

The Rotarian Genealogist

NOVEMBER 2025 | SECOND QUARTER 2025-2026

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT LUANNE NEWMAN

Dear Members,

Perhaps you live in a part of our world where the seasons are changing. Are you enjoying it? In southeast Texas, our weather has hardly cooled, but eventually fall/winter/spring should deliver daily highs lower than 90°F (32.2°C). I'd like to think that we will be inside more and find ourselves with more time to research our family tree. Right?

Speaking of family trees, don't miss the article on page 10 about who we can choose to receive access to our records on Ancestry®. The graphic is an actual freehand drawing by my sister. Upon planning my first Wille Family Reunion, I found myself with 82 pages of information to share. I turned to my sister, an artist in California, to create exactly what I was seeing in my mind as a handbook cover. If you want to find my branch, you can follow Olga, Ruth, and I'm one of those three apples.

Don't miss the article from FORG Director, Martha Stuckey. Ancestry app...YES!

It's not too early to think about our NEXT RI Convention and our FORG table in the House of Friendship in Taipei, Taiwan in June 2026. Check out the request from Bill Harvey on page 3.

We are happy that the knowledgeable and ever-popular Thomas MacEntee will speak to us at our next ZOOM meeting. Have a friend join you, but don't miss it! Enjoy your holidays and make new family memories! *Yule*

FORG CALENDAR

01 November	Newsletter Published
08 November	FORG Family Reunion Meeting via ZOOM Speaker: Thomas MacEntee "AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?"
01 February	Newsletter Published
07 February	FORG Family Reunion Meeting via ZOOM Cheryl Rosen, "Jewish Genealogy"

FORG FAMILY REUNION MEETING

"AI AND GENEALOGY: TROUBLE AHEAD?"



THOMAS MAC ENTEE

So what if I told you that a Baby Boomer guy with a love of punk rock music but also art history who somehow "fell" into the technology industry almost 40 years ago, and then left a lucrative career in Information Technology to pursue his love of family history and genealogy?

And that his passion for tracing his roots began almost 50 years ago when he was watching the mini-series Roots on ABC Television at his great-grandparents' house in February 1977?

While some might think these two elements - technology and historical research - are opposites. The truth is, "tech people" like Thomas are needed to guide today's genealogists through the maze of options so they can deploy the best apps and devices as they break down those research brick walls.

Having taught over 1,000 in-person and virtual genealogy lectures since 2010, service on the boards of many genealogical societies, organizing a group of over 1,000 genealogy bloggers, and helping researchers save money on genealogy products and services, Thomas MacEntee is ready for the next chapter in his professional journey: changing the way genealogists acquire new research skills, motivating researchers to take a chance on new technologies, and improving how family stories and heirlooms are preserved and passed on to the next generations.

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

FORG Family Reunion

**November 8, 2025 19:30 London
1:30 PM Central Daylight Time/US**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89867323762?pwd=JouPwbsDGSQCRroF5Nqm6rbC1KRM1b.1>

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion

<https://us02web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=ed58cdob-0c12-4b53-a04e-7dd702cba726>



FORG NEEDS You!

The Fellowship of Rotarian Genealogists WILL BE IN TAIPEI!

Yes, the June 2026 Rotary International Convention will be held in beautiful Taipei, Taiwan June 13th—17th, 2026.

FORG's Past President Bill Harvey is already making plans to attend and will once again have a table in the House of Friendship, but he needs YOU!

Have you ever helped work our Fellowship table? If you talk to others who have done so, they rave about the opportunity. No special skills are needed. You will be showing visitors our Paul Harris Family Tree and taking photos of them for our "Family of Rotary" Tree on the wall.

Let us know if you are planning to attend so Bill can plan ahead. And, yes, this is really Bill's email address ...Love it!! — paulharrisrocks@gmail.com

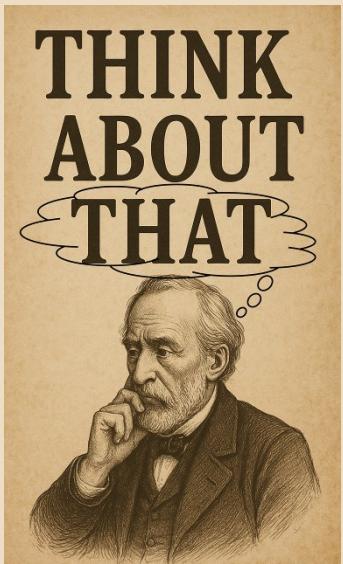


Murphy's Law of Genealogy:

Your ancestor's maiden name will be recorded on the one record page that is missing.



NAMES, NAMES, EVERYWHERE

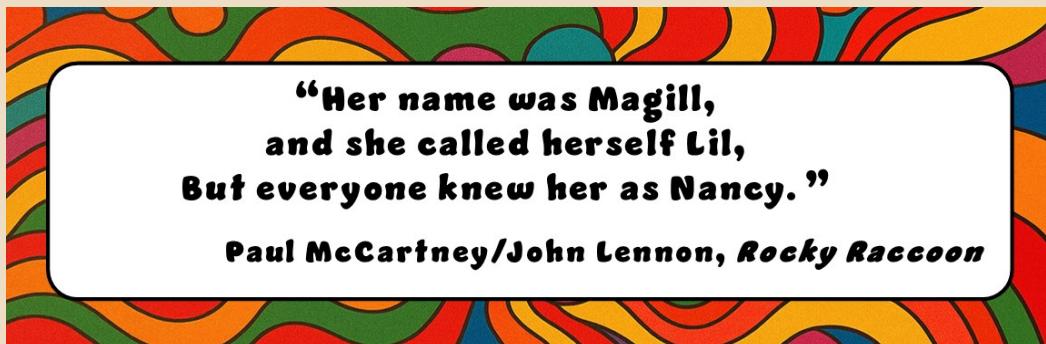


Genealogists often face significant hurdles when researching names due to the fluid and inconsistent nature of naming conventions across time and cultures. One major challenge is the use of nicknames, diminutives, or alternate spellings that obscure a person's formal identity. For example, someone named Elizabeth might appear in records as Liz, Beth, Eliza, or even Betsy, depending on the context or the recorder's preference. These variations can make it difficult to confirm whether multiple entries refer to the same individual or different people entirely. Additionally, historical records may contain transcription errors or phonetic spellings, further complicating the search.

Another common obstacle is the repetition of names within families, especially in cultures where naming children after parents or grandparents is customary. It's not unusual to find several individuals named John Smith across generations, sometimes even within the same household. Without precise birth dates, locations, or other distinguishing details, it becomes a puzzle to determine which John Smith married whom, or which one appears in a particular census. This issue is compounded when records are sparse or incomplete, forcing genealogists to rely on circumstantial evidence and educated guesses to build accurate family trees.

Finally, migration and cultural assimilation can alter names dramatically. Immigrants often changed or anglicized their names upon arriving in a new country, either voluntarily or through clerical error. A name like "Giovanni" might become "John," or "Schmidt" might be recorded as "Smith," erasing clues about ethnic origin and making it harder to trace lineage across borders. These shifts, combined with inconsistent recordkeeping and evolving naming customs, mean genealogists must be part detective, part historian, and part linguist to untangle the threads of identity woven through generations.

-Courtesy of Microsoft Copilot



IT IS A SMALL WORLD, AFTER ALL...

By Martha Stuckey,
Rotary Club of Baton Rouge - Capital City
Baton Rouge, Louisiana USA

You never know where you might meet family.

This past March I was attending a college "celebration" for its 200th anniversary in Jackson, LA, not far from Baton Rouge. I knew one cousin (1st cousin on my mother's side) would be there as I knew her and her sister as well as I had graduated from Centenary College of LA. But she was friends with someone named John (short for Johnson) Allums. I knew the Allums name from family research and got a chance to ask him about it. And thanks to having the Ancestry app on my phone we figured out we were also cousins, but 2nd or 3rd cousins on my Father's side. And to make it even more interesting, his sister was the organist in Steel Magnolias.



Johnson "John" Allums with cousin Martha Stuckey

TELL US WHAT You WOULD LIKE

In a large group of members who live all over the world, we want to be sure that we are giving you some information that you want or need. One idea is to have sub-groups by interest or ethnic research:

- African
- British
- Eastern European
- French Canadian
- Family Tree Maker
- German
- Irish
- Italian
- Jewish
- Mayflower
- Scandinavian
- Technology

These are just some topics. What interests you in this list or what did we leave off that would interest you to communicate with other members? [Drop us an email.](#)

FORG — DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET

Do you learn something from our Zoom meetings? Know anyone in the world who enjoys family research?

For \$20USD/year or \$100USD for life, our members have access to amazing speakers who even hold a Q & A session right after the presentation! Tell your genealogy friends that, if they are in Rotary or not they can be a part of FORG. It's easy! [Share this link in an email to them.](#)

SAVE THE DATES — UPCOMING ZOOM PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER 8, 2025

AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?

presented by
Thomas MacEntee

"My Cousin's My Great Grandma

and

My Son's My First Cousin?

Oy Vey!"

***The Problem with Endogamy in
Jewish Genealogy***

With

Cheryl Rosen

FEBRUARY 7, 2026

PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY LEGACY: BACK UP AND SYNC YOUR MEMORIES

By Lisa Ronjes Moritz
Rotary Club of Omaha (Downtown), Nebraska USA

Your family memories are priceless treasures and ensuring they're safe for generations to come is a gift to your loved ones. In this edition, we'll break down the key tech terms and explore the differences between backing up and syncing, so you can confidently protect your cherished moments.

KEY TERMS TO KNOW

- 1. Hub** A hub is where all your photos and videos come together in one place. Think of it as your go-to location for organizing and safeguarding your memories. We like to call it the Memories Hub.
- 2. Computer** Your primary computer acts as the central device for accessing your hub. If preserving your memories is important, having a computer in your setup is essential for a robust backup strategy.
- 3. External Hard Drive (EHD)** An EHD is a portable storage device that provides an extra layer of protection. Modern options like Solid State Drives (SSDs) offer faster performance and are a great choice for this purpose.
- 4. Cloud Auto Backup** This feature automatically saves your computer or EHD files to an internet-based cloud service, ensuring your memories are secure and accessible.
- 5. Cloud Photo Service** A cloud photo service is designed specifically for preserving and sharing your photos. It's perfect for viewing your cherished moments anytime, anywhere.
- 6. Cloud File Service** A cloud file service goes beyond photos to save and sync all types of files, including videos, documents, and spreadsheets. It's an all-encompassing solution for digital storage.



SYNC VS. BACKUP: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Sync Syncing ensures two-way communication between your device and a cloud platform, keeping your photos updated across all devices. For instance, services like Google Photos and iCloud sync automatically. However, keep in mind that sync also means changes—like deleting a photo on one device—will reflect across all synced platforms.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY LEGACY: BACK UP AND SYNC YOUR MEMORIES (CONT.)

Backup Backup, on the other hand, is a one-way process. It transfers your photos to another location, but you must manually delete unwanted files. This method provides a safety net, keeping your memories secure even if something happens to your original device.

Automatic Backup Automatic backups run in the background, copying your files without any effort on your part. This seamless approach is ideal for one of your backup methods.

Manual Backup Manual backups involve actively copying your files to ensure everything is stored correctly. While hands-on, this method allows you to maintain folder structures for easy retrieval. A monthly routine—like adding the previous month's photos—is a practical approach.

THE 3-2-1 BACKUP METHOD

The 3-2-1 method is the gold standard for securing your data:

- **3 copies of data:** Keep three versions of your files.
- **2 different mediums:** Use two distinct storage types (e.g., computer and cloud service).
- **1 offsite:** Store one backup away from home (e.g., a cloud service or an external hard drive stored securely).

Examples of 3-2-1 Backup Setups:

- Computer, external hard drive, cloud auto backup (e.g., [Backblaze](#)*)
- Computer, cloud photo service (e.g., [Forever.com](#)), cloud file service (e.g., [pCloud.com](#))
- Computer, external hard drive, external hard drive offsite
- External hard drive, cloud photo service (e.g., SmugMug), cloud auto backup (e.g., Backblaze)

Backing up your memories isn't just a task—it's an investment in preserving your family's stories and genealogy. By understanding the distinctions between sync and backup and adopting the 3-2-1 method, you're taking vital steps to safeguard your precious moments for future generations.

[Need help setting up your back up, schedule a complimentary chat with fellow Rotarian Lisa Tonjes Moritz!](#)

WHILE YOU ARE AWAITING DNA RESULTS.....BRAIN CALISTHENICS

Family Research Word Scramble

EOTNSCRA

SSCEUN

DAN

EGENLYGAO

LADN CDOSRRE

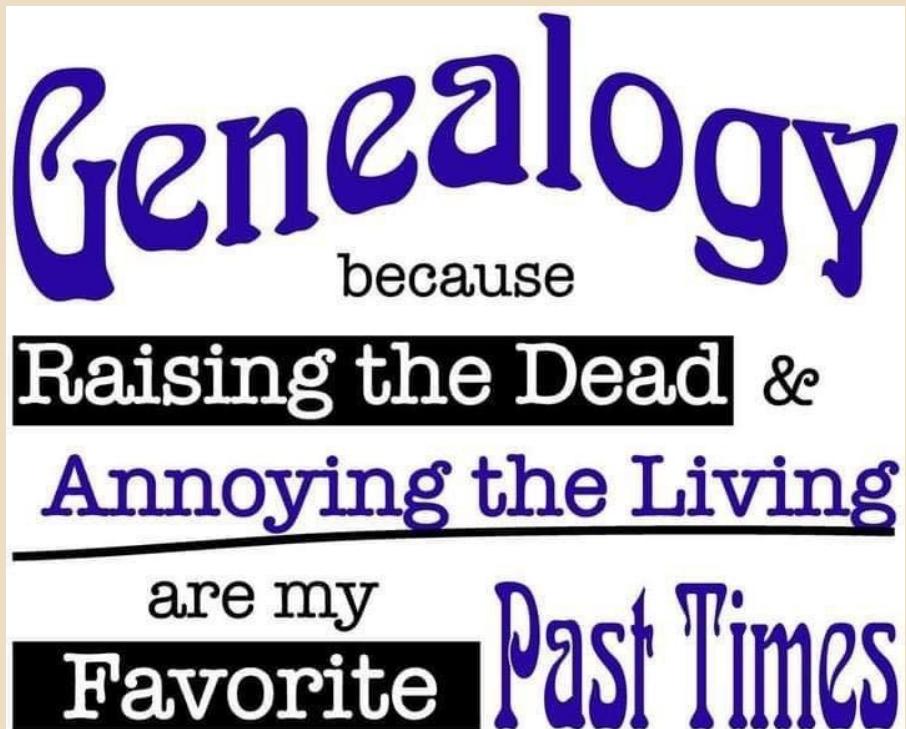
IIVLC TGIIAORERNTS

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AND IGSTNET

ADINDCSETEN

HISVERCA



WHO WILL GET YOUR ANCESTRY® TREE?

In talking with visitors to the FORG table at several of our RI Conventions, it seems many have a membership in Ancestry.com. There are always new updates, new membership tiers offered, and much information for our trees. Board director Martha Stuckey brought to my attention something Ancestry® now has called The Ancestry® legacy contact .

It's a real concern, what will happen to our research, trees, heirlooms, etc. Some are actually including verbiage in their wills as to whom should receive these things. I heard one story that one aunt kept track of the tree. After she passed away, her niece called to ask the cousin for some information and the daughters would not share it at all. I don't know how you feel about that but I'm pretty sure many of us do this in *order* to share it!

Ancestry® has the ability to designate an individual so as not to lose important family



historical records you have found. There are many details you can find at this link,

Ancestry®
Legacy
Contact .

*Included with
permission from
Ancestry®.*

*Original drawing by
Laura Lynn Gatti
Ledson, Luanne
Newman's sister.*

When designing this tree, Ledson was asked to keep it accurate, in order of birth, number of branches, and apples for descendants.

Maybe you have a cousin who has a similar talent.

FAMILY RECIPE SHARING

Today's recipe is from:

AMY MC BURNIE

Rotary Club of Greer, South Carolina USA



AMY'S AWESOME MAC & CHEESE

2T butter

4 C milk (or 3 1/2 C milk and 1/2 C cream for extra richness) - I use skim milk and cream - reserve 1/4 C milk

1/4 C corn starch

1/4 t white ground pepper (or to taste)

1/8 t cayenne or several drops hot sauce (my preference)

1# shredded white Cooper CV Sharp

cheese*

1/2 # shredded white extra sharp cheddar (sharp works OK)

2# macaroni or shell pasta (my preference), cooked to just al dente

* (I don't like the look of yellow mac and cheese). White Land O' Lakes American cheese can be substituted for the Cooper. Cooper can be purchased from Cubacheese.com

Abbreviations: T=tablespoon t=teaspoon C=cup/8 ounces #=pound " = inches

- Preheat oven to 350° (degrees)

- In a large pan (I prefer a Dutch oven so I can bake it in the same dish) melt butter. Add milk/cream, pepper, cayenne/hot sauce. Heat to not quite boiling. Stir occasionally. Shake reserved milk and corn starch in a small container. Add corn starch slurry to Dutch oven and cook until beginning to thicken (about 1 minute), stirring constantly. Taste and adjust pepper and add salt if needed.

- Slowly add the shredded cheese in batches. Make sure first batch is melted before adding the second. Continue to stir, scraping sides, and ensuring that no cheese is getting stuck on the bottom.

- Remove from heat and add half of the pasta, folding to completely coat but not break the pasta. Continue to add pasta until a good pasta to sauce ratio is achieved. Sometimes, I'll need the full amount; mostly it'll be around 3/4ths. Unused macaroni can be frozen to use elsewhere.

- From here you can just put the Dutch oven in and bake it, 25 to 35 minutes or until the top is browned. If you transfer to a casserole dish, spray with Pam first.

If you like to add toppings you could add toasted breadcrumbs. Personally, that's gilding the lily.

- When finished, remove from oven and let set about 5-10 minutes. Enjoy!

- Note: this can be made and put into your freezer. Fill small, freezer and oven safe container with the unbaked mixture. Freeze. To use – thaw and then bring to room temp (this is key). Then bake at 350° for 30 to 40 minutes. Tip – Spray dish with Pam. Cut a length of parchment paper long enough to go down one side, across the bottom, and up the other side plus about 5". Center this strip inside the dish, press and fold so the paper extends above the sides (you've created a sling). Fill the dish with the mac & cheese, cover, then freeze. Once frozen, pull the casserole from the dish, remove the parchment sling, and either seal in a labeled vacuum bag or a zip shut baggie. Your casserole can be stored easily in the freezer, without tying up a casserole dish. To use, thaw it, then place it back into the original dish – it should fit nice and easy.

Happy Holidays

to all our members
for all the holidays
you celebrate!

EOTNSCRA
SSCEUN
DAN
EGENLYGAO
LADN CDOSRRE
IIVLC TGIIAORERNTS
SAHIPR ODRRSEC
AND IGSTNET
ADNDCCSETEN
HISVERCA

ANCESTOR
CENSUS
AND
GENEALOGY
LAND RECORDS
CIVIL REGISTRATION
PARISH RECORDS
DNA TESTING
DESCENDANT
ARCHIVES