



# The Searcher

Suncoast Genealogy Society Newsletter

## What's happening in July

### 26 July 2025 SGS Membership Meeting



1:30-4:00 pm, Palm Harbor Library

1:30 SGS Meeting, 2:00 Program

In Person Speaker

## Overview of FamilySearch.org

Debbe will go over all the new parts of FamilySearch and give an overview of all the sections of FamilySearch, such as Trees, Search, Books, Catalog, Genealogies, and Research Wiki.



Speaker  
Debbe Hagner

Debbe's amateur interest in tracing her family's roots led her to pursue a professional career in genealogy. In 1996, she attended Brigham Young University and received a Diploma in Family History. She is one of the few professional and accredited genealogists in the Tampa Bay area. Debbe is in private practice where she presents genealogy seminars and workshops on an on-going basis. She conducts private and confidential family background research studies and assists individuals on a one-on-one basis to research their family histories and develop supporting genealogy records.

## Look What's Coming in August!



### 23 August 2025 SGS Membership Meeting

Palm Harbor Library, 1:30 SGS Meeting, 2:00 Program

## Bring in your Heirlooms and share their stories

Please send information about your heirloom and story to :  
Jean VanHorn at [jean.vh@verizon.net](mailto:jean.vh@verizon.net)  
so she can schedule the talks



## President's Message



Glenn York presented "Finding a Birth Mother" at the June SGS Membership meeting. He discussed a case where a person was adopted and DNA was used to find the birth mother. It was stressed that when we come across a case like this, we need to tread carefully to avoid causing negative reactions or emotional harm. A good lesson to remember as many of us find situations like this.

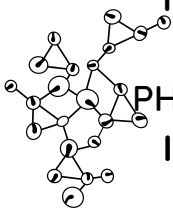
The Fourth of July holiday weekend has passed and I feel summer is half over. But the season for family reunions is not, so if you have one, go prepared with questions for your elders. You and your family tree will be glad you did!

*John Matthews*

### Genealogy and DNA IG

Monday, July 14 @  
1:00-3:00 pm

PHL Conference Room  
In-Person Meeting  
open to everyone



**Topic: Christine Fiechter will present a deep dive into her April SGS presentation "Finding Capt. Yager".**

Next Meeting: Monday Aug 11



Let's go deeper to learn more about what Christine will share, when she was part of a team of investigative genetic genealogists at Ramapo IGG Center as they began a DNA analysis of a jawbone that was given to identify.

**JOIN US**

### Genealogy Help Desk

Tues, Wed & Thurs  
1:00-4:00 pm

PHL Genealogy Section



Need help researching online, breaking down a brick wall?  
Beginners and members are encouraged to stop by!

**Come join us at the Help Desk!**

### Board Meeting

All SGS Members are welcome to come to the Board meetings. They are on the first **MONDAY** of the month on ZOOM. The next meeting is on Aug 4, 2025 at 2:30pm

## SGS Board 2024-2026

**President:** John Matthews  
**Vice President:** Eugene Girardi  
**VP/Membership:** Shari Harmon  
**VP/Programs:** Jean Van Horn  
**Treasurer:** Joan Baptist  
**Secretary:** Marianne Bradley  
**Past President:** Robert Pierro  
**Directors:** Redd Slyker  
 Ann James  
 Kim Croco-Brooks

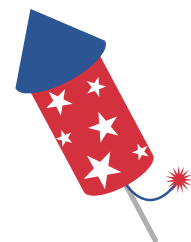
### Committee Chairs & Others

**Education:** Ann James & Jean Van Horn  
**Facebook:** Beth Bleich  
**Help Desk:** Marianne Bradley  
**Historian:** Ann James  
**Library Liaison:** Peter Cannon  
**Publicity:** **OPEN POSITION**  
**Newsletter:** Kim Croco-Brooks  
**Registered Agent:** Shari Harmon  
**Sunshine:** Mary Jane Hough  
**Web Development:** John Matthews  
**DNA IG:** Robert Pierro & John Matthews

Proud Partner with



Debra Bachman  
 Betsy Burroughs  
 Eugene Girardi  
 LynnRae Kidd  
 Suzanne Wood



The first settlement in America was:



- a. Plymouth, MA
- b. Jamestown, VA
- c. Boston, MA
- d. Williamsburg, VA

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Questions?



Check our website:  
[sgsfl.com](http://sgsfl.com)

Email us:  
[info@sgsfl.com](mailto:info@sgsfl.com)

Connect with us on  
[Suncoast Genealogy Society Facebook](#)

### Suncoast Genealogy Society

c/o Palm Harbor Library  
 2330 Nebraska Ave.  
 Palm Harbor, FL 34683





## Our Genealogy Friends

**Pinellas Genealogy Society**  
**Saturday, July 19 @ 10 am-1 pm**  
**Hybrid Meeting & via Zoom**

**Topic: Start Your Family Tree**  
**Summer Workshop**

<https://pinellaskenealogysociety.com/>

**Florida Genealogical Society – Tampa**

<https://fgstampa.org/>

**Jewish Genealogical Society of Tampa Bay**

<http://www.jgstb.org/>



**East Lake Community Library**  
 A **FAMILY SEARCH** Affiliate  
 Library

Contact the library at 727-773-2665

Many of those records can be accessed at ELCL because we are the only North Pinellas FamilySearch affiliate library and have privileges to limited-access databases

**Tarpon Springs Library**  
**Genealogy Research Group**  
**Monday, July 14 @ 6:00 pm**

**Monday, Aug 11, 6:00 pm**

**Topic: Genealogy Laptops and Snacks**  
**Summer Workshop**

<http://tarponlibrary.org/genealogy/>

### **SAR, Clearwater Chapter**

Members meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month, Sept thru May, 11:30 am, Dunedin Country Club.

Go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/SARClearwater/>  
 for more information.

**Hillsborough County Public**  
**Library Cooperative**

Online Genealogy Resources  
<https://hcplc.org>

### **DAR, Caladesi Chapter**

Members meet the 3rd Monday of the month Sept thru May, 11:30 am, North Dunedin Baptist Church. Contact Debbie Smyth, [dsmyth927@gmail.com](mailto:dsmyth927@gmail.com) for more information.

Answer: b. Jamestown 1607





# Getting Involved

## PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

We are looking for someone who would like to take on this position.

Please contact  
**John Matthews**  
if you are interested.

## GENEALOGY HELP DESK

Hone your research skills while helping others. It's the most rewarding job there is!

We can train you! Contact **Marianne Bradley** to volunteer and/or set up training time with one of the other volunteers.

## Other Local Resources

### Palm Harbor Museum

2043 Curlew Rd, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Phone: (727) 724 -3054

Hours: Thurs, Fri and Sat; 10 am to 2 pm

<https://www.palmharbormuseum.com>

### Clearwater Historical Society

610 S Fort Harrison, Clearwater, FL 33756

Phone: (727) 754-8019

Hours: Wednesdays & Saturdays; 10 am-2 pm

<https://www.clearwaterhistoricalsociety.org>

### Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society

Historic Train Depot. Downtown Tarpon Springs, FL

160 East Tarpon Ave, Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

Phone: 727-943-4624

Hours: Wednesdays-Saturdays: 11:00 am-3:00 pm

<http://tarponspringsareahistoricalociety.org>

### Pinellas County Historical Society

<https://pchs.winniedesignandphoto.com>

### USF-Special Collections

140 7<sup>th</sup> Ave S, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Phone: 727-873-4123

<https://lib.usf.edu>

### Did you know

Anyone that recruits two people to join SGS will receive a free one-year membership.

When our  
*hearts* ♥  
turn to our ancestors,  
something changes inside us.  
We feel part of something  
*greater*  
than ourselves.

-Russell M. Nelson

### FACEBOOK GROUPS

Are you part of our SGS Facebook Group or any other Genealogy Facebook groups? There are many groups that you can join.

## What unusual way have you found information about your ancestor

My third great-grandmother, Sally Wilmot was born in New Haven, CT in 1786. She married Benjamin Ford there in 1805, and son Benjamin was born there in 1807. The story my mother heard was that husband Benjamin was a mariner lost-at-sea in a New England storm circa 1809.

My mother was searching for info on Sally from about 1970-2001 until she passed, but alas this was before the internet, Ancestry, etc. It was all done by library research. She knew that Sally's son, her great-grandfather Benjamin had married in 1841 in Charleston SC, had children and worked there the rest of his life and died in 1882 at age 74 and was buried there. But trips to the library and cemetery there still gave us no answers as to Sally Wilmot Ford's whereabouts.

After about 2015, I resumed this "Sally search", and when I received the death certificate for Benjamin, born in 1807 who died in Charleston in 1882 at age 74, it stated that he had resided there for 67 years - My AHA MOMENT. He came there at age 7, so his mother must have brought him to Charleston - so this is where I need to look for her. Sarah Ford? Sally Ford? New husband name? Where O Where is she? Then about 2024, Newspapers.com sent me a hint on Benjamin Ford - an obituary from 1871 for his mother, Sarah Bassett, stating she was survived by two sons, Oran Bassett and Benjamin Ford. Now I discovered that Oran Bassett, born 1820 was the son of Sarah and John Bassett. And it explained why Benjamin named his firstborn, Oran Bassett Ford - after his half-brother.

Now I had my mother's long sought after answers. Some of the paperwork and hints we receive are not available when we are first searching, nor make sense, but new hints pop up from many new sources over many years, so never give up.

BY MARIANNE BRADLEY

Do you have an heirloom from your ancestors and you want to share your story about it? August is the date.

Tell Jean Van Horn what you want to share.



Do you have questions about how to research, where to look for your ancestors, have a brickwall that you can not break? Get your questions ready for Megan Smolenyak by November.



### DNA Mentors Available

Struggling with understanding your DNA results? Have questions for with you can't find answers? Email [info@sgsfl.com](mailto:info@sgsfl.com) to get connected with a Mentor.

### DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

Do you have an idea on how to improve our newsletter? Do you have a story or a breakthrough? Is there something you would like to share - a genealogy tip, a website or a an upcoming event? Email your ideas to Kim Croco-Brooks: [inhislovinghands10@yahoo.com](mailto:inhislovinghands10@yahoo.com)



## ABOUT THE BOOK

Maggie Gilbert and her children, Jack and Alice, live a pretty normal life. That is, until Maggie starts looking into her family tree. In doing so, she uncovers a dark mystery that could endanger one of her children. She has to solve the mystery in the past, if she is to save her family in the present.

Together with a fellow genealogist, Zelah, Maggie unearths details about the drowning of a young girl and the unsolved disappearance of Maggie's ancestor. Strange forces are at work, and they seem to be leaking into the present.

This supernatural mystery is set in and around Cwmbran and Newport in South Wales, and draws on real historical details.



## ABOUT THE AURTHOR

I was born in Newport in South Wales, and grew up in Cwmbran.

At 18 I made my first big move away from home, to Leeds to study at the City of Leeds and Carnegie College (now Leeds Metropolitan University). I trained as a teacher and taught in Yorkshire and South Wales for three years.

Someone once said that a career is what you've had when you look back. My 'career' has been a succession of interesting things to do, plus being in the right place at the right time.

After teaching I worked as a holiday rep in Austria (great fun!) then became a project Manager for British Gymnastics, followed by a move into Human Resources.

My passion for genealogy began when my mother began to research her own Irish immigrant family. I helped her with the on-line researching (she never quite 'got' the internet) and became hooked myself in the process. The idea for a genealogy mystery novel came about on a train journey between London and South Wales. That idea became Three Times Removed.

There are now 4 published books in the Maze series. I am already working on Books 5 and 6: The Policeman and The Soldier. And there will be more. I am a member of the Society of Genealogists. I love attending the interesting and informative courses the Society organises, to learn as much as I can and improve my researching skills. Plus I attend my own local FH society whenever I can.

I now live in North Wales, close to the sea.

**M. K. JONES**

M. K. Jones has many other books



## JUNE MEETING

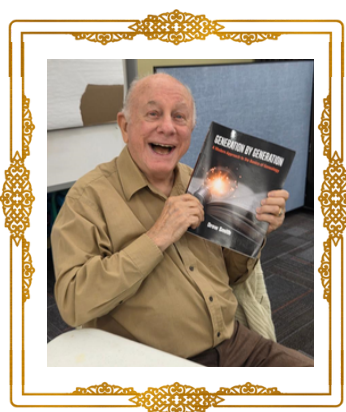


Speaker: Glenn York  
Finding a Birth Mother



### Six points in establishing contact when you found the birth parent

- Adoptees have a right to know about their family
- They do not have right to a relationship with birth parents
- It is usually best for the adoptee to make contact
- It is not the researcher's role to force contact
- These relationships can result in happy reunions or disasters
- Be supportive and let adoptee to work at their pace



Eugene won  
Door Prize  
a book  
**Generation by Generation:  
A Modern Approach to the  
Basics of Genealogy**  
by  
Drew Smith





## 2025 MEETINGS

26 July The New Family Search - speaker: Debbe Hagner  
 23 August Show and Tell - Members  
 27 September Understanding AI in Genealogy: Foundations and Tools  
 - speaker: Diana Elder  
 25 October Seminar 1. Tasks AI Can Do for Your Genealogy Research  
 at Lightning Speed 2. Seeing Family History Through Google Lens  
 - speaker: Lisa Louise Cook  
 22 November Questions & Answers - speaker: Megan Smolenyak  
 2 December Christmas Party at Johnny's Italian Restaurant

### Sue Yearwood Painter July 28, 1948-December 25, 2024

Sue Yearwood Painter, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and sister, passed away peacefully at home on Christmas night 2024 at the age of 76. She was surrounded by the love of her family as they reflected on a life well-lived.

Sue was preceded in death by her devoted husband of 56 years, Tom Painter, with whom she shared a life full of love, laughter, and cherished memories. She leaves behind a legacy of love and family, survived by her brother, Clarence "Buddy" Yearwood, and his wife, Deanna. Sue's memory will also be carried forward by her four children: Thomas E. Painter, Jr., and his wife Pam; Richard Todd King and his wife Patty; Jeffery Robert Painter and his wife Jennifer; and Laura Kalinowski and her husband Kevin.



Sue was a proud grandmother to eight grandchildren and an adoring great-grandmother to one great-grandson. Her family was her greatest joy, and she treasured the time spent with them.

Sue will be remembered for her warmth, generosity, sense of humor and love for her family. She touched the lives of all who knew her and leaves behind a legacy of kindness, dedication, and unconditional love.

A private celebration of Sue's life will be held in late January by her children in Clearwater, FL.

May she rest in peace, reunited with her beloved husband, Tom, and forever cherished in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Sue was a student of the Fall 2022 Beginner Genealogy Class of the Suncoast Genealogy Society, Palm harbor, FL.