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Reflections from Your Chronicles Team

While including our usual features (Techniques, Tools, & Tips, meeting summaries, and queries) we are focusing in this issue primarily on impressions from the IAJGS-Boston conference, held August 4-9, 2013. Our contributors share what they learned during formal sessions and informal gatherings; in other words: “What Happened in Boston Doesn’t Stay in Boston.” The article entitled “The Road to Philadelphia Goes Straight through Jerusalem” demonstrates how a random act of genealogical kindness can provide significant assistance to a researcher. Consider similarly helping a genealogy colleague in the future. We also pay tribute to esteemed member, Steve Schecter, who died on September 30th.

At least twenty-four members of the JGSGP family gathered on October 4th to bid a sad farewell to Steve Schecter, our vice president of programming. He died unexpectedly as a result of a tragic fall. Our members were joined by many others at the funeral which was a significant testimonial to the man whom we all considered to be “a good guy.”

I have many wonderful memories of Steve, going back at least seven years. I don’t recall remember exactly when we met, but I vividly remember standing outside in the parking lot at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel after one of our society meetings and discussing his surname, which was also one of interest to me. I learned that Schecter wasn’t the original surname which meant we weren’t related. “Nisht geferlich, “not so terrible,” because that discussion was the first of many, many extended conversations (Continued on page 3)
The rest of the story is fascinating. Briefly engaged to but really "the other woman" in an adulterous relationship with Sheriff Johnny Behan, Josephine left him for his political rival, Wyatt Earp. That rivalry came to a violent head with the famous shootout. Josephine and Wyatt were together until his death in 1929, and his ashes are buried in the Marcus family plot near San Francisco. There is even mention of the couple attending a family Passover seder. Josephine lived until the mid 1940s and constantly strove to maintain and control Wyatt's legacy.

I'm pretty sure Josephine and I do not share any family history. Nevertheless I recommend the book and the website. You can view a brief group of videos there which demonstrate the forensics used to determine the authenticity of various photos reported to be Josephine. It's interesting to see the methodology used to compare facial features.

**Author Eugene Hurwitz is a greater Philadelphia professional photographer (A&G's Picture This!, Feasterville, PA) who often contributes his talents to JGSGP and his work to “Chronicles.”**

*Contact Gene at: ehurwitz@verizon.net*

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**CHOOSING THE CORRECT GENEALOGY SOFTWARE**

*by James Gross*

In this column I will address two common questions facing genealogists: Why should I bother to use genealogy software? Which is the best software to use?

While some of us have handwritten notes and papers, I think it can be safely argued that the use of computers and genealogy software helps to maximize time management and increase research efficiency as you accumulate information and notes. Genealogy programs provide a fast and accurate means for storing, viewing, and analyzing your genealogy work. The larger your family tree, the more branches or data you need to manage. Software helps you more efficiently manage that data because you can more easily trace, track, organize, and ultimately share your family tree data. Your paper records become secondary because your information is now permanently saved on the software.

There are approximately ten well-known genealogy programs available today.¹ This discussion will confine itself to briefly highlighting three of those programs: Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree, and RootsMagic. All three programs are gedcom compatible and can be used to export data from the program to create a gedcom file. Think of a gedcom (Genealogical Data Communication) file as a universal file format for sharing genealogy files between genealogy software programs. Using a gedcom compatible program is necessary if you choose to upload a copy of your family tree to a website such as JewishGen.org or Ancestry.com.

While compatibility with the familysearch.org website is not a requirement for choosing a genealogy software program, Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree, and RootsMagic are all listed as being endorsed by and compatible with familysearch.org, the genealogy research website run by the LDS (Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints or Mormons). The LDS recommended software chart can be a helpful guide in software selection.²

You should be aware that there are a number of websites which review and rate gedcom compatible software.³⁴ Here are a few examples:

Ancestral Quest: “This program has continued to develop and is a very widely used program.” Legacy: “…has a standard version that is free and is one of the better free genealogy programs available.” RootsMagic: “Complete and easy to use with extensive reports.”⁵⁶⁷ See “Cyndi’s List” for more information available on Ancestral Quest⁵, Legacy⁶, and RootsMagic⁷.

So, am I going to answer that second common question facing genealogists by recommending the best genealogy software program for you? Let’s just say that I will let you decide which program is best for your needs. Select your program based on the company support, user reviews, and your determination of the program’s usefulness. Just make sure that you choose a software program which has gedcom and be sure to periodically back up your data files. ❖

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¹. [http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com](http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com)
². [https://familysearch.org/products](https://familysearch.org/products)
³. [http://tinyurl.com/5uozuc](http://tinyurl.com/5uozuc)

*Author James Gross’ biography and contact information can be found on page 13.*