



# Keys To The Present

Newsletter of the Genealogical Society of Kendall County, Inc.

## Seminar Registration Closes Jan 14

Hundreds of genealogists have already experienced the success of using DNA testing as a tool in proving their family pedigree. Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak will discuss the why and how of DNA testing at the Fourth Annual Hill Country Family History Seminar January 26 at the Boerne Convention and Community Center.

Early registration ends for the seminar, and for the dinner the evening before, January 14. Prices for the seminar for members will be \$35.00 if purchased before that date and \$50.00 at the door. Price includes lunch.

Smolenyak is a dynamic speaker, co-author of several books, including *Trace Your Roots with DNA*, featured in the Book of The Month Club; and co-founder of *Roots Television*, a pioneering and popular online channel of genealogy and history-oriented programming.

In addition to discussing DNA, she will also talk about finding obituaries, online newspaper research, and reverse genealogy.

Megan will discuss ways to Honor your Ancestors at the catered dinner held the evening before the Seminar. Both events will be held at the Boerne Convention and Community Center. Alexis Markert is registrar. Registration forms are in the Genealogy Library or may be downloaded from the GSKC website at [www.rootsworld.com/~txgskc/](http://www.rootsworld.com/~txgskc/).



Mary Taylor Honored

## Annual Awards

Mary Taylor was announced as the recipient of the annual Rachel Morgan Betz Award for outstanding leadership and contribution to GSKC. Mary has been part of the First Family Project committee since its inception. She has also served as registrar for past Dell genealogy classes and in other capacities with the Society.

Alexis Markert was very surprised to be named the Volunteer of Year, as other members of the Executive Committee had selected her for that award while letting her think the award was slated for someone else. Alexis has served as both Corresponding Secretary and Membership Chairman for the past three years, as well as registrar for two Hill Country Seminars.

Equally surprised to receive an award was Bryden Moon, named by the Executive Committee as winner of the Genie Award. This is not given every year, but only when the EC feels a new member has made an outstanding contribution during their first year of membership. Bryden began serving as a Library Volunteer almost before the ink was dry on his check, and has made contributions to the Keys to The Past. He will be a regular contributor to the Journal extracting information from First Family books in coming months.



Alexis Markert



Bryden Moon

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Boerne, Texas

## Upcoming Events

January 5, 2008

GSKC Meeting

Showcase Your Ancestors

January 24, 2008

Computer Genies

January 26, 2008

4th Hill Country Seminar  
Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak

## Inside this issue:

<i>From the President</i>	2
<i>Showcase Your Ancestors</i>	2
<i>Terri James Profile</i>	2
<i>Genealogy Course</i>	3
<i>Minutes of Last Meeting</i>	3/4
<i>Position Open</i>	4

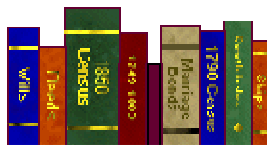
## “Two Bits” from the President

Looking ahead at a new year is like looking at a field covered with fresh snow unblemished by foot steps. What will be recorded there by the end of the day?

What will be recorded in our GSKC Minutes Book for 2008? Here is my wish list: new faces in our society, as the word spreads that we have something to offer family historians; a successful Hill Country Seminar; additional members willing to volunteer their time to help visitors to the library; the introduction of what will become an on-going record extraction and indexing project; and continued efforts to preserve the county records. If every local able-bodied member would donate 1-2 hours a week, or a half a day once a month to one of our projects, not only would a great deal be accomplished, but the volunteer would experience the real joy that comes with belonging to an organization.

One group's sorrow can often lead to another's benefit, as was evident last week when Harry and I went to Fredericksburg to visit the dismantling of the local genealogy society library. The Society there is disbanding. We were able to select over 100 books for our library, many of these classic ge-

nealogy library volumes no longer in print. We acquired 17 on South Carolina, 16 on Georgia, several more for our excellent Virginia collection, and a large number for our New England section, plus 2 to 3 each for several other states. Other groups had beaten us to the Gillespie County and Texas books. The Library Committee will now have the task of deciding what goes on the shelves and what may have to be put into storage until we get a larger space in the new library.



I had not intended to teach our six week genealogy course while serving as president, but because so many people have asked us to do so, we have agreed to offer it this year. We do need a class administrator in order to do so. (See the Help Wanted Ad)

If you have procrastinated paying your dues, now is the time! And don't forget to register for Megan Smolenyak's seminar before January 14<sup>th</sup> to get the lower member price.

## January 5 Meeting

Now that you have collected all that information about your ancestors, what do you do with it? Kari Geiger will illustrate how to **Showcase Your Ancestors** at the first GSKC meeting of the year on Saturday January 5. Kari, one of our newest members, and her husband Larry may have already won your hearts as Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus in recent weeks in Boerne Christmas events. Now Kari will add to your genealogical skills as she illustrates the art of scrapbooking. She has also agreed to be Historian for the Society for 2008.

The business meeting, at which the 2008 budget will be presented, starts at 10 a.m. in the meeting room of the Boerne Public Library

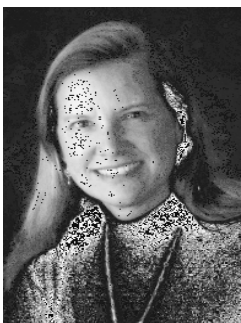
### Computer Genies

Brick Walls a Problem? The ways the Internet may help to “raze” some of the walls, will be the subject discussed at the January 24<sup>th</sup> Computer Genie meeting.

“We will go on line at the meeting to seek solutions for individual problems”. said Don Evans, chairman of the Computer Genie group.

The meeting will be held from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Boerne Public Library and open to the public.

## GSKC Officer Profile



Terri James has been the Treasurer of GSKC for the past two years and was recently elected to a third (and she says final ) year. She was born in Coronado, CA, to Jim & Jane Burt when her father was in the Navy. Seven years and four brothers later, the family settled in Billings, MT, where she grew up. After graduating from Montana State Univ. with a degree in nursing, she joined the Air Force to “see the world”. She mostly saw Texas with her first and last assignments both at Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio. Along the way, she became a certified nurse midwife and delivered over 800 babies. Later she completed a PhD in nursing research and was on faculty at the UT Health Science Center teaching new nurses how to care for new mothers and babies.

Terri became interested in genealogy after her husband, George, took a class with Harry & Mary Alice Dell and convinced her it was a lot of fun. The next year, she was in class, too. They recently downsized to a small house in Fredericksburg and are working at Hill Country Memorial Hospital there. where they are both nurses.

## GSKC to Offer Six Week Genealogy Course in 2008



*Genealogical Research - Today and Tomorrow*, the latest revision of the GSKC genealogy course taught by Harry and Mary Alice Dell, will emphasize the growing role the Internet is playing in the life of genealogists. Traditional methodology will also be discussed as important historical documents, as land, probate, naturaliza-

tion and other records, are examined. Analytical techniques, such as building timelines, clue extraction, and handwriting deciphering will also be taught.

Classes will be held for six consecutive Thursday evenings beginning March 6 and continuing through April 10 at the Boerne Convention and Community Center. Cost for the course for new students will be \$50.00 and \$35.00 for returning students. Price includes a 175 plus page notebook of outlines and reference

material.

Beginning genealogists who have never taken a similar course are required to attend the **Free Introduction to Genealogy** which will be given following the March 1 GSKC meeting. Pre-registration is required and will begin January 20<sup>th</sup> and close on February 25<sup>th</sup>, and is on a first come first serve basis. Class size is limited to 50 (which was the number registered in 2006 when the course was last offered.)



## Minutes of the December 1, 2007 Meeting

The Genealogical Society of Kendall County met at 10:00 A.M., Saturday, December 1, 2007, at the Boerne Public Library. President Mary Alice Dell opened the meeting with the pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag and the pledge to the Texas Flag. Alexis Markert introduced her guest, Kari Geiger. Minutes for the November 3 meeting, printed in the December *Keys to the Present* Newsletter, were approved as printed. There was no treasurer's report, as the treasurer Terri James was absent. She subsequently reported that the society has a checking account balance of \$5063.22 and a savings balance of \$2060.55.



### Committees Reports;

**Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee approved the purchase by the First Family of a portable scanner to record photos and other documents during home visits. Regina Adams showed the scanner after the regular meeting. Mary Alice expressed her appreciation for all of the efforts of June Kiphart who served as Vice President and also as editor of *the Keys to the Past* journal in 2007.

**Library Committee:** GSKC Librarian Lucy Croft reported that 1283 people registered in the Genealogy room and the society had acquired 64 new books and 4 microfiche in 2007. The names of the persons donating fifty-five of the books and the microfiche are known, while the remainder were donated with no name given as to the donor. She requested that people let her know when they donate books. Library Volunteers have donated 1419 hours to the genealogy library in 2007. There are 24 volunteers, with four currently inactive.

**Membership Committee:** Alexis Markert, Membership Chairman, reported that 61 people have paid 2008 dues.

**Hospitality Committee:** Irene Page acknowledged Paulette Thompson's many contributions to the committee. She suggested that three persons are needed on this committee.

**Computer Genies:** Don Evans, Chairman of the Computer Genies group, mentioned the good program on DNA and its genealogical uses presented by Mary Alice Dell at the November meeting. He also passed a signup sheet for anyone not receiving notices of the meetings which are held on the third Thursdays of the month. There will be no Computer Genies meeting in December 2007.

### Old Business:

Over 500 flyers announcing the January Hill Country Seminar have been mailed to previous seminar attendees. Twenty RV parks will receive them in January. Flyers were also distributed at the Texas State Genealogy Society meeting attended recently by the Dells. Alexis Markert reported that 15 registrations for the seminar had been received to date. Irene Page reminded the group that Dick Magers had discussed his goal to obtain the present library building as a museum when the new library building is opened. She said that we voted to help him and asked what we were going to do. Jack Charles urged members to donate to Ancestry.com since the group voted to provide it to the library again in 2008.

(continued on Page 4)



***The Genealogical Society of Kendall  
County Newsletter***

Mary Alice Dell, President - [madel35@gvtc.com](mailto:madel35@gvtc.com)  
Don Evans, Vice President  
Gwen Adrian, Recording Secretary  
Alexis Markert, Corresponding Secretary  
Terri James, Treasurer  
Lucy Croft, Librarian

P.O. Box 623  
Boerne, TX 78006  
GSKC Website: [www.rootsweb.com/~txgskc/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgskc/)

**Help Wanted (Advertisement)**

**Positions Open Now!** Class Administrator of the 2008 GSKC Genealogy Course needed. No experience required. Will train. Duties include registering students for the course, keeping attendance during the course, overseeing the printing and assembling of course notebooks.

Compensation: Free registration for the six week course and the gratitude of the instructors. Also open is the position of Class Hostess (The Cookie Angel) to serve the evening refreshments. Apply to Mary Alice Dell.

**Minutes Continued from page 3**

**New Business**

**Annual Awards:** Mary Alice Dell presented awards to the following people, selected by the Executive Committee: The highest honor given by GSKC, the Rachel Morgan Betz award, named after the founder of the Society, went to Mary Taylor for her continuing work with the First Family Project. The Volunteer of the Year award went to Alexis Markert, who has served as Corresponding Secretary for three years and also registrar for the annual Hill Country Seminars for the past two years. The Genie Award, for outstanding contributions by a new member in their first year went to Bryden Moon as a Library Volunteer for his contributions to the Journal.

**Planning for 2008:** In order to plan for activities of the society in 2008, questionnaires were emailed to the membership but not many were returned. Mary Alice directed the group to break into three subgroups, each subgroup considered a different society function.

Group 1, led by Don Evans, discussed programs. They decided all of the programs we have had have been helpful. Suggestions for future programs included historic periods; visiting the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah; Welsh patronymic naming systems; immigration ships; building a timeline; new genealogic techniques; and new internet sites. Group 2, led by Regina Adams, discussed activities of the society. They decided the library volunteers should be continued and suggested adding a column to the volunteer sign-up sheet enumerating the number of visitors helped. They discussed further work with First Families, included how others could help by finding and working with additional first family descendants. They predicted they would be able to make more and better copies of some of the records in the First Family books with the new scanner. They also think we should continue extracting county records. The priority order for this should be (1) vital records, (2) land records, (3) probate records, and (4) school records. People who volunteer to do this work need to be told how many would be participating and the time required. Group 3, led by Lucy Croft discussed seminars, courses, and social events. They decided we should continue the seminars as they have a lot of merit, although may not be good fundraisers. They suggested national speakers be invited, and more people should help preparing for them. The 6 week courses should be offered as they are valuable sources of information, and are not intended as fundraisers, although they sometimes show a slight profit. They decided that we probably did not need to have a separate social event, but perhaps the society could plan the December meeting so that it would also interest the spouses of members who are not interested in genealogy.

The group thanked Betty Immel and Irene Page for the delicious refreshments provided for the meeting and also for their festive presentation. Mary Alice announced that Frankie Glenn was in the hospital, but she is getting better and is expected to return to Town and Country Manor soon.

Harry and Mary Alice Dell presented a program on the use of Ancestry.com. Harry described free sites on Ancestry.com and distributed a list of additional free genealogy sites found on [genealogybuff.com](http://genealogybuff.com). Mary Alice discussed strategies for getting prepared at home to search Ancestry.com before coming to the library and some name searching techniques