



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEXT MEETING INFORMATION

LAST MEETING RECAP & SCHEDULE NEWS

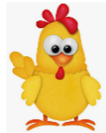
MUTTERINGS & MUSINGS

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

RESOURCE INFORMATION

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

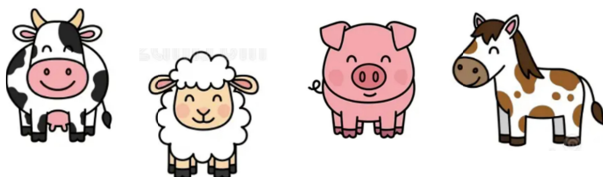


**Next meeting: 3RD WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 19TH 2026**

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



GO MAKE NEW MEMORIES!!!



AUGUST PRESENTATIONS

LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR GENEALOGISTS

By Natalie Beacom

- As Director of the New Berlin Public Library, Natalie will share some of the best tools the library has to offer you, the avid researcher.
- She'll discuss the databases that are available to help facilitate and simplify your family history research.
- Whether you are a novice at the beginning of your journey or a well-seasoned researcher, there's useful tools you can take home for a week at a time from the "Library of Things" collection:

Digital recorders	Document scanners
Portable scanners	Negative scanners
Slides scanners	8mm film digitizers
Super 8mm digitizers	Video-to-digital converter

- Can't wait to hear about these! What a money saver to rent instead of buying 😊

PASSENGER LIST RESEARCH

By Bob Heck

- Bob will enlighten us as to why 1820 was a pivotal year in the shipping world and the subsequent bump the printing world experienced as the US Government started requiring passenger lists.
- He'll show us search techniques for finding your ancestors on a passenger list arriving in the United States.
- Those lists might lead you to more details about the places in Europe your family set sail from. Who did they sail with?
- So, if you are feeling nauti, come seas the day and bend to pier pressure!



- **NEW MEETING SCHEDULE - 2026**
3rd WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
for the remaining Aug-Nov 2026.

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

JULY PRESENTATION RECAP

WHAT'S NEW WITH AI By Randy Ray

- Randy continues to show us how quick, amazing, and helpful AI can truly be.
- One new tip to focus on is asking better questions. Example used showed all the difference: "Acting as a professional genealogist..."
 - Asking that way brought about step-by-step instructions for
 - Research strategies
 - Where to look
 - Next steps
 - Follow-up
- He also showed how utilizing AI to enhance some photos can be accomplished through scanning in some negatives. Awesome!
- Get comfortable with it because it is only going to keep getting better and fine-tuned.
- Use it by typing or voice commands
 - To proofread-articles, emails, any correspondence
 - Transcribing challenging documents
 - Summarizing transcriptions
 - Translating foreign documents
 - Organizing items, files, photos
 - Convert docs for you into
 - PDF's
 - Spreadsheets
- Randy showed us how it can help with genealogy as well as your daily life
- He used AI to write the first part of his presentation.
- Many free options on your phone, tablet, PC, and now in some cars.
- See his handouts for many of the tasks and tips that AI can do and it will only continue

to get better voice and text options with better conversations.

- Practice asking the fine-tuned questions to get results on help with home, work, trips, organization and more.
- Thank you, Randy, for holding our hand as we glide into the next best things! Great job.

GETTING OVER BRICK WALLS

By Bob Heck

- Everyone hits brick walls in their research journey and Bob said to bring the tenacity.
- Bob showed us super examples that he has used throughout his years of research to overcome various obstacles and encouraged us to keep trying.
- Methods of breaking down barriers don't need to be difficult. Sometimes it is right in front of you.
- Challenge yourself to look at photos again, maybe there is a lapel pin or brooch that could signify a lodge or social group that could help identify more connections.
- Sometimes it is persistence that eventually pays off. Listening to Bob asking for parish-records viewing permission for years until a new regime finally said not only yes, but here are the keys to the safe, was priceless.
- Talk to people – Bob went looking to find a location that had been talked about in his family lore. Not only did he find it, but by asking people in the area that had a family picnic in progress, he was given guidance to see exactly what he came for and stories to go along with it.
- Looking for a copy of a photo that his ancestors sailed over on brought him to secure an incredibly special piece of art. Have the conversations.
- We watched him use AI to assist and recommend how to take your problem to a solution.
- Don't give up. New tools come about daily and more information gets scanned all the time.
- Great presentation and check out his handout for more leads- thanks Bob!

MUSINGS & MUTTERINGS:

The Wisconsin State Fair is celebrating its **monumental 175th anniversary in 2026**, marking a rich progression from a traveling agricultural exhibition in 1851 to a massive, million-visitor permanent fixture in West Allis. Here's some of the fair's most significant additions, milestones, and physical transformations over nearly two centuries.

The Formative Years (1851 – 1891)

Before securing a permanent home, the fair moved from city to city to showcase the state's agricultural progress.

- **1851:** The very first Wisconsin State Fair is held in **Janesville** along the Rock River. It features a plowing match and a 200-pound squash.
- **1859:** Future U.S. President **Abraham Lincoln** delivers a keynote speech on the importance of agriculture. The fair also debuts "cooking with gas" technology.
- **1861–1863:** The fair is cancelled for the first time due to the **American Civil War**. The Madison fairgrounds are repurposed as a union troop training camp known as Camp Randall.
- **1869:** The first organized **fire engine demonstration** is introduced to the public.

Setting Permanent Roots (1892 – 1939)

Finding a forever home allowed the fairgrounds to build world-class, lasting infrastructure.

- **1892:** The fair relocates permanently to a 160-acre plot in **West Allis**, featuring a 6,000-seat grandstand and a dedicated horse racing track.
- **1903:** The **Milwaukee Mile** opens at the fairgrounds, hosting its first official automobile race and laying the foundation for the oldest operating motor speedway in the world.
- **1904:** The introduction of **electric lighting** allows the fair to safely expand into nighttime operations.
- **1907:** The **Dairy Cattle Barn** is constructed. Today, it remains the oldest standing original structure at State Fair Park.

- **1924:** The iconic **Original Cream Puff** is officially introduced by the Wisconsin Bakers Association, evolving into the fair's signature food staple.
- **1930s:** The fair introduces its first major **Midway rides** and live radio/television broadcasts from the park. The **Green Bay Packers** regularly use the fairgrounds' infield stadium to play home games.
- **1937–1938:** Through the New Deal's **Works Progress Administration (WPA)**, a massive new horse barn and a steel-framed grandstand are constructed.

Mid-Century Expansion & Iconography (1940 – 1999)

Modern entertainment, branding, and major physical renovations defined the post-war era.

- **1948:** To mark Wisconsin's statehood centennial, the fair holds a massive 23-day exposition. This year marks the birth of the **Century Farm Program** and the **Alice in Dairyland** program.
- **1960s:** The permanent **Giant Slide** and **SkyGlider** aerial ride open, instantly becoming timeless visual landmarks of the fairgrounds.
- **1972:** The iconic **snowflake logo** is introduced to signify State Fair Park's evolution into a year-round event venue.
- **1974:** Construction connects the North, South, and East Exhibit Halls into one unified, climate-controlled complex.
- **1976:** The new, award-winning **Coliseum** opens to serve as the premier arena for livestock judging and events.

The Modern Era (2000 – 2025)

Enhanced corporate backing, agricultural education facilities, and record attendance push the fair into elite status.

- **2002:** The modern **Wisconsin Exposition Center** opens, offering 200,000 square feet of state-of-the-art exhibition space.
- **2012:** The **Wisconsin Products Pavilion** is fully revitalized, highlighting the state's multi-billion-dollar food, beverage, and agricultural industries.
- **2024:** The fair hits an all-time **record-breaking attendance of 1,136,805 fairgoers**, securing its spot as one of the

top three largest state fairs in the United States.

Milestone 175th Anniversary Additions (2026)

To celebrate 175 years of progression, the 2026 Wisconsin State Fair (running August 6–16) has introduced several massive historical and entertainment features:

Addition / Milestone	Description
The America 250 Wheel	Standing 230 feet tall , this is the largest portable observation wheel in the world. Making its Midwest debut, its 45 gondolas feature trivia honoring U.S. presidents and national parks to simultaneously celebrate America's 250th anniversary.
The Return of the Parade	Discontinued years ago due to massive crowd control limits, the grand parade returns on Tuesday, August 11, at 2:50 PM. It features anniversary-themed floats moving across the park.
"Faces of Farming" Exhibit	A brand new agricultural showcase highlighting 175 years of Wisconsin farming history , telling the deep multi-generational stories of local agricultural families.
Exploratory Park History Display	A dedicated retrospective installation featuring historical photos, vintage Milwaukee Mile racing archives, and the original entrance gate from the fair's early permanent era.
Limited-Edition Cream Puff	The historic Dairy Building is baking a highly exclusive "Fair-aschino Cherry" Cream Puff in small batches, featuring flavor notes of maraschino cherry, grenadine, and ginger ale.

JULY meeting attendance ...

36

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

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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

\$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 ☺

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

This newsletter is the official monthly publication of the Milwaukee PAF Users Group. All rights are reserved. No articles herein may be reproduced for profit or commercial gain without the express written consent of the Publisher or the Milwaukee PAF Users Group. Other PAF Users Groups may republish articles freely but must include credit to the authors and for the Milwaukee PAF Users Group Newsletter.

Members interested in submitting articles may email them to bobheckmpafug@gmail.com. The MPAFUG publisher will determine if an article will be used in this newsletter. Articles will be used as space permits.

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.

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.

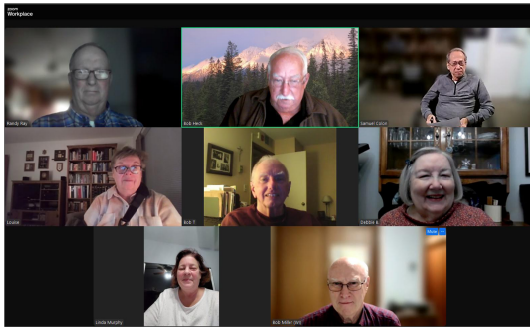
Come enjoy this resource!

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.**

