



What's happening in February

# The Searcher

Suncoast Genealogy Society Newsletter

## 21 Feb 2026 Membership Meeting

1:30-4:00 pm, on **ZOOM ONLY**  
1:30 SGS Meeting, 2:00 Program

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

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with  
**Palm Harbor Library**  
You. Us. Together.



**Speaker - Debbe Hagner**

## Overview of FamilySearch.org

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

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. Debbie is in private practice where she presents genealogy seminars and workshops on an ongoing 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.

To register, send request to:  
[SuncoastGenSoc@gmail.com](mailto:SuncoastGenSoc@gmail.com)  
Member Supported. Public Always Welcome

## President's Message



We had another great presentation on TimeLines by Karen Fortin at our last SGS member meeting, with an interesting case study and unexpected results. TimeLines are an essential genealogical tool and will also be covered in our upcoming Beginning Genealogy Course.

Our next SGS member meeting will be on February 21st when Debbe Hagner will talk about the New FamilySearch. This is a week earlier than normal to not conflict with the annual Pinellas Genealogy Society seminar.

This is a good time to remind SGS members to register for the annual RootsTech conference, March 5-7, at Salt Lake City. If you are not going in-person, it is free and many sessions are available on-line.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Matthews".

## SGS Board 2024-2026

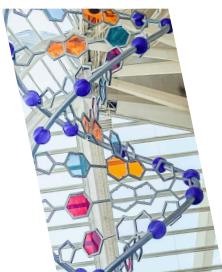
### Board of Directors

**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:** Peggy Toohey  
 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:** Jenny Kidd  
**Newsletter:** Kim Croco-Brooks  
**Registered Agent:** Shari Harmon  
**Sunshine:** Mary Jane Hough  
**Web Development:** John Matthews  
**DNA IG:** Robert Pierro & John Matthews

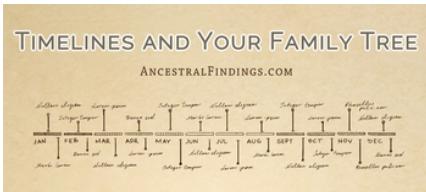
## Genealogy and DNA IG



Monday, Feb 9 @  
1:00-3:00 pm  
PHL Conference Room  
In-Person Meeting  
open to everyone

### Topic: Time Line Case

Bring one of more of your ancestors' timeline as we will discuss different ways to create them & how helpful they are.



Next Meeting: Monday, Mar 9

### Reminder

It is time to renew your membership again!

Have you renewed your membership? It will be running out soon. Don't miss out on your upcoming meetings and monthly newsletters.

Send to: Shari Harmon,  
1864 Northwood Dr, Clearwater,  
FL 33764

### DNA Mentors Available



Are you wondering how to understand your DNA results? Do you have questions about your DNA?

Email [info@sgsfl.com](mailto:info@sgsfl.com) to connect with a Mentor.

## Board Meeting

All SGS Members are welcome to come to the Board meetings. They are on the first **Monday** of this month on ZOOM.

The next meeting is on  
Mar 2 @ 2:30pm

## 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!

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday Tech with John



Christine Fiechter

Anita Freudenthal

Bob Pierro   Sherrie Reres



### NEW MEMBER

Debbe Hagner

[debbe.hagner@gmail.com](mailto:debbe.hagner@gmail.com)

Kristie Swoboda

[k@swoboda.com](mailto:k@swoboda.com)



# Our Genealogy Friends

## Pinellas Genealogy Society

Saturday, Feb 28 @ 8 am-4 pm

PGS Annual Seminar

Hybrid Meeting & via Zoom

**Speakers:** Diana Elder, Taneya Koonce, Debbie Wilson Smyth

<https://pinellasgenealogysociety.com/>



## East Lake Community Library

4125 E Lake Rd S, Palm Harbor, FL

Contact the library at 727-773-2665

## Largo Public Library

120 Central Park Dr, Largo, FL 33771

Contact the library at 727-586-7410

## 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.

## 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

## Florida Genealogical Society – Tampa

<https://fgstampa.org/>

## Jewish Genealogical Society of Tampa Bay

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

**Tarpon Springs Library**  
**Genealogy Research Assistance**  
**(727) 943-4922 ext 6010**  
**Monday, Feb 9 @ 6:30 pm**

**Topic: Tracking the Trail: Developing Effective Research Habits**

**Speaker: Debbie Wilson Smyth**

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



## Manatee Genealogical Society

**First Tuesday on Zoom**

<https://mgsfl.org>

## Family Search Center

**St Petersburg/Seminole**

9000 106<sup>th</sup> Ave N  
Largo, FL 33777-1147

**Hours:**

Tues 10 am-6 pm  
Thurs 10 am-9 pm  
Sat 10 am-4 pm

[FL\\_StPetersburg@familyhistorymail.org](mailto:FL_StPetersburg@familyhistorymail.org)

**Services:** Computers, Photo negative scanner, Photo scanner, Printer

## JANUARY MEETING 2026



### Timelines for Organizing, Analyzing, & Breaking Down Brick Walls

**SPEAKER: KAREN A. FORTIN**

Karen showed us by either using pencil and paper or on our computer, how we can create a timeline for our ancestor. By putting their age, location, and events of their life and adding a particular historical event, as wars, epidemics, a murder trial in chronological order will help make their story come alive by using a spreadsheet.



I challenge you to make a timeline of one of your ancestors and bring it to our next Genealogy and DNA IG on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. I have a template on the last page of this newsletter.



Jenny Kidd won  
Nathan Dyan  
Goodwin book:  
The Deserter's Tale

#### **Please welcome Jenny Kidd as she is our Publicity Chair Person**

Jenny Kidd has been researching her family's history since her son asked about buying a kilt with the correct family tartan as he was learning to play the bagpipes.

After some rudimentary research she found that the family is part of Clan Donald. This started her love of genealogy. She has uncovered verified proof of her relationship to Devil Anse Hatfield, the patriarch of the Hatfield vs McCoy feud, joined the DAR and has been on the hunt to verify her connection to Dunluce Castle in Ireland. Her mother-in-law, LynnRae, is herself an accomplished family researcher and they both joined SGS to make friends and learn more tips to break those brick walls. She works in the marketing department at her company and is looking to put that experience to work with SGS.



#### **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**

## SGS MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

SUNCOAST GENEALOGY SOCIETY  
MINUTES FOR GENERAL MEETING -  
24 JANUARY 2026

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 1:35PM

IN ATTENDANCE: Shari will report

SECRETARY REPORT: Minutes approved  
as presented.

TREASURER REPORT: approved as  
presented

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: 28 current  
members, 3 guests

PROGRAMS REPORT: Jean presented the  
previously named programs and  
announced a fun surprise for the April  
meeting.

### OLD BUSINESS:

DNA interest group for Feb. 9, will be  
on Timelines, which is appropriate to  
follow today's program on Timelines.  
The membership voted to approve the  
Policies and Procedures as has been  
presented.

NEW BUSINESS: At the April meeting we  
will have the 2026 elections for the  
year of May 2026-April 2028.

GOOD AND WELFARE: no report today

SHARE THE BASKET: Joan Baptist  
won the \$27 today

DRAWING FOR DOOR PRIZE: Jenny  
Kidd won the Nathan Dylan  
Goodwin genealogy mystery book.

ADJOURNMENT: 1:50pm.

NOTES: none

ANNOUNCEMENTS: none

PROGRAM: Karen Fortin will present  
today's program on TIMELINES.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:  
Marianne Bradley, Secretary

### LAST WILL OF MR. FARMER

I leave:

To my wife, my overdraft at the  
bank — maybe she can explain it.

To my banker, my soul — he has  
the mortgage on it anyway.

To my neighbor, my clown suit —  
he'll need it if he continues to farm as  
he has in the past.

To the ASCS, my grain bin — I  
was planning to let them take it next  
year anyway.

To the county agent, 50 bushels of  
corn to see if he can hit the market —  
I never could.

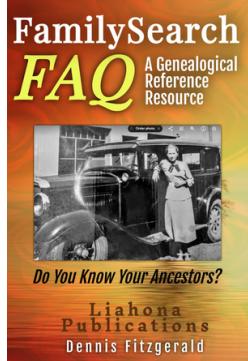
To the junk man, all my machinery —  
he's had his eye on it for years.

To my undertaker, a special request —  
I want six implement and  
fertilizer dealers for my pallbearers.  
They are used to carrying me.

To the weatherman, rain and sleet  
and snow for the funeral, please —  
no sense in having good weather  
now.

To the grave digger — don't  
bother. The hole I'm in should be big  
enough.

\*\*\*



You can discover the secrets to unveiling your family's history with "FamilySearch FAQ," the ultimate guide to genealogy.

With over 400 questions answered, this book provides you with a roadmap to navigate the intricate world of family research.

From understanding the fundamentals of genealogy to harnessing advanced research strategies, this book provides you with the knowledge and tools needed to uncover your heritage. Explore the vast treasure trove of records, census data, and historical archives on FamilySearch.org, the world's largest genealogy platform.

By Dennis Fitzgerald



Registration for RootsTech 2026 is now open. The global family discovery event will take place March 5–7, 2026, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and online at RootsTech.org. Select content will be available in multiple languages.

The 3-day genealogy conference includes a variety of family history-themed activities, including:

- Keynote speakers addressing the power of family connection
- Hundreds of in-person and online classes for beginners and experts
- A virtual Expo Hall for browsing and learning about new products
- Daily forums on the latest breakthroughs in family history research and innovation

You can connect with other cousins.



*Save the Date*

## 2026 MEETINGS

21 Feb 2026: Speaker: Debbe Hagner - The New FamilySearch

28 Mar 2026: Speaker: Robert Weis - Genealogical Gold in New England Town Books and Reports

25 Apr 2026: Elections and Fun Surprise

# Biographical Outline of the Life of

Family Tree  
MAGAZINE

(Name of Person)

Record information on education, military service, marriage, children, illnesses, religious milestones, migrations, residences, jobs, family events, land purchases, court appearances, deaths and burials, etc.

Date	Age	Event and Place	Source