

Speak!

The Online Newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild



In This Issue

From Our President	1
Welcome New Members	2
Member News	3
Message from your Editor	3
Using Your GSG Website	4
Member Awards	5
Branching Out	6
Member Benefits/Join the GSG	7
Speak! Policies/Board Members	8

*The next issue of **Speak!**
will be published in Summer 2025*

From Our President

When Vacation Mode Collides with Speaking Engagements

Something interesting happened recently. I was scheduled to speak at a genealogy workshop luncheon, hosted by a local radio station. It had been on the calendar for months, and all the details were settled well in advance.

A few weeks before, I had let my contact at the station know that I'd be out of the country from Monday through Thursday of that week and that I might be hard to reach. True to plan, I was on vacation, enjoying a tropical island, not checking emails or texts.

But on the Tuesday before, my contact emailed me to confirm I was still scheduled to speak. When she didn't hear back (because, well ... vacation mode), she started texting, asking, "*Are you still going to be here Saturday?*"

That's when several of my local colleagues started reaching out—letting me know the radio station was scrambling to find a replacement speaker. They had gotten the impression I wasn't going to be available!

I quickly checked my email and sent a reply to reassure her that yes, I was still scheduled for Saturday. She responded right away, apologizing and admitting she had mixed up her days—thinking it was already Friday instead of Tuesday!

Lesson Learned

Looking back, I probably should have touched base one more time before leaving the country—just a simple reminder that all was on track. Especially when heading into "vacation mode," turning off mobile devices and stepping away from the usual routine.

If you have a speaking engagement lined up shortly after a vacation (or even during one), it's a good idea to check in with your contact before you leave. A little proactive communication can save a lot of last-minute scrambling!

Larry



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome to our New Members – 1 Jan 2025 – 31 Mar 2025

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

Jason Felihkatubbe

Cynthia Grostick

Susan Lynch

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

Lisa Alzo	Orla McDaniel	Diana Smith
Tee Bylo-Hitching	Lisa Medina	Patti Huff Smith
Laura Congleton	Kimberly Nagy	Christina Staley
Laura Hedgecock	Elizabeth Swanay O'Neal	Alexander Tolksdorf
Jim Jackson	Anni Parsons	Bonnie Wade
Louis Kessler	Denyce Peyton	Susie Wickman
Ann Wead Kimbrough	Joanne Sher	Robert York
	Catherine Sherwood	

Call for Presentations

Since attending the webinar David McCorkle gave last fall on using ChatGPT and other AI software, I have been using it a lot lately. One way is in response to the various limitations each organization puts on the amount of space allotted for a synopsis or a biography. Some entities give us plenty of space to give a good synopsis and others barely enough room to say it is a presentation. It would be great if we could somehow standardize these across all genealogical organizations. In the meantime, I can ask ChatGPT to rewrite a synopsis, title, or biography based on the limitations imposed by each society.

Look for your Guild at the National Genealogical Society 2025 Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. We will be there. Would you like to attend and not pay the conference fee? We need someone to help coordinate this, and other future conferences (see next page).



MEMBER NEWS

The Genealogical Speakers Guild is dependent upon its volunteers. Please consider helping keep our organization viable by providing some of your time and talents to support its valuable mission.

THE GUILD IS IN NEED

The Genealogical Speakers Guild is looking for a National Booth Coordinator to help us with the booth this year and for volunteers to cover the booth for part of the conference. Please email me at President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org.

GSG plans to provide four webinars for our members this year. Please submit topics you would like to present or ones you would like to hear.

Thanks for listening!

CONFERENCES AND CALL FOR PROPOSALS

With so many conferences going virtual, it is difficult to keep up with them all! *Conference Keeper* (<https://conferencekeeper.org/>) offers a calendar with all kinds of events (individual webinars, conferences, and institutes)—virtual and in-person. Some events are offered free, others have an admission fee. Check it out, today.

The website also provides a page for Calls for Presentations & Papers at <https://conferencekeeper.org/call-for-papers/>

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR

Have you been introduced to your fellow Guild members in an issue of *Speak!*? If you are new to the Guild, or have been a member for a while and have never been featured in our *Members' Profiles* column, or if it has been more than five years since you appeared, please let your fellow members know who you are, and/or what you have been up to lately, by completing a member questionnaire. With an organization as far-flung as ours, it's great to be able to put a face to, and learn a bit about, each other through *Members' Profiles*!

Speak! also seeks announcements of upcoming programs, awards received by GSG members, speaking opportunities, articles on new technology, the passing of Guild members, etc. Please send all updates to editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.org.

Speak! is *your* newsletter. Without your input, there is no *Speak!*

Respectfully,

Lauren Maehrlein, Editor *Speak!*



USING YOUR GSG WEBSITE

GSG WEBSITE – UPLOAD A PDF OPTION AVAILABLE

Have you taken advantage of the website feature – the ability to upload a PDF file to your profile? The feature allows you to add even more value to the public profile seen by prospective clients. You can upload a PDF of your speaker brochure, a listing of your current lectures, etc. (The file must be a PDF file.)

After logging in, go to the Member's Corner, click on "Edit My Profile." Next click on the "Contact" tab at the top of the page. Then go about halfway down the page and you will find the PDF Upload entry after the Time Zone entry. Click on Browse, find your document, and upload it. On the public side, anyone visiting your profile page will be able to download the PDF.

When you need to replace it, instructions can be found on the "Edit Profile Guidance" page.

If you haven't used it yet, we hope that you find this feature useful and value added.

If you have other suggestions for the website, please do not hesitate to let us know. Email: president@genealogicalspeakersguild.org

GSG LOGO FOR USE BY MEMBERS

The GSG logo is available for use by all active members in their printed and electronic business materials. The downloadable logo can be found in the Members' Corner of the website. Please address any technical issues you may have about downloading the logo to webmaster@genealogicalspeakersguild.org.



IDEAS FOR ADVERTISING WITH YOUR GSG WEB PAGE

Add a link to your business website from your GSG member web page and vice versa—add a link to your GSG member web page from other personal or directory web pages (such as your APG, BCG, or any other society member page). These are ideal opportunities to maximize your exposure with minimum rekeying of your information.

MEMBER AWARDS

Genealogical Speakers Guild member Lisa Voge, of Colorado, is the inaugural recipient of the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) Fellowship. Lisa's winning fellowship proposal focuses primarily on creating a finding aid for Italian passport collections in northern Italian archives. Archives on Lisa's fall 2025 itinerary include Treviso, Turin, Genoa, Savona, and Livorno, but she plans to add more depending on how her final schedule works out.



Many Italian archives hold passport collections from 1850 to 1950, although few are indexed. Part of Lisa's proposal includes indexing targeted collections, promoting APG, visiting emigration museums, networking with Italian archivists and genealogists, and enhancing her Italian speaking and reading abilities. The information found and shared will be of interest to all researchers of Italian genealogy worldwide.

"The well-documented Italian diaspora creates an audience of genealogical researchers interested in these records," said Voge. "These passport records inform the immigration journey stories of Italians to the United States, Canada, England, Brazil, Argentina, Australia and other countries around the world."¹

Voge, an experienced genealogist with 20 years of research experience, is the owner of *Travel Your Tree*, a family history research and heritage travel company. Her areas of expertise include late nineteenth through twentieth century United States research and immigration, particularly Italian and Irish research.²

Per the APG fellowship application, "*The APG Fellowship is a funded, short-term opportunity for a professional genealogist to undertake a program focused on professional, academic and/or personal development related to their genealogical practice. The APG Fellowship MUST be undertaken outside of the member's country of legal residence.*" Once the fellowship is completed, Lisa will provide a presentation and report to APG, which will be published in the APG Quarterly. For more information on the APG fellowship visit: https://www.apgen.org/news_manager.php?page=37704. To follow Lisa as she documents her fellowship journey, follow her on Facebook and on Instagram at [@travelyourtree](https://www.instagram.com/travelyourtree).

The GSG applauds Lisa's initiative and wishes her success!

¹ [Lisa M. Voge Named as Recipient of Inaugural APG Fellowship - Association of Professional Genealogists](#)

² Ibid

BRANCHING OUT GENEALOGY PODCAST: A FRESH VOICE IN THE GENEALOGY PODCAST SPACE



The **Branching Out Genealogy Podcast** is one of the newest additions to genealogy podcasting. Hosted by Genealogical Speakers Guild members Elizabeth Swanay O’Neal, CG®, and Tami Osmer Mize, manager of ConferenceKeeper.org, the podcast is a lively and informative resource offering tips, tools, and inspiration for genealogists at every level.

Drawing on their combined experience, enthusiasm, and deep roots in the genealogy world, Elizabeth and Tami cover a wide range of topics that resonate with family history enthusiasts. The episodes are presented in a casual, conversational format that feels more like chatting with friends than sitting through a lecture—making complex topics both accessible and engaging.

So far, **Branching Out** has explored themes such as setting and achieving genealogy goals; tools for collecting family stories; continuing education opportunities; and even dog DNA testing. Listeners can expect regular features like tech tips, website highlights, and the latest industry news—often served with a side of lighthearted commentary and a bit of genealogical "tea."

A recent episode introduced a new recurring segment featuring Gena Philibert-Ortega—speaker, author, and well-known bibliophile—who shares what she is currently reading, offering valuable book recommendations and fresh insights.

More than just a podcast, **Branching Out** is cultivating a community. Listeners are encouraged to engage through comments, email, and feedback, making it a two-way conversation. The hosts also provide useful resources such as software recommendations, conference and workshop tips, and strategies for tackling research roadblocks.

The **Branching Out Genealogy Podcast** is available on all major platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Spotify, and YouTube. Listeners can also visit the website at <http://www.BranchingOut.show> to catch up on episodes, browse show notes, and explore links to all the resources mentioned.

In a time when many people are searching for connection, **Branching Out** offers a warm, welcoming space for genealogists to come together and celebrate their shared joy of family history. Tune in and spend some time with new friends who love genealogy as much as you do!

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*.



NOT A MEMBER??

Join the Genealogical Speakers Guild to take advantage of its benefits (see page 9) and the expertise and experience of accumulated knowledge from its outstanding roster of speakers.

Sign in at [Join GSG – Genealogical Speakers Guild](#) and choose from various levels of membership:

- **Membership Plans**
 - 1 Year Membership - \$40 / 1 Year membership in the *Genealogical Speakers Guild*.
 - 2 Year Membership - \$80 / 2 Years membership in the *Genealogical Speakers Guild*.
 - 1 Year Family Membership - \$45 / 1 Year
 - 2 Year Family Membership - \$90 / 2 Years

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.

GSG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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