

# Sunflower Seeds



*Kansas Sunflower Mensa Virtual Meetings*

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April 2021, Volume – 49, Issue # 4  
Kansas Sunflower Mensa Newsletter

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LocSec: Bill Barnett 316-214-3330 [grandledge@hotmail.com](mailto:grandledge@hotmail.com)

Acting Editor: Bill Barnett

Asst. LocSec: Igor Ponomaryov

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Web Contact: Igor Ponomaryov

Contact other officers through the American Mensa website.

## Chapter's Official Web Sites

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

[www.facebook.com/groups/773587949355460](https://www.facebook.com/groups/773587949355460)Sunflower Seeds

## Submissions Guidelines

The Sunflower Seeds is published monthly. Quarterly there will be a larger newsletter with more articles. Submission deadline is the first of the month. Members in good standing may submit articles, puzzles, photography, etc. to the editor for publication. To submit an article for the newsletter send it to [grandledge@hotmail.com](mailto:grandledge@hotmail.com)

## LocSec Corner - February 2021

Bill Barnett

Spring is here and winter came back. Winter did not get the memo. Someday the Covid restrictions will be gone. I hoped for a day when they announced it was over. It seems it will just fade away instead. I really miss the in person meetings. At some time we will return to the outdoor meetings at Bill Cather's place or in a park in Wichita.

**The group is looking for an editor. Contact me if you are interested.**

**The group has one proctor and is looking for another. It would be better to have three. Contact Dan Gollub if you are interested.**

You are talented and can be a writer for Seeds. Send your articles, letters, comments, and pictures for Seeds to the editor.

## Heartland Mensa Region Seven

Rich Olcott

You can't not like April – the return of gentle weather, flowers popping out all over the place, and (we hope) baseball. OK, there's Tax Day, but on the other hand there's Easter, Ramadan and Earth Day.

The third week of April is the traditional home of Mensa Cares, our nation-wide exercise in local community service. It's always been a good spark for Local Groups getting together to improve public life, whether by picking up litter in a park, sorting canned goods at a Food Bank or even donating blood. Not this year, of course – recommended precautions against the various strains of Covid-19 have mixed nearly

everything of that sort (although picking up litter is always a good thing). I'm looking forward to next year, though...

Here's one sign of a promising future – North Dakota Mensa has announced the latest edition of their perennial Regional Gathering, this time named ND HeRitaGe 2021. It's scheduled for August 20-22 at the President's House in Valley City ND. You can read full details and register at [northdakota.us.mensa.org/RG.html](http://northdakota.us.mensa.org/RG.html). Yes, it's just a few days before AML hosts a much bigger party, the World Gathering in Houston ([ag.us.mensa.org](http://ag.us.mensa.org)), but the ND RGs traditionally feature homemade brownies.

This April is special for American Mensa because it includes the start of our national election period. If you have an email address on file with the National Office, look for your electronic ballot in your Inbox on or soon after April 15. If the office doesn't have an email address for you, they'll mail you a paper ballot. Marked ballots, either flavor, need to be returned by May 15.

You can see the list of candidates and access their candidacy materials after logging onto American Mensa's website and going to [us.mensa.org/lead/amc/elections/2021-election-portal/](http://us.mensa.org/lead/amc/elections/2021-election-portal/). You'll see that we have contests going for four of the five national offices, one referendum for a Bylaws amendment, and several active races for RVC posts.

There's no RVC contest in our Heartland Region, because Beth Anne Demeter was unopposed and therefore “declared elected.” She has a long history of service to Mensa at the local, national and international levels. You can check it out if you click on her name in the Election Portal's listing. I have full confidence that as RVC and as an AMC member she will provide informed and enthusiastic leadership for our Region and for American Mensa. Thanks for stepping up, Beth Anne, prepare to be real busy starting in July.

~~ Rich

# The Pig-Out Column

Recommendations from the Head Pig, Mike Dickson:  
Check with Mike (316-651-4707) to see if people are planning to go. Everything is tentative at this time until you talk to Mike. Some people are isolating until the virus is gone or they are vaccinated. Changes will be published in upcoming Seeds.



**May 1, 2021, 12:45pm**

Bella Luna Café, 2132 N. Rock Rd., Wichita 316-634-0008

**June 5, 2021, 12:45pm**

N & J's Café & Bakery, 5600 E. Lincoln St., Wichita 316-681-3975

**July 3, 2021, 12:45pm**

YaYa's Euro Bistro, 8115 E. 21st St. North, Wichita 316-634-1000



**Pig-Outs are the perfect place to invite friends.**

# Night to Night Video Experiment

Bill Barnett



Starlight on the River, Sony a7Sii, 24 mm, f/1.4, 1/10 second, ISO 8000, a little twilight on the horizon, but too dark for people to see well.

I have a passion for making perfect night video in wilderness locations. Night photography is easy, just use a very slow shutter speed like the photo above and adjust the picture later. In a higher resolution of this photo even the stars are visible. It's a bit noisy, but makes a stunning image. Everything is different at night. Colors are different, shadows are different, even what is dark and light is different. It is a whole different world that many people miss. Hollywood has a simple solution, shoot the night scene in the day, darken the image, and replace the sky in post production. Or bring in a big lighting crew. No problem with a multi million dollar budget. What about the small shop videographer? What about live events in the wilderness at night? How to do it? And even at that day to night is not the same as night to night.

Fast lenses and fast cameras to start with. First the fast lens. The lens used here has been described as a unicorn, one of a kind and almost magical in what it does. There are faster lenses, some as fast as f/0.95, but not at a wide angle like 24 mm on a full frame camera. Next a fast camera like the Sony a7Sii in the under \$5000 range. It is unique for working well at high ISO. It

has an update that can shoot in RAW with an attachment. That might help a little bit. There are cameras with the same sensor which shoot in RAW, but not without a Hollywood budget. Everything must be shot on a tripod of course.

The fastest equipment still does not make a good video in starlight without some adjustments. Typically video is shot with a shutter speed of 1/50 or 1/60 second, twice the frame rate. Reasonable good video of people can be shot at a shutter speed of 1/30 second. That pushes the camera one f-stop. Slower than that the motion blur can be very distracting. So light must be added, but minimal light can be used.

A landscape can be shot with a shutter speed of 1/4 second. That pushed the camera 4 f-stops. Essentially the camera is stacking images to gain more light. It gives some motion blur to water, but within the artistic range that looks interesting. Any panning or zooming must be done in post production. If any blur is wanted anything moving will get it.

The camera used lists ISOs into the 100,000s, but past 10,000 is very noisy and it is better closer to 2,000. The camera seems to have dual native ISOs of 100 and 1600. A video in starlight can be done at 24 mm, f/1.4, 1/4 second, and ISO 4000. It will be dark but looks like night and has interesting images. shooting in moonlight should be better.



For videoing people in very low light more light needs to be added. A good starting place is the typical key light, fill light, and rim light. The result is a lit subject and empty black background, or vague background from spill light. So that does not achieve the effect wanted. The next step is to light the background well. It is easier to light the subject than the background and one soft light turned down might match the background and allow the video to have lower luma.

To light people in the woods in the dark small panel lights can be used that weigh 4 oz. They need to be on lightweight stands that weigh 1 1/4 pounds or less. They can be hidden in plain view if gaffer tape covers their LED screens and they are in front of a dark woody background.



They need ‘barn doors’ to prevent light spill onto the ground. The barn doors can be made out of lightweight aluminum sheet metal and gaffer tape.

Starlight and moonlight are white, but that is not what people imagine when they watch movies. Hollywood has taught us that moonlight is blue in movies. If the color is turned all the way toward cool in processing it gives the video a cinematic dark moonlight look without actually being too dark to see well.



The next step in the experiment is to film in moonlight instead of starlight. I am looking forward to the full moon.

<https://youtu.be/sXwQs12fdjU>

There is a video of this experiment called: ‘Night Hike Experiment’ on The Wilderness Hiker YouTube channel. The river shown at the top of the article was shot in starlight and is at the end of the short video below.



YOUTUBE.COM

**Night Hike Experiment**

Night into night. It's an elusive goal. Hollywood films day into night. They even ...

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheWildernessHikerHowToSeeTheWorld>

# Expedition To The Islands, Lost At Sea

Bill Barnett

Continuation of the story of Maarieda - an excerpt from chapter 5



**MAARIEDA WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

## **Maarieda, March 28, 0005 continued**

Amie, Lisa, and Kristie headed south along the shore.

“There is driftwood washed up everywhere,” said Lisa. “What did this?”

“A storm,” replied Amie. “This came from other land and could have brought other plants and animals with it.”

“There is a dead bird on that clump of driftwood,” said Kristie. “And an empty bird nest on that one.”

“Things did wash in,” said Lisa.

“Get samples,” ordered Amie. “This beach has a collection of everything from the sea and other lands to the west.”

They spent the day collecting samples from the beach debris and then headed back to the shuttle. Soon everyone was back at the shuttle and they shared stories.



### **Maarieda, March 29, 0005**

After breakfast Amie said: “We will build a shelter here pointing to a flat area at the highest part of the rocks. The rock here is excellent building material. It will be slow to cut, but the stones can be laid without mortar. There are no trees here so even the roof will be rock. We will get the agribots started and then we will be off to explore.”

“More construction.” said Doug. “Always more construction. We need to explore.”

“Yeah, we need to explore.” chimed in all six teens.

“You said that last year,” laughed James. “Now get to work.”

Soon the agribots were cutting stone into blocks. Michael and Sam were surveying the area while the others were organizing supplies from the shuttle and the agribots. One agribot was set to making a garden and planting grass around the outcropping.

It was late afternoon and there were two perfectly cut granite blocks, a third of a meter by a third of a meter by a meter. It was a small fraction of what was needed, but the agribots would work all day and night and not stop until they were done. Another agribot was beginning to get the soil ready for the garden.

Amie called a meeting in the evening. “Tomorrow everyone will start the exploration trip per the plan. Be ready first thing.”

### **Maarieda, March 30, 0005**

After breakfast Amie said: “Teams one and three to the shuttle.” Amie, Lisa, Kristie, Sam, Doug, and Teri loaded up the shuttle and were off to Greenmerry Isle.

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Team two, James, Michael, and Linda took two carts with two boats and headed east across Renegade Isle. After an hour of worsening difficulty in traveling they stopped.

“We are two klicks in and this forest is impossible for the carts,” said Michael. “We are going to be forever cutting fern trees and never make it across the island.

“It has been more than an hour and we can barely move forward,” said James.

“We have the drone,” reminded Linda. “We can explore with it.”

“Good idea,” responded James. And he began to look around for a landing spot.

“There is no place to launch the drone here,” stated Michael.

“We can clear a landing pad,” said James. “Start here and make it six meters in diameter.”

They began cutting fern trees and it seemed the trees were trying to get away from them.

“Look, everywhere I go the trees lean away from me!” exclaimed Linda. “And it seems like they are groaning when we cut them.”

“These trees are alive,” said Michael, “More than just physical life. Like they know we are cutting them. How are they different from the other trees?”

“What a statement from the skeptic,” stated James. “Are you now believing in metaphysical trees?”

Linda laughed.

“All of these trees are connected by their roots,” said Linda after looking at them throughly. “And they all have a golden spotted mushroom on their trunk.”

“They look like a single organism,” said James after studying them for an hour, “just like aspen trees. Let’s try something. Get out the drone and start the engine.”

“Teri got out the drone, placed it in the middle of the clearing they had started to make, and started the engine.”

At the noise and wind of the drone the trees all swayed away from the drone, leaving a hole in the canopy.

“Fly it,” ordered James.

The drone took off and the trees closed the hole after it left. They spent

the rest of the day studying the land around them with the drone.

“Nothing but continuous fern forest,” said James. “We can call it The Golden Fern Forest. And there are a few rock outcroppings. There is an outcropping a quarter of a klick from us. We didn’t see it because of the forest. Land the drone there and we will camp there.”

They landed the drone and headed to the outcropping to camp for the night.

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The shuttle landed on Greenmerry Isle with Amie, Lisa, Kristie, Sam, Doug, and Teri.

“Explore the area nearby and be back before dark,” ordered Amie. And they began exploring the area around the shuttle landing.

Amie, Lisa, and Kristie went south and Sam, Doug, and Teri went north.

“This island has the usual moss,” said Kristie, “and the usual ferns, but none of the golden fern trees like on Renegade Isle.”

“But the ferns have little green mushrooms on them,” replied Lisa. “Plain little green mushrooms.”

“Get samples,” ordered Amie. “Maybe they’re symbiotic. Are the ferns the same as on Renegade Isle?”

“No they are different, they are not as tall, have different leaves, and their roots are different,” replied Kristie.

They spent the rest of the day searching the area around the shuttle.

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Sam, Doug, and Teri hiked south along the shore.

“There are a lot of fern debris and seaweed washed up on the shore,” said Doug.

“There are rafts of seaweed,” said Teri. “There is even a dead date tree and some coconuts on this big raft. And the the raft is three meters thick.”

“And a bird nest,” replied Doug.

Sam just studied the raft before them. It was twenty meters by twenty meters by two meters thick. He watched as the kids walked out onto the raft to collect samples. The raft was sturdy under their feet. “Amazing,” he said. “We keep finding something new.”

“What is this?” asked Teri.

“There is an area of debris three hundred clicks west of here.” Sam replied. “It is in an ocean gyre where the current just goes in a circle and never connects to land. A floating island has developed there. It will be interesting to study the ocean floor there.”

“And how did this get here?” asked Teri.

“A storm blew it in,” replied Sam. “Oh, and yes we will see if someone can go there in the ultralight,” anticipating her next question.

When it was late afternoon everyone returned and began to set up camp.

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“This is base camp,” said Amie. “We will set up tents here. There is nothing to build a shelter with now so we just use tents.” After dinner Amie called a meeting to plan the next day and said: “We will spend another day here. Michael and Lisa will fly the ultralight to Seaweed Island and see what is there.”

### **Maarieda, March 31, 0005**

At dawn Doug and Lisa headed east in the ultralight. It would take half a day to get there. Amie and James took the shuttle to photograph Seaweed Island.

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Amie circled the gyre with the shuttle. “This is not just a trash dump or Sargasso Sea, it’s way more than we imagined,” stated Amie. “I simply thought it was another ocean garbage dump from the satellite photos.”

“With trees and animals it must be much more than we thought,” said James. “Like having its own biosphere. I wonder if the Sargasso Sea was once like that.”

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Back on Greenmerry Sam, Linda, and Kristie were doing a soil analysis from the seaweed raft as well as analyzing the coconut and dates.

“This is a sandy loam soil,” said Sam. “The island made of seaweed did not just form yesterday. It is thousands, if not millions of years old.”

“So the dirt blew in on the wind? across the ocean?” asked Kristie.

“There does not seem to be any other explanation,” replied Sam. “That would take a long time.”

“Is it a real island, attached to the bottom?” asked Linda.

“It rotates,” replied Kristie, “it is not attached to the bottom, but it looks real. How can it stay in one piece that long?”

“The fibers do not rot,” replied Sam. “They carbon date hundreds of years old. Some of the seaweed has chlorophyll and some does not. Some must have another way of growing in the dark.”

“I will tell the others,” said Linda, “They will want to know.”

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Doug found a place to land the ultralight in an area of moss and short ferns and he and Lisa began to explore the area.

“Look, more iguanas!” exclaimed Lisa. “There are lots of them. And they are different from the others. They are smaller and have blue and purple stripes. Here is a nest with eggs, they are the same color.”

A large iguana rushed in between Lisa and the nest, just looking at her with a cold reptile stare. They were both surprised to see each other.

“Catch one,” ordered Doug, “but not that one.”

For the next quarter hour they chased iguanas through the date and fern trees.

“Let’s make a net,” said Lisa expressed. “We will never catch one otherwise.”

They made a net and soon had four small iguanas, two brightly colored and two dull colored.

“We have to leave in a half hour,” said Lisa, “to be back by dark.”

As they hiked around the island they saw date trees, coconut trees, and banana trees. There were birds and several types of iguanas. They took some dates and coconuts with them. The ultralight could only carry a few things.

“Time to get back,” ordered Lisa knowing Doug was ignoring time.

“Okay, let's go,” replied Doug and they headed back in the ultralight plane.

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When everyone was back on Greenmerry Isle they compared notes.

“The island is fifty clicks in diameter, fairly round, and seems to look the same everywhere,” stated Amie. “We have better photos of it, but the terrain looks consistent.”

“We found iguanas, birds, date trees, coconut trees, and banana trees,” stated Doug. “Someone could live there. The ground is stable and does not seem to have any ocean waves.”

“The floating island seems ancient,” said Sam. “It takes a very long time to develop that soil.”

“And the dates, coconuts and iguanas?” asked Teri. “How did they get there?”

“They were planted other places and died out, but the original plants provided seeds for the floating island.”

“Wow!” exclaimed James. “A whole unexpected chapter in understanding this planet.”

“We are back on schedule tomorrow morning,” ordered Amie.

### **Maarieda, March 32, 0005**

At dawn Sam, Doug, and Teri took two boats and headed south along the shore of Greenmerry Isle planning to head east to Keerroney Isle.

Amie, Lisa, and Kristie stayed on Greenmerry with the shuttle and ultralight so they would be available if the other teams needed help.

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Back on Renegade Isle James, Michael, and Linda, made it back to the shore after a couple days of difficult travel through dense fern trees.

“These trees must be pissed off at us,” complained Michael.

“You hurt them,” laughed Linda. “You cut off their friends and they have to grow back,” she sneered.

“Right,” laughed James. “You hurt them too.”

“They seem sentient, or is it my imagination?” asked Michael.

“You should know!” exclaimed James. “You are the one who does not believe in anything. We camp here, near the shore, and follow the shore around the island starting somehow.” ordered James.

### **Maarieda, March 33, 0005**

At dawn James, Michael, and Linda headed south along the beach of Renegade Isle with their carts carrying the boats.

“It is all the same here,” said Linda. “The same fern tree forest and same short ferns along the beach. Just a giant sand bar with moss and ferns.”

“What can you make of the ferns?” asked Michael. “Do they have a nervous system, or something?”

“Check it out,” retorted James. “There is a microscope in the kit, use it.”

Michael started making slides to study and put them into the microscope. “What is this?” he asked. “Look.”

Sam looked and said, “Hmm, looks like nerve cells in a plant. Linda, look at this.”

“That is what the nerve cells we read about looked like, but plants don’t have nerve cells.”

“This one does,” said James.

“It really was pissed,” retorted Michael. “I told you so.”

“Does it have a brain?” asked Linda.

“Good question,” replied James. “That will take some study on another trip. Let’s get back to traveling. We are getting behind schedule.”

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Amie, Lisa, and Kristie headed into the interior of Greenmerry. Two clicks in they found the cenote that was on the map. It was thirty meters deep.

“Fix the rope,” ordered Amie. “We can see what is in here.”

After fixing the rope Amie and Lisa rappelled into the hole and splashed into the water below.

“I can barely touch the bottom,” said Lisa. “This is the ocean, smell it, more ocean water.”

“I have a sample, let’s get out of here,” ordered Amie.

“This is fun!” exclaimed Lisa.

“Yeah!” replied Kristie. “I want in too.”

“This could take forever,” replied Amie. “Time to go, we need to be traveling.”

They ascended the rope, dried off, and headed further into the fern tree forest.

“The cenote was the only thing different here,” said Kristi.

“I brought a box of bugs and four tiny green tree frogs,” said Lisa.

“Leave them here,” said Amie. “Any place is as good as another. We need to be back by dark.”

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Sam, Doug, and Teri made it around the northern bend of Greenmerry Isle and headed south.

Sam said: “It looks like better sailing. This side is not just a giant sand bar.”

“The current is slower here,” replied Doug. “And there is a rock bottom.”

“We hit rock bottom!” laughed Teri. “I always wanted to know what it was like to hit rock bottom.”

“I need be be more careful what I say!” laughed Sam.

“Too late,” replied Teri. “We know everything you say. Everyone heard every whisper in a spaceship. They can almost hear your thoughts.”

“No secrets on a spaceship,” stated Doug. “Earth people think there are secrets. None.”

“Okay,” sighed Sam, “right. Follow the shore and miss the rocks.”

A few hours later the boat scrapped to a stop.

“Low tide,” stated Sam. “Let’s get out and see what we can see.”

They got out of the boat and were wading around. It was shallow everywhere.

“Nothing but a granite bottom where nothing grows,” said Teri.

“Then back in the boat and don’t turn this water into drinking water,” ordered Sam. “Something in the rocks doesn’t let anything live here. We head for open water when the tide comes in.”

To be continued.





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