

Speak!

The Online Newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild



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

From Our President

Our apologies for the tardiness of this newsletter. Family emergencies and personal situations came up that precluded getting the June issue out.

As stated in my previous comments, organizations like the Genealogical Speakers Guild exist only with the help of our volunteers. Thank you to Janice Sellers (Chairman), Margo Fariss Brewer, and Dave Robison for forming our Nominations

Committee. Elections are now complete, and your board will remain with the same people for another year, with President Larry W. Thomas; Treasurer David M. McCorkle; and Director Jamie McManus Mayhew, PLCGS, re-elected for new terms.

Watch for an announcement about our annual meeting.

We had one volunteer help with publicity and marketing and two more I hope will join Debra Taylor Gonzalez-Garcia and Ann Staley on our Education Committee. We are planning to get our webinars back up and running. The first will be on using Artificial Intelligence to put together presentations. If there is a topic you would like to hear, please let us know. If you have a topic you would like to present, you can submit the proposal also.

If you were not aware, we have two Facebook pages: one open to everyone and one only open to members. We post calls for proposals on the member-only page and on our website. I hope everyone took my advice to take time for their health, family, education, and fun.

We want to honor all past presidents of the GSG, unfortunately, we cannot find a complete list. If you served as president or if you can help provide a list of names and years served, please email me

at President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org

Thanks for listening!

Larry

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



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

18 Feb 2024 – 19 Aug 2024

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

Shelley Bishop	Ann Wead Kimbrough
Rhonda Casler	Thomas Koselka
Christine Cohen	Georgia R. Pribanic
John Daskalakis	Lori Lyn Price
Liv Marit Haakenstad	Pat Richley-Erickson
Tee Bylo Hitching	Edward Swierczewski
Katherine Penney Howard	Richard Young

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

Julia Anderson	Diane Henriks	Cheri Hudson Passey
Carol Ansel	James Jackson	Diane Richard
Tina Beaird	Peggy Jude	Dave Robison
Sheila Benedict	Dana Kelly	Debra Taylor Gonzalez-Garcia
Andrea Bentschneider	Louis Kessler	Larry W. Thomas
Gail Shaffer Blankenau	Michael D. Lacopo	Alexander Tolksdorf
Jeffrey Bockman	Winona I. Laird	Kathryn Townsend
Maureen Brady	Gregg Legutki	Bethany L. Ware
Eleanor Brinsko	Nancy E. Loe	Nancy Lee (Lauer) Waters
Claire V. Brisson-Banks	Annette Burke Lyttle	Robert Cameron Weir
Kathleen J. Callanan	Jamie L. Mayhew	Robert M. Wilbanks IV
Christine Cochran	David McCorkle	Paula Williams
Laura H. Congleton	Rebecca Rothman McCoy	Robert Glenn York
Grant Din	Lisa Medina	Megan Clark Young
Michele Doyle	Dana Ann Palmer	
LaBrenda Garrett-Nelson	Cynthia Patton	

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*.



GSG Educational Webinars

Since we began this project, we have had five wonderful presentations by very knowledgeable speakers. Four 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.

We do pay an honorarium. If you have a topic that you would like to hear more about, please let us know that also.

Second – We would like to get this project back on track, but we need some volunteers to help with planning and hosting the events. Time commitment is about four hours a quarter for a couple of planning meetings and the webinars themselves.

We do pay an honorarium. If you have a topic that you would like to hear more about, please let us know that also.

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 Richard Hill.

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

RICHARD HILL

Michiganander **Richard Hill**'s search to find his biological parents prompted him to research his family history, which eventually led to lecturing on genetic genealogy and the uses of DNA testing. Interviewed by renowned genetic genealogist CeCe Moore about his pioneering use of DNA testing to find his birth father's family, he was influenced to share his knowledge with others. He, in turn, helped influence CeCe to share her talents to help thousands of adoptees.

Richard began speaking in 2009 to share his DNA success story. In 2012, he self-published his journey in *Finding Family: My Search for Roots and the Secrets in My DNA*. The book was republished in 2017 by a publishing company and is now also available as an audiobook on Audible. With encouragement from Ms. Moore, he created more presentations and offers half- and full-day seminars.

Speaking nationally, Richard's audiences are mostly genealogists, but his presentation on ethnic ancestry occasionally attracts a much broader audience. He recently presented online to the staff of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection unit for Family History Month. He has found that, although most attendees have taken DNA tests, he always

covers enough of the basics, so those who have not yet tested can follow along and proceed step-by-step to an intermediate level. He leaves the most advanced topics to specialists.

The Covid pandemic taught all of us the benefits of Zoom and other similar platforms which enable speakers to reach every corner of the globe. By eliminating the need to travel, and the expenses that entails, even small societies can provide top-notch speakers for their members. Even remotely, Richard enjoys the Q&A sessions following his lectures and the interaction with his audiences.

A long-time GSG member, Richard shares his home with his wife of 56 years, and two cats.



He also belongs to the American Adoption Congress.

His advice: Don't depend on one talk. Build a portfolio of related but uniquely different presentations.

Richard has a website and a consistent social media presence. His bookings come from libraries and genealogy groups that contact him, and he submits proposals for a small number of major conferences. Those

interested may reach and/or follow Richard through one of the following:

Website: <https://www.dnafavorites.com/>

Blog: <https://www.dnafavorites.com/dna-testing-blog.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dnafavorites>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ricardhilldna/>

X: <https://twitter.com/RichardHillDNA>

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.

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We are pleased to present in this issue a profile of GSG member, **Claire V. Brisson-Banks**.

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

CLAIRE V. BRISSON-BANKS, BS, MLIS, AG

Claire V. Brisson-Banks, a twenty-year member of GSG, was inspired to research her genealogy by her husband, who had begun his search before their marriage. She reached out to her mother and aunt to help fill in the missing pieces on her side of the family. As a mom with six children, she didn't venture too far from the home until her youngest was in school. She then went back to work and to college where she attained her BS, MLIS.

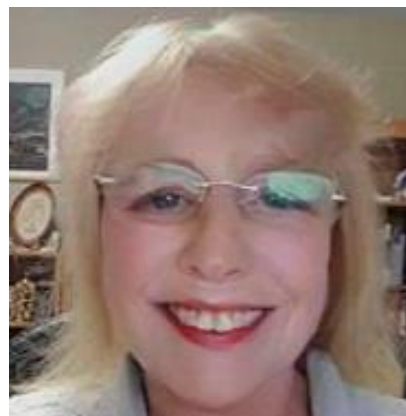
Now living in Missouri with her husband, Les, and two of her adult children, Claire is a native of Rhode Island. She was named Director of Rhode Island's first Family History Center, in 1988, and ran five conferences there. She and her family later moved to Utah, where she worked at the Family History Library and taught multiple courses, in addition to providing programs at RootsTech and during Education Week at BYU. Claire worked as a professor for BYUI from 2015 through 2019 when she began her studies to earn her doctorate.

In addition to lecturing extensively throughout the United States, Claire has spoken in Australia, and provided programs in England's "Who Do You Think You Are," in 2011. She is no stranger to providing lectures via webinars on her specialties of England,

Scotland, Ireland, Australia, the US and Canada, and Youth. She is grateful for the ability to keep in

touch, not only with the genealogical community, but with her far-flung children, 23 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren via Zoom and social media.

Claire finds sharing the knowledge she's gained with the people she meets a privilege and honor, and she is pleased that some of those people become clients. Most of her speaking engagements are found through her website, the Midwest Genealogical Center, and of course GSG. She also belongs to the American-French Genealogical Society, the International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists, International Society for British Genealogy and Family History, and the Missouri State Genealogical Association, plus a few others.



Do you have a tip to share? Actually, I have a “lesson learned.” I was asked to teach at a hotel for a group visiting the area. Their connector to my computer didn’t work and I ended up showing the slides on my small computer. While most there didn’t complain as it was a technical issue, a couple did and from that point on, I’ve always had my own set up should there be a need. She also cautions speakers to know their slides, be prepared, and say a little prayer. With those preparations, you can’t go wrong.

Closing thoughts? To those who think they can’t do this, I’m here to say, “You can!” No matter what obstacles you have in your way now, don’t ever give up, keep trying, and eventually you will succeed!

How can you be reached? Any of the following will put you in touch with Claire:
www.clairebrissonbanks.com
www.timelessgen.com
<https://timelessgen.blogspot.com/>
<https://gen-reflections.blogspot.com/>

A HELPFUL HINT

This helpful website estimates the length of time the lecture you’ve agonized over will take to deliver. It instantly tells you whether you need to add more for the time allotted, or if it needs cutting.

[Convert Words to Time - Talk Time Calculator](#)

A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

I wish to apologize for dropping the ball over the summer and not getting the June or September issues out on time. My husband’s illness and subsequent passing consumed my every moment from May until early September.

Thank you for your patience.

Lauren

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

- One-year membership in the Genealogical Speakers Guild.*

- 2 Year Membership - \$80 / 2 Years

- Two-year membership in the Genealogical Speakers Guild.*

- 1 Year Family Membership - \$45 / 1 Year

- One-year Family membership in the Genealogical Speakers Guild.*

- 2 Year Family Membership - \$90 / 2 Years

- Two-year Family membership in the Genealogical Speakers Guild.*



GSG MEMBERS SPEAK AT NGS 2024 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The 2024 National Genealogical Society Virtual Family History Conference was held 16-18 May 2024. A strong Guild presence was apparent with 12 Guild members providing 15 presentations for the conference.

Julia A. Anderson, MA, AG, AGL
Grant Din, MA
La Brenda Garrett-Nelson, JD, LL.M., CG, CGL, FASG
Annette Burke Lyttle
David M. McCorkle
Judy Nimer Muhn

Dana Ann Palmer, CG, CGL
Cheri Hudson Passey
Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL
Craig R. Scott, CG, FUGA
C. Ann Staley, CG, CGL
Paula Williams

GSG MEMBER SPEAKS AT 44TH IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

Suzanne Hoffman provided two presentations at the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies 44th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 18-22 August 2024.

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

In June 2021, we announced that a new feature had been added to the GSG website—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 valuable. 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. We also have a reversed logo if you want to sometimes use it as the background during virtual presentations.



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.

Do you have an educational program you would like to present? Send your name, contact information, presentation title, and short abstract, to President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org. We do pay an honorarium. Also, if there's a topic that you would like to hear more about, please let us know.

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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Director: Sheila Benedict, 2025

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

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

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Ziller, MLIS

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