

# NEWSLETTER

November 2007

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[www.massgencouncil.org](http://www.massgencouncil.org)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

Dear Members and Member Societies,

It is a true privilege to be elected President of MGC. During its long and glorious history, MGC has supported genealogists through promoting legislative awareness and through educational seminars. I very much enjoyed our last seminar. Our Track 1 speaker, Marcia Melnyk, was as dynamic as ever. The break-out sessions by member societies were very interesting. My favorite session was the interview between Melinde Lutz Sanborn FASG, and Rich McCoy of Vermont. As the interviewer, our Vice President really pulled out information important to all of us about how vital records legislation is influenced nationally.

We all have come to appreciate the fine food and great central location of the Verizon Conference Center of the past three years. Unfortunately, the center has been sold and is no longer available for our conferences. Before family issues forced her to resign from her position, our Program Director, Christine Sweet-Hart, CG, located a conference facility at Bentley College in Waltham that is nearly as central and nearly as affordable. The theme for our next Annual Seminar will be "Taking Genealogy into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." We are planning a central track to include a history of MGC and three presentations on new trends in genealogical research. One of our member organizations, the New England Historic and Genealogical Society (NEHGS), has agreed to partner with us in supporting Track 1. Those of you who are still hesitant to use Internet or computer resources will find these sessions very helpful. NEHGS has agreed to supply some of their most knowledgeable people for our seminar.

We continue to monitor activity on Beacon Hill relating to vital records access and preservation. MGC Civil Records director Bernie Couming has given us a column inside about the legislative process. Stay an informed consumer of Beacon Hill -- be sure to follow-up on his suggestions on where to get more information about the process through which bills go.

Finally, please accept my apologies for the lateness of the November newsletter. The February one will come out soon with details about our upcoming conference.

With best wishes,

*Barbara J. Mathews, CG<sup>SM</sup>*

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council Annual Meeting and Seminar will be held **26 April 2008 at Bentley College.**

**"Taking Genealogy into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"**

Co-sponsored by the New England Historic and Genealogical Society  
Speakers include Joshua Taylor from NEHGS

# MGC BOARD MEMBERS 2007-2009

## OFFICERS

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Melinde Lutz Sanborn, FASG, Vice President  
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Bernie Couming, Civil Records  
Arthur Roberts, Newsletter Editor  
*Position open*, Programs  
Michael Brophy, Publicity  
Sheila FitzPatrick, Ways & Means  
Christine Sweet-Hart, CG, Webmaster

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

2 FEBRUARY 2007

MGC Board meets four times a year. The next meeting will take place 2 February 2008, at NARA, Waltham, from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

## HISTORY AND MISSION STATEMENT

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council was founded in 1980 and has dedicated itself to serving the interests of the state's genealogical community.

MGC's stated purposes are to act as advocates in monitoring legislative and administrative activities of governmental agencies which affect genealogists; to sponsor and present legislation and programs designed to expand the resources and accessibility of services; to develop and promote the growth, education, and exchange of ideas among persons and organizations interested in the pursuit of genealogy; and to provide other activities to advance genealogy.

## CONTACTING MGC

**Newsletter Contributions:** If you would like to have the projects or activities of your society included in the MGC newsletter, please send them to Newsletter Editor, Massachusetts Genealogical Council, P. O. Box 5393, Cochrasset, MA 01778, or via email to [info@massgencouncil.org](mailto:info@massgencouncil.org).

**Newsletter Options:** If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please contact the newsletter editor at [info@massgencouncil.org](mailto:info@massgencouncil.org).

**Coming in the Next Issue:** Vital record access updates, news, reviews.

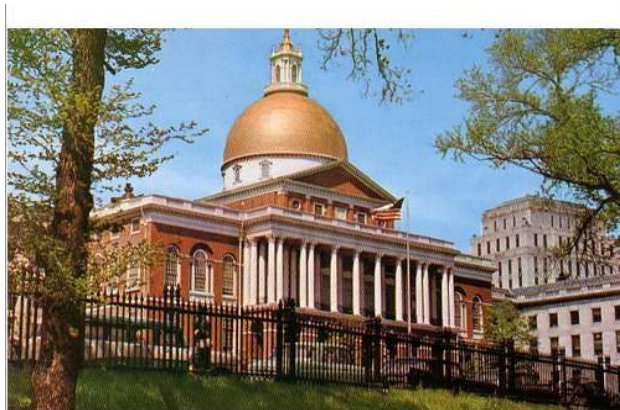
**Address/Email Change?** Keep the MGC newsletter coming – inform us of any changes by contacting us at [info@massgencouncil.org](mailto:info@massgencouncil.org).

# CIVIL RECORDS REPORT

By Bernard Couming, Civil Records Director

The genealogical community and affiliated historians and researchers continue to express their concern to maintain public access to the Vital Records in Massachusetts in accordance with the current law (general law Chapter 46), which encodes the status of Public Records. As previously reported, several bills have been filed by various interests, to restrict public access. Our bill, H-2154, is sponsored by Rep. Peter J. Koutoujian of Waltham. All these bills (pro and con) were subjects of the public hearing before the Joint Committee on Public Health (JCPH) on July 25 2007, and remain “in committee” to date. They will be addressed either singly or in concert as the legislative calendar proceeds and as political pressure dictates. To be addressed requires the staff of the JCPH to review the filed language of the various bills to assure correct and proper parlance and to assure conflict-free impact on existing laws well as identifying anticipated budgetary impact. Once so vetted, at the impulse of political interests, a bill is scheduled onto the calendar of the committee’s Executive Session and it is voted on for one of three options, to be recommended to the floor for passage, or for non passage, or to be tabled for further study (eg., limbo).

The Massachusetts legislature’s website, <http://www.mass.gov/legis/>, provides lists of all current legislators contact information, committee assignments, as well as the history of all bills under consideration in the current 2007-2008 session. It also provides the text of all bills under consideration and the text of the entire existing laws of the commonwealth and the text of the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The process of creating and passing legislation by the legislature is summarized in two documents on the website: LAWMAKING IN MASSACHUSETTS, and MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATIVE HISTORY. The 39-item table of contents is hyperlinked to the underlying text. It starts with an Introduction and a Legislative Process Overview, and continues with such interesting topics as Legislative Committees’ Role in the Enactment Process. The site includes definitions of First Reading, Second Reading, Third Reading, and Engrossment. The two documents on the website are well worth pursuing to gain an insight into the process, not only for our billsof interest, but also for any other legislative topics of interest to the reader.



## MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Council is open to any person or organization interested in its activities upon payment of dues. The membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Dues: \$10 for individual  
\$15 for dual (same mailing address)  
\$20 for organizations.

## MGC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- \* Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana
- \* Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society
- \* Cape Cod Genealogical Society
- \* Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society
- \* Descendants of Whaling Masters
- \* Essex Society of Genealogists
- \* Friends of the Silvio O. Conte Archives
- \* Genealogical Roundtable
- \* The Irish Ancestral Research Association
- \* The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston
- \* The Massachusetts Society of Genealogists
- \* The Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants
- \* The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Washington, DC
- \* New England Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists (formerly called the Greater Boston Chapter)
- \* New England Historic Genealogical Society
- \* The Waltham Historical Society

## HELP WANTED

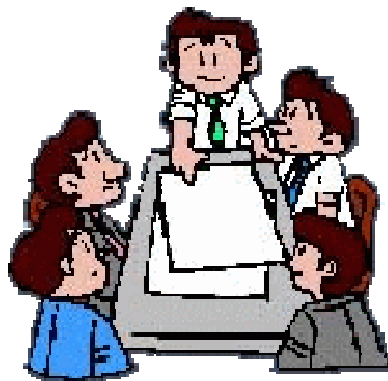
Two respected and important members of the Board have had to resign their positions due to family matters. Vicki Ryan is no longer Newsletter Editor and Christine Sweet-Hart, CG, is no longer Program Director. Both are sorely missed. We have filled the Newsletter Editor position, but still need help with Programs. Please look within your own genealogical organizations for capable and energetic people to help us pull through. Please circulate this job position advertisement throughout the Massachusetts genealogical and historical community.

### MGC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council (MGC) is currently seeking a Program Director. Duties of this position include locating a conference facility, planning an interesting and accessible conference program with multiple tracks, managing the budget and pricing for breakeven, and communicating with speakers, MGC board members, member organizations, and facility managers to ensure a smooth conference. The Program Director attends MGC boards meetings and the annual conference. The position is a volunteer opportunity for the right person.

While many of the plans for the 2008 conference are in place, we are still looking for someone who will help with the remaining tasks for April 26<sup>th</sup>. Other board members with program experience will help the motivated applicant to grow into the position of managing one of the larger annual genealogical events in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council, founded in 1980, is dedicated to serving the interests of the state's genealogical community. MGC acts as an advocate in monitoring governmental legislative and administrative activities affecting genealogists; sponsoring and presenting legislation and programs designed to expand the resources and accessibility of services; developing and promoting the growth, education, and exchange of ideas among persons and organizations interested in the pursuit of genealogy; and providing other activities to advance genealogy. Qualified applicants should e-mail their resume to [president@massgencouncil.org](mailto:president@massgencouncil.org).



## MASSGENCOUNCIL@ROOTSWEB.COM

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council now has its own email list service on Rootsweb. We will be using this email list to send information, announcements, and news about our organization and about our activities. You will also be free to use this list to ask questions about activities or to issue your own concerns about records access and/or legislative activities that impact genealogists.

For those of you who haven't yet subscribed, here are directions about subscribing and using the list. To join MASSGENCOUNCIL-L, send mail to [MASSGENCOUNCIL-L-request@rootsweb.com](mailto:MASSGENCOUNCIL-L-request@rootsweb.com) with the single word [subscribe](#) in the message subject and body.

If you run into any trouble using the list, feel free to ask for help at the email address [MASSGENCOUNCIL-admin@rootsweb.com](mailto:MASSGENCOUNCIL-admin@rootsweb.com).

Further instructions from the Rootsweb website:

- Subscribing. Clicking on one of the shortcut links below should work, but if your browser doesn't understand them, try these manual instructions: to join MASSGENCOUNCIL-L, send mail to [MASSGENCOUNCIL-L-request@rootsweb.com](mailto:MASSGENCOUNCIL-L-request@rootsweb.com) with the single word [subscribe](#) in the message subject and body. To join MASSGENCOUNCIL-D, do the same thing with [MASSGENCOUNCIL-D-request@rootsweb.com](mailto:MASSGENCOUNCIL-D-request@rootsweb.com).
  - [Subscribe to MASSGENCOUNCIL-L](#)
  - [Subscribe to MASSGENCOUNCIL-D \(digest\)](#)
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## MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL

### DUES RENEWAL NOTICE FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2008

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council is dedicated to serving the interests of the state's genealogical community. Founded in 1980, the Council's stated aim is to develop and promote the study and exchange of ideas among persons and organizations interested in the pursuit of genealogy. Its programs and activities are designed to complement those of the many genealogical and hereditary societies throughout the state and to provide a statewide forum for genealogists.

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council (MGC) is composed of both individual and organizational members. Individual members receive the newsletter, participate in activities organized by MGC, and attend the Annual Meeting and Seminar. Member organizations receive the newsletter and are encouraged to send a delegate to the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors and Annual Meeting. Delegates are voting members of the Board. Membership in the Council is open to any person or organization interested in its activities upon payment of dues. The membership year runs from 1 January through 31 December. Note: Dues are NOT tax-deductible.

**Your membership influences our legislators. Please renew your membership and continue your participation in the work of MGC.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Delegate Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Please Circle One: RENEWAL NEW

Please indicate level of membership:

\_\_\_ Individual \$10.00    \_\_\_ Dual \$15.00 (same address, one newsletter)

\_\_\_ Organization \$20.00

[ ] Would prefer to receive the newsletter via email. Please indicate email address above.

Make checks payable to: Massachusetts Genealogical Council

Mail to: Massachusetts Genealogical Council, P.O. Box 5393, Cochrane, MA 01778-5393.

**MGC has a number of committees. Please indicate your interest(s).**

\_\_\_ Monitoring legislative and access issues

\_\_\_ Preparing the newsletter

\_\_\_ Assisting with the Annual Seminar

\_\_\_ Helping with the website

Massachusetts Genealogical Council  
P.O. Box 5393  
Cohitate, MA 01778