From Our Former President

I am sure that all GSG members are creatively coping with the three-plus months of COVID-19 shelter-in-place and that you and your families are all healthy and safe.

Please consider sharing your methods for occupying your time with other GSG members. Did you:

- Learn new ways of sharing your lectures with a broader audience?
- Discover a different approach to new lecture topics?
- Develop new ideas for keeping your speaking audience’s attention and involvement?

Please consider putting ideas you had for whiling away time during your confinement into an article for a future GSG Speak! issue. Our editor, Lauren Maehrlein, is always looking for items, especially those that could help members with their speaking careers.

At the recent 2020 annual meeting, Lauren made a plea for members to have their profile written up for a future issue. You only have to complete a questionnaire which you request from Lauren editor@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org. Your profile is a great way to advertise yourself and let your fellow GSG members know your speaking strengths. Then other members and I can recommend you when asked for a speaker with knowledge about a specific topic.

GSG has a new president, David Robison. Dave is full of energy and has the background and desire to keep moving the Guild forward. Look for Dave and the Board to reactivate Educational Webinars. I want to thank all Guild members who took the recent survey. Your answers have let the Board know that you are very interested in having these webinars.

Since this is my last president’s letter, it is my last chance to browbeat everyone—gently 😊— into being involved GSG members. We are a great Guild, which could become fantastic, but only with your participation and help. Please volunteer when asked, by joining committees, accepting positions, and writing articles for Speak!

There are several thank-yous I want to make. First, to the entire GSG membership for all your participation in the various projects we undertook and completed during my years as president.
“Thank-you” is not enough to cover the help and friendship I have received from the GSG members on the Board who have always been very supportive and willing to work to get a job done.

- I will start with Vice President Ann Staley, a good friend and business partner, who stepped in when needed and weathered hours of typing and talking about ways to help GSG grow, plus hours on business strategy. Her ears must need a break.
- My GSG treasurer and parliamentarian, Diana Smith, who has kept GSG financially solvent and kept me on the straight and narrow of GSG by-laws and Robert’s Rules of Order.
- Elizabeth O’Neal, my secretary, who has recorded everything said at a meeting even when it was almost two hours long. She then had the minutes ready to be sent out when I needed them.
- Next are my two directors, Timothy Pinnick and Sheila Benedict—they are always prepared to volunteer to take on a project, research it, and follow it to completion.
- The next thank-yous go to non-board members: GSG’s Speak! Editor, Lauren Maehrlein, who has put up with and even smiled at my inevitably late president’s letter (this month is no exception)— I give you my thanks, sympathy, and gratitude.
- My final thank-you is to GSG Webmaster Mark Beasley who is responsible for our redesigned website and is continually looking for ways to improve it. Mark has always answered emails and put out “fires” even if they are late at night.

Thank you everyone for all you have done to make my years as president easier. Please thank these GSG members when you see them at a conference or meeting; they work very hard behind the scenes to make sure the Guild provides what its members want.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Speak!

Margo Fariss Brewer
Outgoing President, Genealogical Speakers Guild

WELCOME OUR NEW PRESIDENT, DAVE ROBISON

Dave Robison, owner of Old Bones Genealogy of New England, is a professional genealogist from western Massachusetts. He holds a Certificate of Genealogical Research from Boston University and has completed the 18-month Pro-Gen course in Professional Genealogy.

He is an active member of the Massachusetts Society of Genealogists—Worcester Chapter, the Massachusetts Genealogy Council, Central New York Genealogical Society (CNYGS), the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, among others. Dave is the former President of both the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society (WMGS) and the Connecticut Society of Genealogists (CSG) and is past president of New England Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists.

He continues his position on the CSG Board of Governors and is active on their Program Committee.

Dave has been heavily involved in the
biennial conferences of the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC) 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021. He is now serving as the president of NERGC for the 2021 conference which will be held in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Dave is a vice president of the Pomeroy Chapter of Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (MASSAR) and is pursuing campaigns to attract new members. He has recently been named the State Registrar/Genealogist for the Massachusetts SAR.

A resident of Chicopee, Massachusetts, Dave lives with his wife Karen, an RN for the Chicopee School System. Between them, they have five adult children and four grandchildren.

He was recently named to the Chicopee Historical Commission by Mayor Richard Kos.

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### 2020-2021 GSG Officers and Directors

It is with pleasure that we announce the new GSG Officers and Directors for 2020-2021:

- **President:** David Robison
- **Vice-President:** C. Ann Staley
- **Secretary:** Elizabeth O’Neal
- **Treasurer:** Jennifer Warner
- **Director:** Sheila Benedict
- **Director:** Cheri Hudson Passey

The Board would like to hear your ideas to help keep the Genealogical Speakers Guild moving forward.

Please send your ideas, suggestions, and concerns to President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org.

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### GSG Presenters at 2020 NGS Virtual Conference

- Kelli Bergheimer – S453
- Michael Brophy – W122
- Janis Minor Forte – F305
- Annette Burke Lyttle – W125, W157, T223
- Julie Miller, CG, CGL, FNGS – W148, T249, F303
- Jill Morrelli, CG – T214, F302
- Judy Nimer Muhn – S449
- Dana Palmer, CG – F327, S401
- Diane Richard – F314, F350
- Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL – T248, F301, S455
- C. Ann Staley, CG, CGL – T260, S430

The following GSG Members provided syllabus material for the NGS 2020 Virtual Conference:

- Michael D. Lacopo, DVM – W159, T229, F352
- Craig R. Scott, CG, FUGA – W141, T213, T245
- Rich Venezia – F317, S405, S425
GOING VIRTUAL HAS SOME SURPRISING BONUSES FOR SOCIETIES

While we’re all disappointed not to be able to meet in person right now, there are some bonuses to taking our society meetings online. One is that we can invite speakers from outside our geographical area to provide programs for our online meetings. This allows us to have presentations from speakers we might not ordinarily be able to afford if we had to pay travel costs in addition to their speaker fee.

Searching for a speaker

The Genealogical Speakers Guild member directory allows us to search for speakers in a number of ways: by last name, specialty, lecture topic, or location. I don’t know about the rest of you, but the search functions I’ve used most often up to now are last name and location. If you’re looking for a specific speaker to invite to a virtual meeting, the last name function is great. But nowadays we can expand our program horizons by choosing a topic or specialty we’re interested in and seeing who offers that expertise.

For example, let’s say we’re interested in a presentation on using probate records in our research. If we enter “probate” in the lecture topic box, we get thirteen results for speakers who have a presentation on probate records.

Or let’s say we’re interested in a presentation on the genealogical proof standard. By entering “proof” in the lecture topic box, nine speakers are listed who have presentations on that subject. A search for “bounty land” as a topic returns two speakers who have presentations.

For a speaker on Irish genealogy, enter “Irish” in the specialty box, and get nine results. “Southern research” provides four speakers, and “DNA” as a specialty shows thirteen speakers.
These kinds of searches make it convenient for program chairs to provide their societies with balanced programs that cover a wide variety of useful topics.

**Comfort and fees**

Not all genealogical speakers are comfortable with presenting virtually, but many are. The best way to determine if a speaker will accept our invitation to present virtually is to ask. Another way to determine if a speaker is comfortable with online presentations is to see if they list webinar presentations in the Recent Engagements section of their profile.

Some may indicate in the Speaking Conditions section that they are willing to present online.

We should not expect speakers to discount their fees for a webinar presentation. Each speaker sets their fees to fit the needs of their business and to give them fair compensation for the time and effort it takes to put together a presentation. An online presentation is no less valuable than an in-person one. That said, some speakers may be willing to negotiate with societies on the matter of fees.

**But we’re not online . . .**

Many societies are embracing the online meeting format. If your society has not tried having an online meeting yet, there are many ways you can make this happen.

Many speakers who are accustomed to speaking online have their own subscriptions to virtual meeting platforms. Other speakers may not have their own subscriptions, but they have access to a platform. Either way, the society doesn’t have to do anything but send the meeting link out to its members, along with some basic instructions provided by the speaker.

Attending a virtual meeting has become so easy and so prevalent in 2020 that many of our members who we may think are not tech savvy enough to participate in an online meeting probably are already communicating with friends, family, and other groups this way. Online platforms like Zoom, GoToMeeting, ezTalks Meetings, Skype for Business, Join.me, HighFive, Roundee, Google Hangouts, and Crowdcast provide free or low-cost meeting spaces that are being used for family gatherings, virtual happy hours, game playing, and other activities we used to do in person.¹

A little online research can identify the platform that will fit best for your society and its budget. Most platforms are easy to use and provide tutorials to get us up to speed on how to host an online meeting.

**The future**

Once we’re back to meeting in person, we can still use the virtual option to occasionally bring in a speaker from elsewhere to round out our yearly program schedules. Having a speaker present a live webinar to an in-person group is not difficult as long as the meeting room has a projector and a sound system that a laptop can plug into. A brief practice session is usually required to make sure the technology works as it should.

The online option that we’re turning to now out of necessity can also serve us well in the future, after the necessity has passed.

*If you have topics you’d like to see addressed in future columns, please contact me at annette@heritagedetective.com.*

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MEMBER PROFILE

Speak! is pleased to provide a forum for members of the GSG to introduce themselves to one another and to the many others who read Speak! If you are a new member, or a long-time member who has not yet been profiled, we’d love to invite you to take the opportunity to let the genealogical world know who you are and what your particular talents and accomplishments are.

In this issue we are pleased to present a profile of one of the GSG’s newer members, Kevin Borland of Borland Genetics.

If you are interested in having your profile featured in an upcoming issue of Speak! please contact Lauren Maehrlein at Editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.

Kevin Borland

Kevin Borland’s genealogical speaking career began as a part of his company’s, Borland Genetics, web tools and database. He is also one of the four directors of mitoYDNA, a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping a public database of Y and mitochondrial DNA. Mostly speaking as spokesperson for Borland Genetics, he has presented online webinars, lectures, and workshops, in addition to many pre-recorded videos and tutorials related to DNA reconstruction. His future plans include speaking to audiences in Australia and New Zealand in an effort to extend his product’s market.

A native of the rural, mountainous, northwest corner of New Jersey, Kevin currently lives by himself in Kenansville, Florida, a rural non-mountainous community on the Kissimmee Prairie. He’s traded sightings of black bears for visits from alligators that come up to his dock.

Kevin’s first taste of genealogy came with a high school family tree assignment. He interviewed his great-grandfather, Weldon Borland, for the assignment and the old man’s stories about growing up in rural southeastern Ohio were the spark that got Kevin started.

Following the death of his grandmother, Helen Freudenberg, he met many family members from her side, including one cousin in particular. Richard Norton was and is a serious genealogist who Kevin considers his mentor in genealogy. Richard challenged Kevin to pursue new directions to learn more about their common ancestors. They continue to work as a team to solve family mysteries, and Richard is currently the corporate secretary and a managing director at Borland Genetics.

Focusing his genealogical research on southeastern Ohio, greater New York City, and the Carpathian Mountains in southeast Poland, Kevin has done extensive research on his Lemko lines. The Lemkos are among an ethnic minority from Poland who speak a language related to Ukrainian. The combination of this obscure language and Latin in the available records makes understanding the documents a challenge.

Kevin Borland
His years as a litigating attorney, telling clients’ stories before juries in Washington, DC, and Virginia, provided training for his genealogical speaking. Kevin’s lecture topics focus specifically on genetic genealogy, with an emphasis on using mathematical techniques and third-party tools (some of which he invented) to reconstruct synthetic DNA kits for ancestors. Much of his content explains the digital nature of DNA and the consequences in terms of practical applications in genetic genealogy.

Networking at conferences and initiating programs in conjunction with Borland Genetics are the vehicles that have led to Kevin’s speaking engagements. The GSG website allows him to host general course information and enables him to quickly and simply connect links to his centrally stored content and bio.

Kevin enjoys an interview format, rather than straight lectures, as a way to share his expertise. He has found that even just sporadic questions here and there, make discussions more natural and engaging for the listener.

He feels that the best part of presenting is when listeners have an ah-ha moment about a complicated topic, especially such as DNA reconstruction. This can be an intimidating subject because it requires understanding of a broad range of concepts in genetic genealogy. Kevin notes that seeing those he has taught helping others provides a very rewarding feeling.

Kevin’s closing statement:
A revolution has occurred in the arena of third-party genetic genealogy tools in the past few years and I’m happy to have been able to have played a major role in it as a commercial DNA software developer. On the speaking side, educating the public to be proficient in DNA Painter, GEDmatch, DNA Gedcom, Borland Genetics, Genetic Affairs, etc., whose tools are constantly improving and expanding in new directions, requires staying on top of the technology. For those up to the challenge, I believe the market of up-to-date knowledge for consumers is large and growing. I hope to contribute to this and empower genealogists to accomplish tasks and solve problems they might have thought impossible.

Kevin invites you to visit his website at www.borlandgenetics.com and to read his blog posts at https://borlandgenetics.blogspot.com/
CALLS FOR PAPERS

The following is not a comprehensive list of speaking opportunities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some events may have been cancelled or postponed. Please check with sponsoring organizations before submitting.

If you are aware of additional calls, please send to Editor@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org

DEADLINE 10 August 2020

**Indiana Historical Society:** Midwestern Roots 2021, "Immigration and Migration." 30-31 July 2021. To be held at the Marriott East in Indianapolis, Indiana. IHS is looking for engaging and energetic presenters to help tell the many stories of the Midwest. Please consider submitting a proposal by 10 August 2020. Detailed conference information may be found at [indianahistory.org/midwesternroots](https://indianahistory.org/midwesternroots)

DEADLINE 1 September 2020

**The Society of Genealogists and the Halsted Trust** are coming together to host a major family history conference: “Elizabethan Ancestors: Genealogy from the age of Elizabeth Tudor to Elizabeth Windsor.” This event will be held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Derby, DE74 2TZ, United Kingdom, 3-5 September 2021. Speakers may submit up to five proposals. Please see the website for full details: [www.elizabethanancestors.org.uk](http://www.elizabethanancestors.org.uk) and [forms.gle/SfDxHhzJSXsR9TF29](https://forms.gle/SfDxHhzJSXsR9TF29)

DEADLINE 30 September 2020

**7th Annual SLIG Colloquium**, 2021, Salt Lake City, Utah, Saturday, 16 January 2021. The Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) continues to reach out to advanced, experienced teaching professionals in the genealogical community for new content and proposals. Full details and submission form can be found at: [slig.ugagenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=530](https://slig.ugagenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=530)

DEADLINE 1 October 2020

**Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy.** Submissions are being accepted for the 2022 SLIG. Courses with hands-on learning opportunities are encouraged. Courses that fill educational needs not addressed elsewhere are generally preferred. Full details and submission form can be found at: [slig.ugagenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=395](https://slig.ugagenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=395)

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**GSG Educational Webinars**

The GSG Educational Webinar Program is getting underway. The positions have been filled and the members are meeting to discuss the logistics. As soon as the duties and procedures have been established, more information will be provided.

Thank you to those who took the recent survey and provided us with the feedback needed.
UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Botetourt Genealogy Fair 2020, 8-12 July 2020, Fincastle, Virginia

The Family History Fanatics, A Summer of DNA Virtual Conference, 8 August, 2020,
https://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com/econference

Mayflower International Genealogical Conference, 29 August 2020, Plymouth, United Kingdom

2020 FGS Family History Conference “Blazing Trails in the Heart of America” 2-5 Sep 2020, Kansas City, Missouri
https://fgs.org/

New York State Family History Conference In person or NYSFCH@Home, 10-11 September 2020, Albany, New York
http://nysfhc.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/


St. Cloud Area Genealogists & Stearns History Museum, "Growing for Generations" 19 September 2020, St. Cloud, Minnesota
https://www.stearnshistorymuseum.org/2020/01/08/family-history-conference-2020/

Kentucky Family Research Conference, 19 September 2020, Hurstbourne, Kentucky
https://tinyurl.com/y8f7njow

Assoc. for the Study of African American Life & History, 105th Annual Conference and Meeting, 23-26 September 2020, Montgomery, Alabama
https://tinyurl.com/y9ijyubz8

31st Annual State Genealogy Conference, 24-16 September 2020, Fairmont, Montana
http://www.montanamsgs.org/conferences.html

Family History Conference of Northwest Arkansas 2020 26 September 2020, Springdale, Arkansas
https://www.familyhistoryconferencenwa.org/

Register of Qualified Genealogists 2020 Conference “Genealogy and Social History: Know your Ancestors” 26 September 2020, Manchester, England
www.qualifiedgenealogists.org/2020-conference
Speak! Policies

Speak!, the quarterly newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild, is published in March, June, September, and December. The deadline for submission of articles and other material for the newsletter is the 15th of the prior month (15 February, 15 May, 15 August, and 15 November).

As stated in Article II of the Bylaws of the Genealogical Speakers Guild (as amended and restated May 2004), the objectives of GSG shall be

1. To provide a unified, effective voice to promote speakers’ interests by providing a forum for the discussion of topics of concern to genealogical speakers;
2. To broaden the speaker base by identifying, educating, and assisting promising speakers;
3. To raise professional lecture standards; and
4. To aid speakers in understanding and fulfilling their obligations to program planners and to audiences.

Guidelines for Submitting Feature Articles

Prior to submitting a feature article, authors are requested to review the newsletter guidelines outlined in this document (Speak! Policies) and submit article topic to Speak! editor, Lauren Maehrlein (editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.org), for approval. Unsolicited articles will be returned to the author along with a copy of Speak! Policies.

- Articles must address a topic directly related to genealogical speaking.
- Articles should be no more than 2,000 words.
- Book reviews should be no more than 750 words.
- The editor retains the right of acceptance of all articles, news, and announcements.
- The editor retains the right to edit articles for accuracy, clarity, and length. Articles will be edited to conform to the latest edition of The Chicago Manual of Style.
- Authors retain their copyright.
- First-time submissions should be accompanied by a short (75 words or fewer) bio of the author and a photo. Both will be printed with the article when published.
- Not all articles submitted may be accepted for publication.
- Articles may not be published in the order in which they are received. The editor will balance content and topics throughout the year.
- Articles by non-members will be considered when space permits.

These guidelines do not apply to member news, calls for papers, or other notices and/or announcements submitted by GSG members. Adopted November 2010; updated January 2015.