

# Mommy Letter

for the

## 2011 Greater LA Area Mensa Regional Gathering

### Welcome

The GLAAM RG planning committee welcomes you to StaRGazing, the 2011 Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa Regional Gathering, February 18-21, 2011. Watch for features that have been changed or added in our attempt to offer the best GLAAM RG ever. If you have questions or problems that cannot be handled on the spot, find co-chairs Desiree Sagray or Madeline Walker, who will usually be at the Registration Desk, and we will try to resolve the issue. To get the most out of your experience, we recommend you take every opportunity to walk up to a Mensa person you don't know and introduce yourself!

### Location

The 2011 Greater LA Mensa Regional Gathering will be held at:  
Warner Center Marriott - Woodland Hills  
21850 Oxnard Street  
Woodland Hills, California 91367  
(818) 887-4800

#### Directions:

**From Glendale-Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley:** Take the 134 Fwy West, which becomes the 101 Fwy West. Exit Topanga Blvd North, turn right. Turn right onto Oxnard Street. The hotel is on the right-hand side.

**From the San Fernando Valley and central Los Angeles:** Take the 101 Fwy West past the 405 Fwy. Exit Topanga Blvd North, turn right. Turn right onto Oxnard Street. The hotel is on the right-hand side.

**From Santa Monica, South Bay, San Diego and Orange County:** Take the 405 Fwy North to the 101 Fwy West. Exit Topanga Blvd North, turn right. Turn right onto Oxnard St. The hotel is on the right.

The hotel does not provide shuttle service to airports.

**Public Transit:** From the North Hollywood Metro Red Line stop, take the Metro Orange Line rapid bus to its western terminus at Warner Center. You are now about 1.5 blocks from the hotel! The Orange Line runs from early morning until about midnight – check schedules first to ensure you make your connections.

### Hotel Reservations

Register for your luxurious hotel room directly through the Warner Center Marriott (818-887-4800 or <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/laxwc-warner-center-marriott-woodland-hills/?toDate=2/21/11&groupCode=menmena&fromDate=2/18/11&app=resvlink>). The GLAAM RG rate is only \$109 for either Single or Double. Mention "Mensa." Room rates were guaranteed through 1/28/11. Last year the hotel extended the deadline, so try it and maybe you'll get lucky. Please note that we have programs until 11:00 pm Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. After that, relax in the StaRGazers Lounge till the wee hours.

There is Internet access in the rooms for a fee.

### On-Site RG Registration and Check-in Times

Friday 3:00 – 8:30 pm

Saturday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm & 1:00-5:30 pm

Sunday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm & 1:00-2:00 pm

Pick up your badge, schedule, and other information at the Registration Desk. Sign-up sheets for activities will be available there. The main Hospitality room will be open 24 hours a day. The StaRGazers Lounge upstairs will be open into the early morning hours. The Game Room will have a schedule posted.

## **RG Registration Rates**

To register a friend onsite, please bring cash or check. We do not take credit cards onsite.

- Full registration is \$129 after Feb. 1st and at the door
- Two-day (Fri/Sat or Sun/Mon) registration is \$74 after Feb. 1st and at the door
- Half-price registration for ages 17 and under

## **Activities at the RG that Require Extra Fees**

- Pub Crawl (\$5 for van, plus drinks)
- Parking in the hotel parking structure (see Parking section)
- Tastings (See Tastings section)
- Meals in Hospitality for nonmembers who took the Mensa Admission Test on Sunday morning, and for children participating in Kids' Track only, along with their parents/guardians (\$4 per child under 18 and \$5 per adult per meal)
- Any offsite meals, including Sunday brunch at the Marriott
- Mensa Testing (See Mensa Testing section)
- Any books or products sold by speakers

## **Dots and Stickers on the Badges**

Hug dots are available for attendees to place on their badges. Green indicates "Wants and gives hugs", Yellow indicates "Ask first" and Red indicates "Don't hug me". Stars indicate tastings or other events for which you have registered.

## **Hospitality**

Hospitality will be held in the Calabasas Room. When not being prepared for or in use for another program, the Ventura I Room across the hallway will serve as overflow seating for Hospitality.

Friday dinner; Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday breakfast, lunch and dinner; and Monday breakfast are included in the registration fee. Breakfasts will be Continental (coffee, milk, juice, bagels, spread, muffins, bread, fruit), with the possible additions of hardboiled eggs and oatmeal. Friday dinner will be pizza and salad, Saturday and Sunday lunch will be meat-and-cheese deli sandwiches, Saturday dinner TBA, Sunday dinner will be brought in from El Pollo Loco (chicken, tortillas, salsa, rice and beans). Coffee, decaf and tea will be available at or shortly after all meals.

Beverages (sodas, water), peanut butter and jelly, bread, fruit, some fresh veggies, and sweet and salty snacks will be available round-the-clock in Hospitality. Wine, beer, and a smaller selection of snacks will be available in the StaRGazers Lounge upstairs.

Filtered water will be available in the conference area.

Please keep all food and drink, except water, in the Hospitality room, the Hospitality overflow room (Ventura I Room), and the StaRGazers Lounge. This is required by our contract with the hotel.

Vegetarian items will be available at all meals. Contact Danila at [doder@usc.edu](mailto:doder@usc.edu) before Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, with any questions about vegetarian dining.

## **Tastings**

The RG proudly offers five low-fee member-selected tastings. Sign up early to guarantee a spot. Sign-up sheets will also be available at the Registration Desk.

- \$8 Cheese tasting
- \$5 Chocolate tasting
- \$12 Liqueur tasting
- \$12 Rum tasting
- \$10 Wine tasting
- \$30 Liqueur/Rum/Wine tastings combo

## **StaRGazers Lounge**

The Lounge will be located in a suite on the 16th or 17th floor. Two-Buck Chuck wine, craft beer, and snacks will be available and included in your registration fee. (You are welcome to contribute food and drink, however!) Please keep all alcoholic beverages inside the Lounge.

The Lounge will be open into the early morning hours. If you can help out by volunteering to babysit the Lounge for a while, please sign up at the Registration Desk.

Recycling will be available in the Lounge.

Please keep the Lounge clean and tidy.

Note: two bedrooms adjacent to the Lounge will have RG Committee members sleeping.

## **What to Bring**

Dress for all RG programs is casual. As the conference rooms can be cool, bring a sweater or light jacket. The hotel has a pool and fitness center for use by hotel guests. Bring clothing you can move in for the dance class on Sunday.

Bring items to place on the media exchange table, and a bag to take home your treasures from the media exchange.

If you plan to participate in the Coffeehouse, bring poems and/or musical instruments.

Bring your limerick submissions to the limerick contest.

Bring your own water bottle and coffee mug to cut down on waste from disposables.

## **BYOB Friday**

On Friday night, bring your own bottle of wine to the Lounge to compare and share with others. This offers more variety than the Two-Buck Chuck provided.

## **Mensa Testing**

The admission test to Mensa will be offered in the conference area from approximately 9:00-11:00 am Sunday morning. Please sign up at least one week IN ADVANCE by contacting Dave Felt at <[feltdd@verizon.net](mailto:feltdd@verizon.net)>, and include the words "MENSA EXAM" in the subject line, or leave a message at 626-355-8315. Dave will send you details. For more information, see <http://www.dfe.net/mensa.html> . Douglas Aberg will proctor this test.

Because the testing requires a quiet environment, only quiet programs are offered until 11:00 am Sunday, and the Game Room will not be open until testing is over.

## **How to Meet People**

The RG offers many opportunities for meeting people. These include:

- Singles Mingle!
- New Member Reception
- Gen X/Y Meet & Greet & Pub Crawl
- GLAAM Annual Meeting
- Meet & Greet for members of the Triple Nine Society (TNS) or the International Society of Philosophical Enquiry (ISPE)
- Meet with Art Mattson, the American Mensa Committee's Region 9 Vice Chair

More ways to meet people: volunteer at Registration or Hospitality, introduce speakers, perform at the Coffeehouse, or hang out in the StaRGazers Lounge. Furthermore, the Mensa Bingo form available at Registration will give you an excuse to ask other people probing questions.

More ideas for meeting people: If you liked (or didn't like) a particular presentation, ask someone else what they thought of it. If you see an empty seat at a lunch table, sit down and introduce yourself. For easy interaction, go to a game where everyone participates. Find a great opening line, like, "I haven't seen you at a GLAAM RG before!"

## **Game Room**

Game maven Michael Wong has generously offered to loan some of his board and card games to the RG. Please treat the games gently and return all pieces to the box. The game room will be open most of the time. See schedule posted outside the Game Room. It will be closed Sunday morning until 11:00 am.

## **Media Exchange**

Please bring your unwanted media to swap with others: books, magazines, CDs, VHS tapes, etc. Leave them on the designated media exchange table in the hallway near the 2nd floor elevators. Please do NOT bring magazines, textbooks, or moldy/smelly books. You do not have to bring something to take something. Leftovers will be donated to charity.

## **On-time**

We will try to start all events on time. We have a full schedule. Please be seated at the activity of your choice before the start time.

## **Speakers/Programs**

At most times we will have two or three speakers presenting, plus games, tastings, and other activities. Please fill out comment forms for each speaker to help us with future planning. To find out about the speakers, go to [www.glaam.us.mensa.org/rg/2011](http://www.glaam.us.mensa.org/rg/2011) , or check your schedule booklet when you arrive.

Programs are subject to change, even after the program book has been printed! Please check with the Registration Desk for the most up-to-date schedule.

## **Pub Crawl**

The chauffeured Pub Crawl Friday night is only \$5 (for the van) plus your drinks. Visit neighborhood pubs selected by discriminating Mensans and crawl back to the hotel in the wee hours of Saturday morning. The Pub Crawl van will depart at 8:00 pm from the hotel front lobby.

The Pub Crawl is preceded by the Gen X/Y Meet & Greet as well as other programs.

## **Friday Night Beatnik Coffeehouse**

Bring a musical instrument to play or a CD to sing along with. Bring a poem to declaim and your best attitude. Pick-a-poem from available Allen Ginsberg or Jack Kerouac books. Host Alan Stillson will keep things moving and will read the submitted limericks for the "What does this photo say to you in limerick form?" contest. He will also give a filk music performance. (If you like sci-fi, science and social musical satire, you'll love it.) Sing along to Peter, Paul and Mary; Bob Dylan and more. Black tights, berets, and bongos are welcome.

## **Chess Tournament**

Sign up before 9:15 am Sunday morning near the Registration table for the Chess Tournament to give our chess organizer, Jonathan Elliot, time to set up the challenges. Jonathan will start promptly at 9:30 am. There will be awards for the winners. Please bring your own chess set if possible.

## **Games and Tournaments**

**Boggle Tournament:** Boggle is a game somewhat similar to Scrabble except that letter cubes are shaken out at random and everyone works off the same set of letters. Words can be made in virtually any direction and each round takes a couple of minutes rather than a couple of hours. We will play in a round-robin format and ultimately declare a champion.

**Carnelli:** The classic Mensa word-association game referencing movies, music, books, and whatever else the capricious and arbitrary host will allow.

**Dr. IQ Trivia:** The audience answers and asks trivia questions.

**Lawyer Games:** Discuss and solve lateral thinking puzzles. Each mystery is stated in a couple minutes, and the host can only answer “Yes”, “No”, or “Not Relevant” to the questions that can lead to a solution.

**Original Interactive Word Games** by puzzle master Alan Stillson.

**Time’s Up / Colander:** In the first round, you can say or do virtually anything to give your teammates a clue about the selected word/phrase. In the second round, you’re limited to one word plus gestures and humming. Final round is strictly humming and pantomime.

**Werewolves and Villagers:** Two teams try to kill each other off. Lie about your identity, accuse other players of being a Werewolf, and figuratively kill other players! Each round lasts 30 minutes. Eight players minimum, ages 9 and up. Please arrive on time to hear the game rules. Quiet observers are welcome.

### **Murder Mystery**

Each player will receive a character card representing one of the characters in the video. Your host will then present a one-hour video of a Murder Mystery. The video will be stopped three times for players to question each other and try to discover vital information to help them draw conclusions and discover the killer. Total playing time is 1½-2 hours. Maximum 12 players per session. Check out the ‘80’s fashions!

### **Sunday Kids' Track**

- Cost is \$20 per child. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult in the room; youth 13-17 must have an adult on the premises and a cell phone number available.
- Kids' Track includes programs from 11:00 am to 5:30 pm Sunday, with more optional morning and evening activities (see below).
- Please note that meals are NOT included in the \$20 price for children and their parents attending only Kids' Track, but Hospitality meals may be purchased at the Registration table: adults - \$5, kids under 18 - \$4.
- Kids registering for Sunday's Kids' Track who hold a full-event or a two-day Sun/Mon registration do not need to pay extra for Kids' Track activities or meals. They are included in the registration price.
- Kids are welcome at all Mensa lectures unless otherwise notified.

### **Kids' Track Schedule**

#### Kids' Track -

- 11:00-12:00 The Planetary Society presents Seeing Light: Prisms, Lightwaves, and the Sky  
12:00-1:00 Buy Hospitality lunch at Registration desk or elsewhere in the hotel on your own  
1:00-1:45 Charades 101 for Beginners  
1:45-2:00 Rock Paper Scissors tournament  
2:00-3:30 Lawyer Games (Lateral Thinking Puzzles)  
3:30-5:30 Werewolves and Villagers (open to adults and kids ages 9 and up, 8 people minimum)

#### Optional morning activities -

- 9:30-12:00 Chess tournament (all ages – sign up by 9:15 am)  
9:30-10:30 Should you have an exotic pet? (no animals will be brought in)  
11:00-12:00 Reinventing yourself for success (for adults and teens)  
10:30-12:00 Mental Math: Making Math Fun for Everyone (for adults/parents and teens)  
11:00 am Game Room opens

#### Optional afternoon/evening activities –

- 6:45 – 7:45 Dance lesson (open to children)  
7:15 – 8:15 Sing-along  
8:00 – 9:15 Music & Science – Left Brain & Right Brain in Harmony

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are always welcome. Please contribute just one or two hours out of about 70 hours available. Help out in Hospitality, host in the StaRGazers Lounge, greet or introduce speakers, or help break down on Monday morning. Sign up at Registration. The RG is conceived, created and run entirely by volunteers. Many hands make light work. You will earn the committee's undying gratitude for helping out.

## **Smoking**

The hotel interior is non-smoking. There are smoking areas outside.

## **Accessibility**

The hotel and the conference area are wheelchair-accessible. Service animals are permitted indoors for people with disabilities.

## **Parking**

Parking in the hotel structure is a \$6 day rate (regular hotel rate is \$13/day) or \$9.00 overnight rate with in-and-out privileges for attendees who are staying in the hotel. There is some street parking available behind the hotel.

## **Internet Access**

There is no Internet access in the conference area. The hotel offers free wireless in the main lobby area (including at the Starbucks). The hotel offers high-speed Internet access in the hotel rooms for a fee.

## **Restaurants**

The Warner Center Marriott has several restaurants, including Breeze, which offers a Sunday brunch from 11:00 am-2:00 pm for \$25 plus tax and tip for adults. Price for brunch is beyond our control and subject to change. Reservations for brunch are up to those interested. To arrange a group, pick a time and start a sign-up sheet near the Registration Desk.

The hotel is near a large mall with many restaurants, and many other restaurants are a short car drive away. A local map will be available at the Registration Desk.

## **Tipping**

Suggested tipping rates are: 15-20% of restaurant tabs, \$1-\$3 per bag to bellman/porter, \$1/round per drink, \$2-\$3 to housekeeper for each night of stay.

## **Photography**

The RG Committee may be taking photographs of the attendees for publicity/posting to the GLAAM website. Please let the photographer know if you do not wish to be photographed.

If you wish to take photos, ask permission of the people in the photograph first. Please do not take pictures of children at the RG unless it is restricted to your own child or you have permission from their parent/guardian. No videos are permitted at the burlesque show.

## **Food sale**

Sale of unused food items and paper goods will be at approximately 11:00 am Monday in the StaRGazers Lounge and/or Hospitality. Please bring cash. If you are interested, please notify Hospitality Chair Bryan Willis onsite as soon as possible. Great bargains!

## **2012 GLAAM RG**

If you would like to participate in the planning of the 2012 RG, or would like to present a topic there, or know someone who might be a good speaker, please inform the Registration Desk.