



# Minnesota Genealogical Society

1185 N. Concord Street  
South Saint Paul, MN 55075

<http://mngs.org>

MGS Board Meeting  
1185 Concord Street North  
Saturday, March 14, 2009

**Present:** Jay Fonkert, President  
Terry Kita, First Vice President  
David Suddarth, Secretary  
Valerie Morrison, Treasurer  
Robin PanLener, Past President  
Bergetta Monroe, Director  
John Schade, Library Committee Chair  
Sandy Thalmann, Director  
Sandy Stadtherr, Director  
Kathryn Otto  
Mary Wickersham  
John Mercer

## **The meeting was called to order at 1:35 P.M.**

A motion was made to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.  
Introductions were made of all present.

## **Secretary's Report:**

David Suddarth reported that minutes from last meeting were distributed via email.  
A motion was made to approve the minutes, seconded and passed.

## **President's Report:**

Jay Fonkert reported on the journal. He pointed out that the journal is one of the biggest expenses we have. He also mentioned that it is an important, tangible benefit for our members. He met with John Mercer to discuss concerns and ideas regarding the journal, including scheduling and how the journal is put together, among other concerns. Paula Goblirsch has supplied Jay a list of who does what on the journal. The Board talked about the scheduling and the idea of only publishing two more issues during the current calendar year to help save on expenses. The fact was brought up that the journal should, ideally, come out on time, but that is not always possible. Also brought up was the fact that the membership expects the journal to come out quarterly. The fact that many people have contributed items to the journal over the years and that it takes a lot of people to put out a journal was mentioned, as well.

Bergetta asked about the proofreading of the journal; is it done online or by actually reading the copy. Kathie Otto responded that the Printer does the proofreading and that she believes it is done line by line.

Jay reported that he felt the meeting with John went well. Kathie reported that authors have told John they will not contribute more material until what has been submitted is published.

Jay passed out a list of journal options, including assumptions and goals. He mentioned that the Board appoints the editor and the Board has policies which need to be followed. Robin PanLener mentioned that the organization has changed and that the print items have been benefits of membership. He added that the library is now a benefit of membership, as are the computers in the library and the online databases as well. He suggested that we are looking at moving from printed benefits to online benefits. Along with this, he recommended that the journal be sent online instead of printed and mailing.

Robin made a motion to set up a small committee to look at how we would like the journal to be and how it fits into MGS. The motion was seconded and passed. Accordingly, Jay asked that a committee look at the journal and report back to the Board in July. Sandy Stadtherr, Bergetta Monroe and Kathie volunteered for the committee.

In accordance with Jay's invitation, John Mercer then stopped by and reported that we have reached a point where we have enough material to plan and be on a regular schedule. He brought up that he spends a lot of time editing copy, coaching writers and that it can take months to put an article together. He added that the writers group has been submitting material for the journal and that the Summer issue is primarily articles from the writers group. He reported that the current issue will be out in April and that the Summer and Autumn issues should be out on schedule. He stressed the fact that he is committed to quality and that the feedback from around the country regarding the journal is very positive.

Bergetta asked about backups and whether there is more than one copy of the material. John responded that yes, there is more than one copy. Bergetta then asked about burnout and where John's level of burnout is. John replied that he is better than he was and that he is fine. Bergetta also asked John what his favorite part of working on the journal is. He responded that encouraging people to contribute and putting together the journal are his favorite parts. Bergetta followed this by asking what parts he does not like. John answered that he does not like it when there are major problems and people begin complaining.

Terry Kita asked a question about how many more issues will be published in 2009. John responded that there will be four additional issues of the journal in 2009.

Terry then made a motion that the Board select an editor and work on management issues associated with the journal. Bergetta seconded the motion. Kathie and Jay asked for clarification between Robin's motion to form a committee, which was passed, and Terry's motion. Terry responded that he believes the committee would speak with staff about recommendations. John wanted to know how things would change and that he believes the items being discussed are being done. He stated that he has tried to keep the journal within the financial constraints of the budget. Kathie mentioned that she believes Terry's motion is premature and that the Board should wait for the committee to give its recommendations. Bergetta mentioned that we need more communication between the journal staff and the Board. Mary Wickersham commented that there is room for improvement in managing the costs associated with the journal and that there should be a better support system for the journal to assist with addressing business issues. Terry mentioned that the Board of Directors is the 'ceiling'. The motion was brought up for a vote and did not pass.

John said that he will look into management issues, including changing printers and examine the overall costs, including printing and postage. He mentioned that he would like to know how much we can spend on the journal. Kathie said that the publications committee needs to know if there should be two issues or four issues and that the newly formed committee needs direction. John believes we need to keep the journal a quarterly publication and go with a slimmer journal. Terry asked how many issues were budgeted for 2009. The Board budgeted for four issues, making a total of six which will come out in 2009. The Board has budgeted \$10,000 for the journal in 2009. Robin suggested that John do 32 pages plus the cover for each of the next four issues and reduce the margins in order to fit more in. He stressed that we need to have the journal out on a regular time frame and mentioned that we have spent \$4200 already. Bergetta moved that John and the committee figure out a way to make four smaller journals for 2009 within the \$5800 left from the budgeted amount of \$10,000. Sandy seconded. Kathie pointed out that the winter issue will be out in 2010. Bergetta then amended her motion for three more issues this year. The motion was seconded and passed.

John stated he does not believe that either he or the committee have been uncooperative with the board and that they have worked to broaden the base of both contributors and articles.

The Board then took a short break.

When the Board resumed, Jay reported that the first members' mornings was very successful.

Additionally, he mentioned that Genline is installed and operating.

He then stated that an idea surfaced at the Branch Council meeting on developing leadership training for both the branches and MGS.

## **Treasurer's Report:**

Val Morrison passed out a brief write-up and profit and loss statements. We are showing small loss thus far in 2009, which is not uncommon. She then detailed expenses. Bergetta asked for a report on the difference in income reported for the November, 2008 program. Mary reported that we had approximately an \$1800 profit.

## **Finance Committee Report:**

The finance committee talked about journal expenses and then about the investment policy. The committee had a discussion with a representative from UBS and a prospectus was sent to the committee. In addition, the representative also sent a questionnaire to determine the level of risk we will tolerate in our investments. Terry Kita reported that the committee is trying to determine whether to change any investments. The next meeting will be April 9. Val Morrison reported that the committee did not make any decisions or reach any conclusions; the meeting was an informational meeting only.

## **Education Committee Report:**

The education committee reported that the Intermediate Genealogy Course has been thru two sessions. Attendance was approximately 33 to 35 last month and 25 this month. The course is going very well and the sessions are profitable.

Speakers contracts: The committee has looked at various sample contracts and is working on developing a contract to present to the Board.

## **Marketing Committee Report:**

The marketing committee reported that they have met three times. The initial focus of the committee is on marketing rather than publicity. It was reported that the committee has had good discussions.

The committee has put together a rough project plan to refine tasks and a timeline. They will identify target markets, communication channels and research markets. The cost and budget is yet to be determined. The Board has given the committee the OK to move forward.

In addition, the committee is evaluating newer technologies in place today, including social networking such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Kathie brought up the fact that MGS has a Flickr page. They are also looking at what other societies are doing. It was stated that the Arizona society is advertising for the Family History store and that 3% of sales come back to the organization. In addition, using Google ads or Yahoo for ads on website was mentioned. Any click-throughs on these ads result in revenue for the organization.

The next meeting will be March 28. Terry Kita asked about branch involvement in the committee. Mary replied that the committee would like to share with the branches.

The committee also mentioned that we do not have a privacy policy on our website. There was a policy statement put together in March 2002 stating that MGS will keep information private and only use for genealogy purposes. The committee will report to the Board on a new privacy policy to put on the website.

### **Upcoming Events:**

April 18 Family History Fair: No report.

June Picnic: Robin PanLener asked for June 13 for the picnic. South Saint Paul Parks reports that July 11, 18 and 25 are also available. The picnic will be an afternoon event at Thompson Park in South Saint Paul. Jay Fonkert asked about expenses. Robin stated that he would like to have this be a revenue raising event. Bergetta Monroe made a motion to authorize holding the event on June 13 with the goal of being revenue neutral. The motion was seconded and passed. This will be a joint event with the Dakota County Genealogical Society.

### **Other Committee Reports:**

Jay Fonkert reported that we have the beginnings of an awards committee. We will offer the same six awards as last year, plus a new award sponsored by the Yankee Genealogical Society. Robin PanLener mentioned that we should send a letter to other societies suggesting that they nominate someone from their society to receive an award.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Suddarth, Secretary