

Supporting family historians in the South Puget Sound since 1974



OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

VOL. 36, NO 7

MAR 2026

UPCOMING :

- **MEMBER MEETING:** Thursday, March 12th 7-8:30pm (Hybrid)
- **SIG MEETINGS** - throughout MAR
- **Newsletter articles due March 15th**
- **OGS Board Meeting Mar 17th,** 6:30-7:45pm

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Newsletter team: **Peggy Cooley, Carolyn Gibbons, and Mandy Stahre**
Contact us: newsletter@olygensoc.org

WEBSITE LINK:
olygensoc.org

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This newsletter is free to the community.

Musings

Volunteer opportunities-We are stronger when we work together. The Olympia Genealogical Society runs on volunteers. Without them, we would have to close our doors like so many other genealogical societies.

Team Opportunities: participation ranges from a one-time 2 hour stint at one of our Outreach activities to a year lone Team Lead that requires several hours a month.

Seminar Team Lead: Nancy Cordell is retiring and we need

a new Lead, as now is the time to hire next year’s Seminar speaker. Email Nancy at dnasig@olygensoc.org

Webmaster position: Co-webmaster bob Monn is retiring from this positions and we are looking to train a new person to help Joe Brookshier.

Publicity: We need someone to promote our activities; contact Andy Carter at president@olygensoc.org.

Nominating Committee: We need 5 people to contact all of our members during March

and April to find officers. It’s fun talking to members who you might not normally chat with and do Society business at the same time. If interested, email info@olygensoc.org. The Board is considering making the elected officers a two year commitment, instead of the current one year. More about that at the next general meeting on March 12. Consider how much you enjoy meeting and talking about genealogy with others-we are fun people! We need your help to keep up the good work of this 50 year old organization.

March program

Bounders, Bigamists and Grass Widows: Using Divorce Records in Genealogical Research. Marital problems, including divorce, adultery, and bigamy, were more common in the 19th and early 20th century than we may realize. When one member of a married couple seems to suddenly disappear from the records, we need to remember that separation or divorce may be the cause, rather than assuming the missing spouse must have died. We will discuss

the kinds of records that can be created when divorce occurs and we will also review techniques for uncovering evidence of divorce and other marital mishaps.

Three short case studies will then be presented to demonstrate the techniques discussed.

Bio: Karen is the principal genealogist for The Past Matters® LLC (www.ThePastMatters.com) and specializes in researching old photographs. She has

served on the board of directors for the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) and the Genealogical Speakers Guild, and is a member of the Daguerreian Society and the DAR. Karen lives in Vancouver, Washington with her husband



and three cats.

Photo: Karen Wallace Steeley

2026 Seminar Recap

A great day of fun and learning took place February 8th at our annual seminar. This year Cyndi Ingles (from CyndisList.com) seminar was on "Decoding Your Ancestors: The Tech Edition". Four presentations included: **"The Path to Digital Libraries & Archives"**; **"Coordinating in the Cloud: Collaboration with Genealogists Online"**; **"Pin Your Ancestors Down with Google Maps & Google Earth"**; and **"Be Your Own Digital Archivist: Preserve Your Research"**. We had a total of 76 people register for the seminar from all points around the globe including the Caribbean and New Zealand thanks to Cyndi announcing the seminar on her various platforms. Each registered person received links to the recordings to re-

view the presentations for **30 days**. The seminar is always a great get together for new and experienced members and guests. Please note, we are looking for a new team lead for our Seminar Team. Nancy has been the lead for many years and is needing to step down. Please consider stepping up to be the Lead for this group. Everyone that has been on the team will continue, so you would not have to train us. Nancy will still be around to get you up to speed. The main duties of the Team lead is setting the meetings, contacting a speaker that the team comes up with, sending the contract and correspondences to the speaker. Notices are formulated and sent out for Save the Date, time

to register, reminders of the upcoming seminar. Week of the seminar final script is written (basically updating current script), update powerpoint pages, gather syllabus. If you are interested in learning more about this position please contact Nancy and she can answer questions in more detail. You don't need to have served on this team before, just know that there is a great team in place to help you along!!

If we don't have a Seminar Lead, there will not be a seminar this coming year, no threat, just reality. It takes people stepping up and saying yes to keep this organization afloat!

- Kerry Upton

1. America 250! The Committee, chaired by Kathy Erlandson, met and brainstormed ideas for OGS’s contribution to our country’s celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. We have divided up tasks and will meet again on March 13.
2. The Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum have signed an agreement to transfer their collections to the Evergreen State College (TESC) Archives in the Spring of 2026. These will then be available in the TESC Archive Catalog. Stay tuned for more information.



SiGs are going strong. Check out the groups that we have and join in!

Genealogy Chat (in person at Peggy Cooley’s house) meet the 3rd Wednesday of each month. All genealogy topics are welcome. Genealogy tips and advice are freely given as well as discussions about the genealogy world.

SIG	Facilitator	Meeting Information	Location
Ancestry.com	<u>Greg Nordlund</u>	4th Saturday 11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Google Meet
DNA	<u>Nancy Cordell</u>	2nd Wednesday 6:30 - 8:00 pm	Google Meet
Family History Writing	<u>Laura Carroll</u>	1st Monday 7:00 - 8:30 pm	Google Meet
Family Tree Maker (FTM)	<u>David Abernathy</u>	1st Tuesday 6:00 - 8:00 pm	Zoom
FamilySearch.org	<u>Carolyn Gibbons</u>	4th Wednesday 6:00 – 8:00 pm	Google Meet
Genealogy Chat	<u>Peggy Cooley</u>	3 rd Wednesday 1:00 - 2:30 pm	In Person at Peggy's house

Outreach Opportunities for 2026

Hoping to have another successful year of reaching out to the public and letting them know OGS is here and still active in its 50+ years of existence. In addition to OGS participating in AMERICA 250! - celebrating our country's 250th anniversary this year (more details to follow on that) - we have been invited again by the Sons and Daughters of Norway (info below) to be part of NORWAY DAY at the Thurston County Fairgrounds. This is our first event to kick off outreach season. I'm looking for volunteers to staff our table there on April 18, 10am - 4pm. The day will be divided into shifts, or you can tell me how long you'd like to work. You'll be handing out genealogical material and fielding questions from the public. Anyone who's worked there previously will tell you it's a very lively event and fun.

At any of these outreach events, please remember that you do NOT need to be an expert in genealogy to be part of this. Many people are just looking to start their genealogy, and you've already done that with your family tree. That said, besides volunteers, anyone who has experience working with Norwegian genealogy will be especially appreciated as I sure don't have any to offer! But don't worry if you don't - we do have some handouts dealing with that.

We are trying to resurrect a former outreach activity that we had prior to COVID and that is **DIG** (Drop In Genealogy). Volunteers are present for a couple of hours in a library to assist the public who drop by with their genealogy brick walls or just want to know how to get started. It was a very successful endeavor

before when we held it at the downtown Olympia library. This is still very much in the planning stage so nothing definite yet, but our location this time would likely be the Tumwater branch of the Timberland Library system. Again, it's just people helping people as best they can. I am trying to get input both from those of you who participated in DIG in the past and any of you who were helped by DIG and subsequently became OGS members, to see how we might improve our approach to this. More details on this as it progresses.

Diana Bargmann
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 (360) 338-3017

18th Annual Olympia Norway Day

April 18, 2026 : 10 - 4



There's more to Norway than
lutefisk and lefse!

*Music, Dancing, Vikings, Fjord
Horses, Food, Giftware, Crafts,
Artwork, & More!*

Thurston Co. Fairgrounds, Olympia
Admission \$3.00
Children under 12, free with adult

Sponsored by Sons of Norway,
Hovedstad Lodge #94
&
Daughters of Norway,
Prillar Guri Lodge #30

Genealogy 101



Breaking News from
www.familysearch.org!

This is not the column I intended to write for this month, but Family Search has some breaking news that I feel I should put out now! Over the years I have been involved with Family Search – say 40 or so – I have watched the site explode, especially this last few years. They put everything they own online, except things that were under copyright (which you can still view/copy at a Family History Center) and a very few books that have not been scanned yet. (Remember almost all is done with volunteer labor!) In addition to the billions of documents online, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of articles on how to do things, where to find things, and one of the more helpful to me, on the history of various places around the world. There is no way to find documents unless you know where to look. I am right now involved in looking into Bohe-

mia. Finding out what country it was or was under the control of during a specific time is a daunting task. The thing I really want to talk about today is a new experiment. There have been several under the Experiment tab, all game-changers. The AI search is phenomenal! It can read handwriting from the 16th century! One of the things I have had a problem with since I first started using Family Search is their Family Tree. While there are good pieces of information there and valid documents, since anyone can change anything on it, there is a lot of – I started to say garbage, but I will be nicer – inaccuracies. If someone changes your great-grandfather to someone you never heard of, there is not much you can do about it except cry and curse. Now there is a cure! Family Search has been working on a beta test that was first called “CET” and

is now User Tree. With this tool, one can upload a GEDcom, work on it using all the Family Search tools, and best of all, NO ONE can make any changes except people one invites. This means it is safe forever – or as close to forever as anything gets. I had been wondering what to do with my 60 years’ worth of genealogy, and here is the answer. I received the email that it was “Live” 19 February.

The instructions in that email are: Go to: "Search" > "genealogies" > (scroll to bottom of the page) "Upload your individual tree".

If that does or does not work for you, please let me know so I can investigate. If it does, let me know how you like it.

Carolynn also leads the Family Search SIG that meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month on Google Meet.



**Don't forget to register for RootsTech
March 5-7th**

OGS Elected Officers

President — Andy Carter

Vice President — Terry Church

Secretary — Kris Retlin

Treasurer — Carol Jenner

Past President—Kathy Erlandson

Team Leads

Librarian — Rebel Romero &

Traci Ragen Clawson

Membership — Helga Warner

Newsletter — Peggy Cooley

OGS Historian — Cindy Stalnaker

Publicity — Andy Carter

Research — Jerri McCoy

Spring Seminar — Nancy Cordell

SIGs—Kerry McHugh-Upton

Sunshine—Kris Retlin

Technology—Joe Brookshier

Outreach—Diana Bargmann

Community Partners

City of Lacey — Erin Quinn Valcho

Timberland Library — Agatha Burstein

February Program:

SPEAKER:

Dr. David Mc Donald, The Preacher Genealogist(TM), has been engaged in genealogical research for 50+ years. A past president of the Board for Certification of Genealogists and the Association of Professional Genealogists, Dave has taught at genealogical institutes across the country. With Billie Stone Fogarty, he is the founder of the Genealogy Symposium, an archives-based, in-person program featuring hands-on instruction and teaching designed to advance research skills and offer learners insights into archival materials and manuscript collections. Dave is the presenter of Family Tree Webinars' new series, "Essential Skills for Beginning Genealogists," and has presented through Ancestry Academy. He is a director of the Wisconsin State Genealogical Society, and former editor of its quarterly journal. Dave has a genealogy practice based in Madison, Wisconsin.

**February OGS MEMBERSHIP MEETING
February 12, 2026**

President Andy Carter called the Zoom meeting to order at 7PM.

Diana Bargmann introduced the speaker, Dr. David McDonald, The Preacher Genealogist. Dr. McDonald substituted for Billie Stone Fogarty who was ill and could not make the presentation on "School Censuses". Dr. McDonald's topic was "For Whom are you Writing – a Guide to Genealogy Compilations".

Following the speaker there was a short Membership meeting.

Programs: Diana Bargmann noted that the March Membership meeting will be a hybrid Zoom-In Person meeting. The School Census topic will be scheduled later.

Seminar: 76 registered, several from foreign countries. The presentation was great and lasted an hour longer than scheduled. A new team leader is needed, if interested volunteer through Info on the website.

Newsletter: They are looking for book reports, information on international outreach, events in Olympia. Longer family stories will be posted on the website.

DIG: Tumwater Library is interested in getting this started.

Nominating Committee: Needs to be established for the 2026-27 slate.

There were 55 participants in the Zoom Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38.

- Kris Retlin, Secretary