

January 2025

The past year was a busy one as the Board of Directors undertook several initiatives to offer more to members, engage the public and set MCGS on solid footing for the future.

A Good Year

More Member Programming

MCGS members are the best, so this year, the Board of Directors started a series of programs just for members to give them more value for their membership dues and to help them advance their genealogical knowledge. Topics were:

“Better Database Search Techniques,” Deborah Halacy; “The Proper Way to Clean Cemetery Headstones,” Gary Swain; “What is WikiTree and How Do I Use It?” David Attride; and “Researching New England, New York, and Quebec,” Deborah Halacy.

Right: Gary Swain demonstrates proper tombstone cleaning techniques.



Enlightening, Entertaining Presentations

Speakers at the 2024 membership meetings came from around the world, the country and our own back yard to enlighten us on topics ranging from lineage research, to local history; technology, to our own memorable ancestors. Presentations were:

“Documenting Lineages before the 1850 Census,” Debbie Duay; “Organize Your Research Trip,” Drew Smith; “Our Spunky Grandmothers,” Cindy Todd, Lisa Tompson and Evi Eskin; “The Funny Side of Genealogy,” Daniel Horowitz; “Palm City History,” Sandra Thurlow; “Technology Provides New Records: A Windfall from FamilySearch,” David Attride; “European Experiences of 19th and 20th Century Voyages to America,” Katherine R. Willson; “Causes of Death: Past, Present and Future,” Janet Mar and Janene Zacccone. We finished the year with a festive holiday celebration featuring food, games and music by local group, Blue Sky Strings.



Daniel Horowitz, came from Israel, and had us laughing at the things we genealogists do for information.

Public Intro to Genealogy

The MCGS Education Committee, (David Attride, chair) started the year with a five-session program to introduce the public to genealogy and to MCGS.

Providing new information to some, and a refresher to others, “Genealogy 101” focused on genealogy concepts, research methods and hands-on experience in the Blake Library Computer Lab exploring FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com.

FamilySearch Affiliate Status for MCLS

At the request of the Library Committee (Evi Eskin, chair), the Martin County Library System applied for FamilySearch Affiliate status in early 2024. MCLS received this important designation in the spring, giving researchers greater access to documents on FamilySearch.org than they have at home.

Anyone can access FamilySearch on one of the two computers in the Genealogy Room at the Blake Library, or on their personal device using library Wi-Fi.

National Genealogical Society Membership

To show our commitment to genealogy, family history and education, the Board voted to join the National Genealogical Society with a “society” membership in 2024. This allows us to tap into such professional resources as a free Bylaws review (which we used), and gives us national exposure in the NGS list of Society and Organization members.

By the Numbers

1,302

Volunteer Hours worked in the Blake Library Genealogy Room.

164

Members

25

Books added to the Genealogy Room collection through purchase or donation.

2024 Board of Directors

Joe Boriotti, president
Janese Swift, vice president
Andrew Bruns, secretary
Barbara Osborn, treasurer
Evi Eskin, chair, Library Committee
Janene Zacccone, chair, Communications Committee, Bylaws Committee
Donna Roy, chair, Hospitality Committee
Janice Tucker, assistant secretary, assistant hospitality chair
Deborah Halacy, at large

New Directors for 2025

Board members Joe Boriotti and Janene Zacccone finished their second of two consecutive two-year terms on Dec. 31, and were ineligible to serve in 2025. Donna Roy completed her first two-year term and opted not to seek re-election to the Board.

MCGS members approved a slate of three candidates in November to fill these vacancies, effective Jan. 1, 2025. They are: David Attride, Ellen Lambiase, and Janet Mar.

Poised for the Future

Governing Documents Updated

The Bylaws Committee (Andrew Bruns, Jerry Bloom Stephenson, Janice Tucker and Janene Zacccone, chair) reviewed the Bylaws and the Policies and Standing Rules. With an eye toward the future, the committee made two recommendations: 1. Rewriting the Bylaws using everyday English, 2. Changing the Policies and Standing Rules to Operating Procedures to more fully document MCGS business requirements and practices. With Board approval, the committee revised both documents.

The Board of Directors and then, the membership, agreed to the proposed Bylaws changes and approved them in September. The Board of Directors approved the Operating Procedures in December. Both documents are fluid, but with the 2024 revisions, MCGS is well positioned for a successful future.

Investing for Tomorrow

MCGS received a personal/matching donation early in its existence that has enabled it to do business with relatively few financial concerns.

The Board decided in 2024 to put some of the organization's money to work to even better position it financially, established an account at Fidelity and purchased CDs.