

# Speak!

The Online Newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild



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*The next issue of **Speak!**  
will be published in June 2024*

## From Our President

**Welcome to our new members listed on the next page.**

The first quarter of 2024 is quickly coming to a close. Have you looked at the courses being offered this year at the many genealogical institutes? As we work to stay current in our profession while scheduling speaking engagements and research, do not forget to take time for yourselves.

This became more apparent in my own life as I scheduled heart surgery for the first of the year. Since my first speaking engagement was not until the end of February, I could afford to take the time off. Although I had planned to get caught up on cleaning up both my electronic and paper files in January, I accomplished almost nothing.

The one thing that did get accomplished is getting the office in my 100-year-old house wired for LAN connections. WiFi does not work with thick lathe and plaster walls, even with a WiFi mesh. Have you everchecked to see how good your upload and download connections are? The faster, the better.

Whether it is taking time for our health, our education, our own research, or just a fun vacation, take time for yourself!

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Most genealogical organizations would not run without volunteers. The Guild's executive board voted to put the names of all 2024 volunteers into a pool and draw a winner of one year's membership fee. That said, we need volunteers for our nominations committee. We have three positions up for election this year: President, Treasurer, and Director. Please volunteer to be on the nominations committee. If you are interested in serving in one of these positions, please let me know.

Please note that we are still looking for someone proficient in Whova to help us with a virtual booth at the NGS 2024 conference. Might this be you?



### Announcements:

The Genealogical Speakers Guild is hoping to operate a booth at the Ohio Genealogical Conference, 10-13 April. Who else is planning on attending? If we do have a booth, we will need some help staffing it.

We want to get our educational series going again. Please see the box to the right for information.

Thanks for listening!

*Larry*

Larry W. Thomas  
PO Box 1511  
Powder Springs, GA 30127-7511

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### GSG Educational Webinars

Since we began this project, we have had five (5) wonderful presentations by very knowledgeable speakers. Four (4) of the recorded presentations are available to you on the website under "Members Only."

Do you have an educational presentation you would like to present? Let us know by sending your name, contact information, presentation title, and short abstract, to [President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org](mailto:President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org). We do pay an honorarium. If you have a topic that you would like to hear more about, please let us know that also.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

**18 Dec 2023 – 11 Feb 2024**

We welcome the following new members of GSG who joined, or rejoined, us. We look forward to your contributions to the Guild!

**Kelley Barret**

**Patti Huff Smith**

**Barbara Coakley**

**Bonnie Wade-Mucia**

We also want to acknowledge our members who have renewed – thank you for your continued support.

Lisa Alzo  
Susy Bates  
Shannon Bennett  
Debra Braverman  
Debra Hoffman  
Deborah A Mayes

Elizabeth Swanay O'Neal  
Anni Parsons  
D. Peyton Enterprises  
Janice Sellers  
Joanne Sher  
Diana Crisman Smith

Helen Smith  
Christina Staley  
Jennifer Warner  
Debbie Smyth  
Michelle Spencer  
Fred Voss

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO GUILD MEMBERSHIP?

- Display of brochures at various genealogical conferences
- *Speak!* Newsletter
- Inclusion in online directory
- Website links
- Banner promotion of speakers at major conferences

These offerings are all great and help your businesses, but there's more!

Have you joined the Facebook™ group and page? Have you used them? "Why?" you ask.

- To connect with other speakers in, or near, your area – your physical area and/or your area of research.
- To ask advice about purchases, business practices, etc.
- To connect with other speakers to share ideas.
- And much more.

Have you volunteered in the Guild booth at the national conferences? **Yes!** This is a benefit. The networking opportunities to interact with the public—the public that hires you—is great. You can talk directly to the program chairs of many societies and their members, promoting not only the Guild, but yourself as well.

Have you offered your time to help with Guild matters, either on the board or as part of a committee? Have you shared your expertise in *Speak!*? You'll have the opportunity to meet and work with like-minded individuals who enjoy working to continue the mission and legacy of the Guild.

Membership renewal allows you to take advantage of all the various benefits of the *Genealogical Speakers Guild*.



### Upcoming Program Alert

The Council for the Advancement of Forensic Genealogy is planning a one-day Virtual Seminar on 27 April 2024.

For information please visit:

<https://www.forensicgenealogists.org/cafg-announces-one-day-virtual-seminar/>

## 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 longtime member who has not yet been profiled, we would 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.

We are pleased to present in this issue a profile of GSG member, Cynthia Keefer Patton.

If you are interested in having your profile featured in an upcoming issue of *Speak!* please contact Lauren Maehrlein at [Editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.com](mailto:Editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.com)

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### CYNTHIA KEEFER PATTON

**Cynthia Keefer Patton** grew up in Atlanta, and Dalton, Georgia, and now lives in Kansas City, Missouri, with her husband, Denny. His three daughters and her son, his wife, and their little girl Emilia all live in the area. She is a newer member of GSG, having joined in the fall of 2023. But she is not new to the genealogy world, as she is also a member of NGS, APG, and numerous other local and regional associations.

#### What started your interest in genealogy?

“When my first husband’s mother passed away, he went on the search for his bio father with whom he had lost touch. He also wanted to find out about his mother’s ancestors. Helping him got me hooked!”

Cynthia then completed the Boston U. Certificate course which she believes to be the biggest influence on her genealogical journey.

Her speaking career began after she was encouraged by other members of her APG Heartland Chapter, which pulls its membership from Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. Her thought was, “if they can do it—I can do it!” Now Cynthia speaks locally, regionally, and nationally, often relying



on *ConferenceKeeper* to see what organizations are seeking proposals and who is speaking where, and then targeting those groups.

Rather than concentrate her expertise on a particular country or ethnicity, Cynthia mostly focuses on topics relating to organization, file management, and time management for genealogists, putting her 25 years’ experience in the Army as a personnel officer to good use. She has also owned a company called Patton Leadership, teaching individuals and businesses how to organize for success.

She has and continues to lecture via webinar, and appreciates that online programming allows speakers to reach audiences with which they wouldn't otherwise be able to interact.

**Closing thoughts:** "One thing I love about the genealogy community is that we are willing to share and learn from each other—

and that we have a common goal: to honor our ancestors' legacies."

Cynthia may be reached via email at [ckpatton58@gmail.com](mailto:ckpatton58@gmail.com) or through her Facebook™ page at "Tell My Family Story" at <https://www.facebook.com/ckpatton58>

## Member News

**Speak!** is happy to showcase the achievements and milestones of our members. This issue provides a progress report on the important book being written by long-time member and Guild Director, **Sheila Benedict**. Its working title is *Oral History for Family Historians: Separating Fact from Fiction*.

The book I am writing has several goals: it is a handbook for anyone doing oral interviews and writing the history; a teaching tool to instruct how to conduct interviews; some of the equipment that's needed and how that equipment is used; what types of questions to ask; and so forth. It is also a reminder that **oral history requires using accurate source citations**, thereby becoming a valuable part of the research and analysis process. There is no experience level that cannot benefit from oral history: from beginners to advanced researchers.

Some years ago, when teaching beginning genealogy at a local community college, one fact I stressed was that the interviews are an important part of researching a family and NOT a substitute for others. However, because the responses are usually part fact and part fiction, a genealogist needs to research the information to eliminate the fiction and verify the facts. That is a strong component of the total body of work genealogists gather in order to formulate a well-documented, verified family history, and part of a reasonably exhaustive search. It is important to be able to take the information, research and evaluate relevance and reliability, and know how and what to ask, where it is done, what is the right time, and who should be interviewed.

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APG Forensic SIG, APG Writer's SIG,  
Genealogical Speakers Guild; IGSI, SCGS, CGS,  
SBCGS, NGS, SLOGCS, TIARA, VGS





## CALLS FOR PAPERS

The following is not a comprehensive list of speaking opportunities. Please check with sponsoring organizations before submitting.

If you are aware of additional calls, please send to [Editor@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org](mailto:Editor@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org)

### DEADLINE 31 March 2024

**The North Carolina Genealogical Society** is seeking proposals for its 2024 Fall Conference, marking its 50th Anniversary. The conference is scheduled to take place at the McKimmon Conference and Training Center in Raleigh, NC, on 25-26 October. Please email questions and submissions to [info@ncgenealogy.org](mailto:info@ncgenealogy.org)

### DEADLINE 30 April 2024

**The Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society** is seeking presenters for their upcoming conference. Please visit <https://www.aahgs.org/> for questions or details on how to submit proposals please email [callforpapers@aaahgs.org](mailto:callforpapers@aaahgs.org)

### DEADLINE 1 May 2024

**The Ohio Genealogy Society** is accepting speaker proposals for the 2025 OGS Conference, "Light Up Your Genealogy!" This event will be held 30 April-3 May at the Kalihari Resort & Conference Center, in Sandusky, Ohio. For submission details, please visit [www.conferencekeeper.org/call-for-papers](http://www.conferencekeeper.org/call-for-papers). For questions: [ogsconference@ogs.org](mailto:ogsconference@ogs.org).

### DEADLINE 1 May 2024

**The Genealogical Society of Bergen County (NJ)** is seeking proposals for a full-day, in-person, seminar to be held in Fall 2024 in Ridgewood, New Jersey. Topics should focus on the NY/NJ area and/or methodology. For questions: [contact@nigsbc.org](mailto:contact@nigsbc.org)

### DEADLINE 1 September 2024

**Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG)** is pleased to accept course proposals for the 2026 Institute, scheduled to be held 26-30 January 2026, also for the SLG fall virtual series 2025, and for SLIG spring virtual 2026. Guidelines may be found at <https://slig.ugagenealogy.org>. Questions may be addressed to [director@slig.ugagenealogy.org](mailto:director@slig.ugagenealogy.org)

### ONGOING

**The Kentucky Genealogical Society** welcomes ongoing proposals for speakers on topics pertaining to genealogical research in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The target audience is researchers who are researching Kentucky ancestors. Proposals may be submitted at any time to [proposal@kygs.org](mailto:proposal@kygs.org).

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### LINDSEY HARNER

**Lindsey Harner**, of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, is a newer member of the GSG, having joined the organization in 2023 after visiting the booth at the NGS Family History Conference in Richmond.

A decade ago, after giving her sister a gift subscription to Ancestry, Lindsey was intrigued by all the information her sister found and couldn't resist trying it herself. Her love of American history and of puzzle solving combined to draw her to genealogy.

Lindsey began her speaking career a year ago in a unique way. Her first speaking engagement resulted from an article she wrote for *Family Tree Magazine*. Her next came through the Association of Professional Genealogists' online directory. She has spoken to her local genealogical society, and further afield via Zoom. Her specialties include researching central Pennsylvania, uncovering ancestors' occupations, finding parents using indirect evidence, federal census records, and she is currently booked to provide a talk on reconciling conflicting birth dates.

Lindsey enjoys sharing her family's history and the research lessons she's learned with other genealogists, and often gets lost in the presentation. The two live webinars via Zoom she's given were both very positive

experiences and gave her the opportunity to connect with and speak to groups in other parts of the country. She recommends signing on early before the presentation to work out any technical issues that may crop up. Interacting with the audience using quizzes or other forms of engagement tools, such as AhaSlides or Slido, allow audience members to participate by texting comments or answers to questions in real-time. Additionally, she advises providing a link for your website and/or blog before the presentation to allow the audience to scan and familiarize themselves with you and your expertise. Also, QR codes can be created and incorporated into a presentation to help audience members find your website easily.

**Advice on getting started?** There are many genealogy groups that are constantly looking for speakers, so don't be afraid to start contacting them, introduce yourself, and pitch them some ideas. Just make sure your ideas are clear and focused. When you schedule a



lecture, use social media to promote the event. Find genealogy groups in the area you're speaking and post about the event to their social pages. Check out Canva to find free templates to create graphics for the event.

In addition to the Genealogical Speakers Guild, Lindsey is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, and her local Lycoming County Genealogical Society.

Lindsey may be contacted through her website [www.LindseysHistories.com](http://www.LindseysHistories.com). The link

for her blog is

[www.lindseyshistories.com/blog/](http://www.lindseyshistories.com/blog/)

**Parting thoughts?** A fun fact about my family is that my grandmother's first cousin had the distinction of being the first person to escape from Attica Prison in New York. My dad learned about this while watching a documentary on television about the prison. The story of our cousin's escape and his mugshot were included in the documentary! This inspired me to research his life and crimes and write about it on my blog. You never know when or where you may stumble upon an interesting family story.

## **DUES RENEWALS/ NEW MEMBERS**

When paying dues renewals, or if you are joining GSG for the first time, here are a few reminders:

1. Pay dues online through the GSG website. Select **Membership Information** from the menu bar, then select **Membership Form**. (*Note: The link "Change Membership Quarter," is different from the membership links.*) Payments made through the GSG website will be processed via PayPal. You do not need to have a personal PayPal account, and we never see your credit card information.
2. Please **do not** go through your personal PayPal account to pay GSG—the funds will not automatically come to our account. In addition, YOU will pay the PayPal fee. When you use the GSG site, WE will pay the fee.
3. When paying your dues online, **always** continue from the payments page to the member information page. We use the information on this page to update your membership, and it can be difficult to match payments to the correct member without it.

### **Any questions?**

Please e-mail [treasurer@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org](mailto:treasurer@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org)



## *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](mailto: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.*

### **GSG BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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M.Ed., PLCGS, 2024

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