

# SUNFLOWER SEEDS



## *Kansas Sunflower Mensa Virtual Meetings*

Cut and paste the following address:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72081034487>

**Every Saturday - 01:00 PM**

Meeting ID: 720 8103 4487

Password: 8T0Jrt

**Contact Bill Barnett @ 214-3330 for a visit from the Sunflower Mensa Food Santa. He and/or family will visit your home between 10-12 noon, on Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup> bearing smiles & good things to eat.**

**November 2020, Volume – 48, Issue # 11**

**Kansas Sunflower Mensa Newsletter**



© depositphotos

Image ID: 246348103 | www.depositphotos.com

### *Has our system of Democracy degenerated to this?*

**Sunflower Seeds** ©2020, Wichita, Kansas Sunflower Mensa, is distributed to chapter members and other select individuals. Mensa is a non-profit international society whose sole requirement for qualification for membership is a score at or above the 98th percentile on any accepted standard tests, or by submission of properly certified prior evidence. <http://www.us.mensa.org>

All unsigned material published in the Sunflower Seeds is either by the editorial staff or obtained from public domain. Items may be reprinted (if not individually copyrighted) if you are another Mensa publication. Be sure to provide proper credit to the author and **Sunflower Seeds**. No other reprinting is permitted without prior written permission of the Publication's Editor.

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.

**Sunflower Seeds** is the Official Publication of the Wichita Kansas Sunflower Mensa #670, published twelve times a year. The subscription fee of \$5.00 is included in annual dues paid to Wichita Sunflower Mensa and American Mensa, Ltd.; other subscriptions for mailed version is \$36.00 per year (USA only) for 12 issues.

*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.*

Editor: R. Klaus Trenary, [editor@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:editor@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

## Officers for 2020:

**LocSec:** Larry Paarmann, 316-209-3752,  
[locsec@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:locsec@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Asst. LocSec:** Bill Barnett, 316-214-3330,  
[asstlocsec@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:asstlocsec@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Treasurer: POSITION OPEN -**  
[treasurer@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:treasurer@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Program Chair:** Bill Barnett, 316-214-3330,  
[programchair@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:programchair@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Publications Chair: POSITION OPEN -**  
[publications@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:publications@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Editor, Seeds:** R. Klaus Trenary, 316-648-6536,  
[editor@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:editor@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Recruit & Test:** Dan Gollub, 316-322-3087,  
[testing@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:testing@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Associate Proctor: POSITION OPEN -**

**Mem. at Large:** Ronnie Lee Ingle, 316- 631-3514,  
[memberatlarge@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:memberatlarge@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Ombudsman:** Mike Dickson, 316-651-4707,  
[ombudsman@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:ombudsman@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org)

**Region – 7 VC:** Rich Olcott, 720-390-7889,  
[rolcott@mindspring.com](mailto:rolcott@mindspring.com)

**American Mensa Ltd.:**

1-888-294-8035

### Chapter's Official Web Sites:

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/773587949355460/>

## The Nominating/Election Committee presented their candidates as follows:

Local Secretary:	Bill Barnett
Deputy Local Secretary:	Igor Ponomarev
Treasurer:	David Fetherston
Member-at-Large:	James Zongker

Since the deadline has passed for any other nominations; The above members will be considered having attained the office to which they were appointed, to be occupied in 2021.



### Heartland Mensa Region 7

December is usually a time for parties and feasting and family get-togethers. Unfortunately, our current political, economic, epidemiological and weird-weather



“perfect storm” has meddled with most of that. As for cross-country travel, faggedaboutit. The multi-layer uncertainty has also derailed the planning that most Local Groups do for their holiday season get-togethers.

So, what to do? Stock up on canned goods, hide under the bed and resort to the internet and video conferencing. If you’re not already an experienced user of Zoom and GoToMeeting and Hangouts, ask any nearby school-kid for help (and give a figurative pat on the back to their teachers, who’ve been dumped into this new environment and are swimming far more than they’re sinking, bless ‘em). **Plains and Peaks Mensa** found that trivia nights work almost as well online as the face-to-face variety. **Nebraska-Western Iowa Mensa** reports that online book clubs do the same.

Many of our most successful events center around food, from picnics to dine-outs to the Hospitality rooms at Gatherings. Believe it or not, it is possible to do a food-centered video conference. How about a multi-cook cooking class for swapping techniques and favorite recipes? **Denver Mensa** used Zoom for a speaker session featuring a professional mixologist who showed us his methods and philosophy. Or you could just do what people have been doing since cell phones got cameras – everyone shows off the vittles on their plate

and then proceeds to consume while carrying on table talk. It just takes one volunteer to start what could become a tradition.

For those of you who have been hanging back from the internet because of its well-earned Wild West reputation, here is a bit of good news. There is a new Sheriff in town, at least in two places. [Mensa Connect](#) is an online conversation facility, supported and secured by American Mensa, with separate sections for national, regional and local discussions. Starting November 2, it’ll have a General Discussion forum – which will be moderated to keep things civil. On Facebook, the old Hospitality and Firehouse groups have been converted to SIGs. Both groups have committed to being kinder and gentler than they have been in the past.

Finally, as I wrote last month, I will not be running for RVC next year. If no-one runs for that position the AMC will appoint a Regional Coordinator, but that person will have no vote on policy matters that will affect our Heartland Region. If you have leadership experience within American Mensa or elsewhere, consider putting your name forward. I value the experience and friends I have gained over the past four years, but now it is your turn. Visit AML’s [Election Portal](#) and start your candidacy rolling. I will sign your petition.

~ Rich



Due to increased concerns about COVID, there will be no Pig-Out or Christmas party this month. Instead, our illustrious new leader, wife and possibly son, will treat members to some X-mas goodies. Interested Mensans can expect a visit from Bill, or Margarita between 10:00-12:00 noon, on Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup>. **Contact Bill Barnett @ 214-3330 for a visit with the Mensa Food Santa.**

## Chapter News of Interest:

Dec 5, 2020 01:00 PM there will be a board meeting to make plans for next year. It will be by Zoom. (info below) All members are welcome to participate.

- (1) We need to appoint a publication chair. Gracie said she will do that.
- (2) We need to appoint Klaus as Seeds Editor.
- (3) We need to appoint proofreaders/assistant editors to help Klaus with Seeds. I think there are 2 or 3 who can do that.
- (4) I would like to continue as program chair.
- (5) We need to appoint Dan Gollub as Local Membership Officer.
- (6) We need to appoint 2 web contacts to manage the website.
- (7) We need to set budgets for Seeds, speakers, and other things.
- (8) We need to plan where to go with Seeds. I propose that we increase the budget, add pages, and have it printed and mailed by a vendor. If that put us in a \$10 per month deficit there is money in the account to cover it for 30+ years. It might be a good investment to attract new people.
- (9) The group needs more proctors to give tests. If you are willing or know someone who is let me know.

Hopefully, the virus will be less of a concern by next summer if the vaccines work well and we can get back to a more normal schedule. Zoom meetings are a love hate thing for me. They are better than nothing. It will be good to meet in person again without the constraints and concerns. Be careful, the virus is spreading faster. Several of us have had it.

~ Bill Barnett



**WICHITA'S PREMIER SKATE  
SHOPPE**

## In Search of Diversity

Gordon Bakken



We human beings are not alike. Even to the extent we are the same -- most have a head two arms, two legs, and the same internal organs -- our minds have different things in them. In that way, we are diverse. Is that diversity a good thing? That is a subject that is much discussed at the current time. My take is that there are two distinct kinds of diversity, one is beneficial; the other is destructive.

The first type I call occupational diversity. For example, in a nation some are truck drivers. Some are house painters. Others are businessmen or scientists. That is good. If everyone were a truck driver, salesman or surgeon, society would be a mess. We need all of these, plus others. A nation with no schoolteachers would be in bad shape, almost as bad as one that had only schoolteachers. A functioning nation needs a lot of occupational diversity.

The other type of diversity I call cultural diversity. That kind of diversity is not only useless, but also destructive. Examples of issues that various cultures disagree on are these: Language, Economic System, Religion, Marriage rules, Race Roles, Political System, Gender roles, Clothing.

These issues are all trivial. A nation can function well with almost any set of rules on these issues, and different rules in different nations are generally not a problem -- if the nations don't try to unite. One set of rules may be better than another, but hardly any can rationally be called "wrong."

Both types of diversity cause segregation. When the diversity is occupational, such as truck drivers and medical doctors, you will usually find them segregated.

They probably will not go to the same parties, or even live in the same neighborhoods. But they will not fight – at least if they have any sense. Eventually, they will need each other.

On the other hand, cultural diversity has no redeeming virtues, and often leads to conflict. One recent example is Sudan. The north and south split into two nations because of their differences. Another example might be the United States at the time of the Civil War. India also split into two nations (India and Pakistan) because they could not agree on a religion. Canada came close to splitting into two countries a few times because they could not decide whether to speak French or English. Belgium now is seriously considering splitting into two nations because they cannot decide on French or Dutch. Yet neighboring countries having different languages are not usually a big problem.

A nation can survive with a certain amount of internal cultural diversity. They are better off without it, but the nation can survive. However, that works best if they segregate. Imagine a town with only one church. The Methodists, Mormons and Catholics would have to hold a common service. No one would like that. Most would not attend.

Here is a cute story about diversity. Two men were going to dinner. “I will pay for dinner if you let me select the drinks,” the first said. The second agreed. At dinner, the first ordered a beer and a coke and two extra glasses. He poured half the beer and half the coke into each glass and handed one to his friend. “I can’t drink that,” he said. “Why? Is it the beer you don’t like, or the coke?” the first asked. “It is not that. Either one by itself is fine, but they just cannot be mixed,” the second replied.

Here is another story from the sports world. On a field, several boys are playing a game. Some of the boys are trying to play by soccer rules, while the others are playing by football rules. As expected, the whole thing is a mess. Is it the football rules that are wrong, or the soccer rules? The answer is neither, of course. All sports have their own rules. None are necessarily right or wrong, or even better. In any game the players may play different positions, such as quarterback or wide

receiver. The important thing is that they are all playing by the same rules.

Thus, a nation, tribe, family, church, or business or any group that is trying to function as a group needs to play by the same rules to function well. The members don’t need to be equal. In fact, too much equality can ruin the whole thing. A company needs bosses and underlings. A family needs parents and children, but they all need to accept a common set of rules.

## Shrinking language

If you are of a "certain age" you may remember some of these bygone words. How about "fender skirts?" Or, speaking of car parts, how about "curb feelers" and "steering knobs."

When did we quit calling the stopping device an "emergency brake?" At some point "parking brake" became the proper term. But I miss the hint of drama that went with "emergency brake." And how about "running boards?" What happened to those?

Here's a phrase I heard all the time in my youth but never anymore: "store-bought." Of course, just about everything is store-bought these days. But once it was bragging material to have a store-bought dress or a store-bought bag of candy.

"Wall-to-wall" was once a magical term in our homes. In the '50s, everyone covered hardwood floors with, wow, wall-to-wall carpeting! Today, everyone replaces wall-to-wall carpeting with hardwood floors. Go figure.

Most of these words go back to the '50s, but here's a pure '60s word I came across the other day: "rat fink." Ooh, what a nasty put-down!

Here's another word I miss: "percolator." That was just a fun word to say. And what was it replaced with? "Coffee maker." How dull. Mr. Coffee, I blame you for this.

Here's food for thought: What wiped out lumbago? Nobody complains of that anymore. Maybe that's what castor oil cured, because I never hear mothers threatening kids with castor oil anymore either.

Some words aren't gone but are definitely on the endangered list. The one that grieves me most is "supper." Now everybody says "dinner." You could help save a great word. Invite someone to supper. Discuss fender skirts.  
~Anonymous

## So, You Think You Are a Genius Puzzle?

Igor Ponomarev

A casino dealer took two playing cards, wrote on the face of each a non-negative integer between 0 and 13 at random (the numbers do not have to be the same), and gave each card face down to an elderly couple from California, one to the wife and one to the husband.

Neither of the spouses could see the other's number, nor could communicate its own number to anyone.

The dealer proposed the following gamble to the couple:

"I can share with you that the sum of values of the two numbers each of you received is either 13 or 10. Can you guess what it is, following certain rules?"

"I will ask each of you, in turns, what the sum of your numbers is, and you can respond in the following ways:

- Any one of you can decline to answer, in which case the I will proceed to ask the other spouse the same question and, if no answer follows, I will return with the same question to the previous person, and so on.
- Any of you can guess the total value incorrectly, in which case both of you will lose the \$200 the casino has collected from you as a deposit, and the game will terminate immediately.
- Either of you can guess the total value correctly, in which case you will get the deposit back plus a \$100 jackpot from me".

"The game will terminate after I have asked the question 20 times in a row with no answer, and you will lose the deposit."

Can the spouses win the jackpot with certainty no matter what numbers each received? They are both rational people, and each knows that the other spouse is rational.

\_\_\_\_\_ (answer in back) \_\_\_\_\_

I found this word game and thought it might be of interest to some of us Mensans.

The app is for iPhones and iPads, so it is on App Store. Here is a link to it:

<https://tinyurl.com/lazydogpuzzle>

Alternatively, find it by searching for 'Lazy Dog Word Puzzle'.

## Did You Know?

- Alfred Binet, the creator of the first practical IQ test, believed intelligence could change and be developed. He was against using his test as a standard measure of fixed intelligence.
- A group of people believes that they have slid from a different timeline into ours. Among other things, they remember Mandela dying in the 80s and New Zealand is located north of Australia, not south'
- Tupac Shakur once stopped to break up an altercation and ended up shooting two police officers, one in the leg and one in the buttocks. The charges on him were dropped after it was discovered that the officers were intoxicated and had stolen weapons from the police evidence room.
- If you rub a grasshopper's hind leg for 5 seconds every minute for four hours, it will trigger its brain to transform, swarm, and become a locust.
- In 2000, the KKK adopted a stretch of highway near St. Louis. The Missouri government responded by renaming the road the ``Rosa Parks Highway."
- The word ``Oxymoron" is actually an oxymoron, "oxy" meaning sharp and ``moron" meaning dull.
- Irish brewer Arthur Guinness was an exceptional individual who used the money he made from brewing to help relief of the poor, abolish dueling, promote literacy and provided his workers with a higher standard of living.
- Children's author Roald Dahl was given a 'Viking funeral' and buried with wine, snooker cues, pencils, and a power saw.
- In London, there is a library (Human library) where you can check-out humans as a living book and listen to their stories
- There has been a book written from the perspective of a successful sociopath/psychopath about the intricacies of the life of someone with this condition called ``Confessions of a Sociopath: A Life Spent Hiding in Plain Sight." The book, for obvious reasons, was written under a pseudonym.





So, don't even ask if you are not on the list. I have already talked to everyone who is going," said Amie.

"I, James, Bob, Sally, Doug, and Michael will be going. We will decide on Project Sea life when we have studied the bay in more detail. It may be a place to leave other fish. The young mothers will stay behind with all the children. Any questions?" said Amie.

"Do we know anything about the other ships?" asked Lisa.

"They are out there, but we do not have much information." replied Amie. "Their communication is limited because of damage and obstacles they encountered. They have not had the uneventful trip that we had."

Michael and Doug were learning about being new fathers as they went from having all the attention of their wives to almost none as the young women were busy with new babies. And now they were off on a bachelor trip with parents. The young women were off on their own exploration trip. Exploring motherhood.

"Is the checklist complete?" demanded Amie.

"Everything is there and ready." replied Michael.

"The shuttle checks out." replied Bob.

"Then we are off," said Amie. "Everyone on board."



They were up into the sky and just as it was turning black and the stars were coming out when they headed back down toward the island. The shuttle circled the island looking for any changes. Everyone was watching with excitement. The mountains offered a new environment to explore. This was a hilly, rocky island and they hoped to find some of the animals that were released in the original terraforming.

They could see the patch of grass the agribots had started near the shelter and a nearby grove of fruit and nut trees. Circling the island everything looked the same as last year except there was a beginning of a shelter. They all watched with excitement as they looked out the windows. It was always exciting going on another exploration trip. Then they hovered over the landing area. As the shuttle landed everyone was out running across the grass and breathing the sea air.

"It just seems different," stated Doug. "Somehow it looks the same but is different here."

"It does seem different." replied James. "Something to study. What is it that is different?"

"The atmosphere readings are all the same," stated Bob. "And there is nothing different organic in the air, at least nothing the sensors can detect. But, yea, it somehow does seem different."

"Bob, check the garden. Inventory the food we can eat. James, check the trees. Inventory how they are doing. Sally check the plot of grass. Doug, see how much the agribots have done on the building. Michael, go to the dock and see if there is anything new there." ordered Amie.

They were all off on task. Amie felt good. She did not have to ride heard on the young people as much as before. And there were only two of them on this trip. She began to unload supplies for the building. As dark approached everyone came back.

"The agribots have finished the concrete floor," said Doug. "They have 237 concrete blocks made. Some are weird shaped. It seems they were ignoring the weather and placing some blocks on uneven ground. I reprogramed the ap. Hope that fixes it."

"There are lots of vegetables ready to eat," said Bob. I brought some. "Seems these agribots did not have the app they needed and did not know what to do with the extra vegetables. I installed the app, and they seem to be fixing it now."

"The trees are growing well," said James. "In ten years, they may have fruit and nuts. They are a long way from a forest. The forest line branches out from the orchard about three clicks. It follows the shoreline and avoids the rock outcroppings."

"The grass is doing what grass does here," said Sally. "It grows where planted but does not make progress against the moss. There are thirty hectares of grass now."



“The fish we left last year came up to the dock,” said Michael. “The dock is just like we left it. I caught some shrimp in the net. Look at this. Almost thirty centimeters long. Not like the little shrimp we had back in space.”

“Dinner time,” said Amie. “We have a lot to do in the morning.”

### Maarieda February 40, 0006

Everyone was up early. Amie and Sally took the boat to explore the bay. Everyone else was working on the building.

“I can see fish here,” said Sally. “Let’s dive here.” And she dropped anchor in the shallow water. They dove into a wonderland of sea life.

“Look at the plant corals,” remarked Sally as she came up for air. The bay was two to six meters deep and stalks of multicolored seaweed were everywhere. The bottom was colored in purple and lilac coral, but it was made by plants not animals. The fish and shrimp were chasing each other through the seaweed forest.

“Get a sample of everything,” said Amie. And they dove into the water getting one of everything they could find. The fish were easy as they had no fear.

“Let’s move on to another spot,” said Sally. “That is enough for here.”

As they moved to a deeper spot a klick away the sea life changed. There were orange corals and a different type of seaweed.



“This is good, we could stay in this area forever. Let’s see how far we can go and if there is anything different,” said Amie.

There were off traveling several klicks across the bay further out away from land.

“The sea is so calm here,” said Amie. And we can still see the bottom, but the land is out of sight.”

“This is amazing,” replied Sally. “So much of the ocean is wild and it is nothing like that here.”

“The seaweed is the same here except for the color,” said Amie. “And the shrimp are everywhere. The coral changes shape and color but is everywhere. This is a huge coral reef. We need to see where it goes out to sea.”

They headed back toward the shore and followed the shore in.

Meanwhile the men were constructing the building.

“The floor needs some repair, but is good for now,” said James. “And the agribots are now programed correctly. Michael, have them make mortar so we can start building. Let us unload the building supplies from the shuttle.”

They unloaded lumber and screws. The forest back home supplied lumber. Screws were a precious commodity. They would try to build Japanese style without screws.

“If we find a good ore here, we can make some metal items,” said James.

“A few,” said Bob. “If the other ships get here, we can make more. The agribots can only make exceedingly small batches.”

They had the supplies in place and the agribots began bringing mortar.

“They were supposed to do this,” said Michael.

“Suppose to,” replied James. “This time it is on us. Work on programing the agribots. It is amazing they accomplish anything at all. They need to finish after we leave.”

“Doug, watch, this is how you do it,” said Bob as he spread mortar and placed a block.

Doug watched, recorded the movement of James, and programed the movements into the agribots. After lunch Doug said: “Watch this. Let us see how the agribots do.” And he set the agribots to building the block wall and adjusted their movements as they went. By dark the machines were successful at building the wall.

"I thought they were already supposed to know how to do this," said Micheal.

"Suppose to. It never works that easy," said James.

"It is hard teaching them." replied Micheal. "What could be worse?"

"Programing you!" laughed Bob. "You are the hardest robot we have to program."

Everyone laughed. Even Micheal had to laugh at himself.

Sally and Amie came to shore and joined them.

"Did you get it built?" asked Amie.

"Sure, it is finished." retorted James. "We just watched and the agribots built it."

"I'm starved!" shouted Micheal and Doug. They went in to eat.

#### **Maarieda February 41, 0006**

They continued to explore the bay and build the shelter. Only Michael had to stay with the agribots, and the others went exploring

#### **Maarieda March 10, 0006**

The shelter was mostly done as far as basic construction goes. The agribots would continue the work along with their other tasks. It would get more work later. The crew was planning the trip into the mountains.

Amie called a meeting. "In the morning we are going into the mountains. We will camp at thirty-five hundred meters altitude to acclimate. And then at four thousand meters."

Lisa was watching from back at home base. "I wish I was there," she sighed.

"And you wished a lot of other things." laughed Michael. "And have them."

"Enough," said Amie. "Check all the gear and pack the carts. Make sure everything in the area is put up. All the tools, everything."

"How far are we going?" asked Doug.

"We will circle the ridge line and climb as many peaks as we can." replied Amie. "It seems some of the rock faces and peaks are where the most interesting crystals are. These are hard rock faces, and we may have to work to get pro into the rock. Also, the valley streams seem to be full of the crystals that fall."

"Sounds like magic," said Bob.

"I thought you did not believe in magic." replied Michael with a grin.

"There is something there we cannot understand." replied Bob. "The radios pick up signals. They have a pattern, like something alive. The pattern goes against entropy, which is the physics definition of life. But it not anything human or animal that we can see. The quantum sensors pick up something too. And not just the reverb of radio signals. At least as we know them."

"Okay, everyone get with it. And bring me your checklist this evening." ordered Amie.

#### **Maarieda March 11, 0006**

At dawn, the crew was ready to go. It had been the first night to stay in the new shelter. The drone flew their course, and it was plotted on a map. Three carts were packed with all their gear. The agribots were back at their normal tasks planting grass and tree seeds.

"Let's go!" shouted Amie.

And off they went with the carts bouncing across the moss covered plain. Soon they were heading uphill.



"More moss," sighed Micheal. "Nothing but moss everywhere." As they headed down into a valley, they came upon a fern forest. "Look, some of our birds. They are living here. And some insects. The bugs seem to like the ferns."

“Must have blown in on a storm.” replied Bob. “We never left any of them here or did any terraforming here.”

On they traveled toward the highlands. The rocks sparkled. The ground below them was a sparkling multicolored sand where the moss and ferns did not grow.

“This looks magical,” said Michael.

“Look who’s talking about magic now.” replied Bob. “The world’s greatest skeptic now believes in magic.”

“There is no real magic.” retorted Michael. “It is just so different and none of us can explain it.”

“Minerals compressed into crystals deep within Maarieda and pushed to the surface by volcanic activity when the crust moved,” stated James.

“We all know that.” replied Doug. “But there is something different here. There is a new discovery. I can feel it”.

“That’s what we are here for,” said Amie with a smile. “You have the curiosity of a mystic and hopefully the reasoning of a scientist.”



By noon they entered a steep valley. They gained a third of the altitude. It was rockier and felt more magical. It was time to stop for lunch.

“I really feel something,” said Sally. “This place is different.”

“Could it be your subconscious mind reacting to something that looks different?” taunted Michael.

“I hear something different,” said Sally.

“I do to,” said Amie. “What is it?”

“The mystical magic.” taunted Michael as he sat down to eat lunch.

When they finished Amie said: “Almost halfway there for today. We need to make more clicks before dark. The drone showed a flat spot in twelve more clicks at the right altitude. Get going.”

They were off on the steepening path that was getting rougher as they went. An hour before dark they made the flat spot. It was a circle of moss inside a turn of the mountain face. They were at thirty-four hundred meters altitude.

“Get the tent set up.” ordered Amie. “The storm is coming in fast.”

In no time the tent was set up and they were inside eating dinner. And the storm hit. It grew dark suddenly and lightening jumped from peak to peak. The crystalline canyon walls lit up like massive monitor screens with patterns flowing up and down the mountains as more and more lightening hit. Bob and James were recording the light show.

“There is a pattern to the glowing crystals on the mountainside,” said Bob. “It almost seems alive.”

“Now you are the mystic.” laughed Michael.

“But it does seem more than just a lightning storm,” said Sally.

They all had to agree. Then the rain hit, and the wind came. It was time to sleep.

### **Maarieda March 12, 0006**

By morning the storm was gone, and the sky cleared as the Tigre, their star, came up.

“Back to plain old rocks and moss,” said Michael with the air of skepticism toward his skepticism.

At the end of the clearing where they camped the path became too narrow for the carts.

“It is two clicks to the next camp. And a thousand meters of climb,” said Amie. “We carry stuff from here. We can make three trips to carry everything.”

And off they went into the climb. It was all class II trail and more from there on up. By midmorning they reached the next clearing. It was just like the last one.

They dropped gear and headed back down. They would make another trip before it was late.

That night the clouds came back, but not like the night before. There was small lightening high in the sky. The canyon walls glowed again, but not so brilliant. Michael and Amie walked to the glowing wall at the edge of the clearing. A small spark jumped from a rock to Michale's finger.

"Wow!" exclaimed Michael. "I felt that, but it did not hurt. It did not shock me."

"Hmmm." exclaimed Amie. "Amazing."

They returned to the tent not saying anything. It was as if everyone was spell bound. The ground was as bright from the glowing canyon walls as if it were with a full Dianna, but it was cloudy overhead.

### Maarieda March 13, 0006

The sky was clear when they got up and headed back down for the rest of their gear.

"So none of us believe in magic," said Doug as they were heading down. "Are we discovering a new science?"

"We will see," said James. "We are discovering something new every day."

Everyone was quiet. It almost seemed like a spiritual place where they needed to be reverent.

"Let's go," said Amie. "There is one more load of gear to get." And off they went downhill again.

"Does this show up when we map from space?" asked Doug.

"Not much." replied James. "We see the rocks and identify the spectrum, and from that the minerals. But nothing like what we are seeing here. It looked interesting, but it is more so here. Sometimes what looks interesting from above is rather dull on the ground. Here it looks more interesting on the ground."

"This is a new science phenomenon?" asked Michael. "Is there anything like in in the books?"

"Not that we can find. That is your project when we get back. Search the literature and find something." replied James.

"It sounds like science fiction instead of real science." replied Bob. "But we are surrounded by it."

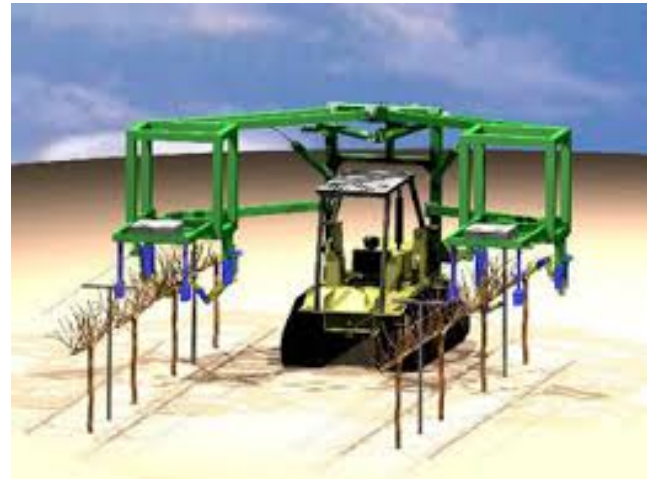
At midmorning they arrived at the base camp and everything was like they left it.

"Load up." ordered Amie. "Lunch when we get back and then you can start studying your magic crystals."

They were off and heading back up the mountain. Soon they arrived and started lunch.

"What all do we have to study these rocks?" asked Michael.

"A radio receiver, a quantum communicator sensor, a spectrometer, a geiger counter, and a camera." replied James. "Everything else is back at home. Those can identify the rocks but may not be able to answer any of your other questions."



"We collected beryl, corundum, quartz, and some rocks that need more study," said Bob. "None of the samples show any of the phenomena we saw at night. Just the canyon walls show that. We will study the walls in daylight and after dark."

After lunch they spread out studying the wall.

"Look," said Doug. "There is a trace of platinum, gold, and silver. And silicon crystal in the faults between rocks. And even traces in some of the rocks."

"So maybe this was formed really deep in the planet and was pushed up here." replied Bob. "There should be lots of very heavy metals on the planet, way deep in the core. The core might be mostly heavy metals. And they are on the surface from meteors. This is different. That may be part of the answer."

They continued to study the rock wall which seemed to be one big electrical grid. The camera just showed rock.

As evening came they went back to camp to eat dinner and plan for after dark.

“Same thing after dark,” said James. “We study the wall the same way again. Except Michael start the camera just as it begins to get dark.”

They were all studying the canyon wall. As it became dark the wall lit up again. Michael videoed Doug walking up to the wall. It seemed to respond. Doug talked to the wall and it seemed to respond.

“Is this a reflection or is it coming from the wall?” Michael asked.

“It could be either.” replied Amie. “I can’t tell.”

“Is the wall reacting to Doug or is it his reflection in the wall?” asked Micheal again.

“Again. I don’t know.” replied Amie. “Can’t tell.”

“You and Doug design an experiment and come back here another time,” said Amie.

Above the sky seemed to be full of electrical activity and the walls pulsed with faint colored light. Dianna came out and lit the sky. Michael filmed it all. They had the spectra data which would help identify all the minerals there.

“Bedtime,” said Amie and they all went into the tent to sleep.



They were all up early feeling tired from a long day of work and being up late.

“We leave the tent here,” said Amie. “The drone video did not show any more camping places. We will try to climb the peak today. We may have to come back tomorrow to finish.”

The path ahead was different. It was only fifteen centimeters wide in some places. The rock face was a steep 80° up on one side and 80° down on the other. It was a steep climb going up the path. They had climbing gear, water, food, and rain gear. Everything else was behind them.

“This path is almost like someone made it for us,” said Doug. “It seems too perfect to be an accident.”

“Sometimes nature is like that,” said Sally. “And sometimes it just seems she is trying to kill you.”

After three hours they came to a wider ledge. It was a meter and a half wide. It was time to start the climb. It would be a hard face climb. There was a tiny crack going up the face of rock.

“Michael, you are on lead,” said Amie. “You kids have supper strength.”

Doug put gear into the crack and set up a belay station. “Start putting up gear as soon as you start,” said Doug.

Michael tied into the rope, grabbed a rack of gear and started up the wall, placing gear as instructed.

“He looks like a gecko,” said Sally. “That has got to be at least 5.12 and he is climbing it like it is nothing.”

With his fingertips in the crack and feet standing on tiny crystal edges Michael soared up the wall. At forty meters he stopped, put in an anchor, and yelled: “Off belay.”

Doug tied in behind him.

“On belay?” asked Doug.

“Belay on.” yelled Michael.

And another gecko was soaring up the wall with a rope dragging behind him. The older generation watched in amazement. They might have had to resort to aid climbing. The kids would fix the ropes so they could climb after them.

Doug passed Michael and traveled another forty meters up the wall, put in an anchor, and yelled: "Off belay."

"On belay?" asked Michael.

"Belay on." yelled Doug.

Michael started up behind him. Ten meters past Doug he began to struggle. At fifteen meters he fell, flying past Doug. After resting he started up the wall again looking like a gecko just cruising along until he passed Doug again. He got in a piece at fifteen meters and fell. Bit by bit he made it up the wall making five meters progress at a time. Finally, he made an anchor.

"Wow, that was tough," said Michael as he was taping up his bloody fingers. "Off belay"

When Doug saw Michael was ready, he asked: "On belay?"



"Belay on." yelled Michael.

The people on the ledge below could barely see them. There were no more geckos on the wall. Just ants struggling to move up. As Doug passed Michael he was quivering. He got in one piece and fell. The climb to the next belay station was a struggle the whole way. After Michael struggled to join him at the belay station he stopped.

"Michael!" yelled Amie over the communicator. "Fix ropes and come down. It is too late. We will come back tomorrow."

Soon Michael and Doug were rappelling off the wall and joined them on the ledge. Their hands were trashed. The kids who never got tired looked like ghosts.

"Eat something and rehydrate." ordered Amie. "We need to head back soon."

They made their way back to camp and arrived just before dark. It was time for dinner.

"What did you see?" asked Amie as they began to relax.

"It just got steeper and the edges disappeared. Like climbing on glass. If it was any worse, you would have to aid climb it." replied Michael.

"I could get the first finger joint in. It was a little wider. But no feet. The edge of the crack is almost a razor." added Doug.

"We'll see what we can do tomorrow." replied Amie. "Will you be ready to climb again?"

"I'm game," said Michael.

"Me too," said Doug.

They slept well after two extremely hard days. The reflection of the Dianna crossed the glistening walls as they light up with waves of light. Each night it was a different show. The kids were too tired to notice.

### Maarieda March 15, 0006

They were up early again. Amie just looked at the kids and how they seemed to recover so fast. Bringing more food, water, and bivies they headed up the narrow trail. It was familiar ground now and they made better time. When they arrived Michael and Doug immediately started ascending the rope.

"When they get to the fourth relay station, we can ascend the rope too. It does not look like anything is loose anywhere on the wall. It is about as hard and solid as any rock gets," said Amie.

Pretty soon everyone was climbing. And Michael was leading and falling his way up the wall. After two more pitches of falling almost as much as climbing Michael and Doug made it to a ledge.

"Wow! It is nice to be able to stand here," said Doug. "Look above. Easier climbing. Lots of edges for feet."

"Like climbing on broken glass or worse. The crystals above are all broken. Must be some serious frost up here," said Michael. "Use double ropes and don't fall. And we use the cut resistant ropes here."

Michael double taped his hands again and headed up the wall. "Hey, this isn't even five ten. It's getting easy." as he soared up the wall.

Soon they were tandem climbing and fixing rope as they went. After four more pitches they reached the top. Soon the others began to join them.

“Amazing,” exclaimed James. “I’ve climbed a lot of stuff, but never seen anything like this.”

“Look across there,” said Sally. “More peaks. All with jagged crystal tops. Looks like a fantasy land.”



“Get data and leave a remote camera and recorders. We need to get back to the ledge before dark. This place looks like a lightning rod” said Amie. “This is the second highest peak. we will try to do the highest, just because. Probably have all the data we can digest now anyway.”

They made it back to the ledge just as it got dark.

“That was something,” said Bob. “What an amazing climb. Like the classic climbs we read about when we were kids.”

“More so,” said James. “Even more so. If we did not have the latest greatest gear it would have been an epic like the first trip up El Capitan.”

“Tomorrow we head back to base camp,” said Amie. “We can explore the hills and valleys before we do another peak. We will be doing good to climb two peaks the way this one went. And the others do not look any easier.”

They anchored the bivies to the wall and all settled in for a good night’s sleep.

### **Maarieda March 16, 0006**

It was late morning when they crawled out of their bivies.

“I needed that,” said Sally.

“Me too,” said Bob.

“We all needed that,” said Amie.

The kids were sleepy eyed trying to eat. It was their everlasting hunger that drove them out of bed. It was almost noon when they headed down the trail. They needed the rest. The trail would have been treacherous if they were not alert and well rested. No one talked. They were all in awe and still recovering from the ordeal. About dusk they made it back to camp two. The tent was there welcoming them.

“I’m starved,” said Michael.

“You are always starved.” retorted Bob with a laugh. “You and Doug are bottomless stomachs.”

Everyone laughed.

There was another show of light on the mountain faces. They had missed the show up above. They were so tired they just fell asleep. But the camera caught that show. They watched in silence and fell asleep in their tent. At home they would review the show and see if they could make any sense of it.

### **Maarieda March 17, 0006**

Midmorning they were up and packed and off downhill to New Saxon. They were all feeling rested and there was more air to breath. They made good time going downhill.

“I never thought I would be happy to see more moss,” said Doug as they were leaving the mountain path.”

“Me too.” replied Michael. “Now we can bounce along on the green sponge downhill to base camp.”

“What was the best part?” asked Amie.

“Watching Michael fall,” said Doug. “He has a special way of screaming when he does it.”

“And watching Doug tape his hands over and over again.” retorted Michael. “He had three layers of shredded tape on his bloody hands. He must like shredded hands.”

“Let me see,” said Sally. “That will heal. Just keep it clean.”

“You always say that.” replied Doug. “We never get infected.”

“You are immune to almost everything. Except doing dumb things that almost get you killed.” replied Sally.

“We didn’t die!” shouted the boys.

The older generation just looked at each other.

It was after dark when they made it to New Saxon and all just fell asleep.

### Maarieda March 18, 0006

They crawled out of bed late.

“Rest day,” said Amie. “Let us cook some good food and just chill. In two days, we will explore the valleys and low hills and see what we can find. After breakfast I want Doug and Michael to get us some shrimp.”

“About time we tried fresh shrimp,” said Bob. “How much freeze-dried food can someone eat?”



“And bring some seaweed,” said Amie. “We can eat the dark purple seaweed. They are all edible, but the dark purple ones are more nutritious.”

“Imagine. We have been on and off the planet for years and this is the first thing we have found here that is edible,” said James.

“There had to be something,” said Sally. “But was this here before? Or did it come with the sea life we seeded here so long ago? Or did it mutate after we brought Earth life here?”

“Something more to study,” said Amie. “It is now your project.”

“We will never get everything studied.” replied Sally.

“Then you need to train more scientists,” said James. “We can be a colony of scientists, at least until the agribots die. It will be survival from then on.”

“Yea, we are buried in new scientists. We will drown in them if we get any more. They are all back at New Eden,” laughed Sally.

“I feel better,” said Doug. “The barbecued shrimp and fresh veggies hit the spot. I can barely move I am so full.”

“So good,” said Michael. “Now I wonder how Linda and Lisa are. I will call them.” and he left the group to call back home.

Lisa answered Michael’s call.

“How are you?” asked Michael.

“Oh, you remember me?” replied Lisa feeling hurt. “Did you forget you had a family?”

“It has been so intense I did not remember anything, except the egg-shaped bubble I was in on the side of a mountain. Nothing else existed when I was there,” replied. “We are back at base camp. It was amazing. How is everyone there?”

“Lori slept all night!” said Lisa. “It was wonderful. Your little pooping machine finally let me sleep. She is following me with her eyes every time she is awake. She likes me to carry her outside. I thought she was trying to teeth, but she is not ready for that. SHE BIT ME! I know when she has to be changed. I can see it in her face. You should be here and see her.”

“This is the woman who forgot I existed.” thought Michael. He knew better than to say that.

“How is Linda?” asked Michael.

“Humph,” sighed Lisa. “I will get her. She looks like she is about to burst. The baby is coming any day.” and went to get her sister wife.

With two men and four women in the space generation there were sister wives. The girls almost killed each other for it, but Captain Amie put the law down and enforced the peace.

“Hi, Michael,” said Linda with impatience in her voice. “How are you?” asked Michael.



“About ready to explode. I can hardly move. This is unbelievable. You should be here.” replied Linda.

“You seemed pretty tired of me when I was leaving,” said Michael.

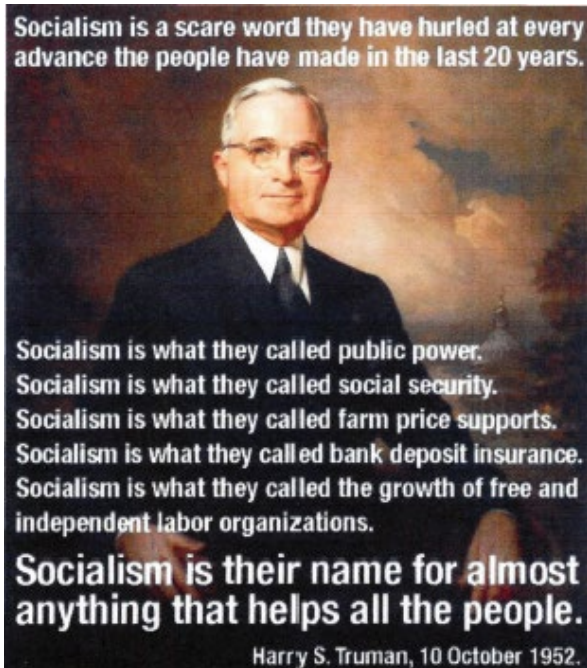
“No kidding. Look at what you did to me!” replied Linda. “I am the size of an elephant!”

They talked on and calmed down. Michael looked across the way and Doug was having the same conversation back home.

“Are women always like that?” asked Doug and Michael of James and Bob.

James and Bob just laughed themselves to tears.

“I guess that answers that,” said Doug to James.



### Solution to the Casino Puzzle

One option available to each of the players (Spouses) is to not answer the question from the Dealer. That provides information to the other party as to the possible numbers he/she has. We will use a set theory notation  $\in$  which means “belongs to”.  $S$  will denote the sum in question,  $H$  will denote Husband’s number, and  $W$  – Wife’s. Assume Dealer asks Wife first, without losing any generality.

1. Wife looks at her number  $W$ : If  $W \in \{11,12,13\}$  then Wife answers:  $S=13$ .

If  $W \notin \{11,12,13\}$ , Wife skips the answer.

Husband knows:  $W \in \{0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10\}$ .

2. Husband looks at his number  $H$ : If  $H \in \{0,1,2\}$ , he answers  $S=10$ .

If  $H \in \{11,12,13\}$ , he answers  $S=13$ .

If  $H \notin \{0,1,2,11,12,13\}$  Husband declines to answer.

$H \in \{3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10\}$  and Wife knows it by now.

3. Wife looks at her number  $W$ : If  $W \in \{0,1,2\}$ , she answers  $S=10$ .

If  $W \in \{8,9,10\}$ , she answers  $S=13$ .

If  $W \notin \{0,1,2,8,9,10\}$ , Wife skips.

$W \in \{3,4,5,6,7\}$  and Husband knows it at this point.

4. Husband looks at his number  $H$ : If  $H \in \{3,4,5\}$ , he answers  $S=10$ .

If  $H \in \{8,9,10\}$ , he answers  $S=13$ .

If  $H \notin \{3,4,5,8,9,10\}$ , Husband skips and Wife knows  $H \in \{6,7\}$ .

5. Wife checks her number  $W$ : If  $W \in \{3,4\}$ , she answers  $S=10$ .

If  $W \in \{6,7\}$ , she answers  $S=13$ .

$W=5$  is impossible because it will not add up to 10 or 13 with what Husband has.

This exhausts all possible outcomes, and the game always terminates with Spouses getting the jackpot.

