

OFFICIAL MINUTES
of the
GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA MENSA
BOARD of DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting – July 25, 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 and TALKOV, and guests Jonathan Carr and Sandra Smith in attendance. TAYLOR, WALKER, WONG, and YU arrived during the meeting.

B. Approval of Agenda

Motion (KAPNICK/LINDENBLATT) to approve: passed 7-0-0.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

None submitted.

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

Chair – [SUBMITTED]

AG

I attended the AG in Pittsburgh. While there, I attended the LocSec Meet & Greet program, the LocSec Basics Program, and the What Can the National Office Do For You Program. From there I learned about the PR Marketing List maintained by National for each chapter; the Live Support button on the National Website; and the Open House information. We also received a good powerpoint slide presentation that I will be able to forward to our Secretary for keeping with our archives.

Open House

In order to put together an Open House, I contacted the Felicia Mahood Center and the Burbank American Legion Hall. I still do not have answers from either about the possibility of rental of their facilities. However, we have set an Open House for Griffith Park on August 30 at 2:00. This has been reported to National and we are listed with their websites and will receive the 50 \$5 off –coupons for test takers to be distributed at the Open House. We are looking to make this an annual event that the chapter subsidizes the food and beverages as a way to have the chapter and prospective members come and mingle in an informal, relaxed atmosphere.

Alternate Facilities

Although I was looking for the Open House, I also was looking into the costs of possibly approaching the Brand Library (Glendale), San Marino Library, and the Culver City Mall Community Room in addition to the American Legion Hall and Felicia Mahood Center as possible locations for the Forum events.

MERF Scholarship

While at the AG, I also met Mary Wolfe who coordinates the MERF the Scholarship Program for MERF. We have since submitted our form to MERF as of July 24, 2009 (within the deadline) and I will update you as soon as we have confirmation. I will be speaking with Rudi about PR efforts for the Scholarship Publicity.

Newsletter

While at the AG, I made some contacts with LocSecs of larger groups who have outsourced the mailing of their newsletters. It appears that they are all much more expensive than what we do. However, I am still investigating some of the services and still getting more information from a few other people to investigate. Obviously, if we can keep the expenses down, improve quality, and outsource the “mailing” itself...that would be to our advantage. Still investigating these things.

Contact from Members

I received three e-mails from members or prospective members who asked about activities and one who suggested several activities for the Singles activities.

GLAAM Facebook Group

There are about 85 people on the GLAAM Facebook Group. The majority are people that I know personally and/or know to be GLAAM/Mensa members or have a connection to Mensa (one person is the parent of a prospective youth member of GLAAM). However, there are some other names on there that I don't know. We started using it to announce some of the Axion SIG events a few months back. I'm not sure that anything has come from it, but I have started both posting to the group

“Wall” and now sending out messages about upcoming events that are in public venues so that we can see how people respond to this other source of outreach. I am basically copying information out of the on-line calendar and taking out some of the contact information to post the event info. I then substitute my name or phone number as contact. I also refer them to the GLAAM webpage as a way to follow-up on the activities.

Officer Retreat

No new progress on this. I am still looking for a good day/location to have this. I had communicated with Heather briefly after the last meeting, but we don't have anything specifically planned at this point.

LDW

I mentioned to RVC Art at the AG that we were interested in an LDW. I need to follow up with him about that before next month.

B. Area Reports

Mid-City – LINDENBLATT needs reimbursement for the party.

San Fernando Valley – KAPNICK reported that the August party will be okay – to be held on the 8th – but September is disaster. Stratton Lindenmeyer will be out of the country, and there is trouble finding another place. October will be Oktoberfest, to be held at the same place as last year on the third Saturday.

Hi-Desert – [SUBMITTED] Secretary: The Desert Area Mensa Newsletter is out of money so we need to have the BOD subsidize our next six months at \$50 a month. The other events were lightly attended except we did have some attendance at the exotic Feline Compound event with at least four Mensans in attendance who brought along friends and family to join in the event. People had their own plans so there never was any coordination with those who could have gotten them in for free. The Petroglyph event will most likely be on Sunday, October 18th due to the testing schedule at China Lake. The road to the Petroglyphs passes through areas that can be unsafe during testing so no visits are permitted. Reminder, no foreign nationals can attend this event due to security requirements of the Navy. For more information <http://www1.iwvisp.com/martian/HDTUI/>.

C. Members-at-Large

Nikki Frey – FREY went to the Quarterly Forum, and stated that the Board needs to decide how much money to risk on an event.

D. Standing Committees

Gifted Youth – Gifted Youth is reorganizing along new age-group splits.

Membership – New Members’ Reception on the first Saturday, and orientation at the end of the month.

RG – Registration form is on-line, speakers are getting confirmed, marketing had a meeting.

Scholarship – We have good information.

E. Coordinators

Quarterly Forum – We created an intellectual event, but marketing was a challenge. Next time we could make use of Meetup.com. We lost \$1623.00. We were over-optimistic on the public’s response and the marketing failed. We should still do it again next year. The second one should be easier to sell. SAGRAYS noted that there are venues that are quite nice and will not charge for food, such as the Brand Library, and suggested that they be considered.

Data Officer – [SUBMITTED] Our experiment to distribute electronically the Aug/Sep/Oct newsletters is underway. The announcement list is set up and ready to go, and the people on the list have been notified about what’s going on. Only a couple of them have responded so far, but those responses have been very positive. Additionally, nobody so far has asked to be removed from the distribution due to concerns about the size of the newsletter as a PDF attachment. It will be interesting to see if that changes once the newsletter actually goes out.

Roster – [SUBMITTED] There hasn’t been a lot of progress toward getting the roster together since my last report, probably because we’ve all been busy with other things. We should probably schedule a set of milestones with deadlines so we get this done when it needs to be done.

It was noted that the roster is coming in September.

Calendar – [SUBMITTED] No news to report.

SIG - No news to report.

[SUBMITTED as “Hollywood Bowl Event Coordinator’s Report”] At one point, I had 90 people who wanted to come to the concert, but a number of cancellations -- all of them during the 24 hours before the show, and many of them on the night of the event -- dropped the number of tickets we actually gave away to 63, with 15 left unclaimed.

Most of those cancellations were from people who emailed or called to say they weren't coming after all; the number of people who simply failed to show up was relatively small.

I was disappointed to see so many last-minute cancellations, but those of us who were at the concert all had a great time. A number of people thanked me, either at the time or by phone or email afterward, and told me they had a great time. I think the whole experience was very successful, all things considered.

It has been suggested that we try charging people a minimal amount, like a dollar per ticket, so they feel they have a vested interest in showing up and so they won't ask for tickets casually that they aren't really sure they'll use. I like this idea.

It has also been suggested that we try doing more than one Bowl concert next year. Count me in.

Webmaster – [SUBMITTED] I'm happy to have received minutes from several past board meetings. I still need minutes from Oct 2008 and Mar 2009, however, before my collection is complete.

The 2010 RG page has been added to the website. Some parts are pretty much finished (e.g. registration information) , other parts are still a bit sparse, but it includes everything we know so far, and of course, more will be added as we continue to plan.

L.A.Mentary Editor – Back page for July had errors, but August passed SAGRAY's review.

Strategic Planning – FREY reported that she talked to some committee members, and talked about a clubhouse idea. The committee is having a lunch meeting after the Board meeting.

III. Old Business

A. Timely Receipt of Newsletters Discussion

SAGRAY said we are still investigating outsourcing the mailing. The New York and Chicago chapters outsource their mailing. We have one of the cheapest newsletters. It was noted that we could send out a bimonthly newsletter. ROBINETT said the newsletter would lose timeliness if that was done, and ELLIOTT agreed. FREY asked for space in the newsletter to publicize the mailing.

B. Electronic Balloting Discussion

There has been no additional information from the National office. TAYLOR asked if the National office would administer electronic balloting if we proceed with this. SAGRAY answered no. TALKOV stated that this would lead to costly media campaigns by candidates, and LINDENBLATT agreed. SAGRAY said people were already spending money on mailings in the last election, and no online balloting would make access even more limited for those without money to spend. Voter participation is 10%.

IV. New Business

A. 2009-2010 Proposed Budget Discussion

SAGRAY noted that National's subsidy will increase as members join over the course of the year. Last year the projected income was \$4,000 short. SAGRAY asked if we could get a more realistic projection, since this is money that should be spent on the membership, and we are not doing our financial duties if we are just socking this extra money away each year. TAYLOR said we can average the amount received over a number of years and make projections. KAPNICK said we should be fundraising. It was asked what the balance in the account was. TAYLOR replied \$35,000 as of this morning.

It was requested that this item continue as a Special Order for August

B. Reimbursement of Mid-City Area Party

SAGRAY noted that party hosts can just hand in their receipts to get reimbursed.

The party did not take money in.

C. Desert Area Mensa News Subsidy

Motion (ROBINETT/KAPNICK) to expend \$300 for the next six months of the Desert Area Mensa Newsletter.

WONG asked why Hi-Desert materials were not included in the general newsletter. ROBINETT said there was a population density issue. SAGRAY said there is good stuff in the DAMN, and it would be good to have it in the regular newsletter for all to see.

Motion passed 9-0-2.

V. Closing

A. Good of the Order

YU said he is exploring using Google Voice as an alternative to the current Mensaphone service provider. The benefit is that the service provides a free local telephone number and voicemail, which is sufficient for Mensaphone purposes.

WALKER announced that her son Case was accepted to U.C. Berkeley's School of Engineering.

ELLIOTT wished Sagray a happy day-after birthday.

B. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: passed 10-0-1.

Adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kai-An Yu
Secretary

Report submitted by Jonathan Carr

Jonathan Carr
1418 Maple St Apt D
Santa Monica, CA 90405

July 20, 2009

GLAAM
12021 Wilshire Blvd, #624
Los Angeles, CA 90025

RE: Report – First Annual Whootie Award, July 19, 2009

Dear Board of Directors:

This is my debriefing report regarding the Intellectual Leadership Award, a.k.a. the Whootie Award, given to Skip Rizzo on July 19, 2009. There were a couple of successes in this experiment, a couple of failures, and several lessons. I originally conceived of the award as a way to create an intellectual event, fill a higher-brow need that is currently going unfilled within the chapter's offerings, gain some good press for GLAAM, generate money for the Mensa Foundation, and attract new members.

It was definitely an intellectually fulfilling event. The presentation was great, and Skip Rizzo and his wife were both a delight. We also attracted 22 Mensa Members, most of whom I had never seen before. One of them said that he expected more events to be like this when he joined and was surprised when they weren't. A couple of people had never been to an event even though they had been members for years.

The lessons of course come when you try to reach beyond your comfort zone and do new things. Marketing offered the biggest lessons. I tried to do a press release early for the request for nominations only to be told by our PR guy that the charge would be \$450. So, I tried to do it myself for the sake of saving money. Later, our locsec Desiree Sagray straightened him out and now he knows that this is a volunteer organization, which means he works for free like the rest of us. Desiree also found out that the National Mensa Office has a list of media contacts in Los Angeles. Both of these lessons came only weeks before the event, so they are not of much use now, but they will be later.

Other modes of marketing that I used included emails directly to local academics, which was a complete failure. It turns out that academics get so many quack emails that the skepticism is impenetrable that way. In the future, a letter on Mensa Letterhead to the department chairs with a request that it be forwarded to faculty members would probably be a better approach.

A success came from Meetup.com, where I found many groups of people who are very interested in this kind of event. The cost was prohibitive for them, but they might be a source of new members if they were invited to a free monthly forum event. Indeed one of them came to the Whootie Award and left talking about taking the test and joining Mensa. I recommend that GLAAM farm these groups for members. If we opened our events to non-members and posted the events on the groups, it would help. The groups include: "I am a cool nerd", "Deep Thinkers", "I'm a Smart Ass", and "Smart Singles".

Financially, we lost money on the event. Total paid attendance was 24. The hotel cost was \$1991 and the award cost \$235.49, for a total cost \$2,226.49 and the receipts were \$603.46, so the net loss was \$1623.03. See the receipt details below.

Ticketing Option	# Sold	Base Price	Processing	<u>Online Sales Data</u>				
				Unit Total	Gross Charges*	Registration Fees (Total)	Processing Fees (Total)	Net Sales
General Public	1	\$ 35	\$1.99	\$36.99	\$36.99	(\$1.99)	(\$1.39)	\$33.61
Mensa Members	15	\$ 25	\$1.99	\$26.99	\$404.85	(\$29.85)	(\$15.15)	\$359.85
Total:								\$393.46

Among the online sales, three members were no-shows. One online order was a duplicate by Raulette Woods, who asked for, and received, a \$25 refund for one ticket, which is reflected in the Grand Total.

Ticketing Option	Number Sold	<u>Door Sales</u>		
		Price	Totals	
Member	8	\$ 25.00	\$ 200.00	
Non-Member	1	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	
Total:			\$ 235.00	
Grand Total:			<u><u>\$603.46</u></u>	

To close, instead of having a quarterly forum where we give out the Whootie Award, I think it would be better, with Board approval of course, to have an Annual Whootie Award and then return the Forum to a monthly event. The goal for the Whootie Award should continue to be a nice event in a nice venue, where we attract media attention and showcase local cutting edge research. As the annual event goes on, it will grow in prestige and will eventually pay for itself. The monthly Forum can try to attract local academics to a free event where we eat, drink, and discuss their research. The monthly forums can also provide a pseudo audition to the annual award.

Thank you for the opportunity to create the Whootie Award and to undertake this experiment. While we spent \$1600 on the event, we gained the knowledge to do it better

the next time, we brought out members who were otherwise inactive, and we laid the foundation for an event that GLAAM can put its name on.

Sincerely,

Jonathan A. Carr