



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026
VOLUME 2026 ISSUE 7

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STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Next meeting: 3RD WEDNESDAY

JULY 15TH 2026

July 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

YOUR MEETING DATE IS CHANGING!

6:40 PM – NEW BERLIN LIBRARY*
15105 West Library Lane
New Berlin ~ WI 53151



JULY PRESENTATIONS

GETTING OVER BRICK WALLS

By Bob Heck

- Everyone hits brick walls in their research journey.
- Bob will bring examples of how he has gotten over some of those brick walls in genealogy.
- Methods of breaking down barriers don't need to be difficult. He'll include simple techniques that may be right in front of you.
- Watch him use AI to assist and recommend how to take your problem to a solution
- Certain to be inspiring and look forward to continuing down our AI path.

WHAT'S NEW WITH AI By Randy Ray

- We've been introduced to AI by many of our talks over the last six months. Randy uses AI daily and will share some additional recent insights.
- Randy will show how it can help with genealogy as well as your daily life
- He will show us that the first part of his presentation was actually written by AI.
- We'll see how it is beneficial for us as a group too.
- He will explore a variety of additional examples of how AI can break through some of those family tree barriers.
- Including how and where to search using AI.
- Randy will share many examples of how this helped greatly in his own research journey.
- Looking forward to the new help as AI continues to fine tune options.



NEW MEETING SCHEDULE - 2026

Thanks to everyone who participated in the recent survey regarding meeting times, rooms and overall options given some recent scheduling dilemmas.

Your feedback led to the decision to move to the 3rd WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH for the remaining July-Nov 2026. Room change for November.

MONTH & DATE	ROOM
07/15/26	COMMUNITY
08/19/26	COMMUNITY
09/16/26	COMMUNITY
10/21/26	COMMUNITY
11/18/26	HERITAGE
DEC	NO MEETING

JUNE PRESENTATION RECAP

CREATING A FACEBOOK GROUP PAGE FOR SHARING GENEALOGY WITH FAMILY

By Bob Heck

- What an incredible presentation to see Bob's family page he and cousin Cheryl has developed to share with all his family keeping everyone connected.
- As always, go to the handouts for more details but here are some highlights.
- He showed us how much can really be shared on your own family group page.
- He covered what can be involved in a group page.
 - How to create the page
 - Permissions and invitations
 - Security concerns
 - Details of maintenance
- Bob also opened the world of other groups you can check out and join based on your interests. Things like:
 - People groups: family names
 - Places: villages, city, county, state or country of interest
 - Subject groups: genealogy, family history, coming events
 - TONS of pages to follow and possibly get additional information

and connections you never thought of.

- Sections on your group page can include discussions, members, events, media (photos, videos, albums) and files.
- Interviews of Bob's parents and Cheryl's interviews are on their page. Reminder from Bob is to interview people individually. You get some very interesting POV's.
- Seeing the options for centrally posting pictures, videos, and memories from so many different connections is inspiring. Great job Bob!

LOGISTICS OF PLANNING A FAMILY REUNION

By Debbie Bluett

- Debbie gave so many super ideas for planning family get-togethers. See her handout for details. She's a pro!!
- From inception to clean-up, she has thought of everything. Planning details such as:
 - Planning steps
 - Creating teams to help
 - Essential functions
 - Determining venue? Theme?
 - Unique invites
 - Fun activities for all
 - Food & beverages needed
 - Costs involved
 - Clean-up and next get together
- Create teams and assign tasks.
- Remember to have a central source for reference for information such as closest hospital or urgent care, closest Walmart, Dollar store or Walgreens. Keep it on an invite or accessible group page like Bob shared.
- Her handout has many places to look up additional resources. There are regional things-to-do sites, venue event planning help and checklists from beginning to next time.
- Fantastic job covering everything you can imagine you'll need. Lots of fun Debbie – thank you!



MUSINGS & MUTTERINGS:

It's no secret this is a special year – our United States of America is 250 years young. Thought we'd take a few moments to see how far we've come.

50 years ago – 1976: Through a 10-year-old girl's eyes, there was the usual parade on the 4th of July, but this year was special. It was the centennial celebration, and the community would meet and celebrate in the local park afterwards. She got to be in the parade! She would get to ride her hand-me-down bike and her dad would make sure it was decorated with wheel crepe paper bunting, handlebar streamers, paper flowers all done up in red, white, and blue of course. She donned her matching outfit and won in her age group. Best part was afterwards where everyone in town listened to band music, ate ice cream and celebrated the country's birthday.

100 years ago – 1926: The United States was in the middle of the Roaring Twenties, a time of economic growth and cultural change. Cars were becoming common, so families often drove to lakes, parks, or relatives' homes for the holiday instead of staying close to home. One thing that would probably stand out to a modern visitor was how community-focused the day was. Patriotic speeches and ceremonies were central. Without television, smartphones, or the internet, much of the entertainment happened in person: local contests, sack races, pie-eating competitions, brass bands, dances, and evening fireworks. You'd probably recognize the spirit immediately: neighbors gathering, children playing outside all day, the smell of barbecue and fireworks, patriotic music filling the air, and a town coming together to celebrate—just with vintage cars, straw hats, brass bands, and a lot fewer screens.

150 years ago – 1876: Centennial spirit was huge. The country had emerged from the American Civil War just over a decade earlier, and there was a strong emphasis on national unity. Across the country, people decorated

homes and businesses with flags, bunting, and patriotic banners. Many cities sounded church bells and cannon salutes at sunrise. Then a parade featuring veterans, militia units, marching bands, firefighters, civic groups, and horse-drawn floats. In the square, a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, patriotic speeches from local officials and veterans. Horses and buggies brought families to town to enjoy community picnics with homemade food. Athletic contests, sack races, and games for children. Fireworks and bonfires after dark, although fireworks were not yet regulated, so many fires and injuries ensued.

200 years ago – 1826: The United States had only about 12 million people, and much of the population lived in rural communities. There were no railroads connecting most of the country, no electricity, no telephones, no photography, no automobiles, and no recorded music. For many Americans, celebrating the Fourth meant gathering in the town square or at the local courthouse. Solemn speeches from politicians, reciting of the Declaration of Independence of course. Food, games for children, lots of drinking. Toasts to the USA with cider, beer, rum or whiskey. Church bells sounding in the morning, musket shots throughout the day and if you lived in a large city, fireworks at night.

The biggest story of July 4, 1826 was that two of the nation's founders died on the same day:

- John Adams
- Thomas Jefferson

Both had helped draft and champion the Declaration of Independence, and both passed away on its 50th anniversary. The coincidence stunned Americans and was widely viewed as deeply symbolic.



\$12 – the cost per calendar year membership that covers individual and family

RENEW NOW FOR 2026 SO YOU DON'T MISS ANY MEMBER-ONLY BENEFITS (i)

Please send a check for \$12.00 made payable to MPAFUG or bring to the next meeting:

Include: name, address, email & phone number.

Deborah A. Bluett

MPAFUG Treasurer

PO Box 229

Delavan, WI 53115-0229

About This Newsletter

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NO COPYRIGHTED ARTICLES may be submitted without express permission of the author and publisher. Articles should be submitted by the 1st Wednesday to be considered for inclusion in that same month. Credit will be given for your article.

RESOURCES

The Family Search Center

9600 West Grange Avenue, Hales Corners

The Family Search Center Library hours:

Tuesday: 8:30AM – 3:30PM

Wednesday: 8:30AM – 12 Noon

Thursday: 8:30AM – 3:30PM and
6:30PM – 9:00PM

Saturday: 10:00AM – 1:00PM

Enter at the main doors facing West Grange Avenue and follow the signs to the library.

On Thursday evenings, Bob Heck and Randy Ray are the volunteers on duty who will assist you in your research.

250 years ago – 1776: On July 4, 1776, there were no fireworks, parades, or nationwide celebrations. **I had AI make one anyhow – see above picture.** In Philadelphia, the Second Continental Congress approved the final text of the United States Declaration of Independence, formally announcing the colonies' break from Britain, although the actual vote for independence had taken place two days earlier. Most Americans didn't know this had happened because news traveled slowly by horse and ship. As the American Revolutionary War continued, people went about their normal lives while soldiers prepared for battle. Public celebrations came only after the Declaration was read aloud in towns and cities in the following days, making July 4, 1776, a historic political milestone rather than the festive holiday it would later become.

JUNE meeting attendance ...



WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU IN JULY – BRING A FRIEND!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership in MPAFUG is open to anyone interested in learning more about computer genealogy.

For some extra special help from May through September, Cheryl Heck is there to help you. Cheryl is LDS Mormon and is the expert in the Family Search website and LDS issues.

There are numerous portal systems available for free use at the center.

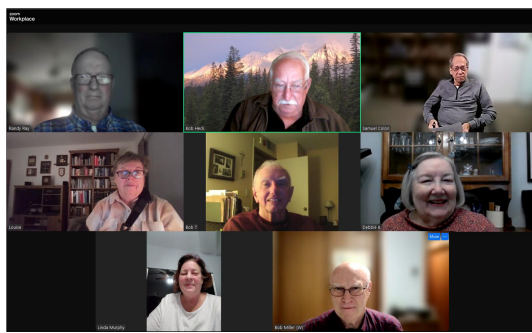
Come enjoy this resource!

MPAFUG KEY INFORMATION

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bob Heck	Debbie Bluett	Randy Ray
Bob Miller	Linda Murphy	Sam Colon
Bob	Merilyn	Steve
Tatalovich	Romani	Gulgowski

Steering committee meetings are held via Zoom on the Monday following the presentation meetings. Generally no meeting in December. The Steering Committee is an informal group of members who get together to plan topics for future meetings.



If you would like to make a presentation or have a suggestion for a meeting topic

Write, call or email:
MPAFUG c/o Bob Heck
4910 Steeple Dr.
Greendale, WI 53129
414-421-7143
bobheckmpafug@gmail.com

OUR WEB PAGE

<http://mpafug.org>

We invite you to visit our page, print a copy of this or last month's newsletter. You'll find a surname section where you can see who else is working on your family line.

Members of MPAFUG have access to a members-only web page which contains past newsletters and handouts from our meetings.

***The New Berlin Public Library does not advocate for or endorse the viewpoints of meetings or meeting room users.**

