



California Genealogical Society  
CaliforniaAncestors.org

eNews

Since 1898

April 2026 Vol. 20, No. 4

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## April is National Volunteer Month: Celebrate with a Potluck on April 11

I appreciate our volunteers all year round, but I know I don't say it often enough and I miss thanking a lot of our volunteers completely.

We are going to have a potluck lunch after the board meeting on **Saturday April 11** in our soon to be vacated home of almost 20 years, the Breuner Building, located at **2201 Broadway, Oakland, Lower Level**. So please come and socialize. Non-volunteers are also welcome. If you don't volunteer currently, come anyway and perhaps say hi to some old friends and meet some new ones. Our volunteers are great people and all have interesting stories to share and help to offer you in your genealogy journey. So come show them some love and enjoy some good company.

To keep this simple, let me suggest if your surname ends in **A-M** bring an **appetizer or savory item** to share and if it begins with the back half of the alphabet (**M-Z**) bring a **dessert, fruit** or other item for sharing. No judgment—it doesn't have to be homemade and we always have plenty of food if you forget to bring something of if you want to bring something in the other category.

Calendar

Genealogy World News:  
Release of the Irish Census

Outside Events & Calendars

- NGS Conference:  
Message from Matt Berry
- GRIP
- Bay Area and ConferenceKeeper calendar links

NEW Volunteer Outreach Opportunities

Recent CGS publications

Credits

The point is to socialize—eating is optional. **The board meeting starts at 10 and usually runs to 11:30. You are welcome to attend that as well, but we'll target noon for the potluck.** Someone will be in the lobby to let you in. **There is no need to RSVP.**

Demolition and emptying out of unwanted items began this last week at our new home at 1841 Berkeley Way, Berkeley. So, there won't be too many more opportunities for you to make those 'remember when we had social gatherings in the Breuner building basement?' stories. Socializing in our new facility will be so much nicer, with a dedicated kitchen and an outdoor private patio. So come for some camaraderie, celebrate our volunteers and say goodbye to Breuner.

Roger Prince  
President, CGS

## March Board Meeting Updates



"We have the keys!" Chairman **Ron Madson** was pleased to make this announcement on March 13. After weeks of hard work by the committee, we now have full access to the **1841 Berkeley Way** property, our new CGS home. The contractors have begun remodeling and other milestones have been put on the calendar. The timing is promising for a grand opening by Fall, with events and meetings before then. The current library will be disposing of tables, chairs, filing cabinets, artwork, and more. Visit the library to see what's available. Contact [Bob Trapp](#) to put in a claim.



Work on the web redesign is progressing after the approval of Phase 1 at the February Board Meeting. The formal kickoff with the project vendor **Madcraft** happened mid-March after their inventory of our site. The project plan was reviewed and a timeline plotted.

Are you interested in previewing and providing your feedback on the appearance and user-friendliness of the new CGS web pages? Volunteers needed. Please contact chairman, [Rudy Wolf](#).

April Board Meeting

Saturday, April 11, 2026  
10 a.m. followed by potluck  
In-person at the CGS Library, 2201  
Broadway, Oakland or by Zoom  
[Register here](#) to attend online.



## Blast from the Past: Genie and Volunteer Award Recipients

For many years, the California Genealogical Society has honored its extraordinary volunteers at a member event, usually in October or as we are planning, on April 11, during **National Volunteer Month**. Some photos from the last ten years are below. Click the year below for articles in our archived blogs or eNews listing the names of winners .

In 2013, the event became branded as “The Genie Awards” given that our genealogy volunteers make wishes happen. The tradition ramped up under the leadership of **Linda Okazaki** (President from 2015-2018) whose enthusiasm set the tone for a celebration that quickly became a beloved CGS ritual. With the creativity of the Membership Committee, led by chair **Kathleen Beitiks**, the Genies grew into a full-fledged annual event—complete with cake, decorations, Genie-lamp trophies, formal photographs, and Linda herself dressed as our spirited Genie cheerleader. Honorees were recognized in [2015](#) for "behind the scenes" work, in [2016](#) for library committee, in [2017](#) (page 3) Intro Class Instructors (not all honorees were present), in [2018](#) (page 3) SIG leaders (not shown) and in [2019](#) Membership team. (Not all honorees were present).



During the COVID years, under the leadership of President **Jim Sorenson**, the awards were presented virtually, but the gratitude for the skills, service, and generosity never dimmed. We missed the cake, but not the chance to honor our volunteers for redesign of our website ([2020](#)), the Remote Education team [2021](#) page 4 (not shown below) and lead volunteers who indexed surnames for the California Names Index, increasing the list by hundreds or more ([2022](#)).



In **2023**, we were able to again celebrate in-person, this time acknowledging the 90 (!) volunteers who had dutifully donned their masks the year before and co-hosted the first post-Covid in-person National Genealogy Society conference in Sacramento. Also in 2023, when we held our 125th Anniversary celebration, put on by Chair **Theresa Hart-Pignotti**, assisted by **Jane Lindsey**, **Nancy Cork**, President **Chris Pattillo** and other volunteers, six of the past presidents received a big thanks and a Presidential cap with the number of their term. Jane herself was honored with a Lifetime Award. Come to this year's potluck on April 11 and to the Genie Award tradition in our new home in the future.



From left to right: Chris Pattillo, Jim Sorenson, Vicky Kolakowski, Linda Okazaki, Jeff Vaillant, Stephen Harris and Jane Lindsey. Not present: Ellen Fernandez-Sacco

## More Magic: Second Albany Outreach Success

On the evening of Wednesday, February 18, six CGS volunteers led by **Grant Din**, repeated a successful learning event at the Albany Community Library under the auspices of the **Path to Belonging** program. The liaison, **Susan Kuramoto Moffatt**, sent the following note of gratitude that captures how special the event was for both the participants and our team. At right, **Kelsey Owyang** with Albany resident.



"Thanks so much for another really fun and enthusiastically attended genealogy event. You made magic happen--**I loved seeing people's faces light up as they were working with you!** We had 30 participants, plus you volunteers--we had capped registration at 30, and while a couple of registrants didn't come (normal for a free event) other folks showed up without registering, so it was perfect."

"Thank you so much for contributing to the community conversations in **Path to Belonging**. You can see the family collages in the exhibition by clicking on them on our [homepage](#) and hear audio recordings of several of the family narrators, too. We hope to have more of the exhibition online soon."

CGS volunteers who participated in addition to Grant were **Steve Haines**, **Howard Hickman**, **Barbara Hill**, **Keith Montgomery**, and **Kelsey Owyang**. If you know a

library or community organization that might want to host an similar outreach event with our volunteer support, contact either [Susan Logas](#) or [Jane Lindsey](#). See Volunteer Opportunities below to help.

## Welcome new members: Susan Pappas, Chris Mussett, Debra Roberge, and James Muir

### Upcoming Member Gatherings

CGS members are getting together! Invitations are sent to the members who live in a region, but members are welcome to attend any gathering that works for their schedule. Spaces are limited. Click location below to reserve a spot. For RSVP information and location, contact [kflom@californiaancestors.org](mailto:kflom@californiaancestors.org).



#### Oakland FamilySearch Center:

- Wednesday, April 8
- 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- [Oakland RSVP](#) (eve)
  
- Wednesday, May 13
- 1-2:30 pm
- [Oakland RSVP](#) (day)

#### Sacramento

Location TBD

- Wednesday, May 13
- 1:30 - 3:00 pm
- [Sacramento RSVP](#)

**San Francisco** will meet in June. See next month's eNews.

#### Lamorinda

- Monday, April 13
- 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- [Lamorinda RSVP](#)

#### Danville

Old Town Cafe, 105 Town and Country Shopping Center, Danville

- Thursday, May 14
- 10:30 am-12:00 pm
- [Danville RSVP](#)

#### Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek Main Library

- Thursday, May 21
- 10:30 a.m. -12 p.m.
- [Walnut Creek RSVP](#)

### Members Only Field Trip: April 23

#### Guided Tour of the Oakland FamilySearch Center

Thursday, April 23, 2026 10:30 am-12:30 pm  
4766 Lincoln Ave, Oakland, CA 94602 (free parking)

Before the OFSC closes for renovations this summer (see below), come for a brief tour, learn about new features on the FamilySearch.org website and more! If you have not been to the FamilySearch Center in a while, you will be



- Over 50 computers
- Free access to AncestryInstitution, FindMyPast, American

amazed at the increased number of resources available.

Bring your lunch and plan to stay after the tour for more research and assistance. Easy access from Highway 13. Free parking. Email [Jane Lindsey](mailto:jane.lindsey@familysearch.org) your questions. [Register here](#)

Ancestors, MyHeritage, GenealogyBank, Fold3, Newspapers.com, and Newspaperarchives

- Access to restricted files
- Comprehensive Scanning Center

## Member Focus: Polyglots



### Connect with our Multi-talented Multi-lingual Members

This month we celebrate the talent of our members who speak multiple languages. Many of our members speak one other language in addition to English. But some speak two or even more. A quick search of our [Member Connections](#) database, created by [Stewart Traiman](#), yielded this short list. There are certainly more in Member Connections or not yet a part of it, for example, the members of the East European SIG. The names from the Member Connection site have all indicated they are willing to help others with their research. You can contact them at the site or filter for country, ethnicity and surnames to find other helpers. Are you also a polyglot? Need help? Search the tool and add your own profile. We'd love to add members and learn about you.

MEMBER	YEAR JOINED CGS	LANGUAGES
<a href="#">Heidi Arno</a>	2019	French, German, Flemish (to a degree)
<a href="#">Michael Burd</a>	2008	German, Italian
<a href="#">Manuel Erviti</a>	2019	French, German, Italian, Spanish
<a href="#">Kim Gehrman White</a>	2022	Portuguese, Spanish, church record Latin
<a href="#">Louise Throop</a>	1998	German, French, Latin?

# Remembering Karen Tracy Lemelin



## Friend, Nurse, Former Board Member

The unexpected death of member **Karen Lemelin** in late February came as a shock to her large community of friends. Karen was born in Oakland, California, and graduated with the Oakland Tech Senior High class of 1961. Before retirement, Karen was employed at Alameda County Medical Center, Highland Campus as a Health Services manager for the Ambulatory Clinics. She was an R.N. with a B.A. degree in Health Services Administration from St. Mary's College. She spent many hours volunteering

with the Flying Medical Volunteers in Mexico, the Red Cross and her children's schools.

Many will remember Karen as the long-time Chair of the Nominations Committee. She was elected to the Board of Directors in 2012 and served as Corresponding Secretary. She became interested in her Norway roots when she was a teenager and was the collector of the family memorabilia. Her personality was well-matched to her long career as an ER nurse--unflappable, funny, quick thinking and caring. She is survived by children and grandchildren. Her [Facebook page](#) (may only open for Friends of Karen) states a celebration of her life will be held at a later date, with details to be shared in the future.

## Education Calendar

# NEXT LEVEL CLASSES

### NEW EVENT ACCESS FOR MEMBERS IN 2026

**Members** no longer need to register for most events and Next Level classes are free for them. Log **into the CGS website**, then go to the [Events & Education](#) and see instructions. **Non-members** register with the EventBrite link and pay \$5.

Questions? Contact [Events](#).



### [Probate Records: More than Wills](#)

with Lisa Gorrell

Understand the difference between testate and intestate estates and much more and the impact on your research.

Wednesday, April 14

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Zoom (free to members, \$5 for non-members) and in-person (free to all) at Oakland Family Search Library.



## [Excel for Genealogists](#)

with Stewart Traiman

Learn to use Excel to help organize your genealogy and reveal patterns and gaps.

Saturday, April 25

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Zoom (free to members, \$5 for non-members)



## [Once Upon a Time...Creating Compelling Stories Out of Mundane Facts](#)

with Linda Okazaki

Hear how to create interesting narratives for your own family from the facts you have collected.

Wednesday, May 20

4:30 - 6:00 p.m. NOTE NEW EARLIER TIME

Zoom (free to members, \$5 for non-members) and in-person (free to all) at Oakland Family Search Library.



## [Adventures in Filipino American Genealogy](#)

with Leo Esclamado

"Everyone is a cousin!" Explore tools and resources available for researching family history in the Filipino American diaspora.

Thursday, May 28

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Live online via Zoom or watch from Oakland FamilySearch Library. Free to all.

## View Previous Classes: Videos for CGS Members

The recordings of the three part *Precision Series* by Pam Brett offered in February and March and Lisa Gorrell's March 18 *Metes and Bounds* recordings are now available for members at [Video for Members](#).

## Ongoing Intro Series & Member Special Interest Groups



### Free Intro to Genealogy

This month: Organizing Your Family History Work

[Register here](#) to attend in-person or by Zoom  
Saturday, April 4, 10:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.



## San Francisco SIG

If you are interested in joining the SF SIG, please send an email to [SFSIG@californiaancestors.org](mailto:SFSIG@californiaancestors.org).

Saturday, April 18, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

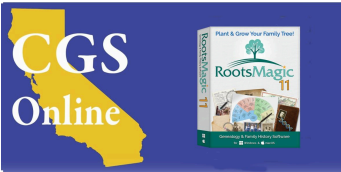


## Family Tree Maker (SIG)

Hosted by Ron Madson and Karen Halfon

[Register here](#)

Saturday, April 18, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.



## Roots Magic SIG

Hosted by Keith Montgomery and Stewart Traidman

[Register here](#)

Wednesday April 22, 6:30 to 8:00 pm



## DNA Skills (SIG)

Hosted by Mark McLaren

If you are interested in joining the DNA Skills SIG, please send an email to [Mark McLaren](#).

Monday, April 27, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

If you would like to host a Special Interest Group, please [contact us here](#).

## Oakland FamilySearch Center Summer Closure

The FamilySearch Center's dates for planned HVAC, plumbing and lighting upgrades have been announced. Work will begin on June 1. The Oakland FamilySearch Center **will be closed from June 1 through August 31**. Discussions are underway about possible off-site activities and other offerings.



CGS and Oakland FamilySearch Center volunteers collaborate to host free, fun, informal discussions on a variety of topics. The 15 Minute Weekly Tips will continue in April on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m and focus on **Artificial Intelligence**. Free and open to all. No registration.

See the OFSC Google [website calendar](#) for a schedule of all events and [here](#) to join Zoom call.

## Tips & Talk

### Genealogy World News: The 1926 Irish Census

#### April 18 is the Big Release Day

by Andrea Daniels

Researchers have long awaited the release of this glimpse into Ireland following the war for independence. It's a first look after the the Civil War severed the island into two camps – Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State. It's also the first census of Ireland by Irish citizens, with each side counting its own people.

Sadly, the pages for Northern Ireland never reached safe storage. It has recently been revealed that they were “pulped and burned” during World War II in a concerted effort to prevent flammable materials from being torched by Nazi firebombs.

But we do have the Irish Free State census which produced 734,462 return sheets covering a population of 2,971,992 individuals. They have been transcribed using OCR software followed by manual verification to ensure accuracy. Details include not just names, addresses and occupations, but personal details such as previous marriages, living children whether in the household or not, religion – if Protestant the name of the particular church, Denomination or body to which they belong, for married women - the number of years in the marriage, for children under 18 and if parents were deceased.

**There's a lot to discover out there. So Get Ready! Get Set! Search!**

See the [National Archives of Ireland Census 1926](#) page with links to Form A. View the National Archives [video](#) about the release, process and contents.



### Outside Learning Opportunities

#### NGS 2026 Family History Conference "America at 250" (May 27-30)

Grand Wayne Convention Center Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The NGS Family History Conference brings together genealogists, educators, researchers, and enthusiasts to share knowledge, strengthen skills, and advance discovery. The 2026 conference will be particularly significant, featuring



2026 Family History Conference  
27-30 May • Fort Wayne, IN

distinguished speakers, innovative sessions, and direct access to the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center. Attendees will gain new skills, new insights, and new connections while commemorating our ancestors' stories throughout 250 years of the American Experiment. Join Conference Program Co-Chair and former CGS Director **Matt Berry** in Fort Wayne for a week of outstanding education and research opportunities.

On-line and in-person [registration here](#). Bookmark the [Conference News](#) blog page for the latest on speakers like Judy G. Russell, JD, The Legal Genealogist, sessions, luncheons, workshops, and more, including new Friday Spotlight Sessions.

Click on graphics below to see websites

**GRIP**<sup>SM</sup>  
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RECORDS, TOOLS, AND SKILLS**

Join us for this GRIP Virtual course.

This course covers 19th through 21st century US records, online resources, "hidden" records, analysis, and methodology.

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, this course is for you.

- Are you past the beginning stages of researching your family history?
- Have you researched online but know there is more elsewhere or that you have missed some resources?
- Do you need a stronger foundation before taking advanced or specialized courses?
- Are you not yet comfortable with in-depth evaluation of documents, deciding what to do next, and delving into less commonly used collections?

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CG®, FMGS, FUGA

## Bay Area Genealogy Calendar



GENEALOGY CONFERENCES, EVENTS, CALLS FOR PAPERS, CONTESTS, GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS, TOURS & CRUISES, AND MORE!

Genealogy CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
**ConferenceKeeper.org**

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Become an Outreach Volunteer

Looking for a way to meet more CGS members and give back to the society? We will have a number of events this year with other organizations. The commitment is for the day of the event and might involve manning an information table or guiding a new genealogist.

Save the dates of **August 12-13** for a two day Genealogy Symposium with multiple speakers sponsored for the second year by the **San Francisco Public Library**. Contact [Jane Lindsey](#). Read about the CGS activities at the 2025 Symposium [here](#).

The annual **Nikkei Angel Island pilgrimage** will be held in **October**. Consultants are needed for this



CGS volunteer Howard Hickman helps an Albany resident get started.

Angel Island

rewarding day. See pictures of the beautiful setting and activities at one of the first Angel Island events [here](#). More details to come. Contact [Grant Din](#)

The [Volunteer Opportunities page](#) on our website has more openings and needs.



## Recent CGS Publications Online

The California Genealogical Society sends our publications by email to members and subscribers. You can also visit our website to read or download PDF's of past issues. Member log-in is required for *Jukebox Genealogy* under the Members tab and *The California Nugget* under the Education tab. Past issues of the eNews are also available to all under the Education tab.



The Blog covered a variety of amusing and instructive topics in March including:

- Using ChatGPT to access a manuscript collection
- You May Be Cool..(a really cool female ancestor)
- Barbie Day
- Spring Forward (time zones through history)
- Research Logs

If you missed these, you can read on the [Blog page](#) of the CGS website



The [March 15 issue](#) of the *Jukebox Genealogy* newsletter featured survey results and six stories from our members about finding elusive female ancestors. The survey found the most common source was death records, but the stories showed a surprising variety of records provided clues.

Stay "tuned" for the May 15 issue which will feature stories of our ancestors in the military and a new song.



The most recent 40-page [Fall 2025](#) issue is rich with three in-depth ancestor stories, including one about a man with many wives and goats,

The editors are hard at work on the Spring 2026 edition of *The California Nugget*. In anticipation of the 250th anniversary of our country's founding, they would like to know what your ancestors were doing then. Had they "crossed the pond"? Were they early Californos? Brief stories are welcome. [Submit here](#).

### CREDITS

Genie photos from the CGS blog, many by Ron Madson  
Albany Outreach news and photos from Grant Din  
Member Field Trip information from Jane Lindsey  
Oakland FamilySearch photos from their website  
Parrots photo from Wikimedia Commons  
Karen Lemelin photo from her Facebook page  
April 18 is the Big Release by Andrea Daniel  
Graphic from National Archive of Ireland website  
GRIP graphic from Conference Keeper newsletter

## California Genealogical Society

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(510) 663-1358

Contact Us



Our library is open **Thursday, Friday, and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

See [Directions and Parking](#) for info on Saturday visits, which have different procedures than weekdays.

Visits are free for all on First Saturdays and always free for members. Non-members can pay the \$5 fee at time of the visit or join and have the fee applied to membership cost.

[Join The Society](#)

[Renew Your Membership](#)

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