

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 305

Diablo, CA 94528-8308

President: Marilyn Tanner

Coord. Editor: Dorothy Baker

Meetings: 10:00 a.m.

3rd Tuesdays of the Month

(Except August & December)

Alamo LDS Church

Stone Valley & Smith Rds - Alamo

SAN RAMON VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. ~~XXIX~~^{XX} No. 7 February - 2005

THIS MONTH - February 15, 2005 "Genealogy In The DIGITAL WORLD"

Bob Dougherty will be our speaker this month. Bob is one of our SRVGS members plus our current Treasurer. He will use a venture in his presentation that was stimulated by genealogical interests. Bob will illustrate his application of some of the currently available technology and assets. The challenges we face in exploring the past are still there, but digital data makes a big difference in how we work on solutions.

JANUARY MEETING

"Life Stories - Free the Memories and Let's Write!"

Speaker: Mary Jane DeRoss Reported by: Lee Schlenker

Last months speaker was Mary Jane DeRoss. As the spring board to her talk. ("We read to know She truly was a motivator! Her topic "Free the Memories and Let's Write!" made you feel that you could put into words just about anything. She was passionate and energetic about what she does and has found fun and extreme satisfaction in doing it.

Mary Jane lives in the Mt. Shasta area and as a teacher majored in mathematics with her minor being reading and writing. She didn't particularly like the reading and writing, but as life would have it, she was hired to teach reading and writing rather than math! Through all this, she now is teaching an eight week writing course/class to people who think they can't write or who don't know how to start a writing project. She enjoys working with groups, as opposed to one-on-one, because the ideas seem to flow - when someone has an idea it somehow is very "catching" for the rest of the group.

Mary Jane used quotes from famous people we're not alone." C.S. Lewis, novelist) She had us remember the talks around the kitchen table of yesteryear - stories, incidents, or everyday happenings shared among family members. (Do we even have dinner together anymore?) For centuries the African tribes told griots (young children) over and over again stories of their ancestors. She pointed out that if we haven't written down stories of when we were younger or stories our parents have handed down about grandparents, times and places we will be losing three generations of history after we pass on. You may not think your children or grandchildren are interested right now but they will be. You're the "bridge" from the past to the present.

But, the problem is getting started. Mary Jane showed us how "historical prompts" can be a big help in conjuring up memories. Using the years 1930 to 1940 her "prompts" were shivered, bank

closure, "Gone With the Wind", NY World's Fair in San Francisco, feed sacks and flour sacks. Most of us can remember something about one of those subjects from that time period. Or, 1940 to 1950 "prompts" - drive-ins, carhops, electric dryer, air raids/rations, Gorgeous George, leg makeup, fake seams, quarantines. She took us from 1910 to 1970 "prompts" and there was much participation from us! She also had Suggested Themes and elaborated on each (i.e. *Teen Years* - first act of rebellion, dating rules/curfew, chores, dances, learn to drive). No matter how short or long that first written memory is, you have made a start! Your first story or recollection on paper will probably be a rough draft. It's the rewriting that will be good!

Narrative writing is telling a story. Mary Jane urged us to show - don't tell - make that picture for others! She said if you were to have two sisters write about growing up together in the same house, their stories would be so different you might not believe that they grew up in that house together! There are some potholes, you need not write about only positive stories. There is no right or wrong. Writing is like eating an elephant - one bite at a time. Start with something small and expound on it in your rewrite. Each time you write you will get bigger and better. By asking parents, relatives or friends a specific question (not a general one) you probably will get a great surprise and a story to write about! Mary Jane's example was asking mom about wearing one of those itchy wool bathing suits way back when. Mom may not have worn one but it could conjure up something else. *That* could be the story!

In the extensive handout we received there were 15 ground rules which she went over with us, plus friendly advise categories on clichés (usually ineffective), sensory details (the verbs are where the action is), writing dialogues (using " "), figurative language, using tense, redundancy (i.e. tuna fish), and weasel words (words with no purpose). These were all items which will help you create and hone in on your story. Try to obtain a copy of this handout. It's extremely good!

Hints: When you write your story write on

every other line. Write the way you actually talk or use the expression your grandparent used frequently in your story. Review, rewrite, don't revise. Stories are good medicine. Send a small story rather than a birthday card! Wait to become a reader, not the writer.

Inspiration is the idea of going on and on. Inspiration is hard to start but once it starts it's good!

Suggested Books which Mary Jane DeRoss uses consistently:

For All Time (A complete Guide to Writing Your Family History) by Charley Kempthorne (softbound)

Woe Is I (Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English) by Patricia T. O'Connor (hard and softbound) (Note: *Woe Is I* is a great gift to grads going off to college)

Writing Your Life (Putting Your Past on Paper) by Lou Willett Stanek, PhD. (softbound)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

SRVGS CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2005

1 Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. The Board Meeting
was held at the home of Ed Mason in Alamo.
90 St. Andrews Lane

15 Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. General Meeting
will be held at the LDS Church on Stone Valley Rd
at Smith Rd, in Alamo. From I-680 freeway, take
Stone Valley Rd east 2 & 1/2 miles.

22 Tuesday - 9:30 a.m. The Library Trip
will be to the California Genealogical Society Library
in Oakland at 1611 Telegraph Avenue (Latham
Building). There will be a \$3.00 charge for non-
members of the California Genealogical Society.
Phone (510) 663-1358 or view their web site,
www.calgensoc.org, for their holdings. CGS has a
large collection of histories and reference books for
practically every state, in addition to being a rich
source for California researchers.

Sign-up can be made at our general meeting or call the Library Trip Coordinator, Louise Ford by 5:00 pm the day before the trip to either add your name or cancel if necessary. Her phone number is (925) 376-4587.

Since nearby parking garages are often impacted, it is recommended that BART be your choice for transportation. CGS is located about half way between the 19th and the 12th Street BART stations. From the 19th Street station, use the 17th Street exit. From the 12th Street Station, use the 14th Street exit. Both surface onto Broadway. There is a small kitchen area for brown baggers, a café in the building and several nearby eateries.

Please note the departure time for carpools. Carpools meet behind Albertson's, off Diablo Road in Danville. Carpools leave promptly.

MARCH 2005

1 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. The Board Meeting will be at the home of Dorothy Humpal in Danville 666 Paradise Valley Court

5 Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.
FREE THE MEMORIES - LET'S WRITE WORKSHOP will be held at the LDS Family History Center in Alamo.

See "Continuing Education" column for pre-registration information. The class will be limited to 30 persons. For further information you may contact Carol Huvane, Member Education Coordinator. Phone 947-5669 or e-mail Tomcarhuvane@aol.com

15 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. General Meeting will be held at the LDS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo.

22 Tuesday - 9:00 a.m. The Library Trip will be to the National Archives in San Bruno.

SRVGS Special Interest Groups:

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2005

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP (The Master Genealogist) - They will meet Tuesday, February 15 after the general meeting at about 12:30 p.m. at the home of Barbara & Jack Johnson, 616 Camino Amigo in Danville. Bring a bag lunch. Their phone no. is 837-2153. This is a genealogy software users group for PC's and does focus on the use of The Master Genealogist. Peggy Dearman is the contact person for the group. Phone 837-1621 or e-mail dearman@pacbell.net

GERMAN – A home group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday February 23 (the fourth Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m., at the home of Barbara & Jack Johnson, 616 Camino Amigo in Danville. Their phone no is 837-2153.

Please let the hostess know if you do not plan to attend or if you need directions. The German interest group will also meet on March 23 at the home of Margarete Keonig in Lafayette. For further details, the contact person for the group is Fran Schweitzer (925) 935-5744 or e-mail FranSchw@pacbell.net

IRISH – Their meeting dates will be February 16 and March 16, (second Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Patty Erickson, 10 Ridge Place in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net for further information. Patty Erickson is also the contact person for the group.

SOUTHERN – They will meet on February 8 (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Peggy Dearman, 749 Morninghome Road in Danville. They will also meet on March 8 at the home of Suzanne Johnston, 145 Gil Blas Road in Danville. The contact person is Dorothy Stanton, Phone 820-3757 or email dpstant@hotmail.com. New persons interested in attending should contact Dorothy Stanton for information.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION/INTERNET –

Some interested members may wish to continue communicating and receiving messages via the network established by Jack Johnson, group coordinator. This group does not otherwise get together for meetings on a regular basis. Their purpose is to more to alert it's participants to useful genealogical sites on the Web. Receiving a message from someone in this group allows a group member to communicate with all group members by saving a message and sending a reply to ALL. Member Internet/e-mail users may join this group by sending an email request to jackmj@earthlink.net. Please use "SRVGS Internet User" as a subject line.

Ed Mason is the coordinator for an additional new method to improve the timeliness and frequency of communication by emails. The purpose of this general email is simply a way to extend our group communication ability beyond the monthly newsletter. This will be done a minimum of once a month. Members will always have the option to Opt-Out if they do not wish to receive these messages. Notify Ed Mason at: edmason@sbcglobal.net

1. If your email address does not appear in Handbook, and you wish to receive these messages.
2. If your email address does appear in the handbook and you do not wish to receive these notices.
3. If you have some information that you would like to make available to the membership.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS**15 February Tuesday 7 to 9 PM**

The Santa Clara County Genealogical Society has invited Eric Narveson, Archivist for Evergreen Valley College to speak about preservation. This regular meeting will be held at the Santa Clara Central Library, 2635 Homestead Road in the Cedar Room. The subject for the speaker presentation for their March 15 meeting will be "San Jose, California's First Capitol City."

16 April Saturday 8:30 am to 3:45 pm

The Sacramento Genealogical Society – Root Cellar, will sponsor an all day seminar featuring Dr. George Schweitzer. It will be held at Rusch Park, 7801 Auburn Blvd. in Citrus Heights. \$ 24 charge if you pre-register. Lunch can be added for \$6. After April 1, the cost will be \$ 32, excluding lunch, as long as space is available. No refunds. Topics will include Indexes via the web, US federal and state land grants, and ways to find another generation. Phone Sammie Hudgens at (916) 481-4930 or Billie Helms at (916) 991-5971.

16 April Saturday 9 am to 4 pm

The San Mateo County Genealogical Society will sponsor an all day seminar featuring Bob Trapp, John Gleed and Dr. Inge Harding-Barlow. It will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in San Mateo. \$ 8 if you pre-register or \$ 13 at the door. Lunch can be added for \$7. Talks will pertain to UK and US research.

23 April Saturday The Sonoma County

Genealogical Society will sponsor an all day seminar in Santa Rosa featuring Sandra Luebking. For further details : www.rootsweb.com/cascgs/luebking.htm

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS**President:**

Marilynn Tanner 925-376-6733
Email: jtanner@nothingbutnet.net

1st V.P.

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Pat Denton	Ed Mason	Sandra Burns
735-8419	838-7848	648-4653

3rd V.P. Membership:

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	Mary Tom	925-376-2756
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Parliamentarian:	Virginia Rood	925-937-8659

President's Message

By Marilyn Tanner

Since I've organized my genealogy, I decided to start writing. It's sort of a "get acquainted with my subject" writing -- meaning informal first draft narrative style.

The old Norwegian ancestors, 1700's up to Grandfather, are only statistical. No clothes for these skeletons. I could, I suppose, research the "times" and find out how they generally lived but I find people interesting because they're so different. A history description wouldn't please me. At least, not at the present time.

When I started to write about Grandfather Thorbjorn building his Amerika trunk in 1848, I thought about his dreams at 24 of a new life in America; free homestead land where crops grew abundantly in good rich soil. He knew he could make a good living there. But he didn't get going when he was 24. He married and had six children before the family left for America 24 years after he had built his Amerika trunk.

That leaving must have been heart-wrenching. How hard to leave family knowing you will never see them again. It must have been like dying.

Certainly they would write but nothing replaces the warm hug, the smiling face, the language you could express yourself in. All would be gone for a journey to a new land, an uncertain future and this family his sole responsibility.

Marilynn Tanner

THINK ABOUT IT

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."

--Dale Carnegie

CONTINUING EDUCATION--

Marilynn, our President, mentioned Harry Baggett's (a SRVGS member) upcoming class at the last meeting. It is called **"USING COMPUTERS IN GENEALOGY"** Section 9248. It is 12 hours in duration, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am until 1:15pm, April 5 -14.. It is so convenient to take this class at the San Ramon Valley Campus of DVC. Check out www.srvs.net, or call 925 866 1822. These classes are scheduled for the community, however, a minimum registration of about eighteen interested people is always needed to prevent community college classes from being cancelled.....

The Acalanes Adult Ed Program is presenting a **"GENEALOGY SEMINAR"** 08-3031. The group meets on Mondays, 10:15 - 12:15, in the Del Valle Library, Walnut Creek. There is a fee. Class started early January, but openings are available.

"Discussions are designed to solve difficult problems." www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted or (925) 935 0170, ext. 0.....

Amador Valley Adult Ed has a NEW class scheduled for Saturday, Feb 26 and/or April 16. It's a chance to **"ORGANIZE YOUR PILES OF PHOTOS!"** It meets 9:30am to 12:30pm at Village High School. www.pleasanton.k12.ca.us/adulted or (925) 426 4280.....

Thank Pat Denton for so quickly scheduling January's guest speaker, Mary Jane DeRoss, to present a **"FREE THE MEMORIES/LET'S WRITE WORKSHOP"** for us on Saturday, March 5th. The seminar will be held in the gym section of the Alamo LDS Church, 9 am until 3 pm. Bring a bag lunch and writing materials and be sure to register right away by calling me at (925) 947 5669 or e-mailing me at tomcarhuvane@aol.com. Interest is high for this seminar. If you register and cannot attend, please let me know. Carol Huvane

WELCOME

We have three new members:

- 1) Gary J. Barton
272 South Overlook Drive
San Ramon, CA 94582
Tel: (925) 895-1167
Email: gjb42@comcast.net
- 2) Sylvia Landgraf
5118 East Lakeshore Drive
San Ramon, CA 94582
Tel: (925) 735-3720
Email: slandgraf@earthlink.net
- 3) Karen Olynger
55 Sugar Pine Lane
Danville, CA 94506
Tel: (925) 648-2791
Email: olynger@pacbell.net

NEED HELP!

Help is waiting for you right "next door".
Where? At the LDS Family History Center in Alamo
Stone Valley and Smith Road.

Why not attend our SRVGS February
Meeting- then go across the hall to the Center.
Volunteers will be waiting to assist you with your
research and/or any problems you are having.
There is a wealth of information right there. GO....
Don't wait. Go right now.

Hours: Monday 10-4pm
Tuesday 7-9pm
Wednesday and Thursday 10-4pm

PLUS: **FREE** on line to Ancestry and Gen Forum
An Added Bonus.

GO TODAY They are waiting for YOU!

X O X O X O X O

Our custom of putting "X's" at the end of letters and notes to symbolize kisses grew out of medieval legal practices. In order to indicate good faith and honesty in those days, the sign of St. Andrew - a cross - was placed after the signature on all important documents.

Thereafter, contracts and agreements were not considered binding until each signer added St. Andrew's cross after the name. The he was required to kiss the document to further guarantee Faithful performance of his obligations. The cross was drawn hurriedly, and often it was tilted and looked much like the letter "X".

Over the centuries the origin of the ceremony Was forgotten, but people still associated the "X" with the kiss instead of the pledge of good faith and the custom has continued into modern times.

(CGS Newsletter, Vol. 14, No. 6, June 1996)

Search for Ancestors on Google

Step by step I have been entering ancestral pairs into Google. I put the full name of one spouse in quotes and the last name of the other spouse. This brings up mostly only relevant information and has been an extremely valuable exercise. Last night I entered an ancestor "Samuel Smith," which is such a common name I would be wading through matches for a week. But with it, I added the last name of his wife "McCullers." The very first entry I got was a RootsWeb transcription of their family Bible from the 1700s, with birth and death dates and marriages of children!

A few nights ago with another couple entry, I ended up talking with a man in Virginia who has written a book on the family I was seeking and is sending it to me.

This seems like a no-brainer, but it took me several years until it occurred to me to do it. I am passing this along because it has helped me so much and I hope it will help others too.

Jean Rawlings Meaney Hilton Head Island.
January 3, 2005 Ancestry

History of Valentine's Day

Dick Eastman - 2/14/2001 - Ancestry [Archive](#)

All lovers know the significance of February 14, but how did this tradition get started? Did our ancestors celebrate this day as well? Perhaps great-great-grandfather met great-great-grandmother at a Valentine's Day festivity, with one of the results being me. Perhaps you and I owe our very existence to this tradition!

The history of Valentine's Day and its patron saint remains a mystery. I always heard that it was named after Saint Valentine, a Catholic priest in third century Rome.

Historians believe that Valentine's Day originated from an ancient Roman feast called Lupercalia. The Romans worshipped a god called Lupercus, a protective deity who kept wild wolves from overrunning the city. The festival to honor Lupercus was held on February 15 and was celebrated as a spring festival. Keep in mind that the Romans did not use the Gregorian calendar that we use today. In the Julian calendar of Rome, February 15 was springtime.

One of the customs associated with Lupercalia was the practice of name-drawing. On Lupercalia Eve (February 14) the names of young girls were written down on pieces of paper and put in jars, from which each young man would draw. The particular girl each young man drew would be his "girlfriend" for the year.

When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young, single men, his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that Valentine be put to death.

A different version of the story claims that Valentine actually sent the first "valentine greeting" himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl who visited him during his confinement. Some versions say that she was the

jailer's daughter. Before his death, it is alleged that Valentine wrote her a letter, which he signed (in Latin) "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

The Lupercalia celebration went on as before for many years following the death of Valentine. As time passed, Christianity became more and more firmly established, and at some point the Romans renamed the pagan feast of Lupercalia for Valentine, who by that point had been canonized to become St. Valentine.

These are nice stories, but keep in mind that the Catholic Church has three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. No one can be sure if the story revolves around the Roman priest who lived under the reign of Emperor Claudius II or one of the other two.

Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is unknown, all the stories describe Valentine's appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and romantic figure.

New Google search page for just us genealogy nuts
[http://www
 searchforancestors.com/google/searcher.html](http://www.searchforancestors.com/google/searcher.html)

Thanks - Dorothy Stanton

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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**Deadling to put information in the Newsletter is the
 Last Thursday of the month.**

Member are encourage to submit articles for the
 Newsletter by mail or email to Coordinator.

Valentine Traditions

Some people used to believe that if a woman saw a robin flying overhead on Valentine's Day, it meant she would marry a sailor. If she saw a sparrow, she would marry a poor man and be very happy. If she saw a goldfinch, she would marry a millionaire.

Some people said if you found a glove on the road on Valentine's Day, your future beloved will have the other missing glove.

Some believed the first man's name you read in the paper or hear will be the name of the man you will marry.

Pick a dandelion that has gone to seed. Take a deep breath and blow the seeds into the wind. Count the seed that remain on the stem, and that is the number of children you will have.

Or, cut an apple in half and count how many seeds are inside, you can also tell how many children you will have.

sources

<http://www.bconnex.net/~mbuchana/realms/valentine/valindx.html>

<http://www-personal.engin.umich.edu/~cstrick.holidays.valentines.html>

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