



Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

May 2023

Volume 45 Number 5

Message from your President	1
May Program	1
Potos from Our April Meeting.....	2
GSSC Cook Books remain available	4
Writing Group Welcomes you to join.....	4
El Vista FHC contact person information.....	4
Anonymous Article.....	4
GSSC 2023 brochure esident	5
Free Beginning Genealogy Class	6

May 18, 2023
7:00 P.M. George Kapor a local Hilmar business man to speak about the people for whom he found left-behind items

Presidents Message

By Vicky Wolff

Happy Spring! This year we will be working on getting new members to join our group and bring back some old members into our fold once again. At the last Board Meeting we discussed different ways in which we could reach new people and interest them in our Genealogical Society. Amy Mowrey volunteered to get information on events and festivals happening in Stanislaus County, so that we could have a booth with information at these events. She has been very active in her endeavors, as she has sent me many applications for varies events around our area. Martha is checking into various events at MJC that we can participate in and Jackie is distributing our new brochures to all the libraries in Stanislaus County. We are checking to have a presence at the Farmers Market here in Modesto. Magazine articles will be going out this week to the various magazines in our area. Please let an Officer or Board Member know if you have other ideas to outreach to potential prospective members in Stanislaus County. Also, we are working on our Scholarship Fund with new wording and a new approach to reaching out to prospective students. Looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting. Thanks for all the volunteer efforts! Vicky

May Program

By Karen Souza

Please join us for the May presentation of old and antique items and their stories. For further information on GSSC, please check out the website: stanislausgenealogy.org or email GSSC for more information on genealogy at gssc-founded1968@gmail.com



George Kapor, a local Hilmar businessman, will be our guest speaker on May 18, 2023 at our monthly meeting. He will be telling stories of "Finding Treasures." At the storage facility he and his wife own, he found some great family history items left behind. He also purchased other interesting items in an antique store that he will share with us. Please join us for this "show and tell."

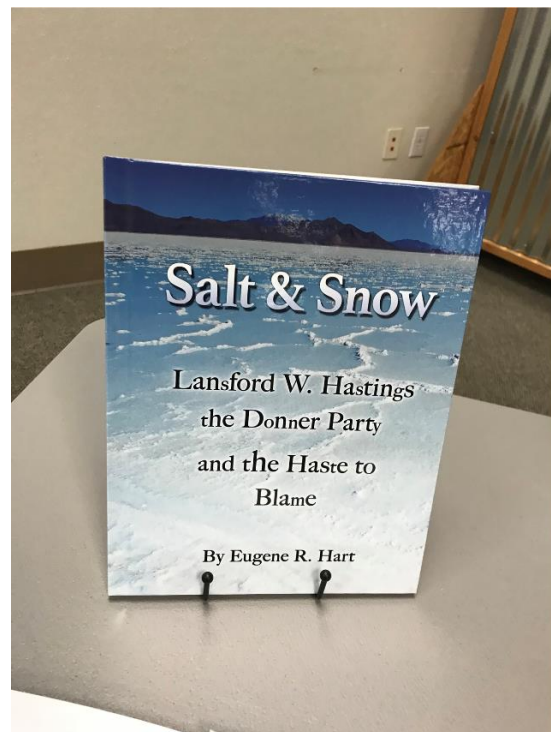


Photos from the April Meeting

By Heidi Armo



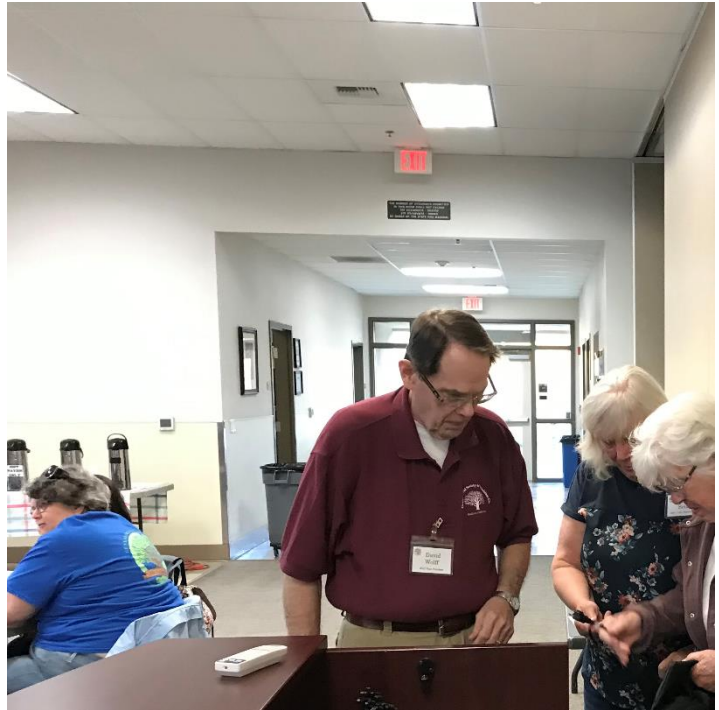
Our presenter - Eugene R. Hart



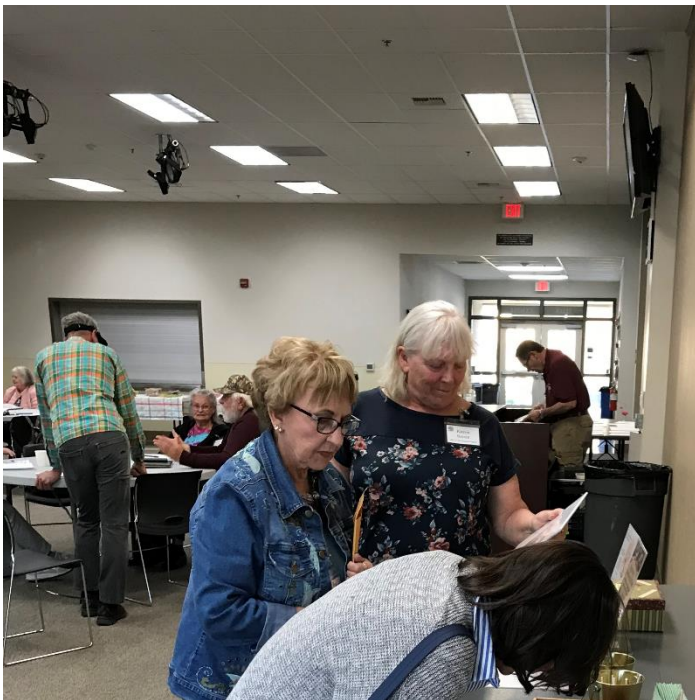
His text and subject of his talk



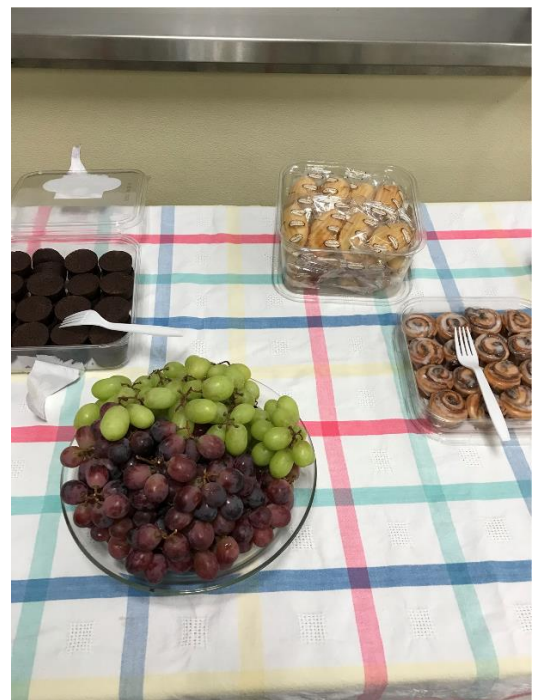
Our President



Setting up for our presentation



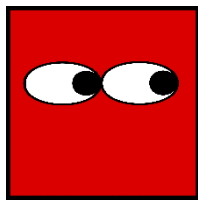
Meeting Sign in



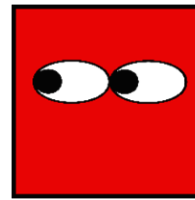
Some of our Break snacks



Our newest member to Jackie Niemeyer's right



The Cooking Gene



We still have copies of the GSSC Cookbook: **The Cooking Gene**. Judy and Joyce would be more than happy to fill your order. We are now down to a limited number of our popular cookbook. The Board has set the price for the remaining copies at **\$20 plus \$5 for shipping and handling**. See our website stanislausgenealogy.org/Publications to order your copy.

Writing Group

Submitted by Joann McDonald

The next meeting of the writing group will be held at Joann MacDonald's home at 10:00 on May 11th. Please E-mail her at JMastergardener@aol.com to confirm you are coming.

FHC on El Vista is open by appointment only.

Marian Sanderson is the contact person. She can be reached at 209-968-4796 to make an appointment.

**The following Anonymous Article is presented to you by your President Vicky Wolff for your consideration about "How to Grow Our Society Post COVID-19"
Please read it carefully and provide us with your input.**

[Back to list](#)

Expanding the Reach of Genealogy Societies and Conferences

12 Jan 2023 6:46 PM Anonymous

WARNING: *This article contains personal opinions. The intended primary audience for this article is the members and officers of genealogy societies.*

There are two contradictory "facts" floating around among genealogy societies, points that I hear discussed at almost all the genealogy conferences and meetings that I attend:

Fact #1: Genealogy is more popular today than ever before. It is the second or third or fourth most popular topic on the Web, depending upon whose sources you care to cite.

Fact #2: Attendance at all genealogy venues is down. The average attendance at genealogy conferences is declining. (Note that I wrote "average." There are some notable exceptions.) Membership in genealogy societies is also declining. Finally, the number of visitors to most major genealogy libraries reportedly is declining.

Is it just me, or does anyone else see a contradiction in these two "facts?" If interest in genealogy is growing, why aren't we seeing more and more people at conferences, libraries, and society meetings?

I would like to offer some possible solutions to this quandary.

In the past few years, I have attended dozens genealogy conferences in four different countries. I have also worked in genealogy society booths at two different non-genealogy events, one with a few thousand attendees and another with more than one million attendees.

Over the past 40 years I have attended more than 150 regional, national, and international genealogy conferences and have visited several dozen genealogy societies. I have seen some ideas that worked well, some that did not work so well, and a few that totally fizzled. I am not sure if I am an expert in the topic of shrinking attendance, but a few observations stand out in my mind.

First of all, genealogy societies need to grow in order to succeed. To be sure, some societies have existed for years with a more or less stable number of members, or even with declining membership numbers. However, the societies that seem to succeed in

producing new services and publications are those that are growing. Constant growth means new people joining with new ideas and invigorated interest levels. Newcomers soon gain experience and then become the "movers and shakers" within the genealogy community. Those who have been around for a number of years, conversing with the same people time after time, tend to settle in and enjoy the social aspects of the local society, but they do not strike out with new ideas and new energy levels. The genealogy societies with declining memberships rarely produce new and innovative products and services.

Next, when we (the long-term the members of genealogy societies) go to genealogy conventions to advertise our services and products, we are "preaching to the choir." Who goes to genealogy conventions? The long-time genealogists who already know about our products and services! Yes, the attendees at genealogy conferences typically are those who have been researching their family trees for some time. They probably already know about your society and made a determination some time ago whether or not to join. The bigger the conference and the more people attracted, the truer this seems to be.

For instance, I have attended 32 of the last 34 annual national conferences of the U.S. National Genealogical Society. I have also attended a number of other national, international, and larger regional conferences. You know who I saw at recent conferences? Mostly the same people that I saw the previous year and the years before. Some of those faces look very familiar; in many cases I think I have been seeing the same faces for 34 years! These are the people who already know about the services of your society. Exhibiting at national and local genealogical conferences may be a desirable thing, but it does not attract many new members!

What we need is new blood. We need those mysterious people who are buying the software and surfing the web's genealogy pages and newsgroups. These people are in "stealth" mode; we know they are lurking out there someplace, but we have difficulty locating them. We need to attract these people to both local and national genealogy conferences. If they could become "hooked" at the conferences, I bet a significant number of them would join local and ethnic genealogy societies. Yes, they could energize societies as we watch membership begin to increase.

So, how do we find and interest these people? We (the old-time members of the societies) have to go to the potential newcomers. We cannot wait for them to come to us. We cannot go to genealogy conferences that keep attracting the same crowd and expect our membership numbers to grow as a result. We have to seek out the potential newcomers wherever they are. And I assure you that is not at genealogy conferences.

Some years ago I spent several days working in a genealogy society's booth at the Eastern States Exposition, an event locally referred to as "The Big E." This Exposition is similar to a state fair, except that it covers all six New England states. It was an eye-opening experience. More than one million people attended this 17-day event, and an estimated 750,000 of those people walked by the genealogy booth where I worked. To be sure, not all of the attendees stopped to talk, but thousands did. Yes, thousands. I think we (the society) talked with more people at this one 17-day event than we do the rest of the year at all the genealogy events combined.

Talking with the general public is a fascinating experience. To be sure, the conversations mostly were at an introductory level since most of these people had no idea who their great-grandparents were. We had a high-speed Internet connection in the booth and spent many hours looking at Social Security Death Index records, as well as a variety of Web sites in addition to our own. We handed out blank pedigree charts by the thousands, along with some advertising materials.

Not all of these people went home and started looking up their family trees that evening or the next day; but, a significant number did. I also believe that we planted many "genealogy seeds" that may not sprout for months or perhaps years. What we did do well is that we got many of these people to start thinking about their family heritage, people who would not have started that thought process if we only exhibited at genealogy events. I believe that some number of these people will join a genealogy society in the coming weeks, months, and years. Admittedly, I do not have an accurate yardstick to measure the success of our efforts at this non-genealogy event. All I have is intuition and some one-on-one feedback from individuals. Yet every staff member and volunteer who worked in the genealogy booth at this event has expressed satisfaction with our efforts and believes that we "did good."

Other venues that would seem suitable for a genealogy society's booth would include:

- Any event that celebrates history, such as "Old Time Days"
- ✓ Any ethnic heritage events, such as St. Patrick's Day celebrations or Highland Games
- State, county and local agricultural fairs
- Civil War re-enactments
- Revolutionary War re-enactments
- Antique auto shows
- Steam engine and old gasoline engine meets

Gunners Market

I am sure that you can add to the above list. You can probably find other potential events within the next year in your vicinity.

In short, I would urge you and every other genealogy society member to creatively find new places in which to advertise your society's products and services. While it is good to advertise to genealogists, it is even more important to generate publicity among those who never heard of your organization. In short, you need to advertise to the general public. The only way to do this is to go out and find the general public at the places where the public gathers. It works best if the people you talk to have at least a casual interest in history and/or heritage, such as the people who attend the types of events I listed above.

I am reminded of a very old joke that has been told millions of times. Many years ago, a shoe manufacturer felt they had saturated the U.S., Canadian, and European markets. They already sold millions of pairs of shoes every year but wanted to increase those sales even further. Seeking new markets, they sent a salesman to darkest Africa where there were no shoe manufacturers.

The salesman wired back to the home office, "The people here do not wear shoes. There is no opportunity to sell shoes. I am returning home rather than wasting my time any further."

Undaunted, the home office sent another salesman known to have a unique way of looking at sales situations. A few days later he wired back, "The people here do not wear shoes. The potential market is unlimited! Please send all the shoes you can spare, I am going to stay and make a fortune!"

The joke is an old one but perhaps it does point out that new viewpoints and new approaches are needed. I would suggest that it is time to throw away some of the ideas we have held for years.

How does your genealogy society "sell" its services and products? Are you seeking new members/customers in markets that are already saturated? Or are you seeking opportunities in places where genealogy is unknown? Where are you most likely to find new members?

Has your genealogy or local history society had any success publicizing its efforts and attracting new members via nontraditional methods? If so, would you mind sharing your success stories so that others could benefit from your ideas?

[Add comment](#)

Comments

- *13 Jan 2023 5:18 AM | Anonymous*

The other problem with many societies is the "old guard" often don't like change of any sort. This is the way we have always done it. No need to change. They don't like having their "authority" challenged. It is particularly evident in groups where one person holds sway, and no-one dares question them.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

E-NEWSLETTER

FREE QUERIES

RESEARCH TRIPS

EVENTS

February - "Souper" Supper

March - Spring Workshop

May - Memorial Day Cemetery Project

June - Ice Cream Social

September - Red Poinsettia Sale

October - Fall Seminar & Int'l Festival

November - Ancestor Night

ge • ne • al • o • gy ~ a line of descent traced continuously from an ancestor

FOUR GENERATION CHARTS

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

SURNAME REGISTRY

WORKSHOPS

SEMINARS

Writing Group

Second Thursday of each month

Contact us for details

Stanislaus County Library

Special Collections Room

Personalized Assistance

Mondays Noon to 4pm

"How-to" classes, demonstrations and
help for beginner, intermediate and
advanced researchers

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

of Stanislaus County

GROWING FAMILY TREES



P.O. Box 1352
Modesto, CA 95353

FOLLOW US

Facebook
Genealogical Society
of Stanislaus County

WWW
www.stanislausgenealogy.org

EMAIL
gsscformed1968@gmail.com

JOIN US

Trinity United Presbyterian Church
Telle Center
1600 Carver Road, Modesto, CA

Located between Briggsmore & Orangeburg
Third Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm
(Excluding July and December)

BUSINESS & PROGRAM at EACH MEETING

Public Welcome

PURPOSE

TO BRING TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A MUTUAL
INTEREST IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH.

TO INFORM, INSTRUCT AND EDUCATE MEMBERS IN
TECHNIQUES OF RESEARCH.

TO INCREASE THE GENEALOGICAL HOLDINGS OF THE
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ROOM AT THE STANISLAUS COUNTY
LIBRARY AND ACQUIRE OTHER
MATERIAL FOR COMMUNITY USE IN THE FORM OF REFERENCE
BOOKS, MICROFICHE AND MICROFILMS.

INFORM - INSTRUCT - EDUCATE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership dues for the calendar year:
\$25.00 Single Membership
\$35.00 Family Membership
Includes Stanislaus Researcher E-Newsletter
Additional \$8.00 for hard copy

_____ *name*

_____ *address*

_____ *phone*

_____ *email*

RETURNING MEMBER ____ (yes) ____ (no)

Interests & family surnames

Mail your application & payment to:

**Genealogical Society
of Stanislaus County
P.O. Box 1352
Modesto, CA 95353**

**For more information, email us at:
gsscformed1968@gmail.com**



Beginning Genealogical Class

**Modesto Library Makerspace
Saturday, April 29 at 2 p.m.**

**The Modesto Library and the
Genealogical Society of Stanislaus
County will teach you to:**

- Trace your family history
- Use forms to keep your findings organized
- Navigate the Library's Special Collections room for research

Register at www.stanlibrary.org



Modesto Library

1500 I Street • 209-558-7814

www.stanlibrary.org



Membership Information Dues: Single membership, \$25.00 per year Family membership, \$35.00 per year Stanislaus Researcher Published 10 times per year by Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County, P. O. Box 1352, Modesto, CA 95353-1352. Delivered via email.

Submit articles for publication to the editor via email: lruddick@ix.netcom.com by the 15th of each month.

Address changes: Send address, email and phone number changes to Joyce Hickman at: c/o GSSC, P. O. Box 1352, Modesto, CA 95353-1352

Email: gssc-founded1968@gmail.com

Telephone: 209-529-9430 (Vicky Wolff)

GSSC web page: <https://stanislausgenealogy.org>

The newsletter is posted at this website, along with other interesting society related items.

General meeting: 7:00 p.m. on the 3rd Thursday of each month, except July and December at the Trinity Presbyterian Church at 1600 Carver Rd., Modesto, CA.

Board meeting: 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month, The Secret Garden, 2401 E Orangeburg Ave., Modesto, CA.

2023 Officers		2023 Standing Committees	
President	Vicky Wolff	Acquisitions	Vacant
1st Vice President	Karen Souza	Audit	Board of Directors
2nd Vice President	Jackie Niemeyer	Budget	Roxanne Ferrari
Corresponding Secretary	Martha Carter Bhatti	Four Generation Charts	Julie Condrin
Recording Secretary	Pam Atherstone	Historian	Heidi Arno
Treasurer	Roxanne Ferrari	Membership	Joyce Hickman
Director at Large 1	Joyce Hickman	Memorial Day	Membership
Director at Large 2	Amy Mowery	Mentor	Joann McDonald
Director at Large 3	Joann McDonald	Newsletter & Website	Lewis & Logan Ruddick
Director at Large 4	Martha Carter-Bhatti	Nominating	Membership
Director at Large 5	Julie Condrin	Planning	Officers & Board
Past President	David Wolff	Programs	Karen Souza
		Publicity	Vicky Wolff
		Queries	Coleen Norby
		Registrar	Marge Scheuber
		Research & Publication	Vacant
		Refreshments	Joann McDonald
		Seminar	Vacant
		Special Collections Room & Workshops	Jackie Niemeyer
		Social Media	Pam Atherstone
		Sunshine	Martha Carter-Bhatti
		Trips	Heidi Arno

Updated 17 April 2023

We have 68 members for 2023

[website GSSC](https://stanislausgenealogy.org)



Genealogical Society of
Stanislaus County
P O Box 1352
Modesto, CA 95352-1352

