

California Men's Gatherings  
Annual Member's Meeting  
Jan. 16 & 17, 2016  
Sacramento, California

**Voting Members Present (19 Voting Members)**

Jim Ruboyianes, Frank Rothacker, Drew Blanchar, Charlie Malarkey, Philip Carberry, Mohabee Serrano, Matthew Sunderland, Jamie Simmons, Cat Walker, Mike Fahy, Ben-Andy Hein, Joe Wagenhofer, Rich Farshler, Dave Clark, William Ketchum, Norman Skonovd, Jeff Ryhkus, Clay Kilgore (via remote videoconference). Al-Binky Hoch

**Meeting Called To Order: 9:59 AM**

Matthew opened the meeting. According to Matthew, we used a different process to make proposals and decision-making, last year. We're focusing this meeting on where we ended last year, but in a conventional manner. Matthew reported that his experience last year was on the grass roots. He served as a planner, for the 84<sup>th</sup> Gathering.

The participants then introduced themselves, around the room.

**Process Minutes:** Voting is by modified consensus; block is possible, which allows a compromise so that most of the voters are satisfied, or “can live with” the proposal. Best to vote yes or no, without abstaining. Elections for CMG Board Officers will be held 5:00 PM, Saturday.

**Old Business And Reports**

**-Sustainability of the CMG (Matthew Sunderland)**

Is there a need for the CMG beyond this group of men? Matthew says there are so many experiences from the past which could be considered, to keep it moving forward. The Members were challenged to rethink their roles in leadership this weekend, and possibly open up to mentoring another man.

**-2015 Financial Report and 2016 Statewide Budget**

Dave Clark, CMG Treasurer, presented the current financial report. The first page is the yearlong cash balances, since 2008. Dave explained that the first years (2008-2010) shown in the chart was when we did not set a Statewide budget. 2011 was the fortuitous year, while 2012 was the leanest year, income wise. There was a \$5K loss, from the Spring Gathering (82<sup>nd</sup> CMG), in 2015.

A model was presented by Dave, of what he thinks Gatherings could do to become financially healthy (CMG 83-Summer 2015 Summary of Financial Results). Dave says that the tiered system does work. 25 men paid to the top tier. Also, room upgrades yielded \$7100 at this Gathering. There were also donations, bus fees, and additional revenue makers, at \$2817, total. Historically, the Summer and Fall Gatherings have been less expensive and incurred fewer frills, than the Spring Gatherings. Ben-Andy says that Camp Shalom charged extra (\$6K) for filling the water tanks, which also raised the amount paid for the 2015 Spring Gathering.

There is really no extravagance in planning gatherings this coming year. Spring is spending only as needed, with much oversight. The Spring Gathering in 2016 (85<sup>th</sup> CMG) will be held at a different location, with a different contract model, so it may bring Spring back to a profitable state.

Dave presented the Statewide Budget for 2016. The actuals from 2015 show that expenditures were well

under the proposed budget for that year. The budget for 2016 won't vary much from the one for last year, at \$17,150.

Proposal (the Motion is made by Dave Clark, and seconded, later on Saturday)

The CMG Statewide Budget be approved with the following changes:

Civi Crm maintenance increases to \$2000

Special Projects is cut to \$0.

Board Training is cut to \$500.

A new line will be added: Gathering Marketing, with \$1000 budgeted in this line, for the Spring Gathering to use, as needed, for marketing and promotions.

*\$17,150 new budget 17Y; 0N; 2A*

#### **-Development Director Report (Joe Wagenhofer)**

Joe Wagenhofer says we took in some funds from Amazon (~\$100), Car Donations (~\$500), and the 2015 Annual Appeal. Planned Giving is not part of the Annual Appeal, since PG is a long-term plan, from wills, annuities, etc.. The Annual Appeal brought in \$600. Joe says employer matching funds, and foundations will be solicited. Joe says he's the sole grant writer for this, but will welcome helpers.

#### **-Vice President's Report (Jamie Simmons)**

*Insurance*

Jamie says the CMG has renewed its insurance coverage. Storage lockers, the Board ("D & O"), and the corporation's assets are covered.

*Newcomer Welcome*

Jamie told the Members that the newcomer welcome has been his goal, and the last one at the Fall Gathering was particularly encouraging. Matthew says the newcomer orientation was done in a commendable fashion, as was the closing newcomer debrief.

#### **-CMG Storage Container (Matthew Sunderland)**

The CMG Storage Container at Camp Shalom, was sold to CMEN, for \$750. Matthew has been working on this deal. He told the Members that the container was emptied shortly after the Spring Gathering, which is when CMEN approached him regarding the purchase. The deal is expected to close favorably, and both parties are awaiting a decision from Camp Shalom, regarding the use of their land for the container.

#### **-Secretary's Report and Meeting Minutes Approval (Mohabee Serrano)**

Mohabee says that the Board held four in-person Board Meetings, and two Board teleconferences, in 2015. He says that the most pressing issue of the year was relocating the Spring Gathering in 2016. Many men worked on this process, and the development of the contract with the selected camp. Pathfinder Ranch offers a lot of good opportunities to the CMG, with newer facilities, and a favorable distance from Los Angeles San Diego, and Palm Springs.

The Minutes of the 2015 Annual Member's Meeting was presented on Sunday. The minutes were approved: 18 Y; 0N; 1A.

#### **-85<sup>th</sup> CMG (Spring Gathering) Report (Vic)**

The 2016 Spring Gathering has seven members; Vic is the co-chairman and Board Rep. There's a new camp food service manager, who will provide great meals. Vic presented a postcard, which promotes the Gathering. It was suggested that the image of the lake be changed, to include men at the lake.

#### **Archivist/Historian's Report (Cat Walker)**

Cat Walker says the past year yielded time for going through and organizing the paper archives. This year,

online and digital archives will be considered. He plans to compare the digital with what is already scanned. Cat says he might delegate helpers from time to time in scanning and organizing. Cat needs meeting minutes, documents and reports, photos and artifacts.

### **Registrar's Report** (Clay Kilgore)

Clay says he's been the registrar since the last AMM, and he's been happy with the registration process. In the past three years, about 600 men have registered for Gatherings and events. Speed Dating seems to be a popular event, with an average of 157 attendees in the past year. Experience he's had: there's a gap in registration volume, the numbers fluctuate between the initial invitation message and the two weeks prior to a Gathering. Registering two Gatherings in advance does not work well, Clay says. Civi CRM works to his needs, and there are some processes he's not familiar with, but he will learn in time. He wants to send out a questionnaire regarding skills of each attendee.

### **Communication Director's Report** (Drew Blanchar)

Drew Blanchar's report (see email):

Questions—Who is handling Facebook management? Tony Clark has stepped down, from being the Tech Director. Jim R. says we currently have 5 or 6 administrators, who allow/disallow new signups. Uncle Drew says that passwords have not been changed for awhile, and this must be done. Jim says he's unfamiliar with the process, and doesn't want to take this on. Jim says there's no continuity in Facebook, and a person needs to be selected to coordinate this. We have three FB accounts. The “corporate” account, available to the public, has many new “likes” per month, while the “community” page gets much attention, around the Gatherings. The third account, one which allows free dialogue among CMG men and the public, which is monitored and administered, gets very little attention.

### **-Webmaster's Report** (Jim Ruboyianes)

Jim says that the website is in “maintenance mode” at this time. Many changes have been made, such as the inclusion of photos, diversity, ages, etc. On many of the pages, pictures have been added. Jim thinks this adds to the appeal of the website overall. The webmaster, Jim says, really is the “front end” man, the part available to the public. The back end is our registration, confidential info., and document archive. Jim is thanked for this report, and for his good work.

*Lunch break called at 12:32 PM. Meeting restarted: 1:19 PM*

### **-Maintenance and Skills Survey** (Clay Kilgore)

*Civi CRM Maintenance*

Matthew introduced Clay, who wanted to elaborate about allocating more money for Giant Rabbit additions. He says there are a few “glitches” that GR might help. Clay says he'll consult with Ben-Andy before checking with GR about these issues.

*CMG Skills Survey*

An interest survey was made, but Clay is new to the plans for its development and deployment. Clay prefers that the questionnaire be separate from registration. Ben-Andy offered suggestions, and will work with Clay, in the coming months. Matthew says the survey isn't ready to roll out now, but in the future, it could aid a PC in finding men with specific skills.

### **-Electronics at Gatherings** (Matthew Sunderland)

It's noted that the new policy which allows PDAs, hand-held devices, and tablets to be used during Gatherings was a success. There were no objections by non-users, and the device users appreciated the change.

### **-Community Services Director** (Matthew Sunderland)

A new office was formed, in the CMG Board, is currently an open position, since the Board could not find a man to take on this position. Since the CSD outreaches to local organizations throughout the state, it might be best for the LECs to implement this position instead. Suggestions included reaching out to Board Reps to carry this out, in the local communities. Since there was no interest in managing this from a statewide level, this is no longer an Appointed Board position. This is now an activity for each LEC to pursue, since local organizations can be best sought for common projects by an interested person selected by each LEC. *This matter was affirmed by consensus.*

### **Mentoring** (Matthew Sunderland)

The proposal in question was to add more workshops in mentoring during Gatherings. The Planners and workshop organizers ran into several problems. Matthew opened the discussion up, and the men commented, in turn, around the circle.

#### *Discussion Notes*

The mechanisms need to be examined. “Mentoring” is a generic term, with many different levels and outcomes. It's so vague that a policy on this subject isn't possible—we're not ready for this. There was a chance to address our cultural and personal values during the interim of discussions and consideration. Specific subjects, such as “mentoring leadership” might be possible, but this requires careful and mindful planning. Our former motto, “Men Mentoring Men to Be Men...” was one attempt to encourage mentoring. We have set up some structures to help men mentor men.

### **Welcoming** (Jamie Simmons)

The Gatherings of 2015 welcomed the men, with a favorable outcome. Workshop leaders were encouraged to have an introductory circle, where the participants identify themselves. Buddies were encouraged to open up to new possible men, and a first-timer lounge was set up, so that newcomers could be acknowledged in an informal setting. Jamie thinks LECs might implement this for events, too. The 83<sup>rd</sup> CMG (Summer, 2015) took action by having “welcomers” posted at the entrance gate, to guide the attendees to parking and cabins. Check-in at Fall included guides to help newcomers find lodging and meeting places. This will continue this year. Spring has traditionally had volunteers setting up a day prior to the opening day; there were volunteers who were to help attendees find cabins and to find meeting spaces, though this wasn't the intended result. Jamie has implemented a welcome circle in all of the LEC-DC Mind Spa workshops, in Palm Springs.

### **Social Networking** (Matthew Sunderland)

A survey is being produced, and this matter is being taken on by Blaidd Peisinger, CMG Arts and Activities Director. There was already discussion earlier about the survey. How to implement the survey. This is a survey to create a database. There are some things that are known, and things that are unknown about CMG general members. The two times the survey is implemented: the first time a person signs into the system; the first time one registers for a Gathering; and a third survey is yet to be created. A committee really needs to be formed. Blaidd already wrote the survey; 100 percent participation is not possible. The part that needs to be discussed is technical and involved. Proposal: a break-out group will be formed to further discuss this. *Secretary's Note: This proposal was not considered further, during the meeting.*

### **Edge Committee** (Mike Fahy)

The lists that were generated at the 2015 AMM are a possibility for LECs to consider, for events and themes. The Edge refers to being on the apex of change, in a personal, social, and community context. What about our culture now is going to inspire future generations to continue our mission?

Matthew conducted a “round the circle discussion”. This is what resulted:

The CMG might consider community services, which can assist other organizations, to align us with the CMG mission. Suggests looking at the transgendered community to address new “edges.” Including

women in activities, such as “gal pal” parties. Balancing the serious issues with fun kinds of activities. We acknowledged that we've used some of the elements of the Edge Committee's findings. Many in the circle shared thoughts about openly inviting women to Gatherings. Most who spoke were not favorable to doing this. It was noted: Through this process, we implicitly spoke on the edge, about discomfort and disadvantage. Does age matter? Attract older men, and not be concerned about younger men? This might be our path.

### **Document Storage** (Drew Blanchar)

Uncle Drew says that the possibilities of having an open access system were not approved last year. How do we preserve our critical documents and make them accessible? Basecamp is inadequate, in many ways, according to Frank. Lee will evaluate all that the CMG uses, and will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors, later this year.

### **Elders** (Matthew Sunderland)

Matthew shared his ideas regarding Elders, and the Elder's Circle. We set up a hybrid system, and since we installed the first five Elders, there have been changes in the Elder selection process. At first, the Board nominated elders, and it was an imperfect set up. At every Gathering, we introduced a new Elder. Matthew is concerned that new Elders haven't been selected for the past year, and also is concerned that four current Elders have health issues that might keep them from serving. There are considerations the Board heard, such as the lack of Elder meeting times and getting together in general. There was a direct message sent to the Exec. Committee and the Elders, about how it thrives. Matthew thinks Eldership is necessary. Matthew pointed out that the Elders present at this meeting did not respond to the messages he sent out, last year, regarding selecting new Elders.

Michael spoke, regarding the concern he has about the lack of new elder selections. What was set up was an attempt to keep the momentum of elders in community. The Exec. Committee and the Elders, not the Execs themselves, selected Elders. Being an Elder is an honorary status and is not an action-oriented or other task-oriented position.

The Elders were invited to respond.

Joe: the process of Elder selection is made difficult. There hasn't been the ability to get full participation with all Elders. Joe thinks that perhaps the selection process might go back to a collaboration between the Board and the Elders.

Jim: There was a phone teleconference some time ago, where all the elders could be together. “It was a joy to hear the voices,” Jim told the Members. The logistics of communication was inherent, and there was a level of discomfort in making decisions without a consensus of all Elders. Jim is OK with collaborating with the Exec. Committee again.

Al-Binky said there was a high level of discomfort without having the full group together. He's not comfortable with the current level of technology, either. He and Patrick spoke together recently, about this. He's quite honored to be an Elder, and isn't certain what to do about the selection process.

Comments from around the circle: Perhaps two or three Elders could recommend a new Elder. There's a way to do this, which can involve both Elders and the Execs. Elders hold the overall view, the Execs have the immediate view. Nomination of Elders has been based on consensus of everyone, if any one of the Elders or Execs disagree, then the nomination is dropped. Elders could be acknowledged at Gatherings, to honor the institutional culture. Heart and Head thoughts need to be acknowledged. The CMG is an older organization, and having Elders shows honor and helps the group hold the honor in the public eye. The Elders are the sheer vibes keepers, and conflict resolvers of this organization. We strive to hold an unusual

and special role. We honor Elders at each Gathering. It matters not how old one is, but how one has contributed to the organization. There's a distinct honor to becoming an Elder.

### **Marketing and Outreach Director** (Matthew Sunderland)

At the last AMM, Ross was elected to be the temporary Marketing Director. His term of service ended in May, 2015. Rick Steadman was selected by the Board of Directors, and he accepted the role, but was unable to commence, due to an unforeseen illness.

Marketing is an important matter for the CMG to consider. Dave proposes to add \$1,000 to the Spring Budget, to market the Spring Gathering. Dave suggests that we could take money budgeted for other line items to spend on this. Dave also suggests that the Gathering Planners approach the Board to authorize the addition of money for this purpose. Vic wants to connect with Jim, Jamie, and Uncle Drew, to use already-available funds. Dave's proposal, which was to fund the Marketing, and to subtract from other line items, is shown with the Treasurer's Report. The Members approved this amendment to the budget.

### **Board of Directors Nominations and Elections**

Mike Fahy conducted the nomination and election process. The bylaws concerning the election, and the duties of each officer was read to the Members. Mike cautioned the Members that the elections are not a "rubber stamp" to elect; new nominees are welcome to bid in this election.

### **Executive Officers**

#### **President**

Matthew Sunderland, incumbent, is nominated, he accepts. This is his third year in this term of his service. *Nominations were closed with only one candidate.*

Statement: It's an honor to serve as President. This continues to be a learning experience for me. I dropped the ball on several accounts, during the past year. I'll be more mindful and I'll gain wisdom from my past mistakes, in the coming year. Matthew wants to communicate more effectively, and will work to be alert and flexible to changes. He plans to find and mentor a new candidate for President next year.

Matthew was re-elected by show of hands. Vote tally: 18Y; 0N; 1A.

#### **Vice President**

Jamie, incumbent, is nominated; Jamie accepts. This is his third year in the term of service. *Nominations were closed with only one candidate.*

Statement: Serving in this capacity has been a rewarding and learning experience. Jamie looks forward to serving in the coming year. Jamie was re-elected by a show of hands. Vote tally: 18Y, 0N, 1A.

#### **Secretary**

Mohabee, incumbent, is nominated, and he accepts. This is his third year in this term of service. *Nominations were closed with only one candidate.*

Statement: Mohabee is honored to have been Secretary, since 1997, serving four complete three-year terms, and this term is his fifth one. He looks forward to serving the CMG in this capacity.

*Mohabee was re-elected, by a show of hands.* Vote tally: 19Y; 0N; 0A

## **Treasurer**

Earlier in the meeting, Dave Clark told the Members that he's not able to provide further services beyond this time in his term of office. Dave will mentor and help the succeeding Treasurer until it's time for him to part.

Ben-Andy Hein is nominated; he accepts. *Nominations were closed with only one candidate.*

Statement: Ben-Andy says that he found it extraordinarily difficult to maintain his commitments, in the past year. He thinks it might be the best thing for him to become Treasurer; it might not. He will make an honest attempt to complete the duties of Treasurer, if elected.

There was a brief discussion of whether this candidate's condition was sufficient to elect him. A break was called, for a private conversation with the candidate. The meeting then continued. The candidate wants to serve in this capacity. There was a motion to allow Lee Usher and Dave Clark to serve as mentors, in the coming months. All parties and the Members agree to this.

By a show of hands, Ben-Andy is elected as Treasurer. Vote tally: 16Y; 1N; 2A.

Mike is thanked for leading and proctoring the Board elections.

The meeting was adjourned with two points that Joel Perry passed on to Matthew:  
The magic happens in the silence.  
Honor the voices of the last year.

Elder Al Binky Hoch closed the Saturday session. He's honored to be with his family.

Meeting adjourned for the evening: 7:03 PM.  
Meeting opened Sunday, Jan. 17, 2016 9:03 AM  
Vibes Keeper for Sunday: Jamie Simmons

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Amend the CMG Mission Statement** (Mike Fahy)

Mike thinks the Mission Statement needs to include bisexual men in its language. He made an initial proposal, which apparently needed further consideration. The presenter wants to move this to a break-out committee session, for further consideration and the wording of this amendment.

Final proposal:

Change Mission Statement, to read: "About CMG...gay and bisexual, in a world that has often been unaccepting."

Mike Moves, Ben-Andy seconds. Vote tally: 17Y; 1N; 1A—Passes.

### **Revise The "Who Attends" on our Enotify Announcements** (Mohabee Serrano and Joe Wagenhofer)

Mohabee presented Brett Garrett's proposal for the "who attends" wording, which appears at the bottom of the page, on E-notify announcements. A break-out session was recommended, for changes to the wording and presentation.

*Finished Proposal:*

CMG members are predominantly gay and bisexual men. We specifically welcome anyone over 18, who identifies as gay, bisexual, straight, transman, genderqueer, intersex, gender fluid, and wishes to participate in a community of men.

Vote tally: 14Y; 1NTB; 2A. *Note: a block and its alternate proposal was heard, to replace “anyone” with “all men,” but it failed to gain a majority vote.* Final vote tally: 14Y; 1N; 2A.

*Discussion Notes:*

There was concern that some of the terms proposed were neither fully understood, nor had clear definitions. We affirmed through the discourse, that we welcome all to the Gatherings and to CMG Local Events.

**Retirement Planning Recommendations For Workshops** (Joe Wagenhofer)

We need a person to foster this. Joe, as Development Director, would take this on. He would reach out to potential workshop leaders, to conduct workshops and seminars, regarding retirement planning, estate management, and financial self-care for older men. The Members approved this, 17Y, 0N, 1A.

**CMG Mentoring Program** (Lee Usher)

The Mentoring Program includes men's general development, the aging process, and what we're doing to provide info and workshops of support and growth. Lee wants to explore mentoring further, in a break-out session.

*Proposal, from break-out committee (Lee Usher, Vic Fusilero, and Drew Blanchar):*

The CMG implements a mentoring program that includes information, actions, and activities:

-Who: CMG Members

Leadership Positions (PCs, LECs, and Board of Directors)

-What: CMG Values (*seeing, listening, and affirming*)

Communication Skills

Listening Skills

Personal Development

-When: Always.

-How: Through mentoring workshops (Local Events and Gatherings)

Volunteer Development

Documentation On Website

1 on 1: Current officers seek out past and possible future candidates for Board Offices.

-Why: To Foster CMG Organizational Continuity and Values.

-Follow-Up: The three men (Lee, Vic, and Drew) will check in, regarding local mentoring efforts, with these local areas:

Lee: San Diego; Vic: Los Angeles and Desert Cities; Drew: Bay Area and Sacramento.

The CMG Mentoring Program was adopted. Vote: 18Y; 0N; 1A

*Discussion Notes:*

Ben-Andy: when—always. We do this as a matter of course.

Cat thinks this will help to include new people into leadership roles. How we mentor people and encourage them into leadership is to provide a positive experience, and they may rise to leadership.

**Presentation of Reports and Board Nominees** (Drew Blanchar)

A proposal that BOD member reports and director election nominations be required, and posted prior to an AMM. (*author withdraws this proposal*).

**Next Meeting**

The next CMG Annual Member's Meeting will occur in Los Angeles in 2017. Further details to be sent via E-notify.

**Adjournment**

The 2016 CMG Annual Business Meeting was adjourned 11:46 AM.