

The Rotarian Genealogist

FEBRUARY 2025 | THIRD QUARTER 2024-2025

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT LUANNE NEWMAN

Dear Members,

It's already the second month of the NEW YEAR and I'm sure you have accomplished many things on your to-do list, not to mention the every-popular resolutions (I jest).

We are all unique yet we share a passion for researching our family tree. Just ask our friends about our passion — when someone at a luncheon table poses a question: "How can I find my ancestor information?" We light up, they roll their eyes, and our excitement cannot be contained.

In this newsletter you will learn about some successes, some traditions, resources, and opportunities.

Moving forward, this newsletter will include short interviews with you, our members. Who knows, maybe you will find a long-lost cousin or a new method. If you would like to be interviewed, please [email me](#).

Don't forget the 21-25 June 2025 RI Convention in Calgary CANADA! We will again have an exhibit table and a breakout session in the House of Friendship. Remember, that is how some of us met! [Drop us a line if you will be attending](#) and we'll save you a seat.

Happy hunting, climbing, translating, and travelling!



FORG CALENDAR

- 01 February Newsletter
- 08 February FORG Family Reunion Meeting
Melinde Byrne
- 01 May Newsletter
- 10 May FORG Family Reunion Meeting
- 21-25 June RI Convention/Calgary CANADA



FORG FAMILY REUNION MEETING

JOIN US.....

"ALL MY HEROES CAME HOME"

MELINDE LUTZ BYRNE

08 FEBRUARY 2025

1:30 PM CENTRAL USA

9:30 AM IN HAWAII USA

19:30 LONDON UK

Fellow FORG Member and renowned speaker, Melinde Lutz Byrne will present our next FORG Family Reunion Meeting, "All my Hero's Came Home."

Melinde has been a genealogist since 1976. Trained as an anthropologist and archivist, she began publishing in 1979. She was elected one of the fifty Fellows of the American Society of Genealogists in 1993 (www.fasg.org) and was its President. In 1984 she joined a four-member team to conduct forensic genealogical research. In 1992 she worked with geneticists compiling umbilical mtDNA lineages. In 1995 Melinde joined a five-year publishing project to produce *The Great Migration Begins* and subsequent *The Great Migration* volumes. Recent publications have appeared in the *Hofstra Law Review* (habeas corpus) and *The New England Quarterly* (colonial African freedom). She co-authored editorials in the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*. She has been a guest on NPR *Talk of the Nation* and spotlighted on CBS, NBC, and PBS and has been quoted in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *AARP*, *SWE*, and *Newsweek*. Recently lectured on African names, on a Jane Doe found in 1971, burial ground discoveries, holocaust research, and DNA evidence used to identify samples for law enforcement. Currently researching a book on Miriam Perlstein, a reader on a TV miniseries screenplay "Top Secret Rosies," and advocating for public records access.



JOIN ZOOM MEETING

FORG Family Reunion

Feb 8, 2025 19:30 London

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4337626224?pwd=eJJoLzIPWkRpTTgzY2F3YlFoaztrQTog&omn=82666243915>

Meeting ID: 433 762 6224

Passcode: 20191110

THIS JUST IN ...FROM PAST PRESIDENT SUE WEBER



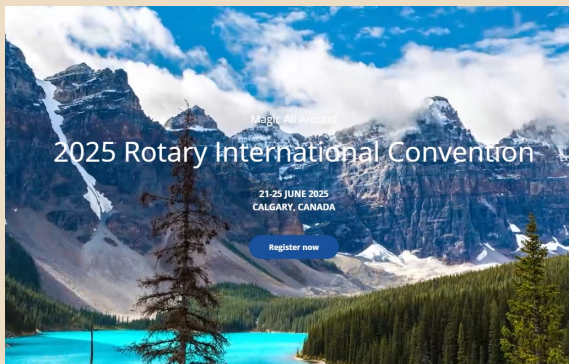
Sue Weber's great-grandmother, Emma Amelia Kelson, from Camden London.

In August 2024, FORG member George English spoke to our fellowship and subsequently connected with a FORG Past President to give her some help. Here is the outcome:

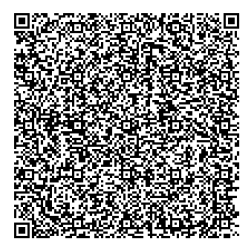
"Exciting news! Thanks to George English helping me dig up the story on my great grandmother and her love for men named 'William', I am headed to London in April to meet distant cousins. One cousin is coming from Australia! I don't have the daily details yet just the dates."

**SHARE YOUR
SUCCESSSES,
FAMILY STORIES,
PRESENTATION
IDEAS & RECIPES...**

REACH OUT TODAY!

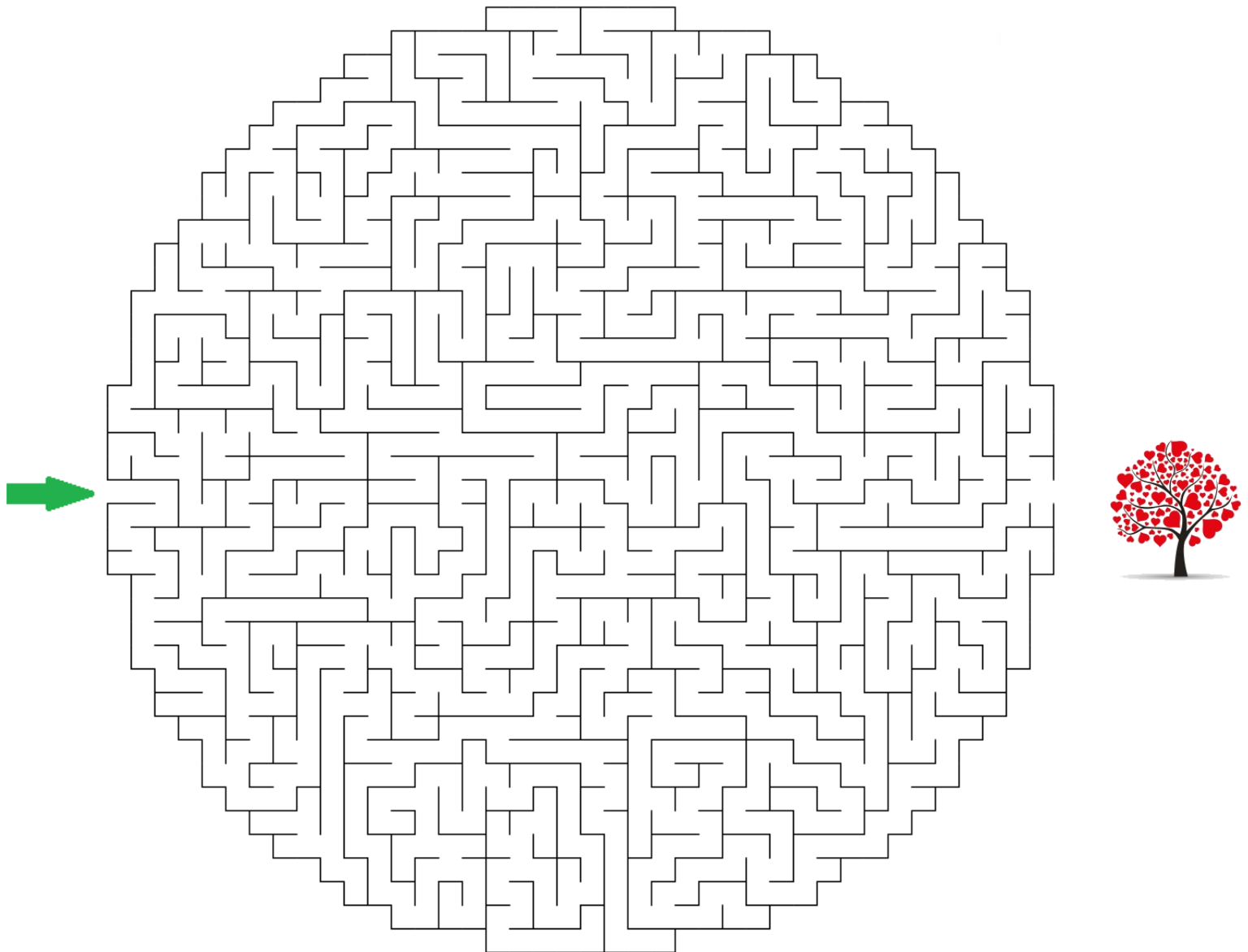


The 2025 RI Convention will be held in Calgary CANADA
21-25 June.
Why should you go?
Scan & watch ➔



or <https://bit.ly/Calgary2025Testimonials>

SOMETIMES, THE SEARCH FOR OUR FAMILY
TREE CAN BE AMAZING AND OTHER TIMES IT'S
ONLY A MAZE, FULL OF BRICK WALLS.
FIND YOUR WAY TO THE TREE OF HEARTS!!



Good Luck!

GARBAGE ON THE FLOOR? No!

Luanne Newman | Luanne.Newman@outlook.com

It caught my attention. I didn't know where it came from, but I picked the small bit of paper up off the office floor to take a quick glance before disposing of it. It was very 'yellowed' and I noticed it was an old newspaper clipping with what looked like movie theaters listings in Chicago – Oak Park, Cicero, and Des Plaines among them. I didn't remember **ever** seeing it before that day, January 11th, 2025. Where did it come from?

My husband and I had just "downsized" to a 55+ "Active Senior Community" seven months earlier. Many items were sold, recycled, thrown out, and some that were in bins covered with dust were stacked in a closet in our new place. They were labeled "Genealogy" or "Old photos," to be processed later.

When I saw names on the paper scrap like Bela Lugosi, Fred Astaire, Hedy Lamarr and Bing Crosby, I knew this was an old piece of paper.



Turning the snippet over, a picture of a young woman was staring back at me but now I saw a handwritten ARROW pointing at the most important twenty words to me on either side of this newspaper clipping: "After 11 years at the Chez Paree, Alfred Gatti is leaving to become executive chef at the new Congress hotel..."

A young immigrant in 1906, Alfredo Gatti (1892-1964) arrived at Ellis Island, New York USA at the age of fourteen years. He is my paternal grandfather from the Piemonte region of Northern Italy. Now, I have visited my cousins there eight times since the beginning of my climb of the family tree in 1989. It's a beautiful part of the world, full of rolling vineyards, crowned with red-tiled roofed homes and a sprinkling of striking church steeples.

The newspaper article contained information, some of which I was very familiar – Grandpa died when I was eight years old and I had always heard stories about both the Chez Paree and the Congress Hotel. But I knew that some of this information was destined to be added to my simple but effective Excel spreadsheet that was a timeline of his life. You see, as I found the census records, the draft registrations, and other dated historic morsels, I would add them to the spreadsheet, then resort by date and month to get a better understanding of the 72 years he lived.



Alfredo Gatti with Luanne Gatti Newman in Florida USA (1964).

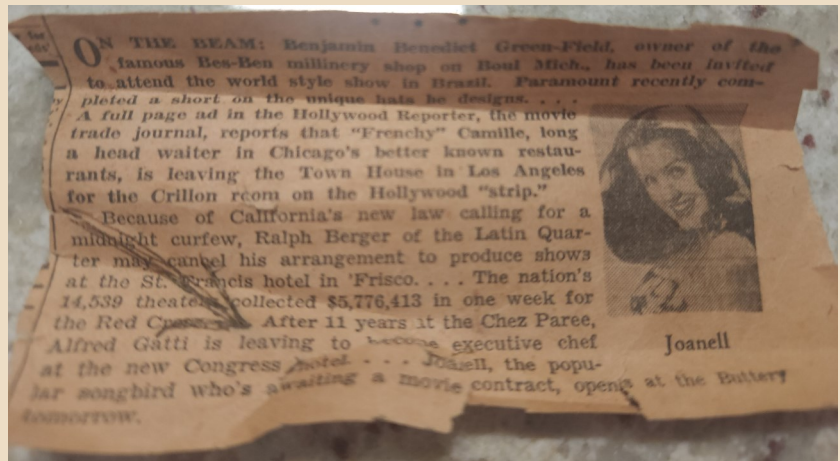
Well, I had the 'occupation' noted with the two workplaces, but I had no date and thus, no accurate "sort." Nothing on either side of this yellowed slip had any dates.

What to do?

(continued page 6)

Garbage on the floor? No! (continued from page 5)

There are always many resources in the world for all of us – the researchers, the certified genealogists, and the casual collectors of family info. One easily within my reach is the Facebook community. Help with translations, immigrations, locations in other nations, occupations are among the plethora of assistance easily obtained. I went to a favorite of mine, the “[Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness - RAOGK USA](#)” Facebook group. I scanned the article, posted that graphic, gave some background information, and my request for the newspaper name and date.



Do we sometimes wear out that 'refresh' icon when we are anxious to get an answer-- the updated posts? Well, refresh I did, and it didn't take more than fifty minutes for some brilliant, helpful individual to give me the answer of The Chicago Sun(day Times) 17 June 1945 page 118.

I had a date! If my grandfather worked at the Chez Paree for 11 years that ended in 1945, that meant he began in 1934. I could also fill in that spreadsheet cell that he began working at the “new” Congress Hotel in 1945. The term “new” referred to the re-opening for civilian use in 1944 when the US Government sold it back after training U.S. Army during WW II.

You would think that I would be happy enough to get that response but what followed was a rush of posts with additional articles that had proof of Alfred working at hotels and restaurants in South Bend and Indianapolis, Indiana, Grand Rapids, Michigan. There

he was, with his white chef hat in some of these article photos.

I have long been a fan of “Random Acts of Kindness” where some kind-hearted people “pay it forward” in a Starbucks line, mail a gift card to someone in need, or show generosity in one way or another. I could not have felt more blessed than I did January 11, 2025, by this discovery gifted to me.





"WHAT HAVE I FORGOTTEN?!?"

How many times has it happened to you, or someone you know: you've hit a brick wall, lost your way, or just cannot think of what else to do to add to your family tree?

Don't give up! You've come so far. Here are some words or encouragement or resources to look through. Maybe one or more will help to re-ignite your search:

HOW ABOUT...

- ☐ Taking a fresh look at records you have
- ☐ Finding a native speaker to look at records from another country
- ☐ Brainstorming with fellow club friends
- ☐ Searching a city directory
- ☐ Taking a DNA test
- ☐ Making a sortable timeline (Excel works well)
- ☐ Turning to social media groups and pages
- ☐ Getting professional help (GENEALOGIST, not therapy)
- ☐ Trying Newspapers.com
- ☐ Interviewing older relatives
- ☐ Visiting a cemetery
- ☐ Searching Find a Grave®
- ☐ Looking over probate and land records
- ☐ Looking at Find *my* past website
- ☐ Try obtaining military Records from archives



FAMILY RECIPE SHARING

Let us know if you have a family recipe that you will share with your FORG Friends.

MODERN MARBLE CAKE



Ingredients:

- 1 - 3/4 c. sifted flour
- 2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 c. shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1 t. vanilla

Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Cream shortening with sugar until fluffy. Beat eggs and add. Add sifted ingredients and milk alternately. Add vanilla. Divide dough into three parts. Add pink coloring to one and chocolate to another.

Chocolate Part:

- 1 oz. (square) chocolate, melted
- 1 T. sugar
- 2 T. milk
- 2 T. Butter

Mix together

Put each part in loaf pan and swirl slightly with a knife. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees. Cake can also be made plain and add raisins and dates.

"This is Aunt Lillian's recipe given to me at my wedding shower."

