

# Massachusetts Genealogical Council Newsletter

Protecting Public Records Access

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**A Publication of the Massachusetts Genealogical Council Established in 1980**

## *FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT...*

This Year's Annual Meeting Wow, what a conference! Bentley College's LaCava Conference Center proved to be an accessible, friendly, spacious place to hold our annual meetings. Our own Michael Brophy provided a riveting history of MGC, filled with photos of familiar faces. Michael Leclerc and Josh Taylor brought us up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with their sessions on using computers for making connections both in research and to cousins. Our two other tracks provided fascinating information on records and history. This year's meeting was graciously supported by a contribution from the Jay Cashman family obtained with the help of our Newsletter Director, Arthur Roberts. In addition, our Vice President, Melinde Lutz Sanborn, FASG, managed a popular silent auction with nearly three dozen items. With these two creative financial supports, we were able to pay the speakers in all our tracks, one of my personal goals for the organization. I am grateful to Arthur and Melinde for their creativity and hard work. Save the Date: Next Year's Meeting is on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Our new Program Director has done the preliminary work to set up next year's annual meeting and seminar. It is planned to take place a few months after the New England Regional Genealogical Conference, so all of us who volunteer there will have had some time to recover. Save the date, which is July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. We will meet again at the LaCava Conference Center at Bentley College in Waltham. Our featured Track 1 speaker will be Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, a well-respected speaker of national prominence. She teaches at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy and she is co-author of *Your Guide to the Family History Library*. Over the past few years, she has researched deeply into Native American records. It will be fun-filled day learning about strategies for research success. Paula keeps a blog in which she shares her warmth and expertise. Check out <http://www.paulastuartwarren.blogspot.com/> if you want to get to know Paula ahead of time! Her July 12<sup>th</sup> entry on records preservation and access covers many issues that are important to all of us.



*Barbara Mathews*



***Paula Stuart-Warren***

Announcing a New Program Director: Many of you will remember that I asked for volunteers for the job of Program Director after Christine Sweet-Hart, CG, had to reevaluate her commitment after her schedule became more strenuous. We were very lucky that one of our speakers at the April conference stepped forward. Josh Taylor is our new Program Director. Josh represents NEHGS on the MGC board and has experience at the national level organizing for the Federation of Genealogical Societies. Josh's personal contacts are sure to give us fun and informational conferences in the future. He stepped right up to the plate, immediately requesting the feedback questionnaires from our last conference to learn what people liked and what they want to change. Upcoming Board Meetings: All MGC members are invited to our board meetings. Our next few meetings are scheduled for Saturday afternoons. I haven't yet confirmed meeting locations so just send me an email at [President@massgencouncil.org](mailto:President@massgencouncil.org) in order to get up-to-date information. It will also be posted on our website. The upcoming board meeting dates are October 13<sup>th</sup>, December 6<sup>th</sup>, and February 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

### ***The MGC Board of Directors***

*Barbara Mathews—President*

*Sharon Sergeant---Secretary*

*Kathryn Black Smith---Treas.*

*Ann Dzindolet---Archives*

*Sheila Fitzpatrick---Ways & Means*

*Sue Richardson---Membership*

*Arthur Roberts---Newsletter*

*Christine Sweet-Hart---Webmaster*

*Michael Brophy---Publicity*

*Shirley Barnes---Corres.*

*Bernard Couming---Civil Records*

## **THE LEGISLATIVE BEAT!**



### ***Bernie Couming watching our legislators!***

Our representatives in both the Office of the Director of Public Records and in the House Ways and Means Committee, (where all Vital Records proposals have resided since March 24<sup>th</sup>) indicate that the Executive Committee yesterday advanced the next agenda of bills for subsequent action. No Vital Records bills were included in that agenda and are unlikely to be included in the two weeks remaining to this (years) legislative session. Should anything change, indicating movement of any of these bills of interest, all members of the House Ways and Means Committee shall be notified and we will be alerted. Of course, after the July 31<sup>st</sup> completion of the formal session, "non-controversial" (unopposed) bills can be processed right up to the final days of the "informal session" of the legislative year on December 31<sup>st</sup>. This has happened before, most recently in 2006, and only by dint of constant vigilance were we able to thwart a surreptitious effort and prevent passage of a similar mischievous bill. We shall continue our opposition and vigilance to the bills that we've judged unacceptable. Unhappily, our own bill, H-2154, which did not receive a positive report out of the Joint Committee on Public Health, despite our extraordinary efforts to gain approval, will also not be likely to move forward out of the House Ways and Means Committee, and will need to be resubmitted once again in the next legislative session for 2009-2010.



## FROM THE EDITOR.....



**Arthur Roberts**

Well, this is the third edition of the MGC Newsletter since my reign began and I certainly could not have done it without the help of MGC members and their timely literary contributions. MGC is planning to expand the Newsletter to a quarterly publication and a "Special Issue" for the yearly conference, now scheduled for July of 2009. In order to achieve the primary goal of MGC, to protect and keep public genealogical records, our members must be notified of all the latest news on the subject but it is also important to expand our membership base, ever looking for persons interested in genealogy and the public access to records. New ideas and concepts contributed by its members will keep the MGC strong and its work effectual in a time when it seems that the walls are closing in on some of the infinite freedoms that we once enjoyed without a second thought. Letters, e-mails and calls to your legislators will help raise the awareness of the need for open records. A continued and varied communication between MGC and all its members is also critical. So, feel free to contact me at:

[editor@massgencouncil.org](mailto:editor@massgencouncil.org)

and you can reach any other Board member through:

[info@massgencouncil.org](mailto:info@massgencouncil.org)

We are also compiling a database of e-mail addresses so we can notify our members and other interested parties of any up to the minute developments on the legislative front. The more members MGC has the louder our joint voice will be at the Massachusetts legislature.

## ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS!

The annual MGC Conference at Bentley College in April was another sterling success. From all the speakers to the most successful *Silent Auction* we have ever had a great time was had by all. What is most important is the exchange of comments and ideas by all those attending. In July of 2009 MGC is planning a bigger and better Annual Conference than ever before. The range of speakers will be much greater as will the topics. You can notify us early if you want to reserve your place now. You can be assured that it will be a *standing room only* conference next year.



*It's a long way back to Adam & Eve*

## A FEW LIGHTER MOMENTS!

GENEALOGY IS LIKE Hide & Seek, They hide, I seek...

Genealogy: people collecting people...

Genealogy: Tracing yourself back to better people...

Genealogy: Where you confuse the dead and irritate the living.....

I used to have a life, then I started doing genealogy...

Isn't Genealogy fun? The answer to one problem leads to two more...

Genealogist: Some day you will be an ancestor too...

Genealogists never die, they just haunt cemeteries....

## ***BROPHY'S CORNER.....***

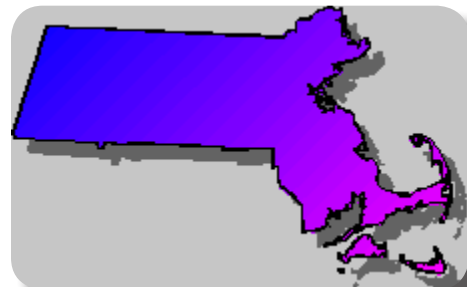
# ***Days and Nights in the Sorority House at Samford***

**Needless to say, I was quite surprised to find my dorm** assignment at the annual Institute of Historic and Genealogical and Historic Research (IGHR) at Samford University was the Alpha Omicron Pi Sorority house. There must have been a mistake right? Or maybe the registration people have a sense of humor and wanted to give me a memorable experience at the Institute?! In any event, I was off to solve the mystery and find out what was going on here. What goes on at Samford stays at Samford correct? Welcome to the maiden voyage of Brophy's corner. I hope to be informative and irreverent in upcoming newsletters as I give my impressions in the often odd but always fascinating world of genealogy and family history. I hope you enjoy. Every year since 1962, the IGHR has taught amateur and professional genealogists the finer points of the field. The week long institute covers topics from *Research in the South* to Military research topics to the course I took this past year, *Irish Genealogical Research*. The courses are taught by first rate instructors in the field on the campus of Samford University, not Stanford, in Birmingham Alabama. One might call the institute a genealogy boot camp for the hopelessly addicted family historian as evidenced by the many regulars who show up year after year. In my course, some of my classmates had already taken the course previously. I am in my second year so I don't qualify yet as a repeat offender. Give me time. At night there were optional lectures to attend. I went to one on improving my lecturing skills with the great Paul Milner, who also gave a speech at the Thursday night closing banquet. Other topics were an introduction to African American research and a talk on Library of Congress Manuscript collections. I was surprised to learn that there are over 3500 manuscripts from Ireland in the Library of Congress Foreign Copying Program (FCP) and plan to check them out the next time I am down in DC. The food was good but dangerous for someone of my appetite when served cafeteria style. When I visited friends who went to private colleges back in the day the food always seem to be better than what I was getting at UMASS. I found the same to be true for my three squares a day at Samford. The café was a short walk from the classroom and the IGHR gave us free snacks at break time. The students who choose to stay at area hotels instead of on campus housing could pay for their meals on campus during the day. As a rabid Boston Celtics fan, I snuck off campus on two nights to have dinner at the local Applebee's and watch the green team beat up on the Lakers on their way to banner number seventeen. I found the IGHR worth the money to go. The tuition was under 400\$ and I flew my favorite airline, economical Southwest, into Birmingham. The on campus housing is cheaper if you get a roommate but either way you will not spend over 300\$ for the week. Part of the appeal for me was to relive my college days the first time by staying in a dorm and bringing my

own sheets and towels, reading lamp, etc. An air conditioned dorm was also a new experience for me with a private bathroom. Speaking of housing, I almost forgot, was I staying in the right place? I found out that the dorms we stayed in my first year were under renovation and that a good number of us were staying in the Greek houses! Since the undergraduates were gone for the semester the IGHR had to put us in the sorority house due to the pre-planned overhaul of the dorms and other overnight activities going on around campus. I even found out that some of the instructors were staying in the same house as I! In any event there were no social mixers that week, no rush week, or fraternity brothers coming over to see their sweethearts. Genealogists generally go to bed pretty early at night (like the dead) and the place was pretty quiet for the week. For that reason, my wife got a good laugh out of the situation and maybe the dorms will be done next year for IGHR 2009. I plan to be there.



***By Michael Brophy***



***Massachusetts  
Genealogical  
Council***



