how things are done, have them elect a small group of representatives, and let them make the decisions. Thus, nations have legislatures. Cities have councils. Churches and corporations have boards. In fact, it is difficult to find any group in America that gathers as the entire group to vote on anything. Their representatives make all the decisions.

None of these groups are true democracies. Thus, they need a new name. I propose that "Elected" (meaning elected representatives) would do well.

**Dictatorship:** Dictatorship is the next word in our title. What does it mean? We usually think of it as a government imposed on the people. Monarchies are dictatorships, as are governments imposed by foreign nations, such as on a colony. Sometimes the dictator is simply the head of the army that overthrew the last ruler. The common trait is that the public has no say in who the rulers are.

Dictatorships are usually run by one person, or a small group, but that is not necessarily the case. They are often cruel, but that is not necessarily the case either. The difference between Dictatorships and Democracies is not how good or bad they are, but how the rulers are selected. Since the public has no input in determining who the rulers will be in a Dictatorship, I say "Appointed" is a better title.

**Capitalism:** Now we come to economic systems. What is capitalism? Capitalism literally means, "making money from money." Thus, anyone who earns interest, owns a business, rents apartments or owns stocks is a Capitalist. Most of us are, at least in a small way.

However, it is not a valid label for our economic system because most of the people in America make their money by working for wages, the same as in any nation. A better name for our system is "Free Enterprise." Free Enterprise simply means that anyone can buy or sell anything (including their labor) to anyone at any time, in any way, and at any price.

**Socialism:** What is Socialism. Socialism literally means: "The government owns the means of production." In the Soviet Union that was true. The government owned the factories, the stores, the farms, and all the apartment buildings. They owned nearly everything. In fact, the *Communist Manifesto* says: Communism may be summed up as the "ablution of private property."

Communism is just another name for Socialism. It is a more common word, and therefore would probably be a better one to use. However, the name "Government Run" labels it well.

The logical question to ask next is: which system is best? I say any of them can be O. K. It mainly depends on whether the rulers are competent and caring or not. Gordon Bakken



## Maarieda - Expedition to Dianna

2020.02.21

By: Bill Barnett

### Maarieda, April 1, 0009

It is spring and time for another exploration trip. This year the Maariedans are going to Dianna, their moon. It is another blue green world that rotates around Maarieda every forty-two days. At two thirds the diameter and three tenths the mass of Maarieda the two worlds are rotating around each other. Studies from Maarieda showed the atmosphere at about 0.6 Barr and 25% oxygen, barely survivable at sea level and a place for altitude sickness. The first trip was a one-day trip to Dianna a month before and no one went outside to breath. Air samples showed there was nothing toxic. It would require supplemental oxygen to go outside. They would have to sleep in the shuttle and limit time outside until they acclimated. At sixty percent of the gravity they could easily carry oxygen packs. Everyone wanted to go. This would be a preliminary exploration. There would be a longer trip another year.

For terraforming they have three projects. Project Flowering Plants is a plan to plant plants that can support human and animal life. Project Zoo, the second project, is a plan to leave animals that can survive in the environment. Project Snowball, the third plan, is to increase the atmosphere by crashing comets onto the poles of Dianna.

Everyone met in the big meeting room except for the mothers who were watching on monitors and caring for small children.

"We will take one shuttle and six people." said Amie, Senior Captain. "We want to know what we are getting into before we make a big commitment. This is not a do or die mission like when we first landed here. All our exploration trips have been successful, and we have not lost anyone yet and I plan to keep it that way. We will land on the eastern shore of Oliviant, the equatorial continent, just south of the equator. That seems to be the best place for weather. We will be there two weeks and leave. I made the list of people who are going. So, do not even ask if you are not on the list. I have already talked to everyone who is going."

"I, James, Sam, Mindy, Lisa, and Michael will be going. We will decide on project snowball after we come back. We will plant some flowering plants and leave a few insects, fish, and some

birds and amphibians. It may not be a place where furry warm-blooded animals can live. At least not until there is more atmosphere."

James, a biologist, was Amie's husband. Mindy is a physician, her husband, Sam is a geologist. Lisa is their daughter. Michael is Lisa's husband. Amie is an electrical engineer as well as senior captain.

"Any questions?" asked Amie.

"Will the Exploration Ship come? What is their status?" asked Captain Haluk. "Is there any new information?"

"They are projected to come into our star system in two months. They will do a survey of the outer planets and then come here. So, about a year. The ship is in good condition and they are healthy. I will have a conference meeting with them and all hands when we get back from Dianna."

"And our ship?" asked Hauns, a crew member of the Agriculture Ship, the third ship. It had been severely damaged on the trip to Maarieda. "What is the schedule for that?"

"It is still ten percent repaired. That will keep the ship safe for now. The ship is safe in orbit. We need to get the Exploration ship here before we commit more time to the repairs. Then they will be done." said Amie.

"Mindy and Lisa, check the inventory to be sure all supplies are there." said Amie. Meeting dismissed.

### Maarieda, April 2, 0009



At dawn, the crew was in the shuttle and ready to go. Lisa, a young mother of two, who was born in space on the Colony Ship, the first ship, had been looking forward to the trip since they landed on Maarieda, but now she was already missing Lori and Eric, her children. She had not been away from them before. As the shuttle went up the sky turned black and the stars came out. Dianna was on the other side of Maarieda and they would chase the moon around the planet. Soon a full Dianna rose over the horizon and was coming out of an eclipse and half lighted. The view was stunning.

The double planets eclipsed each other every month. They were all in awe. They had seen Dianna almost every day and sometimes from space, but now they were on the way to Dianna and were getting a better view. They would soon set foot on what was almost a double planet.

“Wow.” Exclaimed Lisa. “Look at how big Dianna is. And we will be there today.”

“It never gets old.” replied Amie. “When people went to Earth’s Moon the whole world watched. And it was nothing like this. That was a dead world. Fascinating for science, but no way to live there. This is a whole other living world.”

“This is a giant leap for us.” declared Michael. “There are just twenty-one of us and two worlds. But in time, say 10% annual population growth there would be a quarter million people next century.”

“You have no idea what you are talking about.” insisted Lisa. “No idea about giving birth. Just imagine ...”

“Enough!” shouted Amie. “None of that here.”

After they were well on their way Lisa sat at a monitor and called Linda, her sister wife, to ask to speak to Mica. The fight over sharing husbands was long past. Fate dealt them two men and four women as the only young people on a new planet. Lisa tried to make peace, as she was the peace maker. Captain Amie enforced the peace. But motherhood and childcare finished off the fight. There were just too many more important things to do than fight. Lisa had the first child as she was the one who pirated the cure for extended prepuberty, an effect of the climate and flora of Maarieda.

“Good morning Lori.” said Lisa.

“Morning mommie.” said Lori.

“How is she?” said Lisa to Linda.

“Fine. You just left.” laughed Linda. “We are going for a walk.”

“Lisa, do you have the reading on the weather?” asked Amie.

“Bye.” said Lisa to Lori. “Right on it.” said Lisa to Amie. “The showers have passed the landing area and the mist is clearing. Looks like it will be a clear day. And every day will be the same where we are going. The weather there is constant. Lite showers in the mornings and clear the rest of the day.”

The shuttle settled down on a rocky outcropping next to the beach. On one side was a field of green moss as far as they could see. On the other side was a tranquil sea to the horizon. There were no ocean storms brewing here like on Maarieda. They would have to wait until the next day to explore outside, so they sent an agribot to sample the air and water and went about packing for a day trip.

The atmosphere in the shuttle was adjusted to 0.8 Barr, down from the 1.25 Barr of the Maaridian atmosphere, to help them acclimate to the Diannan atmosphere.

“James and Michael, get the agribots ready.” We need to send them onto the surface in an hour.” said Amie.

They were busy testing and adjusting the instruments. And then the first one was off crawling its way through the springy moss bouncing along in the lower gravity. James was piloting it. It bounced more than on Maarieda. The second agribot headed to the ocean and turned to follow the beach up the coast. Michael was piloting it.

“What are the readings?” asked Amie after a half hour.

“The atmosphere at sea level is 0.61 Barr, 73% nitrogen, 25.5% oxygen, 1% argon, and 1% CO<sup>2</sup>. The humidity is 50%. The atmosphere is a little richer and thinner than on Maarieda. The moss looks like the moss on Maarieda.” replied James.

“Same atmosphere.” said Michael. “The water has a salinity of 3.5% with 12% of the salt being magnesium. The beach looks just like the beach on Maarieda. So, just like the ocean back home. There are no rivers or streams close by. What I am seeing is like the high plateau climate we found on Maarieda.”

“Mindy and Lisa, release the geese.” said Captain Amie. “We will see what they do here.”

Geese had been developed in the embryo transfer program. The ship brought a few birds and frozen embryos of other species. They were able to develop more species of animals after they landed. The geese were put outside with food and water. After they ate and drank, they were released. Geese can fly at high altitude on Earth and it was hoped they could breathe here, and the scientists could watch them to see how they reacted to the atmosphere and environment. They flew away and disappeared. After taking samples of the environment the agribots were piloted back. In a few hours, the geese flew back. There was no food for them to find in the environment.

“What did the agribots find?” asked Amie.

“Pretty much the same as on Maarieda.” said James. “Same moss, same lichens, same soil. Another sign of panspermia. This must have been like primordial Earth. I guess every planet that can support life starts this way. I wonder if the same happened to Earth, it was terraformed after the stellar winds blew in primitive life.”

“That is always the question.” replied Sam. “The eternal scientific philosophical question. Evolution explains life, but it does not explain it all. There is too much missing.



Creation explains some things, but not all. Together they still do not explain Earth or the living universe.”

“So, we just don’t know?” asked Lisa. “There is no answer?”

“Sometimes there is no answer. At least not anything we know.” replied Sam.

Earth was just a history lesson to Lisa and Michael. They only knew spaceships and Maarieda and were learning what it was like the first time their parents visited the planet. At near light speed it was just a few years in a spaceship between visits, but nine hundred years on the planet. Time to develop an environment that humans could live in.

“Sam, what did you see from the drone?” asked Amie.

“There is a river about four clicks up the north shore. It is a quarter of a klick wide. The delta looks interesting with ponds and slow-moving water.” replied Sam. “We can make it there tomorrow and explore there. The interior is just a sea of green across the whole continent. There is a small stream on the south shore, not too far away.”

“The atmosphere pressure in the shuttle has been adjusted to 0.82 Barr to acclimate us to the atmosphere here. If anyone feels sick from it let me know.” stated Mindy.

“Good night everyone. It is a busy day tomorrow. Get some sleep.” commanded Amie. Like as if anyone could sleep with so much excitement.

### Maarieda, April 3, 0009



The air was filled with excitement. Everyone was up early. This was the first day they could set foot on Dianna, their moon. They took supplemental oxygen and supplies for a day trip. The agribots were set to plant trees and grass nearby. It would be the beginning of a long process. Hopefully, there would be

enough grass to support the geese after they left.

“Sam, do you have the boat ready?” asked Amie. Sam and Mindy were going to explore the shoreline, heading north.

“It is ready.” said Sam. “We have all the supplies and instruments on board. We just need a cart to move it to the water.”

Michael and Lisa helped load the boat onto their cart and put it in the water. “That should do it.” said Michael as they put the boat into the water. “Now back to get our stuff.”

“I am missing Eric.” whined Lisa. “I hope he is alright.”

“He is okay.” replied Michael. “Linda will take good care of him. She is a good mother too.”

“I know.” replied Lisa. “It just seems strange to not be with him.”

“You need a break.” said Michael. “It will be good for everyone.”

Lisa just sighed. She knew but did not like the separation. They loaded the cart with supplies to travel into the interior of the land. It was different from when they landed on Maarieda. There had been nine hundred years of terraforming there when they landed. This was a pure alien environment, beautiful, but not able to support human life.

“I have the cart ready.” said James.

“Good.” said Amie. “It feels so good that we can just let the young people go and not have to worry about them killing themselves.”

“If they have survived this far, they will make it.” replied James. “They are finally at peace and finally have enough sense to make better decisions. And they can’t lose a boat in a fast current they know should be avoided. They don’t have a boat this time.”

“I hope.” said Amie remembering the other exploration trips.

Amie and James headed along the south shore. The beach had pristine sand, but no sign of animal life, no shells, nothing.

This is a paradise, a hostile almost toxic paradise.” sighed James.

“It is all so beautiful, but we could not live here. Maybe someday someone can live here.”

“That is the plan. Someday there will be humans on four planets if the people on Mars and Llarimya made it. If we can make Maarieda work, we can do the same here on Dianna.” replied James.

“I guess we will never know what happened to them.” sighed Amie.

“Maybe, maybe not.” replied James.

In the evening they all returned and talked about their adventures. The agribots had a quarter hectare planted in grass. It was obvious that the geese needed to be in a cage until the grass was growing.

Lisa and Michael gathered dead fern trees and built a campfire. Making s'mores made them all feel at home. "Thank God for chocolate." said Lisa.

"And the agribots." said Sam. "It is amazing that the chocolate trees grew so well."

"And that the agribots still work and do all the hard work." Said Amie.

Agribots were strange looking robots, looking nothing like science fiction androids. They were more like miniature versions of the robots that built automobiles, except they had tracks to propel themselves. Their AI allowed them to do routine tasks to save humans for more valuable work. "That is stunning." stated Michael as he looked up at the waxing gibbons Maarieda. "Everything is lighted. It does not look like dark."

"It is brighter than Earth's Moon or even Earth from the Moon." replied Sam.

It was a long day and they all returned to the ship to recover and rest. The atmosphere change was tiring, but they all felt well. The atmosphere pressure was adjusted to 0.78 Barr to help with the acclimatization.

#### Maarieda, April 4, 0009



Day three and they were out early to explore more of Dianna.

"Michael, take the ultralight and travel three hours west. Follow the northern coast and see if there is anything new or different." ordered Amie.

An ultralight aircraft has been described as a flying lawn chair. Lightweight and easy to fly it does not go far or high but is especially useful for exploration. A big fast airplane goes too fast to see what is on the ground and could not be carried in a shuttle.

"The geese are doing fine." said Lisa. They just want to escape."

"Not until the grass is ready." said Amie. "There is another quarter hectare planted. There will be five hectares planted before we leave. Then they can go free."

"Sam, take Lisa and a cart and follow the beach to the south. Release shrimp and fish and insects and take samples. Be back before dark." ordered Amie. "James, take Mindy and the boat and follow the north shore. Release shrimp and fish and insects and take samples. Be back before dark. I will circle the area, plant a few trees, and release some insects. We do not know what will grow well here. It is all an experiment. It took so long to terraform Maarieda."

"But we learned a lot." replied Sam. "We may do better here."

"Maybe." replied Amie skeptically.

Sam and Lisa headed south. "Look at these rocks!" exclaimed Lisa. "And the sand! These are polished crystals like we saw in books. The ocean sand has rounded some of them. And some look barely worn."

"Let me see." replied Sam. "Hmmm, remarkably interesting. Looks like beryl and corundum. Emeralds, rubies, sapphires. On Earth you would be rich. Haha, not here."

"They are everywhere." said Lisa. The sand sparkles and looks metallic too."

"So, you found something new. Good. We can take a lot of samples here. You will have a lot to study when we get back." said Sam.

They traveled along collecting every different kind of rock and sand they could find.

"This sand is so heavy." said Lisa.

"It looks like the asteroid sand we use to shield the ships. It may be useful. Put a marker her so we can find this place again. Just above high tide. I think they will want to come back here." said Sam.

So, they filled the cart with what would have launched a thousand ocean ships with a hundred thousand solders on Earth. Here it was building supplies and science experiments. They came to a small freshwater stream flowing into the ocean and released their amphibians, fish and insects. Then they headed back. It was a good day's exploration.

Amie was planting trees. They had a tree farm on Maarieda and knew which trees grew best there. The tree experiment was nine hundred years old. She was planting fruit and nut trees. And coconuts along the shore and bananas just inland. The coast had a semi tropical climate. The trees would provide food as well as building materials and animal habitat.

An agribot would clear the ground and then she could plant a seedling. Later the agribots would clear the moss around the trees until the trees were bigger.

James and Mindy were following the shore in the boat.

"It all looks the same." sighed Mindy. "But this is a good place to plant trees." So, they went ashore and planted coconuts and bananas and citrus fruit trees. "Someone will like these later."

"Yes, someone, in time, will live here." said James. "Let's try breathing without oxygen."

They took off their supplemental oxygen.

"I feel fine." said Mindy.

"I feel fine." replied James.

As they began to work, they began to feel short of breath.

"What I expected." said Mindy as she checked her blood oxygen. "Yep, the blood oxygen is getting lower. We could live like this, but it is better to keep the oxygen until we adapt."

After spending a day planting and releasing their small animals they headed back to the ship.

"We hardly got anywhere." said James.

"Hardly, but there is tomorrow." said Mindy. "And we accomplished a lot."

Just before dark they were all back. Dianna was getting fuller and brighter. Lisa and Michael made another campfire. They were addicted to s'mores. As they sat around the campfire everyone discussed the day.

"Michael, what did you find?" asked Amie.

"It all looks the same. There is a rock outcropping a few clicks from here. Otherwise it is just green moss. I scattered the tree seeds. So, five thousand seeds and 2% survival rate, maybe a hundred trees."

"They will seed the forest." said Amie. "And get places we can't. Sam, what did you and Lisa find?"

"We're rich." laughed Sam sarcastically. "We have emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and platinum." Or better put beryl and corundum. And asteroid sand. We planted some trees and released the amphibians, fish and insects. What chance do they have?"

"Some will make it." replied Amie. "We have to try. And we can always get more now. It is not like when we landed on Maarieda and had a limited supply. Mindy, what did you see?"

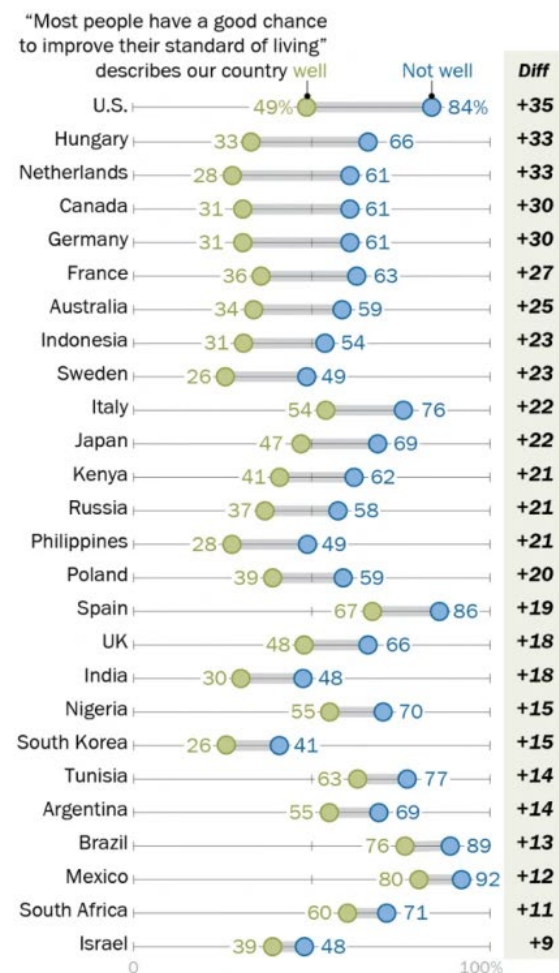
"It is all the same. We released the shrimp and fish. And planted a few trees. It just all looks the same."

"I spent the day planting trees. And it looks like we just barely started."

It was another long day and they were all tired. The atmosphere change was tiring, but they were beginning to acclimate. The atmosphere pressure was adjusted to 0.76 Barr. They would lower it a little every day.

### Pessimism about improving standard of living linked to dissatisfaction with democracy

% who say they are dissatisfied with the way democracy is working in their country



Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, Q4.

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