

Minutes, ExComm Meeting April 14, 2012 at home of Sylvia Zadorozny

Present: Thomas Thomas, Sylvia Zadorozny, Kathy Crum, Ronan Heffernan, Erica Rogers, Art Schwartz, Barbara Loewe, Dan Chesnut, Melissa Stephens

Officers: Theresa Shadrick, Jay Johnson

Guests: Forrest Ford, Audrey Silver, Isabelle Hohmann

Meeting Called to Order 3:15pm

Minutes:

Motion: To approve the Minutes as previously sent to all members. SZ, second AS. Motion carried.

Reports:

Scribe:

JJ: No report. I have been absent the past 2 meetings and Ronan has been subbing for me.

RH: No report.

LocSec:

TT: For the 6th consecutive year we have had growth in membership to the present 765 members level. We are the only chapter to accomplish this. The number of move-ins and move-outs is approximately even, it is just a lot of movement. We appear to attract a lot of young Mensans. Parents are signing up their kids. American Mensa, as a whole, lost members last year and there is much discussion on how to stop members from lapsing and to encourage recruitment. Our lapses are currently at 2009 levels.

Testing:

TT: I scheduled tests for the past few months and no one has shown up, and I have a test scheduled for Saturday. One issue is the prospect list sent out from National, every chapter reports it is unreliable. When a person contacts National, for whatever reason – a home test, information – National sets it up as a lead and the person does not receive the information they wanted. I want to set something up locally because when people contact us they are more likely to test than if they contact National. We are also down one proctor, perhaps 2 as another proctor has not renewed.

Scholarship:

TS: All the paperwork has been sent to National. I will give Ronan the essay to put into *Sounding*. The 2012 winner will be announced at the AG. We will send a check to the winner of 2011.

GCC:

TT: Theresa said that she needs to step down as GCC. Melissa, since you have already been approved, I don't think we have to do anything except thank Theresa for the work she has done in the past.

MS: I was talking to people at the picnic and there are several adults who are willing to act as coordinator. One person is interested in doing science stuff, one who wants to do a games night, and one who wants to do more social events. It looks like we will get more people involved and we have a chance to get this off the ground with a lot more kids.

Discussion: For 18 and younger? Older can volunteer. Change name to Gifted Youth. Kids want a peer.

Publicity:

ER: No publicity was created in February or March. E-mails were sent to David Warner, Editor-in-Chief(4/01); Joe Bardi, Associate Editor(4/10); and a general information email to Creative Loafing(4/10), to inquire whether they would run another "Geek Issue" to coincide with our RG. No reply as yet.

Programs:

MS: I need a budget for the New Member Meeting. I was thinking about an on-your-own dinner. We have requests for a Singles event. The digs will start up in September, I want to do them every other month. I am working on arranging a visit to a TV weather station.

Discussion: A FaceBook connection for singles? Kind of small for that. Mid-30's age range. Age dynamics. National has *M- Available*.

Treasurer:

KC: At the last meeting we had not finalized the budget so this month there are two reports: February and April.

February: 15% of the year has elapsed. I made all the changes that we discussed on the budget. As of the date February 19 everything is pretty well in line. We only got 15% of our revenues and spent 10%. Deposits had not been made for the RG registrations. The Banking Summary Sheet is the same information. Account Balances are fine, no different from the end of the year. Itemized Categories; not a lot went on. Under Itemized Categories-Postage, there was a postage adjustment for February mailing for bad bar codes. Everything else is straightforward. One mistake, where it says *Tampa Bay Sounding* that is actually January and February 2012, not December and January. I made a new category for the ExComm Retreat because we had some expenses.

April: April 14, 29% of the year has lapsed. Under Inflows you see RG 2011 Net Profit: There was a PayPal that came in late that I didn't catch and was just sitting there. Net profit is all registrations other than PayPal fees, no other expenses. National Support is in line. Proctor Revenue: \$30 from National goes in next Friday. Outflows: I made the categories as we discussed where I itemized out the postage for Membership and Proctors. I made another line item for the ExComm Retreat. We have all the expenses in for the picnic which was the first Social. Expenses will be right around \$650. We printed the Handbook twice. We did 40 Crewe List books so far this year. Publicity line is the Google AdWords cost. When we did the budget we didn't put that in which is why it is so high for what we budgeted for Publicity. I closed the checking account at 5th 3rd so we won't keep getting fees, and the money was deposited into our regular Wachovia checking account where the fee is just \$2 a month and is for printing the checks we write on the monthly statement which is good for documentation.

Discussion: Flagship might have a better account. Small expense, good benefit.

KC: Our postage 2nd class is less than \$50/month, usually around \$42. Are we going to have an influx of newsletters that are to be mailed?

Discussion: Ballots in the June issue. Bylaws: Balloting for recipients of electronic newsletter. We don't have to send those people a paper ballot.

KC: Itemized Categories: Lori Puterbaugh's ads. Income breakdown is all there. PayPal is \$2.48 straight off the top for every transaction. There is a big benefit with using PayPal -- no bounced or canceled checks.

Discussion: Give rebate to non PayPal users? Not popular. Might be unlawful.

Calendar:

SZ: Calendar is going along nicely. No report.

Editor:

RH: May goes to the printer Monday.

Webmaster:

RH: No changes.

AS: Nothing has been done with cross-training.

Membership:

ER: For the month ending 1/31/12, there were: 4 move-ins, 5 new, and 7 reinstating members. For the month ending 2/29/12, there were: 1 move-ins, 4 new, and 5 reinstating members. Member packets were sent to new and move-in members. Phone calls were made to new and move-in members with special emphasis on upcoming picnic and RG events. Free Saturday RG tickets went to: Aaron Dennis and James Chevalier. Tickets will also be offered to members on the lists for months ending March and April.

Discussion: Email auto-response? Too few. Lapsed-member compensation? Not yet.

Circulation:

TT: At National, about 10% of the membership showed a change in preference which is high. As well, people who had preferences show they had no preferences, which makes no sense. They are going to look at it. There is not another file that has come out, but there is one we can create from member tracking for officers on the National site where they won't pull up the same format that you are using for membership that Ronan put together, but it is a matter of going in and editing the fields that are in those files.

Volunteer Coordinator:

ER: Two members submitted volunteer forms at the picnic, Forrest Ford and Audrey Silver, and were invited to the April 14th ExComm meeting due to their interest in officer positions. After researching possible gifts to give to members at the RG for submitting a volunteer form, the idea has been dismissed. Forms would be submitted by those who have no real interest in volunteering; it would require a person present to distribute them; and the money spent to purchase them might be better spent on volunteer appreciation efforts for current volunteers. Volunteer forms will be made available at the RG and printed in the June issue of the *Sounding*.

Committee Reports:

Spring Picnic:

AS: We had a good turnout. I think it was nice we had the Segway, it made a nice day. I think the turnout was large because of the postcards.

Election:

JJ: The Call for Candidates made it into the March *Sounding*, but not the April. An abbreviated version is in the May issue. Upon my request, Erica put it on the FaceBook page. I pitched several people at the picnic but got no petitions from them. To date I have received 2 petitions to fill the 4 seats, and tomorrow is the last day to receive petitions. I will prepare the ballot, Candidate Statements, and balloting instructions for June *Sounding*. One member of the Election Committee, Terry Wolfe, decided to leave Mensa and Dan Chesnut suggested Cindy Weatherby who is willing to substitute. Thomas mentioned that the other Committee member, Eloise Hurst, was late in renewing her membership but she has not said anything to me about leaving. I emailed her and got no response back yet.

Bylaws:

RH: Coming along. Another 2 weeks and then it can go to ExComm.

RG:

TS: I have reservations at the Columbia for On-The-Town, an hour before the reservation they will give us a tour. Spaghetti Warehouse is on the schedule. We have 33 registrations so far. I am looking for another place for Howl-At-The-Moon, the original is shut down.

Discussion: Fabulous owl graphic. Give designer a gift? Change lettering. Good for mug. T-shirt will be on Café Press.

Summer Social/Annual Meeting

ER: Dan Chestnut has received approval of our use of the Woodlawn Presbyterian Church facilities in St. Pete. Potential dates are August 4th or 11th with a time of 11-3. Dave Bryant has agreed to be the speaker, presenting forensic interrogation/polygraph. The event will include lunch, the annual meeting, and the presentation. A donation amount must be agreed upon for Woodlawn, the date set, and Mr. Bryant notified of the date and confirmation of topic by our next meeting.

DC: We need to get the money in, \$100.

Discussion: Far enough away from RG. 11th is better. Budget is now \$650, should be enough. Same barbecue as last year?

RG 2013:

TT: We contacted 2 hotels and I would like to look at others. I want to have this in place by RG 2012 so we can announce it. We will have a committee after the '12.

Old Business:

ExComm Retreat:

TT: Maran sent out a report with the minutes and I published a lot in my column and FaceBook. I gave a list of our strengths and ways to enhance them, and challenges. I thought it was successful but too short for what we needed to accomplish, and we have a few good ideas for next year. Next year we want to make it longer and more organized.

There are some things that were take-aways including the Mentorship Program. The idea is to bring in young members or anyone who wants to learn more about any of the aspects of leadership, to be able to participate so we get apprentices. I got this idea from Toastmasters which offers training and certifications. This would give people a sense of ownership which encourages them to remain in the organization. As Volunteer Coordinator, Erica will be working on this as well. Art will be planning 2013. Ronan will create a Gantt Chart for RG planning. Ronan sent me a draft of definitions of various officers and jobs that I will be working on. Art has taken on Service SIG.

AS: It is going to be in May *Sounding*. I will announce an event once I get some responses.

New Member Event:

MS: The theory of doing it specifically for new members is that people who join are most likely to lapse after a year because there has been nothing for them. I want a better idea of what you would like – a meeting, a dinner, rent a room, what?

Discussion: Need flexibility – hors d'oeuvres. Need to be able to circulate, not sit at tables.

MS: 3 suggestions: The Trolley car creates a long corridor. University is a large room, buffet-style. Olive Garden has centralized tables, is a bit upscale, has a nice intimate atmosphere, not much traffic, features bread, soup, salad like the lunch, food would be portable.

Discussion: Who pays for what? We pay for new members and each of us pays for ourselves. Spaghetti Warehouse? Not Golden Corral. Daddy's? A new place on 49th? About 20 people, membership of one year or less. Average age of new members is mid-30's. Not reinstateds, not relocateds.

MS: My budget will be approximately \$15/person, I will plan for 30 people.

TT: Keep us posted on the ExComm List as you get stuff.

Weekly Calendar Events:

TT: Art and Melissa are doing that.

Google AdWords:

RE: I think we should renew advertising on Google. We did authorize \$30 for 3 months; \$40 would be more comfortable.

Discussion: It is possible that we are getting more people who are specifically interested. Those who have shown up for tests in the past 4 months are ones who have contacted us directly. We need the form on our site.

Motion: To budget \$40 a month for Google AdWords, indeterminate. SZ, second BL. Motion carried unanimously.

CultureQuest:

TT: We have a team called Sunshine Banned. I am the Captain and I have received the envelope.

New Business:

Fall Picnic:

RH: I can do it.

Special Rules for Absences:

RH: "I move that the ExComm adopt the following Special Rule of Order: 'All motions to excuse absences of ExComm members are non-amendable and non-debatable, and must be moved at the first meeting at which the officer is present following their absence. The presiding officer may read a statement submitted by the officer in question, or relay a verbal statement from that officer, before voting begins. The vote shall be by ballot.' "

The bylaws committee discussed a rule like this to take the wasted time out of "excused/unexcused" votes. We seem to talk in circles about these absences, to no effect. It will be up to the ExComm whether we remove the excused/unexcused bylaws provision from the upcoming proposed bylaws, but for the next year or so (as the bylaws revision process slowly churns), we have to live with the current bylaws.

Discussion: Wasn't the discussion more about how to handle them, not whether it was excused or not? A flat statement of why they were out. How they do it is their choice. Might come down to something personal. Can post their excuse on the List ahead of time. Closed ballot.

TT: When we do the bylaws it will be a different process because if the bylaws take it out this motion becomes moot.

Motion: As previously written. MS, second BL. Vote: Aye: 5, opposed: 1, Abstain: 3, motion carried.

Local Group Funding/Our Cash Reserve:

TT: There was a motion made to the AMC this past meeting and it has failed, but because it was brought, I want to bring it up. The proposal was: They want to change the amount of money each local group gets. They want to change it to 1/3 the members' dues to come back to the local group. Some thought we were getting more money, some wanted more, some wondered how National would manage. Big debate. The main reason it did not pass is there was no direction as to where this money was going to come from in a National budget which is already spent. The local groups would have no direction on what to use it for. Originally, it was to make sure everyone sent out newsletters. Now we have a lot going out electronically saving us money. The other point was: If a group had a 2-year's cash reserve we would stop getting money. I didn't know if we had it. We get \$24/member, we are not in danger. At our present reimbursement we have approximately \$16,000 in terms of what a cash reserve would be. We are at that point. The question I have is whether we want to consider it or not. Is 2 year's enough reserve? Is it too much reserve? Should we be finding reasonable member-oriented expenses to spend down the reserve to a point we think is a reasonable amount to have on hand? It does seem like a lot of money to have in the bank and not be spending when we have members complaining where is my money going.

AS: We might want to get some expert opinion on where we are on that question. I like the idea of finding good uses and not having much money, but I don't know where we are safe.

TT: We are required to have a balanced budget but then have the general fund of what is left. We are spending by giving new members a handbook.

Discussion: Give swag, tchotchkeys? "Ask Me About Mensa" t-shirt? Reasonable fiscal action. Just holding huge reserves is not responsible. What is the perfect number? This is why we have picnics. Need a cushion for RG.

KC: Right now, if you figure the budget for income and expenditures it is approximately \$17,400 a year. \$2000 is the RG. Keep in mind as well, prior to the last 2 years the RGs were a money-loser and whether we lost \$2000 or \$3000 we had a cushion of approximately \$5000 to cover any RG loses. Right now we have a 2-year's cushion and we are pretty much where what we have budgeted is what comes in. We haven't added a lot of money to the bank account at the end of the fiscal year so it is kind of like we are staying stagnant where we have approximately 2-year's worth. Now if National changes it and National starts to give us more we will have a lot more. Right now the way things are budgeted and the way RGs are running, by having the RGs at a place where we don't have to buy the food, we will probably make money. If we have it at a place where we have to buy the food we will lose. That is a way to look at it. Are we going to have to do something different in order to spend money?

TT: The reason I brought it up is because I am thinking of retention and growth. It is the little things. Anything that a member might get that tells them "I am a member of this group". People respond to little things.

Discussion: Important to recognize volunteers. Try to find ways to keep people interested. Done surveys? Not satisfactory. A pen. Something with a pelican on it. A host gift. Certificates.

TT: These are ideas if we do decide we have excess money.

RH: National is saving us \$6000 by converting people over to electronic delivery.

Age Dynamics Within the Group:

TT: If we are going to be concentrating on trying to make new members stay and we find they are younger, we want to think about what the younger members are interested in, not what we were interested in 30 years ago. The minors in our group are about 10% of the membership but they are not of their own choice – because their parents thought it might be a good idea for them

to have Mensa membership. Because of pop culture such as *Big Bang Theory* and *Mental Floss* people are seeing a more hip view of Mensa. Our average age is still about 35, but leadership age has upped to mid-50s. The older leadership is out of touch with the National membership. Mentoring is missing. Young Mensans are not who we can guarantee we will have down the road because if the parents don't see any benefit they won't renew their kids. The kids know they could re-up when they are 35, out of college and looking for stimulation but in the meantime they probably will not be involved. The people who are testing are mainly younger, prior evidence will be older because of the change in what is accepted. We need to focus on retention because leaders come from those who stick around.

Discussion: The lapsed-members drive is next month; we get .40¢ for every one we contact. Mensa accepts every gifted test for kids at schools.

FF: Can we give the first year membership free?

TT: We presented a proposal to National on that and they nixed it. They want to see what is the cost/benefit and there is no guarantee that a member will stick around after the first year. I wish they would discount testing. Testing and recruitment are important and National does a bad job. I would like to try to do some publicity. I want to work with Google AdWords, maybe putting a tighter revision on the testing page so we can get a better idea of when and where they want to test so we can get these people into a test as soon as possible. The two-prong attack I would think is tchotchkeys to members and discounts to new members.

TT: Our National Treasurer asked: What would membership say if we increased dues \$2 a year or 3%? It was split.

Discussion: Build promotion, test for free. Lower the price, lower the value.

Gifted Children, or Gifted Youth:

Discussion: Kids would find it more attractive. Can't change it in bylaws, National is very specific with Gifted Children Coordinator. A branding issue.

Water at RG:

Discussion: We went through a lot of individual bottles of water last year because people are drinking less wine and soda, more water in general. Jug dispensers cheaper? A branded water cup is also a nice take-away.

TT: We will look into the cost differences and the budget.

Games Weekend:

AS: I got feedback that we should do it locally, then we might be able to do it twice a year. It would increase participation and save gas.

Audrey Silver introduced herself.

Audrey: I am here because I want to help out. I have been a member for years. I went to an RG, but now I am very busy. I am a published writer, editor and RN. I have done research on the local media. I love the idea of swag and branding, the T-shirt is a good idea, and I have some other ideas.

Next meeting: June 9, 3:00pm, Sylvia's.

Meeting adjourned 5:50pm. (ish)

I have attached the amended minutes from the February meeting (the only change should be that Sylvia had a language clarification on where our group's money comes from).

If anyone has any objections, thoughts, modifications to the motion that I sent out on April 6th, I think it would behoove us to discuss and hash-out any concerns or changes this week on the email list, rather than during the ExComm meeting. It would be ironic (and not Alanis Morissette "ironic") to waste a lot of meeting time discussing a motion that is designed to prevent us from wasting meeting time. :-)

Webmaster's report: no changes since the last meeting. (As mentioned in April 6th email,) I suggest that we re-authorize advertising on Google AdWords.

Editor's report: the May issue is almost finished (mostly-finished on Monday evening, undoubtedly more true on Saturday) and should go to the printer shortly. I am trying to book a cruise for sometime in May, so if everyone can try to submit materials "on time" for the June issue of Sounding, that would be great. This issue will contain the ballot and candidate statements. Does anyone have anything special for the June issue?

--ronan

REPORTS FOR EXCOMM 04/14/2012, SUBMITTED BY ERICA ROGERS

PUBLICITY REPORT

No publicity was created in February or March.

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VOLUNTEER REPORT

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SUMMER SOCIAL REPORT

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A donation amount must be agreed upon for Woodlawn, the date set, and Mr. Bryant notified of the date and confirmation of topic by our next meeting.

Election Supervisor Report

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I will prepare the ballot, Candidate Statements, and balloting instrux for June *Sounding*.

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