

# The USGenWeb Project

## NEWS

### Volume 2, Number 6 October 2005

#### NOTES FROM THE NC

*Linda Haas Davenport*

September marked the first month for this year's Advisory Board and it was a busy month. You can check out the September minutes to see what business the AB conducted.

The USGenWeb Project had a booth at the Federation of Genealogical Societies convention in Salt Lake City, UT. The project members who were there have a report elsewhere in the newsletter. This year, for the first time, the USGenWeb Project was invited to join the FGS and an anonymous Project member purchased the membership and gave it to the Project as a gift. Being a part of the FGS gives the Project a presence in "real world" genealogical societies which in turn will bring the Project and our wealth of information to the attention of many more people. A big THANK YOU to the anonymous Project member.

The USGenWeb Project has been given a track for 20 presentations at the 2006 FGS Conference in Boston in February. I'm excited about this opportunity to bring the USGenWeb Project to the attention of so many genealogical societies from across the country. This exposure will increase the number of visitors to the county (parish, etc) sites of the Project.

Last month I mentioned that the AB would be meeting in formal and informal session so that most of the AB's discussions would take place in an open format. During September the AB did not have a separate list for its discussions and things got confusing at times. The AB decided to make use of the Project's old ALL list as our ABChat list. If you would like to listen in on the AB you may subscribe to the list by sending a sub request to: USGENWEB-ALL-L request@rootsweb.com (for individual messages) or USGENWEB-ALL-D-request@rootsweb.com (for digest messages).

I know how very busy Project members are and I know that most of us spend our every spare moment working hard on our sites but the Project has need of good people who are willing to volunteer for some important committees. Please consider volunteering.

The following committees are looking for members:

The Newsletter Committee has been reactivated and Sharon (the editor) is looking for volunteers. If you're interested please contact Sharon at: sharon@marshallnet.com.

The Election Committee will soon be issuing a call for volunteers. If you are interested in helping the EC please contact Tina Vickery.

The Grievance Procedure Committee is looking for volunteers. For more details contact Angie Rayfield.

If you would like to contact any AB member our names and e-mail addresses are found on the AB Membership Page. Hearing from you will help the AB do a better job for you so please don't hesitate to offer us your comments, suggestions or questions.

Until next month.

Linda Haas Davenport, NC

#### September FGS Delegate Digest

*Josh Taylor - Parliamentarian*

As you know, USGenWeb officially joined the Federation of Genealogical Societies last month. As a member of FGS, the Project now receives the Delegate Digest. The September Issue has been received. If you would like to receive a copy, please e-mail josh@djosuataylor.com.

#### USGenWeb at the FGS National Conference in Salt Lake City

*Mike St. Clair - RL AC with additions from W David Samuelsen and Darilee Bednar*

The Federation of Genealogical Societies is a national organization which provides a means for genealogical societies nationwide and world wide to work together to share expertise, support each other, and to work jointly on large projects of importance to all genealogists. One of the ways they do this is by sponsoring what is typically the largest national conference each year. This year it was held in Salt Lake City and an enthusiastic group of USGenWeb project

members manned a booth in their exhibit hall to help tell visitors about our project, to encourage them to make use of our websites

AND to think about what they might do to give something back to each other in return.

You may think that EVERY genealogist already knows about and uses USGenWeb. If so, Based on our experiences at the conference, you would be dead wrong! Based on some rather crude accounting methods and estimates, it appeared to

me that our visitors (I'm guessing more than 600 during the three day conference) fell into four categories.

1) Close to half of them had never used USGenWeb in support of their own research or had made such insignificant use of our resources that they had forgotten. These folks were very excited to learn how much good information was out there for their use. It was not uncommon for there to be two or three sharing one of our two computers at a time and for a few others to be waiting for their turn. This group consumed most of our time and I think we enjoyed showing as much as they enjoyed learning.

2) Better than a third of our visitors were enthusiastic and extensive users of USGenWeb already. Most of them just wanted to stop by, tell us how much they appreciate our volunteers hard work, and pick up material we had describing our project and resources. In several cases, one of these visitors would have the light bulb come on while talking with us and go away committing to provide one resource or another that they had prepared for their own use to their fellow genealogists by contributing it to the appropriate website host.

3) A smaller group of visitors were casual users of USGenWeb but came to learn what it was really all about.

4) A very small group (I only personally met one of these) were extremely skeptical of any value that could come from resources on the Internet. This individual didn't buy into the concept, but did spend enough time with me looking to make at least one comment that we should take very seriously. He pointed out that at the sites we visited, typically there were not good references back to the original source for the serious genealogist who wanted to see the original record for themselves. I know some of the local sites are very good about this, but our expedition of exploration found far more of the other sort. :- ( I will assure you that most of the serious professionals who came by were not members of this group. These were several professional genealogical librarians (from the local Family History Library and elsewhere, including the head archivist of BYU-Idaho), many professional genealogists, and officers of large societies. Several of them expressed the fact that they find USGenWeb invaluable when working on their own personal brick walls!

We had many visits from folks who had been CCs in the past, or who had made contributions of data. We had visitors from many different states, and several foreign countries. There were many leaders of genealogical societies from throughout the country, professional genealogists, and average folks who just enjoyed genealogy as a hobby. We also had visits from several management types from RootsWeb and Ancestry, as well as similar folks from other genealogical vendors.

Some Highlights:

The biggest highlight of the whole conference for me was the chance to meet many project members, both those who worked so hard to help plan for and staff the booth, and others who were attending the training sessions at the conference but still took a few minutes to come by and introduce themselves. This included many past and present CCs and CCs representing a bunch of states. In our project, it's not uncommon to work closely with a bunch of folks that you've never met in your life. At the conference I was able to meet for the first time the SC and ASC for one of the states I volunteer in. I was able to receive a big hug from another of my SCs from someone who had traveled from Hawaii for the conference and another from a someone whose ancestry was from New Orleans and was just passing on her great appreciation to the Louisiana state project for all the work they had done to help preserve materials that had just been seriously endangered by hurricane Katrina. So consider yourself hugged - twice!!

Another highlight was the opportunity to visit so many project websites, both during preparation for attending the conference and during the time spent showing off our wares to the booth visitors. While I'll readily admit I hit a few sites that could really use a little TLC, far more were obviously under the care of someone who did really care. Usually it was the visitors who were jumping up and down with glee over finding some treasure they had no clue was available. But sometimes it was me who couldn't contain my excitement.

We had an extended visit from a very distinguished visitor from Sweden. Ted Rosval is the president of the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies and was very impressed with what has been done. He will be the author of an article in their next quarterly journal about The USGenWeb Project and he will now be a strong proponent of the Sweden Project within World GenWeb and will be encouraging their copying some of our success. We were also approached by enough chairmen of local conferences from around the country to know that almost any of these organizations would be delighted to have a local project member participate to tell the USGenWeb story. We were actually able to connect up a couple of project members with such opportunities right during the conference.

Another opportunity arose during the conference that may also be helpful in spreading the word about what we do, and about the fact that more help is always needed. A new national publication that will focus on genealogy and technology is about to be launched and it's inaugural issue will have an article on USGenWeb.

At any conference, there are always newly announced "products" and several of us get the chance to escape for a few minutes at a time to check out some of the new stuff. There were several I liked a lot and that may have some future implications for a project like USGenWeb. The LDS Church announced the FamilySearch Indexing software which they intend to use over the next many years to literally produce indexes to everything on their microfilm. It's a pretty slick process and I immediately signed up to participate in their next round of testing. Perhaps someday something like this could be available for USGenWeb transcribers. That would be very cool. I also found that machine scanning of microfilm has broken under the \$2,000 limit and I can see that is approaching the level where some project volunteers might be able to harness that technology. I well remember stopping by one of the early vendors of image CDs many years ago and marveling at the \$70,000 machine that they used.

I believe that those who participated in this conference from USGenWeb are pretty much unanimous in believing it was an enjoyable experience and useful for the Project as well. As an organization with no funding and no revenue, it may not be easy to do this in a very significant way, but I think I speak for the group in saying we should try to continue such participation when we can. If you live in an area where a local conference is held (one of our booth volunteers described such a local one day conference in her area that annually attracts over 1500 participants!) you could have a good time, while leveraging your service to the project by participating. In many cases, there will be no charge at all to do so. And in most of the rest, the cost would be insignificant - perhaps within the area where you might be willing to cover it yourself. I personally believe that it would be a good idea for the project to have a small standing committee on publicity to help encourage this happening and to coordinate efforts.

It's risky to name names, and I apologize in advance to any folks that I forgot to include, but these folks deserve your thanks. First, a special thanks goes to W. David Samuelson for a tremendous amount of work ahead of time and during the conference to get the materials, make the arrangements, come up with the needed funds, and don't forget the Sassy Taffy which was the hit of the hall! Others who helped staff the booth, sometimes sacrificing class time that they had paid for were: Darilee Bednar, Annette Nelson, Dorothy Oksner, Andy Wold and Julie Miller.

Some of the USGenWeb people who stopped by and some of their comments:

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Barbara Renick, who started the Campbell County and Anderson County Tennessee Genweb Project Sites in August 1996, said "Thanks everyone for carrying on with all the great work."

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Julie Miller from Broomfield County, Colorado

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D. Sue Kissel of Yavapai, AZ, said she would love to stop for a while but hit paydirt in the library!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Jason Mendenhall and his wife Cindy, Jason is SC for Idaho

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Celia Tomlin (my former SC and still an active CC)

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Josh Taylor

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Gary Barnes stopped by to check out his contribution to Tombstones... He did the Old Soldiers and Sailors Cemetery in San Francisco County. It was there in Archives and Tombstones. He did mention a couple of more things he was thinking about<g>

Some researcher comments

"To Iowa County, Iowa Gen Web CC: I visited your site. It is great. However, could not find the name of the county co-ordinator. Keep up the good work. Was able to find Lewis Family Names. Really appreciated. Signed. Barry Lewis... bplewis@bigclouds.com "

My comment on Barry Lewis... he really, really was happy to find his family on the Iowa Co IA webpage... the search engine really helped. and I did not twist his arm to write a thank you... <g>

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Brooke and Jacqueline

"We teach the students in our Intro to Family History class at BYU to use USGenWeb in their research. There are about

625 students in this class this semester"

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Deborah of Salem UT, FHC librarian said "I have used USGenWeb for years and have had so much success and I have directed many people to this site."

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"You are my favorite people. Just love you!" Renee Zamora

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On to Boston, MA 30 August - 2 September, 2006 for The USGenWeb Project's 10th Anniversary Celebration at the FGS conference.

(psssst... 15-18 August, 2007, Fort Wayne, Indiana, where the fabulous Allen County Public Library is located.)

Details can be obtained by going to the site, [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org)

### **USGenWeb at FGS 2006—10th Anniversary Celebration!**

*Josh Taylor - Parliamentarian*

Plan now to attend USGenWeb's 10th Anniversary Celebration August 30-September 2, 2006 at the Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference in Boston, Massachusetts!

Just to give you a quick "peek" at the full FGS 2006 Program, the following was posted on the FGS Conference Blog:

"Do you have ancestry in these ethnic groups or areas:

Irish, English, Scottish, German, Jewish, Italian, Massachusetts, Canada, New York, United States, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and more? If so, this conference is for you. Do you want to know about the national level archives in the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland to name just a few?

Do you want to learn more about researching on-site or online? Do you want to learn to be a better genealogical speaker?

What about analyzing records, Colonial research, land platting, using USGenWeb, or learning more about your soldier or seaman?

Need to learn more about lineage society applications, running a genealogical society, writing family histories, Irish customs, finding ancestor's inventions, genetics and genealogy, and, and, and . . .

Whew! Intrigued? Check back over the next eleven months as we tell you more about these topics and others."

-Paula Stuart-Warren, National Publicity Chair, FGS 2006.

USGenWeb will be sponsoring 20 events (there are over 375!) at the conference including a luncheon celebration on Thursday, August 31, 2006. For more details on the conference visit the FGS Conference Blog at <http://www.fgsconference.blogspot.com/>. USGenWeb must register for the FGS 2006 Conference to attend the lectures. Details on registration, hotels, and more may be found at: <http://www.fgs.org/2006conf/FGS-2006.htm>. Just a heads up, the "extra early discount" for full conference registration (over 375 lectures) is \$135.00 and ends December 31, 2005.

In addition to sponsoring events at the conference, the USGenWeb at FGS 2006 team will be coordinating research, sight-seeing, and other events in and around Boston in conjunction with the conference. Need a roommate? The team will also be coordinating with USGenWeb members who are attending the conference to assist in finding roommates, hotels, travel arrangements, etc. If you are planning to attend the conference, please let [josh@djoshuataylor.com](mailto:josh@djoshuataylor.com) know immediately to be added on the FGS 2006 list!

For more information on USGenWeb's classes, visit <http://www.usgenweb.org/volunteers/FGS.shtml>.

Hope to see you there!

### **Newsletter Committee**

*Sharon Rhodes - Editor*

We will be assembling a newsletter committee and need volunteers. We will establish purpose, guidelines, rules, expectations etc. We will need writers, reporters, story ideas. If you want to help please send an email to [sharon@marshallnet.com](mailto:sharon@marshallnet.com)

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the USGenWeb Project .

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