

How to Get Help When Your Software Gets Difficult

By Richard Rands

We have a saying at my office that "software without support is *hardware!*" As software becomes more sophisticated, the more it needs to be easier to use. It is frustrating when you cannot figure out why a program does not function the way you expect, but it is even more frustrating when there is no one to turn to for answers. Even if a program claims to have all the features you want, it does not satisfy your needs if you cannot make those features work, and it is much worse if you cannot contact someone to discover why it will not work for you.

Customer support is such a fundamental element of any software product, especially with the products used in genealogy research. Most of today's researchers did not grow up using computer software as young people are today, so the older researchers must rely on having access to knowledgeable and experienced support technicians.

We often hear the comment, "if only people would read the manual." Many of your problems can be solved if you read the manual... that is if you can find the section of the manual that explains your problem. Manuals are usually written to explain how the program works so long as nothing goes wrong.

Before you buy an expensive software program, you should investigate the sources of support.

As soon as something goes wrong, you can forget the manual. The indexes rarely mention your problem.

Before you buy an expensive software program, you should investigate the sources of support. The first step is to check out the Web site and find out if there is a link to information about how and when you can contact a support team. Often there is a warranty period when you have free access to technical support, after which you will be charged a fee for each question. Sometimes you can ask installation questions free of charge, but once you begin to use the program, the questions will cost you money. Always consider the availability and cost of support when you purchase a software program.

Since it is common for support teams to get the same question from many users, the company often has a Web page called "Frequently Asked Questions" or "FAQs." There you will find an answer for each of the commonly asked questions. You will usually be asked to read through the list of FAQs before you talk to the support staff. A good FAQ site will even have a search feature that will search the list

quickly using keywords, rather than requiring a reading of the entire list. A good example of a FAQ site with a search feature is the "Help" site at Ancestry.com. When you click on the "Help?" link at the top right of their Web site, you will see a popup screen listing 54 pages containing 796 FAQs. A similar site is available for users of the Family Tree Maker program.

If there is no provision for telephone support of the product, check for a way to post an email message to their Web site that will be read and answered their support team.

Many software companies have found that there are users who are happy to offer free help to other users. Many of us feel good when we are able to help others over a difficult problem and are willing to take a few minutes of our time to help. Some software companies are taking advantage of this cost saving method of help and have set up links within their Web site to a message board where you can describe your problem. You will receive an answer sooner or later from someone who is monitoring the messages. For example, at the Adobe Acrobat support site, you will find the Adobe User to User Forum where you can

search through messages posted by users and if you do not find the information that you need, post your own questions on the list.

The final step in your check of support is to locate a users' group for the product. If a product is sufficiently popular, it is very likely that a group of users have organized a self-help group to provide assistance to each other. In most cases, you can sign up to participate in the email questions and answers without a charge. Some users' groups have periodic meetings with classes for their members. The Silicon Valley Computer Users Groups is one such organization. There is an excellent source called PAF5 Users Email List (PAF-5-Users-L@rootsweb.com) that has some highly skilled users who are exceptionally quick to respond with answers to questions about PAF and many other programs that can be used along with PAF. The customer support for other popular genealogy software products is similar in nature. Many of them are hosted by the Rootsweb.com mailing list service.

A software program can be a wonderful tool as long as it will work for you. A well supported program with fewer features is more satisfactory than a program with lots of bells and whistles, but no one to help you use them.

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Boxed in, and Still Waiting for an Answer

By Janet Brigham Rands

All I needed was a simple answer to a simple question.

I've had a current version of Adobe Acrobat for several years. It's a handy program that turns almost any kind of file into a "portable document format" (PDF) file, that can be read by almost anyone else on almost any standard computer. I've upgraded Acrobat at least four times now, with each upgrade costing up to \$125. So this is expensive software, by my standards; for that price, I ought to be able to get help. That's what I thought when I upgraded to Acrobat 7 a month or so ago.

There was a feature in Acrobat 5 that drove me nuts, and I was glad to find in Acrobat 6 that the feature was disabled. I use Acrobat for many tasks, including marking PDF proofs for a scientific journal and sending the marked PDF files to the production editor, who is in England. The PDF files come to me from a typesetter in China. Using PDF files speeds the proofs around the globe, literally.

The feature in question showed up in Acrobat 5 whenever I used my graphic tablet to mark the proofs. Any mark I made electronically on the proofs was almost instantly surrounded by a little box that prevented me from making any more marks near the first mark. This meant I couldn't even go back to dot an *i* or cross a *t* without the box blocking me. This feature probably serves some useful purpose, but I'll be darned if I can figure out what.

I was glad to be rid of the boxes with my upgrade to Acrobat 6. But then I installed Acrobat 7 this year and found that the boxes were back. I moaned out loud. I tried every Acrobat pull-down menu in a desperate, futile effort to find the command that would turn off the boxes. So went Hour One.

I even read the program's manual, which took me well into Hour Two, but could find nothing about this feature. Adobe has searchable online documentation, but I couldn't even figure out what to *call* this feature, so searching yielded nothing useful. I tried the index but found nothing. The closest feature I could find was "group," but that did not help.

I went online (www.adobe.com) for support information, and noted that the items weren't listed in a comprehensible order. (The top support item today, as I write this, is: "Error 1303: installer has insufficient privileges..." occurs when installing [Acrobat 6.0-7.0 on Windows].) Nothing about how to get rid of boxes materialized. I spent most of Hour Three clicking through the support site.

Adobe has online tutorials, which said nothing about boxes. Adobe also has online training for purchase. I didn't want to buy training just to get an answer for my simple question, and I had little faith that automated training would discuss the boxes anyway, since nothing else on the Adobe site seemed to discuss boxes. Searching for terms like *boxed mark* yielded nothing. More often than not, Adobe's response to my search terms was, "Make sure all words are spelled correctly. Try different keywords. Try more general keywords."

I launched into Hour Four with a phone call to 1-800-833-6687, Adobe's customer service number listed on the company's Web site. It took several calls and lots of patience before I successfully navigated Adobe's phone tree and reached a "Live Human Being," but one did finally come on the line. When I told her I had a simple question to which I needed only a brief answer, I was deflected to a technical service line, where another "Live Human Being" told me she couldn't answer my question unless I paid \$39 per question.

I replied that it was just a simple, inoffensive question that anyone who knows Acrobat fairly well could answer. She said that didn't matter, it would cost me \$39 per question.

I said, "Thanks, but no thanks, I'd rather dwindle in unbelief. " If I paid for answers to merely three simple questions I'd spend the approximate cost of the upgrade.

Adobe provides no mechanism through which a customer can ask the company a simple question (much less a technical one) and receive an answer. This surprises me, since most companies do at least pretend to provide that service, even if (as if often the case) no one writes back. Some companies write back almost instantly with an actual answer. Some Web sites have a live chat

feature, which is occasionally, but not often, helpful. Such support typically is outsourced to the Asian Subcontinent these days.

Next I tried Adobe's online forum, where those who sign up and get passwords can post questions and hope someone answers them. I signed up, got my password and posted my question. That was on 4 April 2005, at 5:41 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. I'm still waiting for an answer.

Since then, two large sets of journal proofs have come to me from China, and sped on their way to England once I've marked them up. The boxes are still there. I still mutter at them, and I still refuse to pay \$39 to have my question answered. Whenever I encounter someone who uses Acrobat, I ask if they know about the boxes. I feel like a medieval sojourner cursed with a plague of boxes. "Do you know how to turn them off?" I plead. "Sorry," they say. So on I wander, I ask again and again.

If you know how to turn off the boxes, please tell me. They are small and black, and you'll recognize them, because they'll drive you nuts.

A Bit of Wisdom

"It takes less time to do a thing right than to explain why you did it wrong."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1807-1882

American Poet

Alan Mann Coming

Alan Mann, a manager at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, will be the featured speaker at a seminar at the September meeting of SVC GG. Watch the Web site for more details.

Collecting Oral Family History

By Allin Kingsbury

In many parts of the world, family history is memorized and then passed orally to the next generation. In the South Pacific, the family history is set to music and dance and the whole community joins in to recite their history as they sing their favorite melodies and perform their traditional dances. In the developed countries, these traditions have fallen out of favor long ago and written documents have become the accepted form of history. An exception to the trend is oral history which has become popular in the U.S. during the past few decades.

Gary Shumway, a professor at Cal State Fullerton, began teaching courses in oral history. Research projects for Professor Shumway and his students were focused on finding the old timers in Southern California and interviewing them to preserve local history. In their interviews, these individuals would tell of the significant events in their life, how they were affected by major historical events, and what life was like in their earlier years. Collectively, these interviews came to be significant source material for the study of social history. They is very little recitation of the birth, marriage and death information collected by genealogists, but there are many stories about coming to America and to California and the reasons that they left their traditional homes and family to start a new life. They also contain many personal stories that present insight into the character and personality of the person and others who were close.

Family historians can learn much from the interview techniques developed by Professor Shumway and others, and apply these techniques to gather stories about family members. These stories are not limited to the lifetime of the person being interviewed. These individuals can often relate stories told to them by their parents and grandparents. Some of these stories may have been passed on from earlier generations of the family. Even today, the older generation grew up in an era before television, shopping malls, and video games. Their families spent more time together, talked to each other more than families today, and were more interested in what was happening in the lives of their relatives.

Each family should gather the oral history of their family. Most genealogy programs now have multimedia features where sound bites and video clips can be added to a genealogy database. A short video clip can tell the observer more about a person than many pages of text. Words do not adequately describe a person's appearance or personality. Oral interviews can also record many stories about ancestors that otherwise would be lost when death visits the older generation of the family. The time to start the interviews is now. Next year or even next month may be too late.

Planning the Interview

Before you start interviewing family members you must have a plan. Start by making a list of the elderly members of the family. These include grandparents, great aunts and uncles, parents, aunts and uncles and perhaps older cousins. You may want to consider close friends of your ancestors who are living. By listing all of these individuals and the information that they can supply about your family history, you can then determine which interviews are

the most important to your knowledge of your family history. The direct ancestors are the most important, because these individuals will be talking about first-hand experience. Those likely to be next in importance are those who lived with your ancestors as members of the family. Of course there are bound to be some surprises. Some of the people on your list may have stories that are totally unexpected. Others may disappoint you because they cannot remember important details.

The quality of the interview will depend on the preparation that you do for the interview. You need to study the known facts about the person being interviewed, death and marriage dates of persons close to them, where they lived and when they moved, and historical events that may have influenced their lives. My mother could remember in great detail the first time she saw an airplane flying over her house. She also remembers the first car her father purchased. A list of specific subjects should be compiled and these should be checked off as they are covered in the interview. As you listen during the interview, you will hear things that should be added to your list. You will also find many questions to ask regarding things that are confusing or difficult to understand.

The next step is to have the equipment to record the interview. You have a choice between video and audio recordings. The video recordings have an audio track which can be used to produce a sound file which requires much less storage than a video file. The pictures in a video file make the interview much more interesting and help create a feeling of knowing the person interviewed. Avoid using low cost tape which may have quality problems. Also avoid the long play tapes that use plastic backing that has a much smaller thickness than the standard tape. The fine tape can stretch or become wrapped up in the recorder mechanism and destroy part of your recording. You may want to use two recorders so that you do not need to stop recording to change tape cassettes during the interview. You can start the second recorder before the first recorder runs out of tape.

If you use a video recorder, it should be mounted on a tripod and placed about 45 degrees away from in front of the individual. It should be at the edge of the field of view of the person so as not to distract or intimidate the individual. If you use a microphone, it should not be held because that will cause extraneous noise. A good quality recorder and microphone are worth the extra cost, because they will produce better sound and picture.

Make an appointment a few days before the interview. Be sure to explain the purpose and agenda of the interview. The interview session should be no longer than an hour and a half to two hours. If there are health problems, it should be even shorter. If you need more time to cover the material that you want to be in the interview, list possible times for additional sessions which you can schedule at the end of the interview. The life history of a grandfather may take a dozen sessions. One session may yield a page of text for every 5 minutes of the interview, or it may take as long as 20 minutes for a page. A life history of an individual may require several hundred pages to cover an entire lifetime.

Some individuals will need several sessions to cover their life history. A good interview must be unhurried with time for the

individual to pause and think about the events that they are describing. A good interview focuses on one event or story at a time. To keep the interview focused, select the time period or topics to be discussed and share these topics with the individual so that they can also focus on the selected topics.

At the interview Site

When you arrive for the interview, you can discuss the interview procedure and answer questions while you are setting up the equipment. The interview should be in a place free from distraction and interruption. An office or bedroom that can be closed off is much better than a living room with a window on the street with a lot of activity which can distract. Set up the equipment as quickly as possible. If a video camera is used, it should be on a tripod where it can be left running. Place it off to the side of the person's to avoid intimidating the person being filmed. For audio recording of the interview, the microphone should not be held. It should be

placed on a table, or preferably on a microphone stand and out of the person's field of view.

As you are setting up or before you begin the questions, review what you are going to do. List the topics to be discussed in the session. Try to put the person at ease. The person may be more comfortable knowing that you can remove mistakes and pauses where they stop to think. See that there are water and tissue available in case they are needed.

As you start the tape, provide an introduction that includes the names of the speakers, the date and place of the interview. If it is not the first session of the interview, mention the date, time and place of the previous interview. You may also want an introduction that tells a few essential facts about the person and how the person is related to the family.

To be continued

Spider Webs:

Latin Genealogy Dictionary

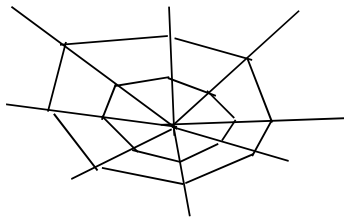
Many records for the seventeenth century and earlier are written in Latin. The vocabulary needed to decipher most of the records used in family history research is not very large. Bert Nelson has created an online Latin Primer to help you make translations. See the site at www.xmission.com/~nelsonb/latin.htm

Immigrant Ancestors

The Immigrant Ancestors project is expanding with 8 new members added to the Project Team in one month. The project includes Italian, English, Welsh, and Portuguese projects and an emigration bibliography. For the Portuguese project, volunteers will extract data from films being scanned from the Portuguese National Archives (Torre do Tombo). Two microfilms have been scanned and tutorials have been written. Volunteers in Argentina are currently testing the Italian software. For more information, go to: <http://immigrants.byu.edu>

Medieval Palaeography and Early-Modern Palaeography

Medieval Palaeography and Early-Modern Palaeography is an interactive Web site created by Dr Dave Postles of the Centre of English Local History at the University of Leicester developed to teach local and family historians how to read English and Latin documents dating from the Middle Ages through the 1700s. Visit this site at: <http://paleo.anglo->



norman.org/palindex.html

Genealogy Resources on the Internet

Genealogy Resources on the Internet is a portal to genealogy sites on the Internet. Not only does this Web site take you to other Genealogy Web sites, but it can help you to utilize mailing lists and USENET Newsgroups. Visit the site at: www.rootsweb.com/~jfuller/internet.html

New York Public Library

The NYPL Digital Gallery now has 250,000 images online and plans to reach 500,000 images over the next several months. They have a broad selection of historic material available, and many documents are unique to the library. The images can be downloaded free for personal use. Visit the site at: <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org>

1861 UK Census

1837online.com is making the entire 1861 census for England and Wales available online. The 1861 census contains information about all the people occupying each English and Welsh household, vessels and institutions as of 7 April 1861. The data is fully searchable and includes information about

occupation and disability. The first data available on the site included London, Middlesex, Kent and Surrey. In a few months, the entire census is expected to be online with more than twenty million records. Visitors can view the original 1861 census documents as originally written, and they can also look at the transcribed data which is much easier to decipher and search. In addition to the census records, 1837online also has births, marriages and deaths in England & Wales from 1837 to date; WW1, WW2 and overseas birth, marriage and death indexes. Go to: www.1837online.com

Google Satellite Photos

After recently launching a map site, Google has now added satellite photos. The high-resolution satellite images are good enough to zoom in on individual homes and business locations. The images were formerly available from the digital mapmaker, Keyhole Corporation, which was acquired by Google six months ago. The Keyhole photos were formerly available on the Internet for \$29.95 a month. Now they are available free.

To view the images, go to: <http://maps.google.com> where you either enter an address, a longitude and latitude, the phrase "pizza" followed by a ZIP code, or any of the other options. When the map is displayed, you will see a new link in the upper right of the screen labeled "Satellite." A mouse click gives you the equivalent satellite photo.

Software of Interest:

GRAMPS

Genealogical Research and Analysis Management Programming System, commonly known as GRAMPS is a genealogy program for Linux, INIX, and Macintosh OS X computers. There seems to be a growing group of computer users who avoid Microsoft Windows because of the many security problems. GRAMPS not only works with the non-Windows operating systems, but it has features that are competitive with the popular genealogy programs. Users can store, edit, and research genealogical data, in a similar manner to other genealogical programs.

GRAMPS begins with a wizard window to set up the program for the user. It asks for name, address, date format, calendar options, and whether LDS-specific extensions are needed. Finally it asks if an existing database is to be used or if a new database is to be started.

The program screen has six icons along the left-hand side: People, Family, Pedigree, Sources, Places, and Media. These icons change the screen to provide a different view of the database.

The user will probably start with the People view which has the following icons: Open, Save, Back, Forward, Home, Reports, Tools, Add, Remove and Edit. Open, Save, Back, Forward and Home operate like a Web browser. The user can designate a "Home" person, and by clicking on the "Home" button, return to that person at any time.

To enter the first person in the database, the user can click on "Add." The fields can then be filled in with known data including the person's name, gender, date and places of birth and death, events in that person's life, attributes (such as physical description, Social Security Number, national origin and caste). There are also data entry fields where the user can enter full source citations, text notes, a gallery of images, Web sites where information may be found, and more.

If you have a GEDCOM file, the program can input thousands of individuals in less than a minute on a newer computer. The program accepts the GEDCOM statements in the file and all text notes and source citations.

If the user clicks on the Family icon on the left of the screen, all the information about that person's family is displayed. Family View also has panels for Active Person's Parents, Relationships, Spouse's Parents, and Children. The function of each icon on the screen is displayed in a pop-up window as the cursor is moved over the icon using the mouse. In Family view you can add a spouse, child, parent or other relative to a family. When adding a spouse, the default relationship is "Married", but you can also select Partner, Other, Unmarried, or Unknown.

The "Events" tab is used to enter the important events in the life of a person. A pop-up window has a choice of 35 common events such as adoption, graduation, military service, or occupation. After selecting a type of event, fields can be filled in with the date, place, cause, and description as appropriate. The event can be flagged to be "Private."

The "Attributes" tab is used to describe the individual with data such as caste, description, identification number, national origin, or Social Security number. The "Sources" tab is used to enter the source of information. The "Gallery" tab is used to link digital images to the database. It accepts the common multimedia file types, including: JPEG and GIF images; MP3, OGG, and WAV sound files; QuickTime, MPEG, and AVI movie files; and more.

GRAMPS can produce a variety reports, including a Book Report, seven types of graphical reports, ten types of text reports, and wall charts. The program can also generate pages for a Web site. Using the Web Family Tree (WFT), a family tree can be displayed online using a single file, instead of many html files. The graphical reports can be created in OpenOffice.org Draw format, PDF, Postscript, or SVG format. Reports can be opened in OpenOffice as they are created or they can be printed. Large wall charts can be created in seconds and printed page by page or stored as a single page in a file that can be printed on a large-format plotter at Kinko's or other office supply store.

The "Tools" option on the toolbar has many options and utilities. Database Verify searches for any entries that are possible errors. These include a marriage date before the date of birth or after their date of death, girls giving birth before the age of twelve or after the age of fifty. The user can change many of the parameters for these tests. Other utilities include database repair, data extraction, duplicate searching, and the renaming of items. One utility creates Soundex codes for the surnames in the database.

GRAMPS will import and export GEDCOM files and data files in GRAMPS format. The user can export data directly to a CD writer, using the GNOME file manager (Nautilus) for burning to CD. Backups and data sharing are quick and easy.

The GRAMPS database is stored in XML format. The XML format makes it possible for programmers familiar with XML to write add-on utilities to analyze and use the data.

One feature where GRAMPS lags other programs is the handling of conflicting information. There are database fields for the date and place of only one birth and one death date, each with one location. Should a user find sources with conflicting dates and places, only one can be entered. Conflicting data can be noted in the source citations and via explanatory text fields. The program does allow multiple sources, and it is easy to note the fact that different sources contradict each other. However, only one date and location can be displayed in a report.

GRAMPS keeps all data in the main memory during operation. This can be a problem when the database becomes large. Several thousand individuals will not slow the operation of the program, but 50,000 individuals in the database probably will noticeably diminish the speed of the program. This problem will be eliminated with the next major release of GRAMPS.

GRAMPS can be downloaded free and there is no request for a donation. For more information, go to:
<http://gramps.sourceforge.net/about.html>

Ask Dr. PAF — “I Give No Answers Before Their Time!”

By Dr. Cornelius D. PAF

Problems with Family Group Records

Q I have some place names to enter that are extremely long. Is there a way that I can save them so I don't have to enter the entire name each time?

A Yes. After you have entered the name once (carefully checking that it is entered correctly), the name will be found in a “pick list” for the place. As you type the name of the place for another event, the whole name will come up automatically. If you began the name with a comma, be sure to begin with a comma each time.

Q I began to enter a name that had not been entered before and a name that started with the first few letters filled up the place name box. How can I stop PAF from entering that name?

A You don't have to stop PAF. Just keep on typing the name you want. That new name will be first on the “pick list.” When you want to enter a name that begins with the typed letter, click on the down arrow at the end of the place box and click on the name you want.

Q I misspelled a place name and it is now on the list of names. How can I delete that name?

A Open the place list by clicking on the down arrow at the end of the box, highlight the name and press the “delete” button.

Q When I tried to print a family group record I got a message that said there is no data.

A “No Data” is a message from “Use List” telling you that you have not entered the MRINs (Marriage Record Identification Number) of the family group records that you want printed. Without the MRINs the software does not know where to find data. Be sure the box for “Use List” is not marked unless you want to enter the MRINs.

Q How can I print more than one family in my direct line at a time?

A Choose “Cascading” as the “Type of Chart.” Then you can choose how many generations of ancestors (up) or descendants (down) you want printed. We define direct line to be all ancestors, not only the people with one surname. If there are multiple marriages for any individual in your direct line, the family group records for the other spouses and their children will not be printed. (See the next question for a suggestion.)

Q How can I print all the family group records for my grandfather who was married three times, and for his third wife who was married twice? This is one of the reasons for showing MRINs and RINs.



A This is the time to click on “Use List.” Enter the MRINs for each family group that you want printed. The numbers need to be separated by a comma. A hyphen can indicate a range of numbers. A list might look like this: 3,15,23-34,39,56

Q My family group records don't have a place for the death date for a child if I haven't entered a date. How can I get a blank space for the death date on some of my records where I have living elderly people so I would have a space to write in the death

date?

A One of the options for “Family Group Records” is “print event boxes when blank.” This means that all the usual information boxes will be printed even when you don't have any data for them.

If you are using the condensed type of chart, you will get bigger spaces in which to write if you choose expanded or medium. Just remember to enter the data into your database along with the source of the information about the death.

Q How can I indicate which child is the direct line when I print a cascading family group?

A In the “Options” menu, click on “mark direct line.” An “x” will be placed next to the birth date of the child in the direct line.

Q Now that I have printed my Family Group Records how do I file them?

A In alphabetical order by the surname, perhaps in a binder where they can stay in order. One suggestion is for each surname, to start with the family group closest to you in time with the parents of the husband next, until you have gone to the end of the line. When there are multiple marriages, the family group records of the other spouses could follow the records of the direct line person. The wife on the direct line will be with her parents, if known, in another section of the binder with the families with her surname.

Q How can I file the Family Group Records of families when they use patronymic names and the surnames change every generation.

A You could still put the family group records in chronological order for each branch of the direct line.

You could file all the family group records alphabetically. You would follow the ancestors by looking for the name of the father of the wife.

Perhaps an easier way to find families would be to file the records by the name of the village, and then in alphabetical order.

Stranger Than Fiction: Man Finds His Natural Father, How Old Is Old?

Man Finds His Natural Father

Giles Gauntlet, age 30, and a catering manager from Southampton, is the child of a brief romance and had only met his father, Barry Alp, once, when he was five years old. He was inspired by the BBC genealogy series *Who Do You Think You Are, Mr. Gauntlet*, and became curious about his natural father. Using the *Genes Reunited* Web site, the younger Mr. Gauntlet uncovered the address of the elder Mr. Alp, 56. He went to meet his estranged father, but got no response when he rang the bell. He looked through

the mail slot and saw a pair of feet sticking out of the lounge. It was the corpse of his father who had died from natural causes. Mr. Gauntlet became quite angry with himself because he had waited so long to meet his father.

How Old Is Old?

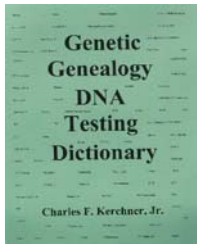
Helen doesn't pay much attention when someone says they are too old to try something new. She became computer literate ten years ago after publishing her first book, a large family genealogy that traces the family back to the 1400s. Now, she is always communicating with relatives

around the world by e-mail.

Helen writes books on her Mac computer, and is working on her major work, her life story. She advises people not to trust everything they find on the Internet. According to Helen, "It's too easy to do the research, and you can't depend upon it."

Helen Burcham Green turned 103 this year. She makes Grandma Moses seem like a youngster when she started a career as a painter in her sixties. Helen should cause a person think twice before saying, "I am too old to learn how to use a computer."

Recently Published:



Genetic Genealogy DNA Testing Dictionary

Charles F. Kerchner, Jr., has published the *Genetic Genealogy DNA Testing Dictionary* which can be a big help in understanding DNA and genetics. The book contains definitions of words, terms, acronyms, and abbreviations related to genetics. It is helpful as a pronunciation guide. Also there are a large number of drawings which help explain the terms. Terms such as Organelles, Deduced Ancestral Haplotype, and Karyotype can be part of your

vocabulary with help from this book. It is not a book you can easily read, but like other dictionaries, it can provide understanding of the terms used in texts dealing with DNA testing. Definitions use terms that can be understood by laymen.

Genetic Genealogy DNA Testing Dictionary by Charles F. Kerchner, Jr. comes as a page spiral bound paperback. It sells for \$9.60. It can be ordered online at: www.kerchner.com/books/ggdictionary.htm.

News For Genealogists:

National Geographic Society DNA Study

The National Geographic Society, with money donated by IBM and the Waitt Family Foundation, plans to collect 100,000 DNA samples from the many peoples around the world for study. Spencer Wells, the author of "The Journey of Man: A Genetic Odyssey," is heading the project which will map the migration paths of all our ancestors. By detecting markers on the Y chromosome and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), the researchers can link the various races and reconstruct the migration paths to learn of the origins of the many ethnic groups around the world. The Y Chromosome is passed on from male to male without change until a mutation or change occurs. These changes are markers which mark the various racial groups who have inherited the same markers. The mitochondrial DNA is passed from mother to children because the mtDNA is present in the egg and is not passed to offspring by males. Thus there is a method of tracking the males and female lineage, not to specific individuals, but to groups of people who have the same markers in their DNA.

The public participation is invited to participate in the project. Anyone can have the DNA test and compare their results with profiles of samples carefully selected to represent different groups

around the world. Those who elect to participate can go to the National Geographic Genographic Project site and register. They will receive some background material and instructions. The DNA samples are coded to maintain privacy. The testing company, Family Tree DNA, the largest DNA testing company will do the tests. They will be asking their other customers who have been tested if they would like to participate in the Genographic Project.

The project will also gather DNA from many of the third world people who cannot afford the testing. These people would include many of the indigenous tribes who have not integrated with modern society. This aspect of the project has brought out opposition from individuals and groups who oppose the exploitation of the indigenous groups. Others argue that without documentation of each individual's ancestry, the reconstruction of migration paths is too speculative to be of scientific value. The primary focus of the project is on the migrations which happened thousands of years ago, mostly before recorded history. They hope to link all races to the first man genetically. Whether this goal can be accomplished can only be answered by the experts. The project is moving on, and you have the option to participate.

For more information, visit the Web site at: www.nationalgeographic.com/genographic

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Please send inquiries, address changes, new memberships, and membership renewals to:
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SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

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Includes lessons and user guide	US\$6
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The following can be ordered from www.svcomputergenealogy.org or the group address (see above):

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