

OFFICIAL MINUTES
of the
GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA MENSA
BOARD of DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting – June 27, 2009

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I. Opening

A. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 11:00 a.m. at Pilgrim Towers, 440 North Madison Avenue, Pasadena, with members ELLIOTT, FREY, KAPNICK, LINDENBLATT, ROBINETT, SAGRAY, TALKOV, VENOLA and WONG, and guests Jonathan Carr Brian Madsen and Sandra Smith in attendance. TAYLOR and YU arrived during the meeting.

B. Approval of Agenda

Motion to (VENOLA) approve: passed 7-0-2.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of September 2008: approved as submitted 7-0-2.

Minutes of November 1, 2008: approved as submitted 7-0-2.

Minutes of November 22, 2009 – it was noted that Gene Schneider’s name was spelled wrong on page 1, that “dirty words” should be singular on page 4, that SAGRAY had submitted the full discourse between FREY and National Ombudsman, that “recommend” was spelled wrong: approved as amended 7-0-2.

Minutes of February 2009 – it was noted that “wonderful” was spelled wrong on page 3: approved as amended 7-0-2.

Minutes of April 2009 – approved as submitted 7-0-2.

Minutes of May 2009 – it was noted that “Whootie” was called “Hooties” in the minutes, Brian Madsen’s title was “Webmaster,” page 4 to change to “Walker nominated. Walker declined,” page 5 to change to “Elliott thanked those who spoke for him for the very moving things said.” Approved as amended 8-0-1.

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

Chair – [SUBMITTED] 1. I communicated with National the first week of June. Through an exchange of several e-mails, the officers of the chapter were updated, the monthly distributions were updated, and all information was conveyed to National by June 3rd to meet their deadline of June 4th as they were "pulling" the monthly distributions on June 5th. I do not yet know if the various officers received their distributions as planned. I intend to determine that at or before the June Board Meeting.

2. I had substantial contact with various officers prospective appointed officers in the chapter, including Membership, PR, SIGHT, RG, Data Officer, and attempts at Scholarship. All such individuals who are interested in these positions have now been submitted as part of the AGenda requests for appointments.

3. I have been in contact with the Editor and Roster personnel to discuss the opportunity to mail out the membership roster as part of the August or September newsletter. We are still soliciting information regarding the feasibility of that process at this time. All members will be reminded to update thier information with national before the end of July so that appropriately updated information will be conveyed in the roster.

4. I have had significant contact with Jonathan Carr, the Editor and the Webmaster to improve the visibility and marketing efforts for the GLAAM Intellectual Leadership Award/Quarterly Forum/Whootie Award that is scheduled to happen on July 19th. I have some concerns about this event although I am relieved that the Newsletter cover for July highlights the event and that we were able to use the announce lists to forward this information to the members of GLAAM. My concerns stem from some of the discontinuity in the publicity and less than readily available information for our members. The June newsletter carried a full page ad referring to this event as "Mind, Body, Soul Day"...but there was no mention of this event in the Calendar section. The ticket deadlines are July 3rd and without the calendar entries in the June newsletter, I believe our members are at a disadvantage to pursue this.

5. I have had significant contact with the RG Committee and the Registration Forms and substantial information will be available on the web as of July 1.

6. I have met with various Board officers in person or via e-mail to discuss chapter business. For LocSec specific business, I have actually logged 109 e-mails in the first three weeks of June...at a minimum that were either sent or received by me.

7. The July newsletter will also have a column I submit designed for newbies. The focus on the July Newsletter column are the various information/ communication tools of GLAAM that our members can access to inform themselves about GLAAM events.

AVC – [SUBMITTED] I'm glad that the reorganization and transition seems to have gone fairly smoothly thus far.

Secretary – [SUBMITTED] There's a huge backlog of minutes waiting to be approved, which I am re-sending/sending out to all for review in advance so we can do this as painlessly as possible on Saturday. And to do that I think we should focus on substantive corrections only for now. I don't think the point of approving the minutes is to do a grammar or spell-check anyway. Humble thanks in advance to everyone for helping with this.

By Saturday I hope to have last October's minutes written up and sent out for your review also, so we'd be all caught up except for March. However, I don't expect I'll have time to do it.

There is a big problem having to do with the March meeting, which is that the notes from that meeting have disappeared. I have Linda's notes from about the first 10 minutes, but the rest was almost certainly lost for good when I was re-installing the software on my computer. From the agenda for that month it looks like we might have approved a funding increase of up to \$2500 for the Hooties, and had a chat about 20/20 at the AG. If anyone has any notes or recollection about what transpired at that meeting, please send them to me so I can generate something to be approved.

I sent out an e-mail earlier this month saying that the agenda will be set early from now on (and when I say early, I mean on time), so we can get stuff done as much in advance as possible. This is on Desiree's initiative but it's what should have been happening all along. To reiterate:

1. All agenda requests must be, and supporting materials (e.g., contracts, exhibits, analyses) should be, received a week in advance. Please try to submit written reports as well, and early.

2. Please also direct my attention to your agenda request, report, or whatever by labeling it clearly as such in your e-mail subject line, so I can pick it out from the din. I suggested two such searchable subject lines: "AGENDA REQUEST" and "MATERIAL SUBMISSION", but I guess something like "ATTN: Secretary" would work as well really. Expect further changes as I make up my notoriously indecisive mind. I might just set up another e-mail (or maybe Brian could) exclusively for the board secretary for these purposes.

3. Also, please refrain from sending large files, since things have to get e-mailed around and stored, and make sure I have a digital copy of everything that needs to be part of the record (anything we used to make a decision on something). Lastly, please copy-edit and make any changes you need to make before sending things to me. Remember things are going on the web for all to see. I'm not going

to TOUCH anything you send to me. I don't necessarily know what you were trying to say and I don't like to guess.

B. Area Reports

Coastal – [SUBMITTED] Delegate:

Had been looking forward to two new people getting involved, but both were no-shows/declined.

Looking forward to one more Billiards night with Jonathan C.

Received a large membership list 2-3 weeks ago.

At the moment I have no plans for Coastal area. We are still in our busy season at work, and what free time I have had goes to new planning for the Gifted Youth group.

Plus I am on the RG committee.

Mid-City – [SUBMITTED] Secretary: 1. Did you receive your membership information from National? When did it arrive?

This is somewhat vague. I get the roster from National about once every 3 months. Personally, I got my individual membership info not long after I renewed.

2. What kind of contact/outreach efforts did you make this month for members in your area?

I sent notice on the MidCity Area mailing list to remind folks about the TTT Third Thursday Thrill, and the Mid City Area party.

Where there any new members in your area? What did you do to contact them?

They were informed of the aforementioned events if they were on the email list.

3. Do you have any goals for your Area? What did you do this last month to work towards those goals?

The goal is to be able to find hosts for Mid City Area parties in the Mid City Area, on a more regular basis, but this is rather difficult considering that a lot of Mid City Area members don't have the space or adequate parking for such an event. There were parking issues of one sort or another at the most recent Mid City Area parties—sometimes fairly severe parking issues.

4. What kinds of events are happening in your area? What do you know about attendance at those events? What sorts of publicity efforts did you use this last month to help publicize those events?

See #1.

5. Have any of your Area Members expressed any concerns to you that the Board needs to address?

So far, they haven't.. other than the occasional phone call requesting a Roster, which still hasn't been put together.

6. Do YOU see any problems in your Area that you would like to address?

Yes, there are problems in the Mid City Area. See #3.

7. Anything else you would like to tell us about your Area.

The Mid City Area Party on Danila Oder's building's roof was quite successful. More will be discussed at the meeting.

San Fernando Valley – KAPNICK is looking for places to meet and have parties. He is getting a 1500 square foot office and is willing to host Mensa there, in the west side of Burbank, with the approval of the Board. September's party may be first, at 909 South Victory, Burbank.

Hi-Desert – [SUBMITTED] Secretary: We had the usual three people at First of the Month. A number of people are going to the Exotic Feline Breeding Compound event including a Mensan from Lancaster and three from Ridgecrest. Most are bringing friends or family.

ELAC – [SUBMITTED] Delegate: Answering Desiree's suggested report format:

1. Received membership information from National; no idea when it arrived.
2. Did not reach out to new members; but I've been saying I'd draft a standard letter/e-mail to go out every month, with introductions to the most popular events/SIGs in ELAC. I suspect Membership Outreach probably already has something I can co-opt or adapt. Hope to finish this by mid-July.
3. Nikki mentioned making the newsletter mailings more fun, and Jonathan suggested scrapping them altogether by having addresses printed directly on the newsletters. Now that's a thought. Meanwhile I've been thinking about playing taped lectures or audiobooks at the mailings to entice outside participation. Ones I've been looking at, for example, include an abridged version of T.E. Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom (four hours), and The Teaching Company's (www.teach12.com) lectures on game theory, or Russian or Viking history. I think the membership would appreciate lectures more, but the Teaching Company lectures would take half a year or longer to finish a whole course. This month I will have on hand a few lectures to try out. If anyone has requests please let me

know, or better yet, bring something yourself. No one has yet brought music to play on my pretty-good sound system, which is available to you, you know.

I'd like to advertise particular lectures or audiobooks in the newsletter, but I'd need to know how to get around any copyright concerns when this is opened to the membership. And also Russ would have to approve of all this, as circulation manager.

4-7. No idea about the events in the area. No member has approached me with a problem to be addressed. Problems in area to be addressed: SNAFU.

Regarding the Strategic Planning Committee:

My silence with respect to the strategic planning committee, which apparently was suggested by something I said, is not a lack of interest. Something in that area needs to be done.

I'm not sure a permanent committee NEEDS to be created, however. As I see it strategic planning is the job of everybody on the board. One thing I'd like to remind us of – and this is a general criticism NOT directed at the creation of this committee – is that every rule or formalization of something carries with it hidden administrative costs in time, complexity, and restrictions on action. Thinking of ourselves as a business and our 1700 members as customers, we are a small business and should be able to, and need to, stay nimble and flexible. We don't want to mistake busywork with real work. And I hope no one takes offense, but it needs to be recognized that SIMPLY creating positions and committees and rules don't ensure that things get done.

If a committee were to be created, however, - and I'd have no objection to an ad hoc committee - I'd like to be on it, and I think Bill Taylor should be on it as Treasurer/Finance Chair, Danielle as Membership Chair, and PR guy Rudi Loehwing.

In any case, I think we need to be setting some goals and coordinating efforts to reach them. There are some goals that I don't think anyone will have strenuous objections to, and that we could easily be working towards:

1. Increasing membership. Regarding membership and participation numbers we don't need to figure out what is achievable beforehand; just set targets and try to reach them, then look at the lessons learned, refine the process, and set new targets in a year. We also don't need to overthink how to reach these goals. Head-banging, sacrifices, just try something.
2. Increasing participation. We need some way of tracking participation, so I'd like to ask/require SIG hosts to keep tallies and report them after events, and we should track not only sheer numbers but the quality of their participation as well.

3. Providing the membership with a better program and more benefit of membership. We should identify a core program of events, activities, etc. that constitute the best, most stable offerings of GLAAM. You could think of this as our product. We could then think about how to add to this core program complementary offerings, and what a truly exciting whole program would look like. We need to preserve good things that are going on and encourage things that have possibility. Having a clearer answer to “Why join?” will help with our membership goals as well.

Other benefits would be nice too. When I first joined my membership packet contained a discount offer for membership in the Auto Club. I wonder if we can offer museum or concert discounts or something.

4. Developing the volunteer pool. Reaching all other goals depends on having people to do the work. We might keep track of who we could call on to do things, and somebody nicer than me should be recruiting new helpers, keeping the old ones around, and training them to do what they do if they need it.

5. Establishing a sound financial foundation for the future. Money lets you do more and better things. We should set long-term financial goals, and look at fundraising and expense cutting options.

6. Fostering group solidarity and identity. You can't have a group that's not a group. And it's just not as fun. People like to belong.

I hope to hear other thoughts. And then I hope we can do some stuff.

C. Members-at-Large

Nikki Frey – We had a nice Mid-City party.

Danielle Hanne – [SUBMITTED, AS “OPEN ITEMS”] Haven't purchased the new AV equipment yet. Will existing projector/screen be needed for Whootie Awards?

D. Standing Committees

Membership – [SUBMITTED] The next New Member's Party will be Aug 1 right before and at the same venue as Singles Mingle. Hopefully this will draw more members.

Gifted Youth – [SUBMITTED] Wrote an article for LAMentary and e-mailed to the Youth list the latest idea to make a go of the Youth group.

Concept: Replace GYC as the sole activities planner by -

1. Break up the large group (4-17 yo) into smaller age-range groups.
2. Enlist parents to join with others within the sub-groups to plan meetings/activities .
3. Keep the sub-groups together as they age so a kid can stay with those he/she has bonded with.
4. GYC continues to co-ordinate and send information to sub-groups.

The list of kids who are Mensa members is currently 56. The e-mail responses from the non-members added 11 interested kids to the list, with parents who indicate they want to make this happen.

The next three months - Will find the break points, alert the parents, and get them to communicate with each other. It would be great if each group could have at least one activity over the summer.

Proctored Testing – Testing in Westside is in progress.

RG – [SUBMITTED] WALKER: Attended kick-off meeting. Participate in the endless swirl of e-mail planning. Contributing ideas wherever I can, including a costume idea.

E. Coordinators

MensaPhone – [SUBMITTED] Our service has recently been upgraded to new equipment. I think that given that we should evaluate the new service before deciding to change vendors.

Calendar – [SUBMITTED] No surprises. All is well.

Roster – [SUBMITTED] * Preliminary discussions are underway re: printing a full roster in an upcoming newsletter. I anticipate no difficulties from a data-processing perspective, although other questions (e.g., formatting, that is, the "look" of the printed page, and printing and mailing logistics) remain to be worked out.

* We should be encouraging people to get their membership profiles current so that when the roster is printed, the information in it is correct. (I know of a few that aren't. Among the more interesting ones, Bryan K. Willis lists "membership@glaam.us.mensa.org" as his email address.) My June SIG Alerts column mentions this.

SIG - [SUBMITTED, as "Hollywood Bowl Event Coordinator's Report"] All 78 tickets have been claimed, with 12 people on the waiting list. As we get closer to the date of the event, I'll be contacting all of those people to make sure they know what to expect. I've already had some questions about where the picnic area is, etc., but I need to broadcast that to everybody so there are fewer surprises.

Webmaster – [SUBMITTED] * I have received finalized minutes for 12/08 and 1/09. Except for those months, I need finalized board minutes from September through the present, and also an agenda for February.

* Thanks to the RG Committee, a 2010 RG page is well underway, and should be ready for unveiling by the time the June L.A. Mentary arrives in mailboxes.

Awards – November is to get really active. FREY suggested picture-taking as a category.

III. Special Orders

A. Appointment of David Fenig to Elections Committee

Motion (ROBINETT/VENOLA) to appoint.

Madsen asked why. SAGRAY responded Fenig is to be a backstop to Jay Friedlander.

Passed: 8-0-2.

B. Appointment of Rudi Loehwing as Public Relations Coordinator

Appointed by SAGRAY.

C. Appointment of Jennifer Venola as SIGHT Coordinator

Appointed by SAGRAY.

D. Appointment of Danielle Hanne as Membership Outreach Coordinator

Appointed by SAGRAY.

E. Appointment of Desiree Sagray and Madeline Walker as RG Committee Co-Chairs

ROBINETT offered thanks to SAGRAY for taking on the role again.

Appointed by SAGRAY.

IV. Old Business

A. Creation of Quarterly Forum Coordinator Position

Carr reported that there have been setbacks. Michael Jackson died so we were bumped off National Public Radio's "Offramp," which had a segment ready. Newspapers will not run a story so close to the event. We are taking off the deadline for ticket sales. Six have been sold so far. Seventy-five non-member or 100 member tickets are needed to break even. Parking is exorbitant. We have invested \$1992 for the hotel and \$230 for the physical award.

ELLIOTT asked why we are locking ourselves into "Quarterly," as opposed to staying with Open Forum. SAGRAY stated that the event is still currently "Fourth Friday Forum," but she is open to changing it to "Open Forum."

Motion (ELLIOTT/KAPNICK) to reactivate the Open Forum program, and appoint Jonathan Carr as coordinator thereto.

Motion (ELLIOTT/YU) to amend to incorporate previous functions of the Fourth Friday Forum: passed 12-0-0.

Main motion as amended passed: 12-0-0.

B. Creation of Strategic Planning Committee

Motion (SAGRAY/YU) to create a strategic planning committee.

TALKOV asked what the purpose is. SAGRAY responded to set goals for the chapter and utilize untapped resources. FREY asked what the untapped resources were. SAGRAY responded our members, many of whom are inactive, and need to get contributing. KAPNICK agreed that we have always been below our potential membership. ROBINETT said she does not know how to get past 80-20 rule of participation. TALKOV agreed that we cannot do planning five minutes at a time at the meeting, and we only have about 1% of our potential membership. FREY stated that we cannot attract new members with an elementary school handout.

Passed 11-1-0.

SAGRAY called for volunteers to sit on the committee: LINDENBLATT, FREY, YU, SAGRAY, KAPNICK, and TALKOV volunteers. FREY appointed as chair.

C. Creation of Data Officer Position

Motion (VENOLA/KAPNICK) to create a Data Officer Position for the chapter: passed 11-0-1.

V. New Business

A. Newsletter Distribution Via Announcement Lists Discussion

Madsen stated that he has a vision to distribute the newsletter electronically. He has joined National's Communications Committee. There are procedural obstacles but no show stoppers. We have the means to do it. We can send redundant electronic and paper newsletters, or ask National to move all electronic delivery people to the end of the labels. He would like a directive from the Board to move forward. KAPNICK added that we need to do a readership survey for ad purposes.

Motion (SAGRAY/KAPNICK) to begin a three-month trial redundant distribution of the newsletter in both electronic and paper format, and to solicit feedback from the membership.

FREY asked about how to choose electronic distribution. SAGRAY said you can update your choice at renewal time or online anytime. TAYLOR noted technical issues. ROBINETT opined that people who chose the electronic option are probably tech-savvy anyway. However, she is worried about the newsletter becoming "Spam from GLAAM." Madsen wanted to know whether to distribute as a link or attachment.

Motion to amend (SAGRAY/KAPNICK) that electronic distribution shall include both a link to the newsletter and the file as an attachment: passed 6-5-1.

FREY asked how many people have requested electronic option. Madsen responded 25%.

Passed 11-0-1.

B. Timely Receipt of Newsletters Discussion

FREY stated that the purpose of the Board is to publish the newsletter, and the newsletter has been coming late. Something needs to be done. SAGRAY offered some history as to the newsletter mailing problem. Madsen noted that when setting the board meetings we forgot that the last Saturday is sometimes the last day of the month. FLEMING asked what the price would be to outsource mailing. SAGRAY responded \$2000 to have labels printed directly on the newsletters, or \$282 to have them stick labels on and bundle for us, but we need information about what the budget allows, and should keep this item as unfinished business.

C. Newsletter Awards Submission Discussion

FREY said we need to make sure this happens in the future. ELLIOTT asked whether there were rules on who submits the nomination. FREY said the LocSec needs to sign, and the Editor. SAGRAY assured FREY that this will happen in the future.

D. Creation of Singles Coordinator

ELLIOTT asked why this is not a SIG. SAGRAY said to allow for support from the chapter, because there has been a lot of interest expressed.

Passed 11-1-0.

E. Roster Discussion

SAGRAY said this is part of LocSec's duties so it needs to get done.

F. Electronic Balloting Discussion

SAGRAY stated that she was for balloting, but against petitioning online. TALKOV said that he foresees board members spending money in media to campaign. Madsen noted that an incumbent can use the distribution lists to campaign. Carr said we need to make participation in the election as easy as possible. SAGRAY recommended that we take the next few months to get information on how to do this from National, and keep as Unfinished Business. WONG stated that he does not want people who are too lazy to go out and get votes to be elected.

G. Officers' Retreat Discussion

SAGRAY said we have the option to work with other local groups. This is designed to get us working as a team, and she envisions a one-day thing. Heather Hale will not charge us her regular rate of \$2500. ROBINETT wanted other chapters participating. FREY expressed concerns about transportation. Madsen said he was excited, and that we

should get the RVC involved. ELLIOTT said it sounds like the Leadership Development Workshop, and wondered what the difference was. SAGRAY responded that retreat is team-building, and LDW has not taken place in a few years. LDW is job-specific. YU opined that the participants should contribute some money into the trip. WONG said retreats are usually just an excuse to party. SAGRAY reiterated that she is thinking of a one-day thing and asked for a straw poll. LINDENBLATT said we should worry about our own problems rather than involve other chapters.

Retreat is a good idea: 8-1.

Invite other groups: 2-6.

VI. Closing

A. Good of the Order

TAYLOR said there were two sheets each for the budgets he handed out.

B. Adjournment

Motion (ELLIOTT/VENOLA) to adjourn: passed 11-0-1.