

Mommy Letter 2013

for the

Greater Los Angeles Area Mensa Regional Gathering

Welcome:

Welcome to GLAAM StaRGazing 2013, taking place February 15-18, 2013 in Woodland Hills CA. We have a huge selection of speakers and activities this year. Go to: www.glaam.us.mensa.org/rg/2013 for the schedule and lists of speakers, games and events.

If you have any questions, Co-Chairs Desiree Sagray and Madeline Walker, or any other committee member, are there to help you. You will find Desiree in Hospitality this year and Madeline will often be at the Registration Table. Joyce Hamilton at the Registration Table will usually be able to point you towards Desiree or Madeline if you don't immediately locate us!

To get the most out of your experience, please take every opportunity to walk up to another RG attendee and introduce yourself! Volunteering is a great way to meet people, too.

ATTENTION!

Several of our speakers will have their books available for sale and for signing. Please bring cash for the pleasure of purchasing these items.

Stewart Farquhar, a Mensa member, has a special offer for attendees. Along with giving three sequential presentations, Mr. Farquhar will review the first ten pages of a feature length script, TV show or novel from each qualifying attendee without charge (normally \$275). He will provide on-page notes for all those who commit to attending his course and submit by Wednesday, February 6, 2013. Furthermore, during class he will draw for five free on-site first-page consultations (normally \$75 each). All attendees are encouraged to bring their first ten pages to class. As a special incentive, he will incorporate and answer questions, as part of each presentation, from those questions submitted by the same deadline before the RG. To qualify for the first ten page review, put "RG13 Script" in the subject line. Please include contact information in the e-mail body then attach your first ten and title pages as a PDF to: stewart@thereaderscompany.com by 6:00pm Wednesday, February 6, 2013.

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. You can be an ambassador to new attendees – even if you are new yourself!

Location:

Warner Center Marriott - Woodland Hills
21850 Oxnard Street (Second Floor)
Woodland Hills, California 91367
(818) 887-4800

Driving Directions:

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. You can drive back to the parking structure on the right.

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=mnsмна&app=resvlink&fromDate=2/15/13&toDate=2/18/13>. The GLAAM RG room rate has expired, but there's no harm in asking for a group discount anyway. The worst that can happen is "No, sorry," and if you smile they may find a better rate for you. Wireless High Speed Internet is free only in the public lobby areas, and available in the guestrooms for a fee.

On-Site RG Registration and Check-in Times:

Friday 3:00 – 9:00 pm

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

Sunday 8:30 am – 12:00 pm & 1:00-2:30 pm

Pick up your badge, schedule, and other information at the Registration Desk in the hallway. Sign-ups for tastings and other activities will be available there. The main Hospitality room will be open 24 hours a day, from 4:00 pm Friday until the Food Sale at 10:00 am Monday. The Game Room will have a schedule posted. We have programs until late on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. After the programs, relax upstairs in the StaRGazers' Lounge till the wee hours.

Dots and Stars on the Badges:

Hug dots are available for attendees to place on their badges. Green indicates "Accepts and gives hugs", Yellow indicates "Ask first" and Red indicates "Please respect my personal space." The definition of Blue Dots changes from moment to moment. Colored stars and other stickers on the badge indicate Registration Codes, Tastings, or other events for which you have Registered. There will be a special sticker designated as Vegetarian which will help Hospitality direct you to the appropriate dishes during meal times.

RG Registration Rates:

Discount rates end on February 1st. To register onsite, please bring cash or check. We do not take credit cards onsite. After February 1st and at the door, registration costs are:

- Full registration - \$139
- Two-day (Fri/Sat or Sun/Mon) registration - \$75
- Half-price RG registration for ages 17 and under
- Sunday Kids' Track is \$30 per child (see below for more info)

Activities at the RG that Require Extra Fees:

- Pub Crawl (\$5 for van, plus cost of drinks)
- Tour to Griffith Park Observatory (\$5 for van, plus \$7 if you want to see the 10:45 am Planetarium show) – this tour is already full – ask to be wait-listed
- Tastings (See Tastings section)
- 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
- Any tips for hotel staff

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/2013, 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; and Sunday breakfast, lunch and dinner. Monday breakfast will be whatever is still available. 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 and Sunday dinners will be food brought in from nearby restaurants. 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 before Thursday, February 14th, 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.

- \$9 Cheese tasting
- \$9 International Desserts tasting
- \$5 Ethnic chips tasting
- \$12 Tequila tasting
- \$12 Rum tasting

StaRGazers' Lounge:

The Lounge will be located in a suite on the 16th or 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 (this is required in our hotel contract!)

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: 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 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.

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 8:30-11:00 am Sunday morning. Please sign up at least one week IN ADVANCE by contacting Dave Felt at <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>. Dave Felt or another proctor will supervise 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 testing requires a quiet environment, only quiet programs are offered until 11:00 am Sunday.

How to Meet People:

The RG offers many opportunities for meeting people, including the New Member Reception, the Gen X/Y Meet & Greet, and the Pub Crawl.

More ways to meet 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.

Hang out in the StaRGazers' Lounge.

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, Hospitality, the Lounge, or to introduce Speakers.

Annual Business Meeting

GLAAM is required by our Bylaws to conduct an Annual Business Meeting (ABM), and we typically hold it on the Monday morning of the RG. This is an opportunity for the Board Members to present annual reports to the membership and allow the membership the opportunity to ask questions of the Board Members regarding the past year. Please note that this event is for GLAAM members only. The submitted Minutes from last year will be available on the website prior to the meeting.

This meeting is also open to GLAAM members who did not register for the RG.

Game Room:

Games in the game room either belong to GLAAM or are someone's personal property, donated for the duration of 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. On Sunday morning, please keep the noise down so the people taking the Mensa test will not be distracted.

Media Exchange:

Bring your unwanted media to swap with others: books, CDs, VHS tapes, etc. Leave them on the designated Media Exchange Table. 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 the cost of 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 Friday evening from the hotel front lobby.

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

Van Tour to the Griffith Park Observatory:

Our van will take a group to the Griffith Park Observatory (\$5 fee per person for the van). Wander the grounds, take in the view from the roof. Spend time watching the Foucault Pendulum or looking at the exhibits on the main floor, or go down a floor to the new exhibits carved out under the Observatory a couple years ago. Tickets are available on-site for the Planetarium show at 10:45 am for \$7 per adult, and less for seniors, children, and students. This tour is already full – you may ask to be wait-listed.

Games (see Program for schedule):

Lawyer Games: Discuss and solve lateral thinking puzzles. Each mystery is stated in a couple minutes. The host, Ed You, can only answer “Yes” or “No” to the questions that can lead to a solution.

Original Interactive Word Games by puzzle master Alan Stillson.

Werewolves and Villagers: Lie about your identity, accuse other players of being a Werewolf, and figuratively kill other players! Minimum 8 players, ages 9 and up. Arrive on time to hear the rules. Quiet observers are welcome.

Pub Trivia: led by Doug Ecks - competitive trivia, as played in pubs from England to San Francisco.

Other Games include:

Friday:	Apples to Apples, Big Bang Theory Trivia
Saturday:	What Were You Thinking, Taboo, Carnelli, Encore, Anomia
Sunday:	Chess, Scattergories, Monopoly, Carnelli
Monday:	Name That Tune

Plus, watch out – at any time a game of Backgammon, Boggle, Palabra, Scrabble, or Trivial Pursuit may break out when you least expect it.

Sunday Kids' Track:

- Cost is \$30 per child, including entry for a parent or two. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult; youth 13-17 must have an adult on premises and a cell phone number available.
- Kids' Track includes programs on Sunday from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm (see below).
- Lunch is included in the \$30 price for children and their parents attending Kids' Track. Other Hospitality meals (breakfast or dinner) 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. A few presentations may be labeled “Adults only”, and parents are expected to use their judgment on other presentations with questionable titles.

Kids' Track Activities:

Chess (non-Tournament)

Leif Gantvoort (a bad guy in *The Amazing Spider-Man*): What's it like to work on a major motion picture?

Hospitality lunch in the Calabaras Room

Lawyers' Games (outside-the-box mystery questions) hosted by Ed You

The Planetary Society presents “30 Years of Space Shuttles”

Werewolves and Villagers (for ages 9 through adult, min. 8 people)

Hey, kids, let's put on a play (for younger kids and non-Werewolf players)

Volunteers:

Volunteers are always welcome. Please contribute just 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. You will earn the committee's undying gratitude for helping out, and have a great chance to meet new people.

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 limited 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:

Aside from the RG supplying all meals and around-the-clock snacks, the Warner Center Marriott has several restaurants, including Breeze, which offers breakfast, lunch and dinner, Q-Martini Bar with lunch and dinner, and Starbucks.

The hotel is near a large mall with many restaurants, and 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.

Food sale:

Sale of unused food items and paper goods will begin at approximately 10:00 am Monday in the StaRGazers' Lounge and/or Hospitality. Please bring cash. If you are interested in anything in particular, please notify Hospitality Chair Desiree Sagray onsite as soon as possible. Great bargains!

2014 GLAAM RG:

If you would like to participate in the planning of the 2014 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.

Count on being at the GLAAM StaRGazers' RG February 14-17, 2014!