



BIG CHANGES AT YOUR SOCIETY

By Kathy Wellington-Nassios,
Co-President

As you are aware from the survey information that has been provided and from our Strategic Planning meetings, the Society is reviewing its financial state. The shortfall between income and expenses has been met over the past several years by generous donations from membership. While this is awesome and fortunate, it is not sustainable. It is time for us to come up with solutions that will improve the bottom line and allow us to maintain the library, programs, website, and publications that we all appreciate.

The Board has taken action to improve our financial standing in the following ways:

1. Membership dues will increase for 2019-2020 by \$5.00 in each category. An individual membership will now be \$30.00. The survey showed us that 89 % of members were OK with this amount of increase. We have not increased

LIBRARY HOURS

3000 West 170th Place
Hazel Crest, Illinois
708-335-3340

(door at west end of municipal building)

Ring library doorbell for access.

Monday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Thursday: CLOSED
Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturdays:
1st & 2nd 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
3rd, 4th, & 5th CLOSED
Sunday: CLOSED

2. Starting with our October issue, the newsletter will now be digital and viewable on our website. When a new issue comes out you will be notified via email. **This means that we need to have your current email address.** If you have not received an email from us in the past year, then that indicates we do not have your email address. Please contact us through the website with your email address. **IF YOU NEED PRINTED NEWSLETTERS** there will be an option on the membership application to purchase printed copies at \$10/year.
3. We have been behind in the production of our *Where The Trails Cross* quarterly for at least 14 years. It is very difficult to find the content for four issues each year. The team has been working super hard and we believe that we will be able to put out eight issues and get caught up this term. These issues will be mailed in paper form to the people who were members during the years that they should have been produced.
4. *Where The Trails Cross*, starting with Vol 50:1 Fall 2019, will be produced only 2 times a year, instead of 4, and will be referred to as a Journal (no longer a quarterly).
5. *Where The Trails Cross*, starting with Vol 50:1 Fall 2019, will be in digital format and available for viewing on the Members Only section of the website. You will be notified via email when a new issue is available. Again, we need your email address. **IF YOU NEED PRINTED JOURNALS** there will be an option on the membership application to

6. purchase printed copies at \$20/year. Did you know that we exchange newsletter and/or quarterlies with 46 organizations? By visiting our library, you have access to what is going on with other societies. In the near future, we hope to publish a list of these organizations in this newsletter and we hope you will stop by the library to see what we have. Many of these exchanges arrive in digital format, but a printed copy will be placed on the library shelf for you to see. The Board voted to continue exchanges in the digital format.

According to our recent survey, 89% of respondents were fine with receiving publications digitally.

We are just one of many societies who have chosen to reduce expenses by going to digital publications. As of last month, Allen County Public Library told us that they got 834 publications digitally!

There are benefits to viewing a publication in digital format – you can see it in color and, maybe more importantly, you can increase the font size so it makes it easier to read. Since almost 75% of our members are over 65 (I am almost there) it is a real benefit! And, of course, you will be able to print the publication at home (or at an office supply store, or the public library) if you chose to read it on the porch with a cup of tea.

We understand that these changes may upset some of you. Please understand that the changes were made for the long-term financial security of the society.

We hope you will continue your membership and find a friend to join. Thanks for your understanding. ■



SSGHS News

SSGHS News (ISSN 0896-4408) is a benefit of membership, published monthly by **South Suburban Genealogical & Historical Society**. SSGHS and the Society's library serves south Cook and east Will Counties, Illinois. We are an Illinois not-for-profit corporation and a 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization.

Telephone: (708) 335-3340
 Web Address: <http://www.ssghs.org>
 E-mail: info@ssghs.org

Research fee for a Librarian — \$20/hour
 (see website for Research Policy).

The Annual Membership year runs from September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019. Dues are:

- Individual \$25.00
- Library or Society \$25.00
- Family (two people at same address) \$30.00
- Contributing \$35.00
- Supporting \$50.00

General Membership & Program Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month, except December and January, at the Society's headquarters, 3000 West 170th Place, Hazel Crest, in the Municipal Center building, which is located between Dixie Highway and Kedzie Avenue, and a half-mile north of 175th Street via California Avenue.

Newsletter submission deadline is each board meeting. We do not assume responsibility for errors, though we will attempt to correct them.

SSGHS News
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RESULTS OF MEMBERS SURVEY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING: PART 2

By Peg Kapustiak

Part 1, published in the July 2019 SSGHS News, included an Introduction of the Survey, a Description of the Strategic Planning Session, and the Challenges and Strengths of SSGHS. The final section follows:

Library, Research and Website

The Introduction to Questions 4-9 of the Members Survey stated: Our Society is an exception to the rule because we maintain a library in our facility that is staffed and managed by our organization. This is a costly endeavor. In our 2017-18 term, the cost to have this library was \$11,396.06 (includes: rent, permit, insurance, phone/internet). In the same term, we had 222 members. This is an average cost of \$51.35 per member.*

Responses to Questions 4-9 indicated 52% had visited our Library in the past 2 years, 76% knew we had family histories, and 88% knew we had maps, atlases and plat books. But only 35% had requested a Pullman lookup, only 13% had paid for Research by SSGHS, and 58% used the Members Only section on <http://www.ssghs.org> website.

Key take-aways:

- We average 20 visitors per month to the library.
- The Board is pursuing FamilySearch Affiliate Library status. An affiliate library must be free and open to all, so we eliminated the fee to use the library. Becoming an affiliate library is expected to increase the number of visitors to our library, including Not-Yet-Members.
- Space is an issue for Workroom/Office and Library— form committee: evaluate layout,

review “use data” of items currently in collection, item availability on internet, review accession/collection policies (i.e. what do we collect?), backlog of potential donations now in boxes, etc.

- Pullman lookups & Family History Research donations must increase.
- Review levels of suggested donations for services.
- Recruit and train additional Library and Pullman Volunteers to help with Research, FamilySearch visitors, to help with routine library operational tasks, and to create additional databases for publications and/or website, etc.
- Information in our Members Only website section can supplement Library collection. ■

Correction to July News page 2:

An error was made in my report in the **Member's Survey and Strategic Planning** article on p.2 of last month's Newsletter. In the section **Challenges that SSGHS faces**, the first line should read “Membership has declined 7.4% compared to last year (not 20% as written). I misread my calculations, so I apologize. Peg Kapustiak

GOALS ORIGINATING FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING

By Peg Kapustiak

Many ideas and proposals to reduce operational Expenses and increase SSGHS Income were proposed in the Strategic Planning session, based on the Members Survey (see above article and also July 2019 Newsletter). These have now been consolidated into Goals that were approved by the Board of Directors on July 9, 2019.

Please note that many of these goals are the same or similar to many other organizations. They define basic expectations by members of those organizations.

GOALS cont p. 4...

SHOW & TELL SUMMARY

By **Patty Higgins**

On Saturday, July 13, 2019 we held our annual “Show and Tell” meeting where our members are the program. This always turns out to be one of the best meetings and this year was no exception. Everyone has a story. Even if you do not think you have a story, you have one.

Marilea Zajec recounted a trip to Tennessee to look for some family graves. They knew the name of a woman in Tennessee and a town. As they drove there, they got off the highway at a random exit to look for a pay phone to call her to make sure she was still alive and able to meet them. They ended up in a very, very small town that seemed all but abandoned. At the only building that appeared to be open, they found a woman and asked about a phone. It turns out that woman was a relative, knew the person they were seeking and the grave they were looking for was on her land. They found the grave in question, but only had one picture left on the camera roll (pre-digital camera and cell phone era). That one photograph turned out crystal clear as a shaft of sunlight lit the stone perfectly.

Carolyn Blanchette recounted her “I had my DNA tested and here is what happened” story. Her original results had a surprise trace of Irish ancestry. As the database updated and refined her results, her Irish ancestry disappeared. The 1940 Census revealed all sorts of details of her childhood neighbors that clarified her memories.

Gene Korzenko who had won a DNA kit, sent it in. He turned out to be 98% Eastern European (and no Irish).

Ken Carlborg recounted his experiences with GEDMatch. He had previously tested with 23 and me. After we had a speaker about GEDMatch, he submitted his results, expecting a long wait. In less than 24 hours, he heard from a match in Sweden. They quickly figured out the common relative. They have exchanged photos and identified a person in a vaguely labelled photo.

Shirley Koelling had a lot of recent luck on Facebook. She connected with a distant relative from Sweden who is temporarily in Michigan. She has since met him in person. He is from Lund University and she had a copy of his dissertation to pass around.

Ann Moser showed a photo of her father and grandfather hauling two huge logs in Wayne County, Ill. These logs were taken to the mill and cut into planks. Her father used some of the planks to make a desk for his sister. Ann has recently donated this desk to the Wayne County Historical Society, and other family items over the years.

Donna Work had a family Bible she received when she was 12 years old. At first she was disappointed in the gift, but later came to realize the value. She had the complete provenance with the stories of how it passed along until it ended up in the drawer of a desk she was given on her 12th birthday.

Peg Kapustiak told about her researching the errors that creep into online trees and the futility of trying to correct them. Names morphed from Dewey to Huey and Maria to Mariah. Even with evidence, people refuse to accept corrections. We have all experienced similar situations.

Phyllis Drewno attended a family reunion where she was not a direct blood relative, but found herself surrounded by younger people who wanted to hear the stories of their family. Even though she is not directly related, she had a lot of information for them. She also told how upon meeting her late husband’s family she already knew many of his cousins, having been classmates with them.

Alan Gardner told a story of his son and a friend, and a dream about a deceased young wife. His son’s dream told about a woman and the dress she wore as she approached an oversized ornate door. Later the dress was found to have been the woman’s wedding dress and the door a relative’s house repurposed as a coffee table after surviving a house fire.



AUGUST CALENDAR

Saturday, August 3
Hazelnut Fest Day.
SSGHS Library closed.

Tuesday, August 6
SSGHS Board of Directors Meeting
at 7:00 p.m. — All members welcome.
SSGHS Library open
from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 10
10:00 a.m.—General Membership Meeting.
Program: “Internet Archive”
By Debra Dudek.
SSGHS Library open
from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 15
Writers’ Group monthly meeting
from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
SSGHS Library closed.

Saturdays, August 17 & 24 & 31
SSGHS Library closed. ■

SHOW & TELL cont...

One of our new members, Don Gordon, shared his beginner’s enthusiasm. His DNA test found he does have some Irish blood (it became a theme for the day.) He experienced the excitement of making finds at the Allen County Library. He and his daughter Dana recounted some surprises they turned up with one relative who turned out to have been abducted and adopted as a young child. In later life she was reunited with her birth family, including a twin! Another relative died under mysterious circumstances. The official record indicates he drowned in a bathtub, leaving out the fact that he was tied up before ending up in the tub.

Our ancestry is exciting, leading to interesting stories. Refreshments were provided by Donna Work and Ann Moser. ■



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AUGUST 2019

AUGUST PROGRAM

By Shirley Koelling

**Internet Archive:
 The Amazing Genealogical
 Resource You're Not Using**

August 10

Our speaker is Debra M. Dudek. Debra is Head of Adult and Teen Services at the Fountaindale Public Library District in Bolingbrook, Ill. Ms. Dudek specializes in British genealogy, World War I research, and emerging technology topics. An alumna of Olivet College and the University of Strathclyde (Glasgow, Scotland), Ms. Dudek holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, a Masters in Information and Library Studies, and a Post Graduate Certificate in Genealogical, Palaeographic & Heraldic Studies.

What is Internet Archive? Internet Archive is a non-profit entity which offers a free choice of well-rounded selection of digital materials such as texts, audio, moving images, software, and archived web pages. Founded in 1996, Internet Archive partners with organizations to provide free digital content. Learn of its amazing collection of city directories, county histories, gazetteers, yearbooks, and family genealogies. Do not miss this fantastic resources. ■

GOALS cont from p. 2....

- #1 GOAL: Society membership will reach 300 by the year 2025.
- #2 GOAL: SSGHS will continue to be a recognized leader in Chicago area genealogy.
- #3 GOAL: SSGHS will continue to offer a myriad of educational opportunities for all members including programs, webinars, publications, classes, training, field trips and special interest groups (SIG's).
- #4 GOAL: SSGHS will achieve financial sustainability through a combination of cost control, member and visitor support, and grants.
- #5 GOAL: SSGHS will continue to produce quality publications with a minimum of expense.
- #6 GOAL: SSGHS will continue to be a well-governed transparent organization whose members and volunteers are appreciated and valued.
- #7 GOAL: Pullman Employee Records collection will continue to be a recognized and integral part of the Pullman story.
- #8 GOAL: SSGHS Library will continue to be an attractive, valuable, and necessary repository for genealogists living in the Chicago area or with Chicago area roots.

The next step is to prioritize Objectives for each Goal. Objectives are the "what do we do to meet each Goal".

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

- August 10 – "Internet Archive"
by Debra Dudek.
- September 14 – "Changes in Research Using Family Search"
by Steve Szabados.
- October 12 – "Finding Your Catholic Ancestors"
by Ginger Frere.
- November 9 – "Even Gangsters Had To Register: World War I Draft Registration Cards and the Selective Service Records They Produced" by Janis Minor Forte.

Refreshments served.

Many ideas and proposals originated at the Strategic Planning Session plus new suggestions continue to come in.

If you would like to be part of the Strategic Planning and Implementation process, please contact info@ssghs.org. We welcome your support and input regardless of how much time you have available, because you have unique skills and interests. Both in-towners and out-of-towners can help in many ways, both off-site or on-site. ■