



## President's Message

At our annual meeting on November 10 our society will be electing a president and a secretary. The vice president position will need a nominee since our current V.P. Margie Wilson has been nominated for president. This V.P. position would only be for one year to finish the remaining two year term. We currently have Margie Wilson nominated for president and Karen Strelow for secretary.

No ballot will be needed as we have no proposed bylaw revisions to consider. At this point only one person has been nominated for the two offices, president and secretary. The position of vice president will be open for nominations and additional nominations for president and secretary will be accepted from the floor.

Besides our annual meeting in November we will have V.P. Margie Wilson leading a Brickwalls troubleshooting session titled "Wisdom of the Crowd". Bring your research challenges (Brickwalls) and have a panel of experienced genealogy researchers provide solutions. Our more experienced members will assist as necessary. Come and enjoy the afternoon with us.

As an added bonus Margie has two boxes full of duplicate genealogy books from our SVGS library which she is offering for free, first come first serve, at our November meeting. Christmas has arrived early so show up before 1 pm for your best opportunities.

There is no meeting in December so you will have more time with your families over the holidays. Have fun!

Volume 32 Number 5  
 President: John Hayes  
 Newsletter: Dottie Chandler  
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I know I will as this is my last president's message. My four years passed quickly assisted by a very capable group of dedicated board members. Get involved and support your new officers. Thank you all.....

*John Hayes*

President  
[rosie@valleyint.com](mailto:rosie@valleyint.com)  
 360-424-4608

P.S. Remember to renew your membership for 2019. Details elsewhere in this newsletter.

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Just a friendly reminder that dues are now due for the Skagit Valley Genealogical Society. In the event you may have already paid, it is possible that they were sent in and just haven't reached me yet. Our year goes from Jan. 1st through Dec. 31st. Dues this year have raised to \$15.00 for single membership and \$20.00 for family membership.

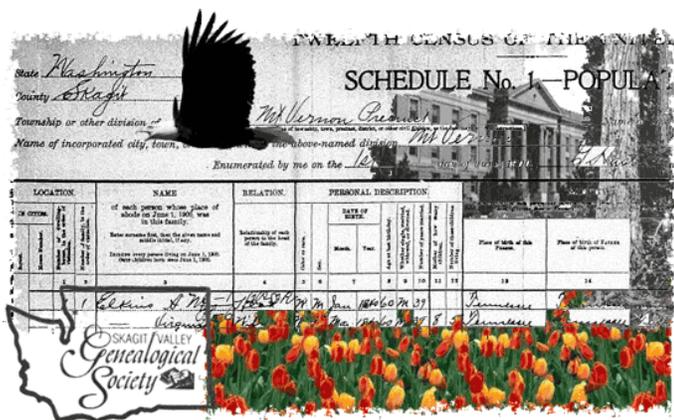
Membership Chairperson

**Sat., Nov. 10 SVGS Annual Meeting and Brickwalls Troubleshooting**

**1:00-3:00PM** Members please bring your research challenges for a "Wisdom of the Crowd" solutions session provided by experienced genealogy researchers on a variety of topics.

-- December – no meetings –

See you Sat. January 12, 2019 at the Burlington



**President:** John Hayes  
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**Membership:** Candice Soine

### SVGS Members,

We have a new BLOG on our website. If you are interested in participating in our blog go to skagit-valleygenealogy. Org/BLOG to see how you can register and log in.  
Thank you.

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**Projects :** Dan Royal/Dottie Chandler

**Publicity:** Margie Wilson

### Special Committees

**Communications:** Barbara Johnson

**Sunshine:** Carol Nersten  
360-770-5542

**Nominating:** **OPEN**

**Audit/Budget:** Candice Soine  
360-755-9071 rainshadowdals@gmail.com

**Bylaws/Standing Rules:** Hazel Rasar  
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**Refreshments:** Rotating with volunteers

**Raffles/Door Prizes:** Carol Nersten

**Seminar:** Board Members

**SOCIETY EMAIL:** genealogy0715@gmail.com

Check out our redesigned web page at  
[skagitvalleygenealogy.org](http://skagitvalleygenealogy.org)

The Skagit Valley Genealogical Society Newsletter accepts business card size advertisement. The cost will be \$10.00 per issue and the editor can help put one together for you if you don't have something ready.

If anyone would like queries or surnames to be posted in the newsletter, please send to... *Ye Editor*

## New Additions to the SVGS Library - Fall 2018 by Margie Wilson

Special thanks to Hazel Rasar and Rita Schultze for contributing three new books to the SVGS Collection. The books are:

- “Reimagine Family History” by Devon Noel Lee and Andrew Lee;
  - “Power Scrapbooking” by Devon Noel Lee; and
- “DNA Q&A: Real Questions from Real People about Genetic Genealogy” by Andrew Lee and Devon Noel Lee.

Thank you also to Candice Soine for her donation of a very interesting book complete with a CD titled: “Finding Your Ancestral Village in Slovakia, Czechy, Ukraine, Galicia and Hungary in the Former Austro-Hungarian Empire” v2.04 by John A. Hudick.

SVGS has a policy that the society purchases a book in memory of a deceased SVGS member. Recently a long time member of SVGS, John Ruhlman, passed away. John and his wife Nancy had researched and traveled to Germany to explore their Germanic roots. So, a book helpful to German research seemed appropriate as no specific book was requested. The book’s title is: “Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents: Analyzing German, Latin and French in Historical Manuscripts” by Roger R. Minert. This scholarly book is an exhaustive study of archaic German, Latin and French handwriting. Family historians often find reading the old “Gothic” German characters unfamiliar and daunting. The author has written this very historically rich and clear textbook specifically designed for genealogists. It’s a fascinating book and packed full of helpful handwriting examples, translations, alphabets and spelling guides useful when researching German documents.

These recent additions to the SVGS collection will be in the “New Books” section, located on the work table, so these books can easily be found and browsed through. These new books will later be shelved into their respective categories when another round of new books enters the collection. I hope you will come visit the library and take time to browse through these new additions.

### **SVGS Volunteers New Hours:**

REMINDER: The hours for SVGS genealogy volunteers to be available at the Burlington Public Library has changed to 10:00am to Noon on the first Saturday of the month (except if the Saturday is during a holiday weekends such as Labor Day, New Year’s, and Independence Day). For more information or if you would like to find out more about becoming a genealogy library volunteer contact

Margie Wilson: [360-757-6224](tel:360-757-6224) or email: [rootsproject@frontier.com](mailto:rootsproject@frontier.com).

## An Unexpected Gift from My Luxembourg Immigrant Ancestor By Margie Wilson

Moien!<sup>1</sup> Genealogy research is full of surprises. Recently I received an unexpected gift from my long since departed great grandmother – the gift of a new adventure – the reclaiming of my ancestor’s Luxembourg citizenship!

My saga began several months ago. I was browsing through a short article in Dick Eastman’s online genealogy newsletter. His newsletter is packed with new and interesting genealogy tips and information. I spotted an article about Luxembourg, where my father’s mother’s family came from in the 1870s. The article was reminding family historians that if you have a direct line Luxembourg ancestor who was born in Luxembourg and alive on January 1, 1900, anywhere in the world, you can apply for dual citizenship with Luxembourg. This is called “reclaiming ancestral citizenship.” To obtain this “reclaimed dual citizenship” an applicant has to prove their direct descent from this Luxembourg native. The catch – the deadline to apply is December 31, 2018<sup>2</sup>. This offer of dual citizenship started in 2008 but I was just now learning about it. Thank you Dick Eastman for publishing that reminder article! So, I need to act quickly.

I don't have children, but I do have one niece. So I thought it prudent to advise her of this opportunity. She is a technology professional at Microsoft. Her job takes her often to Europe so I envisioned that a dual citizenship with Luxembourg might be to her career advantage, somehow, someday. I remember when I was my niece's age, in my 30s; my career ambition was to work in Zurich, Switzerland. Well it never happened for me. But perhaps for my niece she could achieve that ambition of a dream job in Europe. When I mentioned this to my niece, she didn't pause a second. Immediately she was 100% vested in applying for Luxembourg dual citizenship. Her enthusiasm for the "adventure" was contagious. By golly, why not -- I was "in" too. I confess that I have no true vision for myself as to how I would benefit from dual citizenship. But, then I thought with no children to visit me in my elderly years -- perhaps a visit to my niece, who just might wind up living in Luxembourg, would be just what the doctor ordered...a very long visit. So, the application process for my niece and I was put in motion.

The Duchy of Luxembourg does not charge a fee to submit an application for this reclaiming an ancestor's Luxembourg citizenship process. It seems that when my ancestor (or anyone's Luxembourg ancestor) left Luxembourg as a young woman in 1870, Luxembourg declared that she was no longer legally a Luxembourg citizen. It wasn't until well over 150 years later (2008) it was voted by Luxembourg's government that cutting off these emigrants' citizenship was illegal. So it was voted that this illegal move could be compensated for by granting any descendants of these emigrants Luxembourg citizenship and corrects that error.

Since this is a somewhat complicated application process there are several non-profits and businesses that you can choose to contract with for help with the application process. One such non-profit is the Luxembourg America Cultural Society based in Wisconsin. See: <http://www.lacs.lu/>. For a fee they will help with translations into the Luxembourgish language; they may even accompany you when you must appear in person before the Luxembourg Ministry of Justice to answer questions - in French or Luxembourgish, etc.

Since my niece and I were short on time and we needed to be efficient in our application process we contracted with a Luxembourg citizenship assistant here in the USA. The cost for both of us combined for the entire process is \$1600. Since my niece and I share the same common ancestral lineage we are both covered by that one cost (or \$800 each) as the documents we submit will be the same except for our personal birth (and for me marriage) records.

The first step in the application process is to gather all the vital records (birth, marriage, death) of the Luxembourg ancestor tracing it to you. No problem (so I thought) as I had those records already from my research. No such luck. Luxembourg requires that ALL the vital records submitted must be certified copies issued within the last six months. Bummer. That meant I had to re-apply for all these vital records from (unfortunately) New York City where my family is from.

New York City is not only now backed up with an avalanche of Luxembourg descendants trying to meet the December deadline to apply for dual citizenship, but NYC was a major entry point for Luxembourg immigrants in the 1870s. Many Luxembourgers did move on to the Mid-West, such as Wisconsin, Missouri, etc. Mine weren't that exploratory. They stayed in Brooklyn and three generations of tailors and seamstresses lived in the same tenement apartment for over 90 years. My brother and I are the first generation to move west of the Mississippi.

New York City also has understandably some rigorous laws about giving out vital records (think Mecca for identify theft). My Luxembourg ancestor -- Marie Pauline Wichers-Kolbusch, who died in 1926 in Brooklyn wasn't a problem as she (fortunately?) died more than 50 years ago. So her marriage and death record were able to be provided. My grandmother Ursula though died in 1970...not quite 50 years ago, so they weren't so willing to give out her information according to their laws cutoff date for releasing records. So, NYC had some additional (and time consuming as the weeks ticked away) hoops for me to jump through. Same for my father's birth record in 1915. I had to submit proof of my relationship to the person I was requesting a record of...and endure 12 weeks of suspense wondering if the record will be mailed to me, and mail in original death records which I did have, and hopefully will get returned. Suffice it to say I was sure glad I had been doing my family history research and had my documentation in order.

Earlier this month my niece and I completed step one of the application process. Our application package full of <6 month old certified vital records is now flying off to the Duchy of Luxembourg for official review.

Step two will be even more adventuresome -- my niece and I must go to Luxembourg by December 31, 2020 and appear in person before the Ministry of Justice. The thought of this auspicious meeting makes my knees quake like the scarecrow's when he appeared before the Great and Powerful Oz! So, I'm studying the native language, Luxembourgish, so I can hopefully say a respectful "good morning" to the Minister of Justice.

So, this is just the beginning of a fascinating genealogy adventure that lies ahead in my ancestor's homeland. I visited Luxembourg and Echternach my ancestors' home town.

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I enjoyed its beautiful pastoral countryside, walled cities, churches, abbey's and Roman ruins. I was so pleased my ancestors had chosen so well their place to live.

I don't know how my dual Luxembourg citizenship will influence or benefit me. But, the joy is in the exploration of possibilities. An exciting journey made possible by Luxembourg emigrants fleeing the Franco-Prussian War. I never had the good fortune to meet my great grandmother Marie Pauline Wichers. But, she nevertheless left me an exciting legacy to pursue in my lifetime.

Genealogy is indeed a grand adventure full of unexpected twists and turns. What is your genealogy adventure? Why not submit an article to this SVGS newsletter. We'd love to hear your family story.

NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>Moien is "Hello" in the Luxembourgish language – which is a combination of German, French, English and Italian.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about dual citizenship visit the official Duchy of Luxembourg website for requirements: <https://guichet.public.lu/en/citoyens/citoyennete/nationalite-luxembourgeoise/acquisition-recouvrement/recouvrement.html>



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### WELCOME TO FRED MEYER COMMUNITY REWARDS!

What is Community Rewards?

It is the latest addition to the Fred Meyer Rewards Program where you can earn donations for your favorite nonprofit just by shopping with your Rewards Card. Fred Meyer will donate \$2.5 million to nonprofits in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington in 2014 through this new program. Here's how it works: Link your Rewards Card to your favorite nonprofit at [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards). Whenever you use your Rewards card when shopping at Freddy's, you'll be helping the nonprofit linked to your Rewards Card to earn a donation from Fred Meyer. At the end of each quarter, Fred Meyer will make a donation to participating nonprofits based on the accumulated spending of the Rewards customers linked to each nonprofit. Fred Meyer will donate \$625,000 each quarter via Community Rewards! Do I still get Rewards Points, Fuel Points and Rebates? YES! Rewards Customers still get the Rewards Points, Fuel Points and Rebates.

So please go to these sites and help us out. It is appreciated.

### SUNSHINE

If any members know of a fellow member that could use a card. Please let Carol Nersten or one of the other board members know so we can have one sent to them. Carol's number is 360-770-5542

## Holiday Heritage and Family Traditions Around the World

Excerpts from Family Tree Magazine article by Maureen Taylor Dec 14, 2017

Every family celebrates the holidays a little differently. Some light candles in the window; others wait for Santa bearing gifts. Between the annual gift shopping rush, cookie baking and party preparations, have you ever wondered why your family celebrates its special traditions during the winter holiday season? Or about how your forebears celebrated Christmas, Hannukah or religious feast days? You might be surprised what you can learn about your family history from the rituals and routines you carry on year after year.

### Caribbean

On Dec. 26, residents celebrate Jonkonnu, a festival that combines English and African elements and dance

### Eastern Europe

Ukrainians hang spiders and webs on their trees as part of a folkloric tale about a woman who was too poor to decorate her tree so a spider spun webs for decoration during the night. In Russia before the 1917 revolution, an old woman named Baboushka brought children treats. During the Communist era, she was changed to Grandfather Frost.

Slovakian children put polished boots in their windows for St. Nicholas to deliver gifts on Dec. 5. Moravians set up Christmas pyramids decorated with a star and shelves, one reserved for a nativity scene. A propeller on top of the structure turns from the heat of the candles on the shelves.

### England

English children wait for Father Christmas to deliver presents. Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, brought the custom of tree decorating from his native Germany. The first Christmas cards debuted here in the 1840s. Christmas crackers, small popping cardboard tubes with surprises inside, are popular during the holidays.

### Ethiopia

The Coptic Church celebrates Ganna (Christmas) on Jan. 7. Ganna is named after a popular game similar to field hockey, which legend says the shepherds played upon hearing of Jesus' birth. Everyone wears white to a church service following a day of fasting.

### France

Young children think of Advent, which begins four Sundays before Christmas, as a calendar with a prize on every day between Dec. 1 and Dec. 25. Originally, Advent was a time to think about the future spiritual events of the season. Advent dates from 490 AD when the Bishop of Tours advocated fasting three days a week for the 40 days before Christmas. Extended families gather together after midnight Mass for *reveillon*, a banquet on Christmas Eve.

### Italy

Italian children leave their shoes or stockings near the fireplace to receive gifts on Epiphany from La Befana. They also receive presents from Father Christmas on Christmas Day. Nativity scenes and Christmas pyramids are part of Christmas displays

### Netherlands

Black Peter disciplines naughty boys and girls on St. Nicholas Day (Dec. 6), while Sinterklass, or St. Nicholas, rewards good children with candy and gifts.

### Central Europe

Regions of Austria, Bavaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Northern Italy, Slovakia, and Slovenia have Krampus, their own version of Black Peter. This demonic, horned goat-like creature punishes misbehaving children during the holiday season.

### Scandinavia

In Scandinavian countries, trees are strung with straw goats. Danes use red-and-white hearts and strings of miniature Danish flags. Finnish children believe that Santa Claus, lives in Korvatunturi, in the northern part of their country. Swedes honor Santa Lucia on Dec. 13 by selecting a child to dress in a white gown with a red sash. The child wears a wreath on the head with lit candles and delivers traditional food. The *tomte*, or Christmas gnome, brings gifts on Christmas Day. In Norway, Christmas, or *Juledag*, is a quiet prelude to Dec. 26, when Norwegians start eating, drinking and celebrating until Jan. 13.

### Honoring African ancestors

During the 1960s, the struggle for civil rights produced a need for a new holiday, one that would allow African-Americans to celebrate their cultural origins, history and identity. Kwanzaa, a new tradition created by Maulana Karenga in 1966, filled that need. Now more than 5 million African-American families celebrate Kwanzaa, according to Ebony, and the numbers are growing.

From Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, African-Americans reflect on African traditions and values, based on harvest festivals held by several African tribes. The word *Kwanzaa* comes from the Swahili phrase for “first fruits of the harvest,” with an extra a added to signify the seven days of reflection.

Each day of Kwanzaa is an opportunity to focus on a principle that reinforces and strengthens the family. These seven principles, called *nguzo saba*, are *umoja* (unity), *kujich-agulia* (self-determination), *ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *nia* (purpose), *kuumbaa* (creativity) and *imani* (faith). As part of the celebration, families place symbolic objects on a straw mat called a *mkeka*. These objects include an ear of corn for each child in the family (*muhindi*), a unity cup (*kikombe cha umoja*) and a wooden candle holder (*kinara*) with a center black candle flanked by three red and green candles (*misumaa saba*). These colors come from the flag of black nationalism, in which red symbolizes blood, black symbolizes African heritage and green symbolizes land.

Children are given *zawadi*, handmade gifts that represent the fruit of the parents' labor and the rewards of seeds sown by the children. As the week winds down, families get together on Dec. 31 for a feast called *karamu*, a celebration of the year's accomplishments.



This Newsletter is published by the Members of SKAGIT VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY and is distributed free of charge to members. A non-profit organization, membership is open to all persons interested in historical research, preservation and publications of genealogical interest.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2018**

APPLICANTS NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS STREET, CITY, STATE & 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

AREA CODE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

New Member \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Member \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY \$ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

INDIVIDUAL \$15 \_\_\_\_\_



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