

Welcome to StaRGazing 2008, Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa's Regional Gathering! We're delighted to have you here with us this year, and we're confident that we have plenty of offerings that will make your time with us truly enjoyable. Please peruse this introduction and the remainder of the program to identify the discussions, entertainment, food, programs, and games that we are offering this year.

We'd like to ask that you keep a few things in mind as you navigate through the RG this weekend:

**Registration** – All people registered for the RG must either have their own Membership Number on file with us or, if a non-member, the name and Membership Number of an RG-attending, sponsoring Mensa member. All walk-in registrants as well as pre-registrants who did not include this information with their registration will be required either to show their membership card or provide name and Membership Number of a current member who is registered for the RG. Your cooperation with this requirement, necessary for insurance purposes, is appreciated.

**Registration Hours** - The Registration Desk is located outside of the Santa Barbara Room and will be open according to the below schedule. If the Registration Desk is closed, ask someone to track down Jared Levine or Desiree Sagray, and we'll be able to help you out. ***Please note that you cannot enter the Program Rooms or Hospitality without your badge.***

**Friday 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM**

**Saturday 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

**1:30 PM – 6:00 PM**

**Parking** – Although there is a limited amount of free street parking available, parking at the hotel will incur a small charge. For those who have a hotel room, your parking charge will appear on your bill and is \$5/day, which includes in-and-out privileges. For those commuting to the RG, the charge for parking is \$3 per day and does not include in-and-out privileges.

**Attire** – casual for the majority of the event, but you must be clothed in more than just undergarments! Saturday is our Posh Banquet with Keynote Speaker Thom Hartmann, and black-tie is requested for the evening.

**Program Rooms** – Our primary Program Rooms will be the Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and Santa Inez rooms (when combined, these are referred to as the Mission Room), located on the back side of the Conference Center section of the hotel, which is on the back side of the hotel when entering from Sepulveda Blvd. We will also be using the Board Room and Conference Room, directly accessible from the hotel's central courtyard. The Hospitality and Games Room will be on the first floor of the South Tower near the swimming pool (room number TBA). Please note: due to the hacienda nature of the conference center, most of the direct routes among the rooms we are using involve two steps or split-level pathways. However, there are ways to get from any of the rooms using nothing but ramps or flat surfaces. Please advise us if this is an issue and notify us if you require assistance navigating around the RG.

**Room Hours** - Hospitality will be open by 4:00 PM on Friday and 8:00 AM on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. The Program Rooms will officially close at 1:00 AM each day. However, Hospitality/Games will remain open round-the-clock for continuing conversation and games.

**Hospitality / Game Room** – This year, we will be using one of the hotel's Executive Suites in the South Tower for both Hospitality and Games. As this is a standard (although quite spacious) hotel guest room, we won't know the actual room number until the RG starts. There will be a sign at Registration indicating the final assignment of the suite number for Hospitality and Games.

**Meals** – This year, the hotel meal has been included in the cost of registration — there is no separate package. The Saturday evening banquet will be: Roast Pork Loin with Chipotle Apple Sauce; Chicken Marsala; Vegetarian Pasta entrée; Caesar, Greek, Oriental, and Tomato Mozzarella Salads; Assorted Cheese Tray; Relish Tray; Sliced Seasonal Fresh Fruit Platter; Seasonal Vegetables; Rolls and Butter; Coffee, Tea, and Milk; and German Chocolate Cake. Afterwards, our Keynote Address will be given by talk radio personality, Thom Hartmann.

**Chocolate Tasting** – A small fee (\$3-\$5) may be charged at the door, though we are doing our best to avoid that. Supplies are limited. In order to guarantee seating, please RSVP to Danila at [doder@usc.edu](mailto:doder@usc.edu). For those that don't RSVP before the RG, please add your name to the standby list which will be at the Registration Desk.

**Beer Tasting** – Space is limited to 20 participants, so RSVP to [LAMensaRG@gmail.com](mailto:LAMensaRG@gmail.com) by Feb. 13, otherwise make sure to add your name to the sign-up sheet at the Registration Desk upon arrival. People will be added in on a first-come, first-served basis.

**BYOB Wine Tasting** – The name really says it all. Is the Pub Crawl not your scene, but you would still enjoy imbibing a few spirits in good company? Bring your favorite reasonably priced bottle to share on Friday night.

**Mystery Activity** – What is it? What will we need to do? Where do we go and who do we talk to? Make sure you get your instructions sheet, with the answers to these and other questions, at the Registration Desk. If you didn't get one before you walk away, make sure to come on back quickly. You don't want to miss out on this unique, fun activity. Please note: Your teams must consist of the minimum number or more, and no person can be on more than one team. All team members must be registered for the RG at time of check-in for the Mystery Activity. This activity portion will run through Saturday evening with results presented on Sunday. Not all team members need to be registered for Sunday to participate. Prizes will be awarded for winning entries.

**Poetry Reading** - Join us for some dramatic reading of possibly poignant (and possibly pornographic?) poetry. Whether you're a poet yourself or whether you just have an appreciation of the art form and wish to share your favorite published work, all are welcome. All will be given an opportunity to recite their favorite poems. (No epic poems, in full, please.) Host TBA.

**Open Mic** – Also, on Sunday night before the Stand-Up Spectacular begins, we'll be having an open mic. Sing, play an instrument, tell jokes, make a political statement, poetry slam, whatever. Make sure you bring your material with you to the RG.

**Special Events** – Please note the following:

**Silent Auction to benefit MERF:** On Saturday evening, between 9:00–11:00 PM, you will have the opportunity to peruse the items in the Santa Clara Room and enter bids for your choices. Bidding closes promptly at 11:00 PM! Checks for your tax-deductible donations from winning bids will be collected between 11:00–11:30 PM. Receipts will be given upon request. Remember, you're not just buying these items, you are DONATING TO CHARITY; so be generous with your bids. Not unlike Chicago elections, bid early, often, and in high amounts.

**Monday Morning Media Exchange:** Please bring your books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, periodicals, and other media to the RG on Monday morning. Between 8:30-9:30 AM, attendees will be able to check in their trades and receive vouchers for exchange outside of the Board Room. Between 9:30-10:00 AM, redeem your vouchers as you peruse the items from other attendees and choose your "new to you" replacements!

**Money and Prizes** – In your packet will be some Mensa bucks. Please see the **Mensa Bucks FAQ** for further information.

**What's Around?** – Looking to do a little something outside the confines of the RG and the hotel? Pick up a sheet from Registration with lots of suggestions. Included will be the various amenities available within the Hacienda Hotel.

**Smoking** – Those from out-of-state may be unaware: smoking is not permitted in any public rooms, including Hospitality. Smoking is permitted only at designated outside areas.

**Volunteers** – As with every RG, we have plenty of volunteer opportunities! Please see the Registration Desk for sign-up sheets for the specific needs that have not yet been met. Also consider pitching in if you notice something that could help us out. Even better would be if you sign up with us in advance of the RG – just send an e-mail to LAMensaRG@gmail.com to let us know your preference(s) for task (Hospitality, Registration, other) and day/time of shift (preferably in 2-hour increments).

Please take the time to note the names on the back of the Program after you arrive. These are the 2008 RG Committee members and they have worked exceptionally hard this year. Please take the time to let them know that you appreciate their participation.

Last, but certainly not least, we thank you for coming to StaRGazing 2008 and showing us your support. We hope you have a wonderful time!

*Desiree E. Sagray*

**2008 GLAAM RG Chair**