

**Mommy Letter**  
for the  
**2012 Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa Regional Gathering**

**Welcome:**

Welcome to StaRGazing 2012, February 17-20, 2012. We have a huge selection of speakers and activities this year. In general (or especially if you want to sign up early for any of the “ATTENTION” grabbing activities below) you might want to go to: [www.glaam.us.mensa.org/rg/2012](http://www.glaam.us.mensa.org/rg/2012) for the schedule and list of speakers, games and events.

If you have questions or problems, find co-chairs Desiree Sagray or Madeline Walker (usually at the Registration Desk) or any other committee member (identified by their “Ask Me” ribbons) to help resolve the issue. To get the most out of your experience, please take every opportunity to walk up to an RG attendee and introduce yourself!

**ATTENTION!**

GLAAM will hold a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Recognition Awards Celebration on Saturday evening. Hors d’oeuvres will be available, and no-host cocktails may be purchased. Members and guests who are not registered at the RG may attend this Quinquagenary Celebration for \$10 per person. Registration starts around 7 p.m. Invite your friends who cannot attend the full RG!

On Saturday morning, Jennifer Venola and Harry Mallory will present the National Rifle Association’s “Refuse to be a Victim” program. There is a cost of \$6 per person and a limit of 15 attendees. To reserve a space for the NRA program, let us know as soon as possible.

Stewart Farquhar has a special offer to attendees of his interactive Saturday course, “Why They Toss Your Screenwriting Masterpiece.” Mr. Farquhar will review the first page of each qualifying attendee for free (normally \$75) with on-page notes for all those who commit to attending his course by Monday prior to the RG. Further, during class he will draw for five (5) free on-site 10-page consultations. All attendees are encouraged to bring their first ten to class. To qualify for the first page review, send your name and phone number and attach your first and title page to: [LAMensaRG@gmail.com](mailto:LAMensaRG@gmail.com) by 6:00 p.m. Monday, Feb. 13.

On Saturday afternoon following her presentation and continuing to Sunday if requested by enough attendees, Rosemary the Celtic Lady will offer personal “Readings” for a fee.

Sunday late morning, be ready to learn Belly Dancing lead by Ronda Wood. – She recommends some sort of comfortable clothing and shoes on the feet.

Sunday evening Improv Games is an occasion for costume dress-up. Bring your favorite fake finery, fantasy or funky furnishings for a fun festivity. Get ready to get down! Since we are “Flashing Back” to the time that GLAAM was started – feel free to pull out those wardrobe wowsers from 1962!

Bring books and other media for the Media Exchange Table!

Bring a smile and a willingness to say “Hi!” to a stranger who looks like they could use a friendly greeting. Each of you can be an ambassador to new attendees – even if you are one yourself!

**Location:**

Warner Center Marriott - Woodland Hills  
21850 Oxnard Street (Second Floor)

Woodland Hills, California 91367  
(818) 887-4800

### **Driving Directions:**

From the Los Angeles downtown and San Fernando areas take the 101 Freeway West, go about 6 miles past the 405 Freeway. Exit Topanga Blvd North. Go about ½ mile, turn right onto Oxnard Street. Go about 500 feet. The hotel is on the right-hand side.

### **Other Transportation:**

**From LAX to the Warner Center Marriott:** “Shuttle 2 LAX” goes between LAX and Woodland Hills. Arrange tickets at <http://shuttletolax.com/> First person \$20, \$11 for each person with them, each way.

**Other Shuttle services to and from LAX or Burbank/Bob Hope Airport include:**

<http://www.supershuttle.com> - Super Shuttle

<http://primetimeshuttle.com> - Prime Time Shuttle

<http://www.rrshuttle.com> - Roadrunner Shuttle

<https://goairportshuttle.com> - Go Airport Shuttle

**Public Transit:** 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. Get directions at <http://www.metro.net/> .

The Warner Center Marriott does not provide shuttle service to airports or other destinations.

### **Hotel Reservations:**

Register for your luxurious hotel room through the Warner Center Marriott (818-887-4800) or: <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/laxwc?groupCode=menmena&app=resvlink&fromDate=2/16/12&toDate=2/20/12> . Wireless High Speed Internet is available in the public lobby areas for free, and in the guestrooms 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

Saturday Evening 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Sunday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm & 1:00-3:00 pm

Pick up your badge, schedule, and other information at the Registration Desk. Sign-ups for tastings and other activities will be available there. The main Hospitality room will be open 24 hours a day. The Game Room will have a schedule posted. We have programs until late on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. After that, relax upstairs in the StaRGazers’ Lounge till the wee hours.

### **RG Registration Rates:**

To register onsite, please bring cash or check. We do not take credit cards onsite. After February 1<sup>st</sup> and at the door, registration costs are:

- Full registration - \$129
- Two-day (Fri/Sat or Sun/Mon) registration - \$75
- Half-price registration for ages 17 and under
- Super registration (includes registration, pub crawl and all five tastings) - \$169

### **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”. There is no formal definition for

Blue dots in GLAAM. Wear at your own peril! Colored stars indicate tastings or other events for which you have registered.

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

- Pub Crawl (\$5 for van, plus drinks)
- Award Celebration Saturday evening for non-RG attendees - \$10
- Tastings (See Tastings section)
- Children arriving only for Kids' Track on Sunday - \$20 (includes parents who stay with child)
- Sunday Dinner in Hospitality for families participating in Kids' Track **only** (\$4 per child 17 and under, and \$5 per adult)
- National Rifle Association "Refuse to be a Victim" seminar - \$6 (see above)
- Personal "Readings" by Rosemary the Celtic Lady (price TBA)
- Mensa Testing (See Mensa Testing section – must be pre-reserved)
- Any offsite meals, including at restaurants in the Marriott
- Parking Fees in the Parking structure or other places
- Any books or products sold by speakers

**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 to four 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/2012](http://www.glaam.us.mensa.org/rg/2012), 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.

**Hospitality/Meals/Beverages:**

Hospitality meals and snacks will be in the Calabasas Room. When not being used for another program, the Ventura III Room across the hallway will serve as overflow seating for Hospitality.

Meals included in the registration fee include Friday dinner; Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner; Saturday evening hors d'oeuvres; Sunday breakfast, lunch and dinner; and Monday breakfast. Breakfasts will be Continental (i.e. coffee, milk, juice, bagels, schmeer, 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 is Thai, 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 III Room), and the StaRGazers' Lounge. This is required by our contract with the hotel.

Vegetarian items will be available at all meals. Contact Desiree at [dezlaw@aol.com](mailto:dezlaw@aol.com) before Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, with any questions about vegetarian dining or other dietary restrictions.

**Tastings:**

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

- \$8 Cheese tasting
- \$5 Chocolate tasting
- \$10 Aperitifs tasting
- \$12 Whiskey tasting
- \$12 “Off the Wall” Alcohol tasting
- \$30 All Alcohol tastings combo

### **StaRGazers’ Lounge:**

The Lounge will be located in a suite on the 17th floor. 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 (required in our hotel contract!)

The Lounge will be open throughout most of the event unless a volunteer is not available to staff it. If you can help out by volunteering to babysit the Lounge for a while, please sign up at the Registration Desk.

Please bring any game(s) you would like to play in the Lounge as the games in the Game Room may not be brought upstairs.

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 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 belly dancing class on Sunday.

Bring early 60’s themed costumes to wear Sunday evening at the Improv Games.

Bring items to place on the Media Exchange Table, and a bag to take home the treasures you find.

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

Bring any game you might wish to inflict on your fellow attendees.

### **BYOB Friday:**

On Friday night, bring your own bottle of wine to the StaRGazers’ Lounge to compare and share with others. This offers more variety than the beverages 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. If you have friends who have been thinking of taking the test, let them know - this would be a good time, since they get to attend the RG the rest of that day.

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:

- New Member Reception
- Gen X/Y Meet & Greet & Pub Crawl
- GLAAM Annual Meeting
- Bunco Mixer
- Meet with Clark Jones, the American Mensa Committee’s Region 9 Vice Chair

*More ways to meet people:*

Hang out in the StaRGazers Lounge.

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!"

Volunteer at Registration or Hospitality or to introduce Speakers.

**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. Please do not remove games or pieces from the Game Room. The Game Room will be open most of the time. See schedule posted outside the Game Room.

**Media Exchange:**

Please bring your unwanted media to swap with others: books, 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.

**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.

**Games and Tournaments:**

**Tournaments** will include: Bananagrams, Cranium, Carnelli, Times Up/Colander

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

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

**Bunco:** A fun dice game and mixer – meet some of the other attendees!

**Werewolves and Villagers:** Lie about your identity, accuse other players of being a Werewolf, and figuratively kill other players! Each round lasts 30 minutes. Minimum 8 players, ages 9 and up. Please arrive on time to hear the rules. Quiet observers are welcome.

**Non-Tournament Games:** Gather at set times with other people who will enjoy playing Monopoly, Chess, Apples to Apples, Backgammon, Boggle, Palabra, Scrabble, Trivial Pursuit, Taboo.

**Sunday Kids' Track:**

- Cost is \$20 per child, including a parent or two. 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 10:15 am to 6:00 pm Sunday (see below).
- Please note: lunch is included in the \$20 price for children and their parents attending Kids' Track; Other Hospitality meals may be purchased at Registration: adults - \$5, kids 17 and under - \$4.
- Kids who hold a full-event or a two-day Sun/Mon registration do not need to pay extra for Kids' Track activities or for meals. They are included in the RG registration price.
- Kids are welcome at all Mensa lectures and games unless otherwise notified.

### **Kids' Track Schedule:**

- 10:15-11:05 Chess (non-Tournament)
- 11:15-12:15 Technical teacher Jennifer Karp: Fun with Science
- 12:15-12:45 Hospitality lunch in the Calabasas Room
- 12:45-1:45 Songwriter/performer Tim Griffin performs funny and mostly educational music
- 2:00-3:00 The Planetary Society presents White Light, Light in Space, and What are Comets made of?
- 3:00-4:00 Werewolves and Villagers (for adults and kids ages 9 and up, min. 8 people)
- 4:00-6:00 Screening of "First Dog" with filmmaker Bryan Michael Stoller

### **Volunteers:**

Volunteers are always welcome. Please contribute one or two hours: Help out in Hospitality, host in the StaRGazers' Lounge, greet and 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 \$13/day) or \$9.00 overnight rate with in-and-out privileges for attendees who are staying in the hotel. There is limited street parking available behind the hotel.

### **Internet Access:**

There is no Internet access in the conference rooms. Please note that this seems to interfere with personal smart phones. 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. Arrange a group if you wish.

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.

**Food sale:**

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

**2013 GLAAM RG:**

If you would like to participate in the planning of the 2013 RG, or would like to present a topic there, or know someone who might be a good speaker, please inform people at the Registration Desk.

We already have a growing list of people who would like to make presentations in 2013, and they have great topics. Count on being here February 15-18, 2013!