

Speak!

The Online Newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild



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



There was a good crowd at the event and we had a chance to meet and speak with numerous attendees, some of whom were local residents. NGS sold tickets for just the expo, so many people were staying at the hotel for other reasons. A special “thank you!” to Jeff Bockman and Ann Staley for helping at our booth!

The conference began with a jolt! Soon after the Expo opened and the reception started, Friday evening, the fire alarms went off due to smoke in one of the kitchens. We all had to evacuate temporarily.

Several of our members provided presentations or workshops:

- Julia A. Anderson, MA, AG®
- LaBrenda Garrett-Nelson, JD, LLM, CG®, CGL®, FASG
- Laura Hedgecock
- Suzanne Hoffman
- Annette Burke Lyttle, CG
- David M. McCorkle
- Dana Ann Palmer, CG, CGL
- Cheri Hudson Passey
- Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL
- C. Ann Staley, CG, CGL
- Renate Yarborough Sanders

From Our President

Hello!

Welcome to our new members listed on the next page. A special welcome to those individuals who joined during the NGS Conference.

Wrap-up: The NGS’s “Tales & Trails 2025 Family History Conference.” The Genealogical Speakers Guild was a proud Bronze sponsor at this year’s conference in Louisville, Kentucky. The conference was held at the Wyndham Galt House Hotel, a legendary Louisville hotel and conference center.



Announcements:

We are in the process of scheduling our next webinar, the topic will deal with putting a proposal together for an institute such as IGHR or GRIP. I'm sure I am not the only one who would like to know what goes into the process.

Call for Presentations

We are always looking for input from you, the members, on what topics you would like to hear or you would like to present. We have two more webinars to plan for. So please submit some

proposals to me at

President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org

Thanks for listening!

Larry

Larry W. Thomas

PO Box 1511

Powder Springs, GA 30127-7511

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome to our New Members: 1 April 2025 – 31 May 2025

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

Johaira Cespedes

Scott Lee

Brian Rhinehart

Michael Strauss

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

Tina Beaird

Grant Din

Kathryn Townsend

Sheila Benedict

Liv Marit Haakenstad

Robert Weir

Christine Cochran

Dana Kelly

Megan Young

Christine Cohen

Richard Young





TIPS FOR GSG MEMBERS

CONFERENCES AND CALL FOR PROPOSALS

With so many conferences going virtual, it is a little hard 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/>

GSG WEBSITE – UPLOAD A PDF OPTION AVAILABLE

Have you taken advantage of the website feature which provides 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." Then click on the "Contact" tab at the top of the page. Next, 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 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 very pleased this issue to present a profile of GSG member and treasurer, David M. McCorkle.

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

DAVID M. MCCORKLE

The Genealogical Speakers Guild's treasurer, **David M. McCorkle** is a land records expert with research experience in a wide variety of records used by genealogists including court records, probate, colonial records, and governmental records. He has an extensive background in computer software, and has been working on using Artificial Intelligence tools to help researchers process evidence from these records in a more comprehensive and less time-consuming manner.

David is a relative newcomer to genealogy. In 2012 he read that the newly-released 1940 census had caused so much demand it crashed all the servers. Curious as to what had people so interested, he investigated. The census wasn't yet indexed, so he located his father's family in Lumberton the old-fashioned way, using maps and scrolling, and found it kind of fun. Intrigued by the information, he then looked back at 1930, got more interested, and you know the rest.

It is because many of his ancestors had land grants, and the topic interested him enough, that he became an expert in that topic. Unfortunately, that, other projects, and lecturing have taken him away from his family research for now.

A lifelong resident of North Carolina, he was born in Lumberton, grew up in Charlotte, and



now is now happily retired in Cary. On his father's side he has deep roots on many lines dating back to the 1700s, mostly in North Carolina and primarily in what is now Union County. His mother was from Naples, Italy, but other than some DNA, he hasn't done much research on those lines.

David wrote his first computer program in 1973 and worked in the software industry for over 40 years, 20 of those running his own software company. In retirement he devotes his software expertise to genealogical projects. He's a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a B.S. in Zoology.

In the relatively short time he has been involved in genealogy, David has given in-person, online, and hybrid lectures and workshops to national, state, and local genealogical and historical organizations. He also has spoken to corporate and government audiences, and at the past five National Genealogical Society conferences and twice at AAHGS. His topics include land grants, court records, digitization, maps, mapping tools, Artificial Intelligence, land records in general, DNA, land platting workshops, and introduction to genealogy.

David is the sole creator and ongoing administrator of the free website NC Land Grant Images and Data <http://nclandgrants.com>. This website contains searchable records for all 200,000+ land grants issued by North Carolina since 1663, along with over a million high quality images of original records. Many of these records cannot be viewed anywhere else outside of the State Archives of NC.

He is also president and founder of NC Historical Records Online (NCHRO), a 501(c)(3) non-profit with a mission to provide public online access to images of original

records and other relevant information useful to researching North Carolina history and genealogy. He is president of the North Carolina Genealogical Society (NCGS) and the Durham-Orange Genealogical Society (D-OGS), vice president of the Friends of the (NC) Archives, treasurer of the Genealogical Speaker's Guild and of the Historic Mapping Congress, and on the board of the Mecklenburg Genealogical Society.

Along with fellow GSG member Diane L. Richard, David started a genealogy webinar business in 2024 called *GenWebinars*. Their focus is on giving live, in-depth, and interactive webinars on a variety of topics. Currently on hiatus due to busy schedules, they plan to be resuming in the Fall. (Please see article in the June/September 2024 issue of *Speak!*) <https://genwebinars.com>

All these projects along with his work with genealogical societies resulted in David receiving an award of merit in 2023 from the National Genealogical Society, as well as awards from the NC Genealogical Society and from local societies.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR

Speak! is scheduled to be published on the 15th of March, June, September, and December. In order to meet these dates, any and all information must be submitted, ideally, by the 15th of the month previous to the publication date, but no later than the first day of the publication month.

Announcements of upcoming programs, awards received by GSG members, speaking opportunities, articles on new technology, the passing of Guild members, etc., are examples of what sort of input is needed for our publication.

Additionally, we provide a forum to introduce members to each other through our Members' Profiles. Have you been profiled since you joined, or in the last ten years? If not, please let your fellow members know who you are by completing a member questionnaire.

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

Respectfully,

Lauren Maehrlein, Editor *Speak!*



2025 GSG BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

The GSG 2025 Nominations Committee, consisting of Jeffrey Bockman (Chair), Diane Richard, and Lauren Maehrlein, is pleased to present this year's slate of candidates.

Nominations were open for three Genealogical Speakers Guild Board positions. The term for these offices is two years, from June 2025 to June 2027. The open positions and their duties are:

- **Vice President:** The vice president shall execute the powers and duties of the president during the absence or incapacity of the president.
- **Secretary:** Responsible for recording the proceedings of the meetings of the board and the general membership; provides a copy of those proceedings to board members; supervises custody of such records.
- **Director:** Represents the general membership by voting on all issues before the board and performs other duties as requested by the president or the board.

Nominations closed on 31 May 2025.

nominations@genealogicalspeakersguild.org

MEET THE GSG CANDIDATES

FOR VICE PRESIDENT

Michele Doyle: Michele is our current vice president.

She has an MSLS in Library Science from UNC-CH. She was the sole librarian at Old Salem Museums and Gardens for 15 years. Her expertise, in addition to running the library, was helping researchers with their family history research.

She has been a volunteer with local FamilySearch centers for almost two decades and was director of the Greensboro center for two years. She has led family history workshops and taught classes for several organizations in the Greensboro area. She currently is the executive director of the North Carolina Genealogical Society.



FOR SECRETARY



Laura Hedgecock: Laura is an author, international speaker, blogger, and freelance writer. She is passionate about helping others tell family, ancestor, and personal stories. Her website, <https://www.treasurechestofmemories.com/>, provides pragmatic advice on preserving and sharing memories and family stories. Likewise, her book, *Memories of Me: A Complete Guide to Telling and Sharing the Stories of Your Life*, guides and empowers writers and storytellers with practical advice and creative ideas.

Laura serves as president of the 125-year-old Detroit Working Writers, as well as secretary of the Genealogical Speakers Guild. She's a past president and lifetime member of the GeneaBloggers Organization and a panelist on the *GenFriends* YouTube show.

FOR DIRECTOR

Shannon Combs-Bennett is a Qualified Genealogist (QG) based in Northern Virginia. She is an award-winning author who lectures in the United States and internationally on several genealogical subjects, from genetic genealogy to genealogical methodology.

Shannon earned her BS in Biology, with an emphasis in genetics, from Indiana University and her MSc in Genealogical, Heraldic, and Paleographic Studies from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Currently, she is a Ph.D. candidate in History and Genealogical Studies at the University of Strathclyde. She was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 2024.



MEMBER NEWS

GSG Board Director Sheila Benedict will be giving a presentation, "Oral History" to the Genealogical Forum of Oregon on Saturday, 16th August 2025. Her book on the topic has been accepted by Heritage Books and is in the final stages of publication.

Sheila Benedict, Benedict Research Services
Forensic and Family Research
PO Box 365, Solvang, CA 93464-0365 USA
benedictresearchservices@gmail.com
<https://www.benedictprogenealogy.com>
Member APG, SCC, Writer's SIG, Forensic SIG,
Member TIARA; GSG Board Member

HIRING A SPEAKER

Our professional genealogical speakers are eager to help you deliver a quality event. Visit our directory of speakers at [Directory of Members – Genealogical Speakers Guild](#). Here are some helpful guidelines for working with our professional genealogical speakers.

Organization/Society

- Contacts the speaker well in advance of the event and advertises only after a written agreement is reached.
- Provides written confirmation of the engagement including topics, arrangements, and compensation.
- Sends a draft of promotional materials including proposed presentation schedule.
- Organizes the event including location, publicity, and logistics.
- Furnishes the required audio-visual equipment.
- Appoints a host to assist the speaker with local arrangements.
- Compensates speaker at close of the event, according to agreed terms which may include honorarium, travel, and other expenses.

Speaker

- Provides written confirmation of the engagement including the topics to be presented.
- Informs organization/society in advance about requirements including audio-visual needs and any special dietary or lodging needs.
- Informs organization/society in advance about whether recordings (audio or video) are allowed.
- Sends handout material, if any, in advance to allow organization/society to duplicate it, and includes written permission for the society to print.
- Gives well-organized, educational lectures on the agreed-upon topics.
- Provides information and materials in a timely fashion.

Organization/Society and Speaker

- Each should maintain communication with the other about arrangements for the event.



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

President: Larry Thomas, 2026

Vice President: Michele Doyle, 2025

Treasurer: David McCorkle, 2026

Secretary: Laura Hedgecock, 2025

Director: Sheila Benedict, 2025

Director: Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew,
M.Ed., PLCGS, 2026

Speak! Editor: Lauren Maehrlein, MA
Tami Mize, proofreader

Editor Emeritus: Phyllis Matthews
Ziller, MLIS

Webmaster: Mark Beasley

Roots-L Mailing List Moderator:
Jeannette Pieczynski

GSG Facebook Page Administrator:
Eric Basir

National Conference Coordinators:
Vacant