

# RECOM

Retired Employees City of Mesa

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RECOM Executive Board

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## Message From the Board

*"Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each New Year find you a better man". Benjamin Franklin*

Wow another year is almost over, it's amazing how much faster the years go by the older we get. It doesn't seem that long ago that one semester of school was a long time, now it seems like every few weeks my son's hitting me up for next semester's tuition.

Well it's time to get prepared for another election, this one won't quite have the implications of the presidential election we just witnessed, but it is still important, we need to start preparing for our annual RECOM board elections. I have been fortunate to serve this past year with a dedicated group of people, but unfortunately everyone's term is up except mine, therefore, I need your help to both serve on a nominating committee and also to possibly run for office yourself.

I'm hopeful several of the existing board members will want to continue to serve and run for reelection but we need to think about some good replacements. Let me know if you want to either run yourself, help me on the nominating committee, or if you would like to nominate someone for office.

The Board of RECOM tries to provide interesting speakers and topics at our monthly meetings; we would like your input. If you have any suggestions for topics or if you recently happened upon a speaker who you think would be of interest to our members please drop us a note and we will try to accommodate your request.

Lastly, The Board wishes you a wonderful Holiday Season and please keep our less fortunate friends and current city employees in your thoughts and prayers this Holiday Season.

Bill Petrie

## Speaker

Our November speaker was Diane Johnson from the Regional Family History Center which is located right here in Mesa, near the LDS Temple. After retiring from two previous careers, Diane has spent the last eight years working in family history the last four and one half years here at the Center. The original name for family history study is genealogy, a word that probably scared away as many people as the process. But now it's actually the number one hobby in the U.S, and growing fast in other countries with lots of groups and societies springing up.

Most of the research used to be in paper of course, and frequently housed in places not easily reached. But that's all changed now. A vast number of the records are now stored in immense computer banks. A bit about that later. But what's step one if you want to get started in genealogy? Ask yourself : **"Why** do I want to know about my family"?

Maybe there's someone in the family everyone just whispers about? Maybe there's someone in an old picture no one can identify. Maybe there's an event whose origin no one is clear about. But the unknown can be positive or negative. One family discovered that the mysterious letters in a photo they were researching stood for "Ohio State Prison". Ooops!

So, you've decided why you want to research your family. Now, how do you get started? There are pre-printed sheets called pedigree charts. Start with one of those. And the person it starts with is you. Before you go to the books, the websites, and the relatives:

**Start with yourself, and what you know about your family.**

**Get ye a box**, and put it in a really annoying place where you have to stumble over it every day. OK, OK, Not in a place where you're actually going to break a leg – just someplace where you can't ignore it!

**Then place in it**, things like your birth certificate, marriage license, diplomas, photos, diaries, will , and if you're divorced – whatever they call the paper that says you're divorced.

Don't do it all in one day, 'cause if you're the same kind of house keeper the writer is, you might have to dig through those old boxes in the garage, and on the top shelf of the guest room closet for the family Bible.

After you think you've exhausted all the nooks and crannies, dump the whole blessed thing on the floor and **categorize it** into three piles: Childhood/Teens/Adult Life.

As you learn about yourself, you learn about your ancestors. Keep a log of what you do. Keep a log of what your parents are doing. Keep a log of what your grand parents are doing, if you still have them, so that eventually you can add it to the store of information about you and your family. A little more on that later.



Look for classes and speakers. The Family History Center is a great place to start. It has an Annual Expo that's great for people who want to get started. And of course there are books that will get you started on how to use pedigree charts, family trees and such. And don't forget the computer. If you don't have one of your own, there are many at the Family History Center. The upside is that there will be someone to help you. The downside is that they probably don't allow you to come in your 'jammies. And they aren't there 24/7.

But there's an overwhelming amount of information available not only about the U.S., but European countries, Mexico, and many others. And what's not online can be ordered from the millions of records stored on microfilm in Salt Lake City. How to know which records to look for? **What do you want to know?** Decide what you've always wanted to know about your family. Remember that picture?

You may discover that that's your great uncle and he held his head exactly the way you do. (That's why they call it genealogy –Oh, I get it.) And now you want to know his age and where he came from. Well, but it's still an overwhelming amount of information.

There's help, like the Records Selection Table. It kinda tells you not to look for a can of green beans in the bread box. (Unless you're at the old

writer's house, in which case you're on your own.) So, if you are looking for great uncle's age, it may refer you to a list of birth records. If you want to know when he came over from the country, it may refer you to a list of ships' logs. So much more logical than the writer's pantry. And it gets much more detailed than that.

There are original records (like the microfilm of your aforementioned marriage certificate) and compiled records, like the list of births that was printed in the county paper the year your great grandma was born on the farm. And it can and often does get overwhelming – and exciting. But there are indexes and guides along the way.

The best part is that Mesa Family History Center is the fourth largest such library in the country – after Salt Lake, Provo, and Logan Utah-and it's in your back yard.

Meanwhile – start by visiting a website called [www.familyresearch.org](http://www.familyresearch.org). It's one of the gateways to many, many more sites of sources of information from the government to private organizations, like Ancestry.com. And as you get involved and find information in places you can't travel to (not everything is online yet), check out this site: [www.raogk.com](http://www.raogk.com) (random acts of genealogical kindness). These are volunteers who are willing to do research on your behalf in a specific geographical area.



Oh, remember the box in the living room that you fell over (the one you were supposed to put someplace noticeable but not dangerous)? It is going to help you answer questions that come up as you look at all this information, and fill in the pedigree chart. If

you really get into this, there are reasonably priced programs (and even some free ones) that help you organize and index the information in your box. And if you get really inspired, you can add information about you and your family to what's already on the web. But that's down the road apiece. Meanwhile, check out the Regional Family History Center. Good hunting!

## Reports

### Benefits Task Force

Sam Halverson reported that the November meeting of the Benefits Task Force was almost entirely devoted to issues affecting current employees who will be laid off, the first of which will leave on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2009.

You can't imagine how complicated that can get with benefits. However, each person who will be laid off will have an individual meeting with Benefits staff to make sure that they don't miss various application deadlines and understand their insurance options.

**The one thing Donna Salemi stressed again is that there has been NO discussion regarding current retirees losing their healthcare benefits.** Current employees who are retiring will also have healthcare insurance.

The open enrollment process went quite well this year. 340 retirees out of 1,200+ used the online re-enrollment process. 1,407 people took the survey regarding benefits which was at the end of the enrollment forms. By and large, people were very pleased with their benefits with the exception of vision care.

Basically, 50+% of the respondents wanted better vision care, but only about 25% were willing to pay more to get better coverage. I could throw the rest of the percentages at you, but the bottom line is, for the \$4.00 we are paying now, our coverage is as good as it gets.

As of October 31, 2008 The Employee Benefit Trust Fund was about \$18.1 million.

Also, it is now common knowledge that Donna Salemi is retiring on June 30, 2009. We will lose a very, very knowledgeable person and an advocate. Thank you, Donna, for your hard work on our behalf.

## Program Committee

**December 17, Christmas social. Bring your taste buds, your canned food donation and good cheer.**

**January 21, 2009 Speaker:** Brad Tennison , Financial advisor with Tennison Investments and Retirement Planning. "Perceptions of Wall Street"

**February, 18, 2009 Speaker:** Pat Kline from the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS).

## Nominations Committee

We still need members to serve on the Nominating Committee. Please contact Bill Petrie if you would like to serve, or if you would like to run for a Board position.

All positions are open except that of Bill Petrie who has one year left in his term. Elections are in April. Don't assume the current Board members will run again, besides it's good to have new ideas!

## News You Can Use:

If you've done it until now, don't tell anybody, just stop it. Actually, we've probably all done it for years, but now we know it might not be eco-friendly. I think that's the newfangled term for "healthy". I'm talking about left-over, out-dated meds that we've tossed into the toilet – and it was gone. Or not. Turns out it's beginning to showing up in some municipal water supplies. Granted, it's showing up in very, very minute amounts, but why add to a potential hazard? So, paraphrasing at least

two articles the writer has read recently, a better way to dispose of outdated medicines is to put them into a plastic bag, crush them (a hammer works and has the added health benefit of letting out frustrations), add some icky kitchen garbage (so it would not occur to a dumpster diver to try the cocktail), and throw it into the black trash cans. This way, they end up in the land-fill, which has a liner that keeps all kinds of stuff from leaching into the soil.

Some pharmacies will also accept them and dispose of them properly. Might want to check with yours before you bring down your old meds. And you know about not throwing empty medicine bottles with your name, prescription number and pharmacy into the trash. Don't you? Thought you did. Just checking.

## Announcements

For those of you who are very organized, here are the RECOM membership meeting dates for 2009. They will again be in the meeting room of the fire station at 1st Street and Mesa Drive on the third Wednesday of the month at 9:00AM

- January 21, 2009
- February 18, 2009
- March 18, 2009
- April 15, 2009
- May 20, 2009
- June 17, 2009
- July 15, 2009
- August 19, 2009
- September 16, 2009
- October 21, 2009
- November 18, 2009
- December 16, 2009

**But there's one meeting left in 2008! Don't forget our Christmas gathering at our usual meeting time on **December 17<sup>th</sup>**. We'll have refreshments, conversation – and door prizes! If you can, please bring some canned food or non-perishable food which we will donate to a food bank.**

*Peace & Joy for Christmas  
and Hope for the New Year to all.*