

# Sunflower Seeds



## *Kansas Sunflower Mensa Virtual Meetings*

Cut and paste the following address:

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

Every Saturday at 1:00 PM

Meeting ID: 720 8103 4487 Password: 8T0Jrt

January 2021, Volume – 49, Issue # 1

Kansas Sunflower Mensa Newsletter

## Officers for 2021

LocSec: Bill Barnett

Acting Editor: Bill Barnett

For questions concerning Seeds contact the Acting Editor through the American Mensa website or through the Facebook page. Contact other officers through the American Mensa website.

## Chapter's Official Web Sites

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

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

## New Sunflower Seeds Format

Bill Barnett

Welcome to the new Sunflower Seeds format. The Sunflower Seeds will be published monthly with announcements and a few puzzles and short articles. It will be kept to a one ounce / one stamp mailing size.

Quarterly there will be a larger newsletter with more articles. We hope this will make it easier for the editor to provide a quality newsletter that better benefits the group.

Material must be submitted to the editor by the first of the month to be published in the next month's newsletter. The newsletter will be published on the fifteenth day of the month.

Members in good standing may submit articles, puzzles, photography, etc. to the editor for publication. Material that best serves the group will be published. If something does not make one issue of the newsletter it might be put in the next.

To submit an article for the newsletter send it to myself, or [editor@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org](mailto:editor@kansassunflower.us.mensa.org). Material may be submitted in

advance to be put in later as space permits.

Freedom of speech means the government can't put someone in jail for speaking. It does not mean anyone has to listen to them. The editor will put as much of what benefits the group in the newsletter as possible. Material that does not benefit the group will not be put in the newsletter. If something does not make the newsletter it does not mean the material is bad or the submitter is bad.

Paid advertising is space available \$40 per full page, \$25 per 1/2 page, \$15 per 1/4 page. There is a discount for multi month ads.

A big thank you to Klaus Trenary for your good work as Sunflower

Seeds editor for the past few years. Klaus challenged us to participate in the publication, grew interest, and was able to get more people submitting material for the publication.

## LocSec Corner - January 2021

Bill Barnett

Our world has been changed by Covid and the many responses people have to the disease. We are meeting online for now. The disease is spreading faster and many people in our group are older, have health issues and need to be careful to not catch it. I have seen first hand what it can do to a healthy person and it is very unpleasant. When the disease risk is lower the group will return to in person meetings. In the spring we might meet outdoors where the risk is lower.

We live in a world of polarization and conflict. There are people who would like to divide us against each other and tear us apart. Doing so is

a power grab. It is too easy for any of us to fall into the trap of ad hominem attacks, false accusations, threats, and hate speech. If we let them draw us into this kind of behavior we loose.

Good people can have different policies and benefit from discussing them if they respect each other. It has been said that as iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend. We need to debate issues, not people's worth.



What is on the news is appalling. There is so much deliberate misinformation and emotional illogical behavior in the news. And not everyone is behaving badly. I fully respect everyone who protests peacefully. I will be happy to see the rioters and the people who provoke them in prison. I hope it is sorted out in a court of law where the anger and misinformation find no refuge.

Enjoy life. I am looking forward to seeing you soon.

## Heartland Mensa Region Seven

Rich Olcott

If you've been reading these columns for more than a year, you know that February is my least-favorite month – cold, dark, dreary. Other than it being my granddaughter's birth month, the best things about February are that it's short and it's almost March. This year is just a wee bit brighter, though. February 2021 will see the arrival of three robotic missions to Mars – the UAR Hope orbiter on the 9th, China's Tianwen lander/rover mid-month and NASA's Perseverance rover on the 18th. May all three execute successful missions and teach us more about Earth's rusty sister planet.

The other thing about February is that our Mensa Foundation Scholarship judges (bless them and our faithful Scholarship Chairs) are busily scoring every applicant's 550-word goal statement. It's not just about rhetoric, grammar, spelling and punctuation. The judges look for evidence of capability, determination and that all-important grit that scholars will need in tough times. We want to assure our donors (bless them, too) that they're supporting people who will graduate and make a difference.

I'll close this month by cribbing a few thoughts from my RVC predecessor Greg Kontz. In his prescient column four years ago ([region7.us.mensa.org/members/docs-protected/RVCColumn02-2017.pdf](http://region7.us.mensa.org/members/docs-protected/RVCColumn02-2017.pdf)) he compiled some good advice that applies even more to this year. Here are a few tidbits; the rest is worth reading, too:

- We all come from our own perspective, therefore our own perception, therefore our own reality. The fact that someone does not agree with you should not be surprising or infuriating. It does not mean that they're stupid, evil, or that they have an agenda. That's not to say it can't be one of those things – just means that you should not automatically assume it is. Give that kind of leeway to them – then you can expect it for yourself.

- Concentrate on concepts – not people. Things that need to change, especially things involving large organizations, are changed when people start to think differently – not when individuals 'win' or 'lose' after a battle of wills. You also need to realize that concepts are pure things – human interpretation/implementation of them are not. You will occasionally be disappointed – doesn't matter – keep trying.

- Don't worry about 'winning' a conversation – worry about learning from it.

- The reason that I care about Mensa is because I love the conversations, and what I gain from them. Here's a statement about Mensa in general: If there is to be only one place on the face of the earth where light is valued over heat, where sequential logic and the free exchange of ideas rule the day – it should be this place.

Amen, and thanks, Greg. ~~ Rich

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KANSAS SUNFLOWER MENSA BOARD

Kansas Sunflower Mensa (KSM) Board Meeting took place on Saturday, January 9, 2021 at 1:00 pm via Zoom.

Agenda:

1. Election of Board-Appointed Officers
2. Arrangements for publication of the newsletter of KSM

Following newly-elected voting Board members were present:

Bill Barnett, President  
Igor Ponomaryov, Assistant Loc Sec  
Dave Fetherston, Treasurer  
James Zongker, Member at Large

President Barnett moved that the last year's PRO TEM appointed positions will continue into the present 2 -year term:

Publication Chair: Gracie Ulrich  
Recruitment and Testing Chair (Membership Chair): Dan Gollub  
Program Chair: Bill Barnett  
Ombudsman: Mike Dickson

Bill Barnett, James Zongkers and Dave Fetherston voted for the above measure. Igor Ponomaryov abstained. The motion passed. Gracie Ulrich, with the Board's consent, appointed Igor Ponomarev as a Web Page Contact.

As to the KSM Newsletter (Sunflower Seeds), President Barnett moved to keep looking for an Editor and to publish Newsletter at least monthly, Bill Barnett serving as Acting Editor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Igor Ponomarev

## Unfinished Poem

Gracie Ulrich

Can you finish the poem? The best submission will be published.

Following is an unpublished and unfinished sequel to Edward Lear's famous poem, *The Owl and the Pussy-cat*.

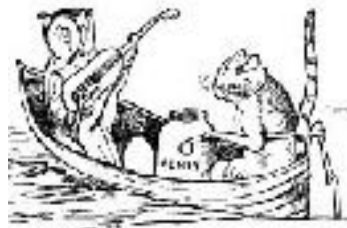
### THE CHILDREN OF THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

Our mother was the Pussy-cat, our father  
was the Owl,  
And so we're partly little beasts and  
partly little fowl,  
The brothers of our family have feathers  
and they hoot,  
While all the sisters dress in fur and have  
long tails to boot.

We all believe that little mice,  
For food are singularly nice.

Our mother died long years ago. She was  
a lovely cat

Her tail was 5 feet long, and grey with stripes, but what of that?  
In Sila forest on the East of fair Calabria's shore  
She tumbled from a lofty tree—none ever saw her more.  
Our owly father long was ill from sorrow and surprise,



But with the feathers of his tail he wiped his weeping eyes.  
And in the hollow of a tree in Sila's inmost maze  
We made a happy home and there we pass our obvious days.  
From Reggian Cosenza many owls about us flit  
And bring us worldly news for which we do not care a bit.  
We watch the sun each morning rise, beyond Tarento's strait;  
We go out ----- before it gets too late;  
And when the evening shades begin to lengthen from the trees  
-----as sure as bees is bees.  
We wander up and down the shore -----  
Or tumble over head and heels, but never, never more  
Can see the far Gromboolian plains -----  
Or weep as we could once have wept o'er many a vanished scene:  
This is the way our father moans—he is so very green.

Our father still preserves his voice, and when he sees a star  
He often sings ----- to that original guitar.  
-----  
-----

The pot in which our parents took the honey on their boat,  
But all the money has been spent, beside the £5 note.  
The owls who come and bring us news are often -----  
(Because we take no interest in politix of the day.)

*It looks like there are some entire stanzas missing here. This is all that there is. Feel free to add content as you are inspired to channel Edward Lear's consciousness.*

## Work Experiences

Dan Gollub

Somehow a miracle happened, and I was hired to work as an intake therapist at a mental health center. I interview new clients who are seeking mental health treatment, and assign a therapist or a medication provider to them, or both. I have a master's degree in psychology, but nothing I learned in school helps with the job. I talk with the clients and don't pretend to them that psychology is an exact science. I try to ask relevant questions that clarify the status of their mental and

emotional functioning. If I can make helpful comments to them I do so. After each interview I write a report about that client. The job gives me a chance to have connections with others (although I meet with each client only once) and to have interesting things to think about afterwards. I have a maximum of four intakes a day. The interviews are usually between 30 to 45 minutes, and it doesn't take long to write each



report. In my free time between intakes I'll sometimes think about the money I'm earning. Being hired rescued me from poverty.

I had three intakes today. Four had been scheduled, but one client canceled.

The first intake involved a 16 year-old girl. Her mother accompanied her. The girl was experiencing social anxiety. She felt nervous around her peers. She felt they were judging her negatively. She thought the friends she had were faking being friends of hers. She smiled on my questions. I wondered why she was so lacking in confidence about her personality. I hoped the therapist I assigned to occasion. She didn't seem angry or hostile. She responded relevantly to her could help her.

The second intake was with a woman in her 60s who was experiencing anxiety and unhappiness. She'd been finding it difficult to adapt to new technology requirements at work. Also, she didn't like her new supervisor. A close friend had died in the past year. Her own health was getting worse. She'd had to move from the countryside, and she missed the peacefulness of her prior home. She was seeking therapy and also perhaps medication for her emotional distress.

"Life has surprises," I told her at the end of the intake, after I'd set up a therapy appointment for her. "Sometimes good things happen." I hoped that was encouraging to her; I wasn't sure what else to say.

My third intake was with a vet with brain damage. He'd experienced a traumatic brain injury during deployment more than 20 years ago. Before the injury he'd been friendly, outgoing, and patient. Now he was consistently impatient and angry. There didn't seem to be any way for him to get his prior self back. He'd had therapy, but it hadn't done any good. "The therapist just wanted to talk about the triggers that made me upset," he said, "and how I could avoid those triggers. It was like being in a classroom." The intake lasted over an hour. He wanted to talk. "I'll send an email to the woman who will be your therapist," I told him. "I'll inform her what didn't work for you in that previous therapy." Having a bond with a supportive therapist would be helpful to him. But to what extent can emotional rapport diminish the harmful effects on the personality which brain damage has caused?

Four intakes today.

The first was with a man who described himself as a high-functioning autistic. He'd always been socially awkward with others. He realized it was nevertheless better for him to be around people some of the time, as long as it didn't cause them or him significant distress. He had a tech job, and was competent at it.

Why had he come for mental health services? "I feel a disconnect at times," he said. "I awaken some mornings and I feel like a different person, but I don't know how I'm different from usual. I need to be able to understand what's going on inside me and to put names to it." He hoped someone could help him accomplish those goals. I didn't know if the therapist I assigned to him had any specialized training in working with autistics, but she was an easy person to talk with. His social awkwardness wouldn't matter during the sessions with her.

The second intake was with a woman with ongoing anxiety. She'd been abused for years as a child and then had been mistreated and abused in various relationships. She was planning to enroll in college, and she

hoped her anxiety wouldn't get in the way. "I always dread something will happen that I can't overcome when I'm around people," she said. "But despite that dread I don't want to isolate myself from others." I'd learned from previous intakes that people who were abused as children tend to experience anxiety as adults. This woman, at least, wasn't giving up. Perhaps if she had enough good experiences with people the anxiety would disappear. I've also learned from intakes that depressed people tend to have difficulties both with identifying their good qualities and having goals for the future.

The third intake was with a woman who had a history of having hallucinations and bouts of depression. The technical word for that mix of symptoms is "schizoaffective." She was polite, relatively reserved, and cooperative in answering my questions. She'd been abused in various ways. Her voices had told her she didn't have a family, although she did. She'd been homeless some of her life but now she was living with an aunt. She hoped medication and therapy could help with her stabilization and enable her to hold down a job.

The fourth intake was with a girl who would cut herself to alleviate stress. She was accompanied by her mother. The girl didn't know how to resolve her stress in other ways than by cutting. The mother's expression while listening to her daughter seemed a mix between concern and self-reproach. In the evening I thought about the last two intakes. The schizoaffective woman had seemed nice. Nice people probably have an easier time changing. They're presumably more receptive to benevolent interactions from others. I hoped she'd benefit from the therapy she was going to receive. But I wasn't as optimistic about the teenager. Self-cutting or other self-harming is a fallback process for some people whose emotional pain passes a threshold. Perhaps their inner logic is something like this: "I can't handle the pain that others cause me, but I

can handle the pain I cause myself." That fallback process is notoriously hard to change. Is there some twisted survival mechanism at work? To be continued.

*Sunflower Seeds* ©2021, Wichita, Kansas Sunflower Mensa, is received through the subscription portion of annual dues. Mensa is an international society of those who scored higher than 98% of the population on a standardized IQ test and is a 501(C)(4) not-for-profit organization with no religious or political affiliations.

<http://www.us.mensa.org>

Copying is prohibited without prior written permission of the editor. Material must be submitted to the editor by the first of the month to be published in the next month's newsletter.

Paid advertising is space available \$40 per full page, \$25 per 1/2 page, \$15 per 1/4 page. There is a discount for multi month ads.