

**Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa**  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom  
April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

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Area	Secretary	Delegate	Members-at-Large
Mid-City	vacant	vacant	[✓] Roy Ball
Coastal	[✓] To Meni	vacant	[✓] Brian Madsen
SFV	vacant	[✓] Alan Stillson	[ / ] Sam Moses
ELAC	vacant	[✓] Jonathan Elliott	[ / ] Andrea Nolan
Hi-Desert	vacant	vacant	[✓] Madeline Walker
Inland Empire	[✓] Wilbert Woo	[✓] Mark Carpenter	vacant

**Key:**

[✓] = present for entire meeting

[ / ] = present for portion

[X:#] = absent, with count (#) of consecutive absences

**Guests:** Jordan Albert Byrne, Jay Friedlander, Toni Hansen

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I. Opening

A. Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order by Chair Jonathan Elliott at 11:00am.

B. Approval of Agenda

- Meni moved to approve, Woo and others seconded, and the agenda was approved without objection.

C. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Elliott and Madsen offered four minor clarifying wording changes.
- Meni moved to approve as amended, Elliott seconded, and the minutes were approved without objection.

II. Reports

A. Executive Officers

1. Chair (Elliott)

- "I consulted with local Ombudsman Jay [Friedlander] and current Regional Vice Chair Rachel [Kibler] and former Regional Vice Chair Desiree [Wong, formerly Elliott], the last of whom was also a member of local and national Bylaws Committees, and they all say the same thing. And on reflection, I agree that I

was in parliamentary error last January to allow a contested Board election for the position of newsletter editor. It seemed at the time to be what the majority wanted and the most expedient way to get there, but apparently, it was improper. Our bylaws require that the Board must either approve or reject the Chair's appointee, and the Board has no authority in that situation to offer a substitute nomination. Discussion before the vote should make it clear whether or not the Chair has any backup appointees in case the first appointee is rejected. If the Board rejects that appointee, even after the Chair makes clear that she is not prepared to appoint anyone else, then we need to decide whether to operate without a newsletter or pursue some other course. But no more contested Board elections for the position of newsletter editor. That was wrong and I'm sorry that I went that way."

2. Executive Vice-Chair (Moses): no report

3. Administrative Vice-Chair (Madsen)

- "Some business in China has been sending me email telling me that they want to register Chinese domains – glaam.cn, glaam.org.cn, glaam.com.cn and so on – and they want to know if I have an objection. Of course I don't, but I'm letting you know, in case anybody here thinks that's a cause for concern."
  - In follow-up, Meni asked for details about the request, Carpenter recommended no response, Albert Byrne recommended forwarding the request to both GoDaddy and national Mensa, and Moses noted that "they're probably trying to get you to buy the domain, which you don't want" and recommended disputing the request, then forwarding it to national Mensa.

4. Secretary (Madsen)

- Updated the website with the latest approved minutes and agenda.
- Received from Elliott a number of Annual Business Meeting minutes which he (Madsen) hadn't previously had, with Elliott's request to post them to the website. Additionally, Madsen had other past minutes that he noted were not on the GLAAM website. Madsen intended to upload all of this to the website, but hadn't started yet.

5. Treasurer (Woo)

- Woo shared a spreadsheet showing income and expenses for the period May 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, attached to these minutes as [Glaam mar 31.xlsx](#).
- This report accurately summarizes RG income and expenses, although a detailed report of the RG was in progress but not yet complete.
  - Elliott noted that this was "our second most lucrative RG ever", and "that's a stupendous achievement."
- Albert Byrne asked for information about setting up the Ting Mobile account using the GLAAM debit card. He and Woo agreed to exchange invoices and set up monthly payments.
  - See also previous discussions on this topic in GLAAM Board meeting minutes from both December 2022 and January 2023.

## B. Area Reports

1. Mid-City: no report
2. Coastal
  - Meni stated that she had missed the deadline for submitting an election petition, and that she hoped she would be appointed at the May Board meeting. "And then I'll run next year for sure."
  - Rail the Mission trip is in progress. "I was finally able to get the group discount again."
  - A day trip to Catalina is planned "in the summer."
3. SFV
  - Stillson's planned trip to the Leonis Adobe Museum in Calabasas did not take place in March due to lack of response, and because Stillson was "under the weather" at the time. "I will be moving that [event] to May."
4. ELAC: no report
5. Hi-Desert: no report
6. Inland Empire: no report

## C. Members-at-Large

1. Ball
  - We have a CultureQuest<sup>®</sup> team. It is called "GLAAMorous".
  - Sent to all Board members a list of treasurer responsibilities compiled by then-Treasurer Bill Taylor in 2010.
2. Madsen
  - Visited our mailbox, found a receipt from Post Pack & Ship confirming Woo's recent payment for the cost of our mailbox rental.
3. Moses
  - Planned to attend Perry Lanaro's upcoming dinner in Santa Monica.
  - "Probably in May or June, I'm going to start a dinner group also in Santa Monica."
4. Nolan: no report
5. Walker
  - Attended the recent RG in Las Vegas "that they haven't had for 23 years." Walker reported that Cookie Bakke and [former GLAAM LocSec] Courtney Seiter were in charge of that RG.
  - Our storage unit is under new management with a new name, now StorQuest, and consequently, they weren't able to deposit our payment check because it was made payable to the previous owners. Walker has asked Woo to write them a replacement check.

## D. Committees

1. Awards Committee

- The tabulation of volunteer award points is complete.
- Member of the Year, Rookie of the Year, and one member advancing in the Hall of Fame are to be announced in the printed *L.A. Mentary* in May.
- "One of our volunteers earned this year the unofficial equivalent of a seventh star."
- "Because of more people reaching the advanced levels of our Hall of Fame, one possibility for streamlining is to increase the point requirement for each level from 75 to 100, but we hesitate to do so because that would mean removing 18 members from the bronze level. Still, it's a possibility if the incoming board wishes to consider it."

## 2. Diversity Committee

- Meni's plans for a social media campaign were planned to commence at her upcoming Easter break.
- "Next week, I'm taking up Judge Filer's offer to come visit him at the Compton courthouse."
- Meni also planned to reach out to "different professional organizations, requesting to speak at one of their board meetings later this year."
- "I've been working on a Mensa pathway for L.A. Unified students. L.A. Unified is very interested. There's a possibility there for us to reach thousands of students throughout L.A. County."
- Albert Byrne: "I'm interested in helping. What you're doing is something that I've been advocating for a long time, and I just didn't have the bandwidth to do it myself, so I'd like to help."

## 3. Elections Committee

- Friedlander: Ballots will be counted Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at noon at the Panera Bread in Santa Clarita.

## 4. Historian

- Elliott provided the following, earlier than scheduled on the agenda, in advance of the Finance Committee's report, because it had bearing on the Finance Committee's responsibilities.
- Elliott reported that he had completed cataloging boxes of historical documents obtained from the storage unit in February. That inventory is attached to these minutes as [Storage Inventory.pdf](#).
- There were no tax documents found in the storage unit, which Elliott reported promptly to the Finance Committee as soon as he had that information to report.

## 5. Finance Committee

- Moses: "Tax returns are in progress, hopefully to be done by the end of the month or so. We should also have a Finance Committee meeting maybe at the end of the month."

## 6. Gifted Youth Committee

- Meni reported:

- that a tubing event at Big Bear was canceled due to weather
- a next event at SpaceX in May, and
- an upcoming paintball event which didn't yet have a date.
- Meni: "Madeline and I want to start a group for very young children," meaning "seven and under." A married couple with two young children in Beverly Hills "are excited to host events for younger kids." Walker and Meni were hoping to see this take place in summer.

#### 7. Regional Gathering Committee

- Walker reported "two possible speakers for next year".
- Friedlander reported that a contract for next year with the hotel was not yet in place, but negotiations with the hotel had commenced. Another group wanted to hold an event at that hotel on the same weekend. The hotel is large enough to accommodate both groups' events concurrently, so the other event should not present a schedule conflict. "Hopefully we'll have a contract shortly and we'll email it to the Board," who would have a week to review it, at which point we'd sign it. Also, hopefully, this would happen in time to announce our next RG at the upcoming San Diego RG [over Memorial Day weekend], and in time for the June issue of *L.A. Mentary*, and if not by then, then in time for the upcoming Annual Gathering in July.

#### 8. Special Events Committee

- Discussions were underway, but there was nothing new to report.

### E. Coordinators

#### 1. Archivist

- Madsen stated that he was aware that he was responsible for updating the motions catalog, but hadn't. "I'll get that done."

#### 2. Calendar Editor

- Stillson: "Everything's been going smoothly. I would like to see more events."

#### 3. Circulation Manager

- Stillson: More and more people are getting the newsletter electronically rather than in print. Most recently, we mailed 862 issues.

#### 4. Data Officer

- Madsen responded to a request from Croatian Mensa who asked for help transferring a (former) GLAAM member's membership to that country.
- Madsen assisted David Fenig in contacting a voter whose vote was ineligible.
- Madsen has also been keeping track of membership changes due to the end of the membership year.
- Meni asked if GLAAM had a process in place to reach out to lapsed members. "Do we have someone that does that regularly?"
  - Madsen expressed his understanding that that was a responsibility of the

Membership Committee, which GLAAM did not have this year, and also that that was the responsibility of Area representatives, who should be acting in concert with the Membership Committee. Furthermore, Madsen said, it was the Data Officer's responsibility to give to Area representatives lists of people who have moved into or left their areas, on request. "Area representatives have not typically been asking me for that, but they can and I'm happy to give them that information when they ask."

- Meni responded: "I would like that for Coastal. If you can give me that information regularly, then I'll make sure to follow up."

#### 5. SIGHT

- Madsen read a report from Arlette Chew: "David Ilan enjoyed hosting two visitors from France overnight, and is expecting two visitors making an extensive US trip from Kentucky in May for two nights."

#### 6. Webmaster

- Elliott:
  - will add an "Elections" link to his redesigned homepage (see below).
  - noted that technical issues continue to prevent members-only access to certain pages; while that investigation continues, those pages are not password-protected.
  - amended the Volunteer Guidelines as discussed in our last Board meeting.
  - finished his draft of a new homepage to replace the one we have had, and invited others to review the draft. "I think you will find that the new format is more descriptive, more functional, and more inviting than the previous version." At the time of this report, hyperlinks on that draft homepage weren't yet linked to their respective pages, but this would follow shortly.

- 7. *L.A. Mentary*, Membership Committee, Ombudsman, Open Forum, Public Relations, Scholarships Committee, SIGs, Social Media, Testing Committee, and Young Ms all offered no report.

### III. Special Orders

#### A. Filling of Vacant Board Positions

- No nominations were offered.

#### B. Filling of Vacant Committee Chair Positions

- No nominations were offered.

#### C. Filling of Vacant Coordinator Positions

- No nominations were offered.

### IV. Unfinished Business

- There was no unfinished business.

### V. New Business

## A. Pre-printing approval of the GLAAM newsletter (Ball)

1. The motion under discussion: "Pre-printing approval of the GLAAM newsletter will be limited to the GLAAM newsletter editor, GLAAM newsletter circulation manager and if the circulation manager deems necessary the GLAAM ombudsman."
2. This item had been carried forward twice before due to shortness of time, and now finally came up for discussion, which lasted for 55 minutes.
3. The *tl;dr* gist of the following very long discussion is this: the motion as written contains language that some considered either unclear or else not serving to accomplish the objectives of its author, and in either case, not universally embraced; and meanwhile, paragraph B of the Newsletter Editor guidelines (in the Volunteer Guidelines document) was also considered somewhat unclear: aspects of that paragraph were either "fuzzy" regarding process or else no longer reflective of current practice. The following discussion led to an agreement that both the motion and the Volunteer Guidelines needed revision, but no determination was achieved as to how to reword either of them. The motion remained pending and on the agenda until interested parties can agree on proposed alternative phrasing.
4. The following are attempts to capture the main points of the discussion:
  - a. Elliott reported an email conversation with RVC Kibler, in which she gave her opinion that this motion would not be consistent with our bylaws, since the Board is the publisher of the newsletter and therefore has a right to review the newsletter before it is published, request changes, and even to stop publication "if it finds a big enough problem."
    - Ball responded that this motion does not prevent input from the Board, but states that because feedback from reviewers has been delaying the prompt delivery of the newsletter, someone must decide that it's time to stop receiving input from reviewers and move the issue to the printer. "So this clarifies what we've already understood, without interfering with any feedback coming to or from the Board members. And basically, this just codifies what we're already doing now. My whole point is that [...] my current motion [does not] exclude anybody from putting in information."
    - Elliott then asked Ball to explain the word "limited" in the text of the motion. "It sounds to me as though this motion *is* seeking to limit any other involvement. Am I reading the word 'limited' wrong?"
      - Ball's response sidestepped the word "limited" altogether. Instead, he said, "We need to focus on the word [*sic*] 'pre-printing approval'. This is to get the printed version on time to the printer and to the mail people. So that's the whole idea."
      - Woo also expressed concern about the word "limited". He said: "I'm concerned about [the] 'will be limited' words in this [motion]. To me that says just the Newsletter [Editor], the Circulation Manager, and the Ombudsman. I mean, that's it. The clear language of this proposed [motion is that] those are the three people and it precludes anybody else. I don't see how we can accept that. Especially since this is a publication of the Board. There's no way I could vote for this [motion] the way it's worded."

- b. Madsen recalled Elliott's report at last month's Board meeting that he had not had an opportunity to review the newsletter prior to publication and asked if he had been given that opportunity this time around.
- Elliott responded that he had had a conversation about that with RVC Kibler. He told her that he understood that this plan to involve the LocSec in the publication of the newsletter was a protocol that had been put in place when Gregory Williamson was LocSec, and which Elliott was attempting to continue. Kibler had responded to Elliott that that protocol was intended only for as long as we had an interim editor, and that once the Board decided to name a non-interim editor, it was not Kibler's intention to continue requiring LocSec involvement in the newsletter's publication.
- c. Stillson summarized the existing practice, which he believed was working well, which was for the Circulation Manager to proofread not only for typos but for potential red flags. "If you want to put it in a more specific language based on Rachel's feedback, I think a very rational thing would be that the Circulation Manager with his or her discretion should bring a potential red flag to the attention of the LocSec for further consideration, and go from there. What we want to do is get a happy medium between expediting [the timely publication of each issue], and also taking reasonable precautions not to look bad to a reader, which would mean looking bad to the public. This is the protocol that we've been recently using, I think it's been working pretty well. We haven't had any blow ups for a while, and I certainly want to keep it that way. If I see anything that might potentially cause a problem, I would surely want to bring it to the attention of whoever the LocSec is to get a second opinion on this."
- d. Madsen: "This question is basically for Roy. In Roy's own words, this motion codifies existing practice. Okay. So in other words, we're presenting a motion that says 'Keep doing what we've been doing'. But if that's true, why have this motion at all? What problem is this motion trying to solve? I don't see it. I don't see this motion as being necessary in any way, shape, or form, and I plan to vote against it. But I want to hear from Roy: why should I vote for it?"
- Ball responded that "This clarifies and codifies what we're already doing now because there's a fuzzy question as to who decides when we go to the printer. Somebody has to make the final decision. And that's what we're doing informally right now. This clarifies the point of when do we decide that it's time to go to the printer. And we've assigned the Circulation Manager the job to look for red flag issues and to bring that to the attention of the LocSec or the Board of the Ombudsman or the Editor or whoever needs to address those questions. Basically, this codifies what we're already doing."
  - Madsen responded: "And because it codifies what we're already doing now, it seems to me like we don't need it. I mean, why not just have a motion that says the sky is blue, except when it rains? What's the point? We have a motion in front of us that you're saying, in your own words, does what we already do, and does not change any of our existing behavior. Then why do we need it? Why shouldn't we vote it down on the basis that it is superfluous and unnecessary?"



- Elliott added: "According to Robert's Rules, a motion which maintains the status quo is out of order on its face and doesn't even need to be voted down. It shouldn't even be entertained."
  - Ball's response to this was that the Volunteer Guidelines are "fuzzy" with regard to when the newsletter goes to the printer.
  - Elliott suggested at this point that if the Volunteer Guidelines need to be clarified then we should clarify the Volunteer Guidelines, "replacing a current fuzzy guideline with a hopefully clearer statement." That way, "if we're actively changing something, if we're not changing our practice, we're at least changing the guidelines to meet the practice."
  - Elliott proposed an amendment to the motion to precede the language of the motion so that the motion begins: "We are replacing paragraph B. of the Newsletter Editor Guidelines with [colon]". He did not suggest wording to replace that paragraph, but rather proposed that we discuss how that paragraph should read. Moses seconded. Elliott asked for objection, heard none, and declared the amendment approved.
- e. Elliott asked the group for their general sense: "Do we feel that we should definitely have a step in the process where the LocSec or somebody else on the Board is always in the evaluation loop? Or do you want to go with Alan's suggestion, where Board members are invited only if the Circulation Manager sees a red flag?"
- During this discussion, Elliott had asked versions of this question three times, but no responses were offered the first two times because none were solicited. At this third request, Elliott collected responses in the form of raised hands.

This was not considered a formal vote in any sense, but rather an attempt to communicate the general sense of the members of the Board to Elliott and to each other.

- Madsen, Woo, Carpenter, and Walker raised hands to indicate that the Board, or a member of the Board, should always be in the loop as part of the publication of each issue.
  - The five other Board members, other than Elliott, raised hands to indicate that the Board should only be involved if the Circulation Manager sees an issue that he or she feels needs the Board's awareness.
  - Elliott concluded, "So I got a sense of the Board: the Board is divided."
- f. Discussion ensued around the idea of exploring alternative phrasings, and of what to do with the motion in the meantime. The general agreement was to keep the motion on the agenda as unfinished business, and in the meantime for interested persons to collaborate between meetings to find wording for the Volunteer Guidelines that would be generally satisfactory.

A. Good of the Order

- Madsen reminded Board members that our May meeting starts at 10:30 rather than 11:00, and lasts for two and a half hours rather than the usual two.
- Ball: "We do recognize and appreciate all the hard work that Jonathan goes through, or any LocSec, including Jonathan. The two toughest jobs on the Board [*sic*] are LocSec and Editor [*sic*] because they have the most to do and we appreciate all the hard work that both the Editor and the LocSec are putting in to try to make it smooth."
- Meni noted that she would be late to our next meeting due to a work-related schedule conflict. Elliott asked her to confirm her willingness to be appointed as Coastal Secretary, as Diversity Committee Chair, and as a member of the Gifted Youth Committee. She confirmed a willingness to continue in those roles.

B. Adjournment

- Moses moved, Carpenter seconded, and Elliott declared the meeting adjourned at 12:55pm.

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*Respectfully submitted,  
Brian Madsen, GLAAM Secretary*