



**NOTICE OF MEETING
TUESDAY**

February 25, 2025

in person at

Alaska Mining Hall of Fame

406 Cushman Street

(in former Carr's Men's Clothing

Parking available in Sadler's parking lot)

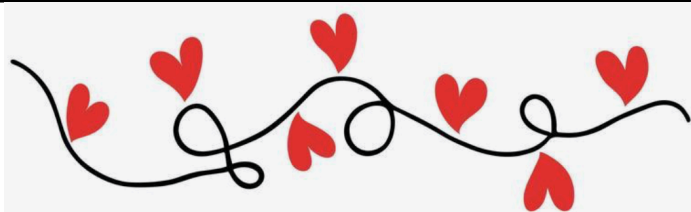
&

via Zoom

**(Members will receive a Zoom invite via email on
Sunday, February 23, 2025)**

Program

The Safe Harbor Toastmasters will show their public speaking skills and give speeches on their family histories. Each speech, with a slide show, will be between 5-7 minutes, and is bound to be both entertaining and educational.



REMINDER: Adele Virgin, a long time FGS member, passed away last year. She left behind thousands of books which her daughters are trying their best to give away. Aldean will again bring boxes of books that you may peruse and take if they are of interest to you.

AGENDA FGS Meeting 2/25/25

Call to Order, Welcome!

Discussion and approval of the Minutes from the Jan 26, 2025 meeting.

Officer's reports:

President Amy Stratman: cleaning up files and website. Research and article writing for the Taproot. Program speakers in the future.

Vice President Janet Richardson: April speaker via Zoom (Mr. Whitekeys)

Secretary: volunteer needed.

Treasurer Aldean Kilbourn:

Unfinished Business: Princess Sophia display update?

New Business:

Announcements:

Next Meeting is Tuesday, March 25, at 6 PM where we will hear a history/tour of Fairbanks Distilling located on the corner of Cushman and 5th Ave (410 Cushman).

Owner Patrick Levy will be available between 5 and 6 for any of us wishing to purchase one of his nine specialty drinks. Our backup plan, in case the tour falls through, would be to meet at the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame for an informal genealogy discussion on using AI (Artificial Intelligence). This is a big topic for ROOTSTech (March 6-8, 2025 in UT).

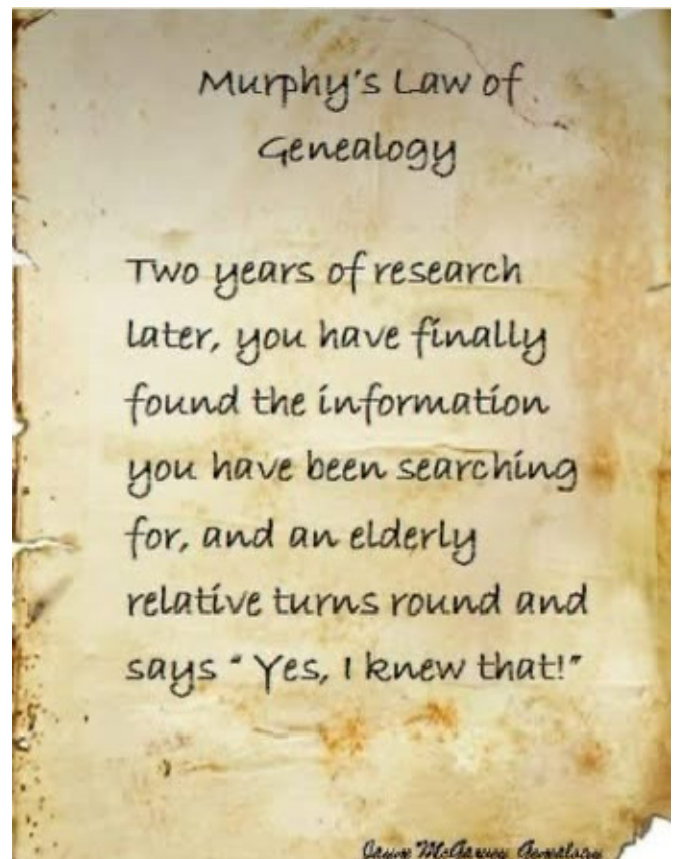
Research Skills or Questions to discuss:

Members may discuss tips, or genealogy they are working on.

Show and Tell: If you have something to show in person, we would love to see what you brought or your story to tell. For Zoom attendees, please hold up your item to the camera or use screen share.

Break for refreshments.

Begin Program at 7pm, The Safe Harbor Toastmasters will show their public speaking skills and give speeches on their family histories. Each speech, with a slide show, will be between 5-7 minutes, and is bound to be both entertaining and educational.



BIRLS for 1900s and 2000s military records

<https://www.birls.org>

The Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) database was originally created and maintained by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (the VA). It provides an index to basic biographical information on more than 18 million deceased American veterans who received some sort of veterans benefits in their lifetime, including health care, disability or life insurance policies, educational benefits (the GI Bill), mortgage assistance (VA loans), and more. The BIRLS database includes people who served in all branches of the US military, including some branches that no longer exist, such as the Women's Army Corps (WACs) and the Army Air Corps, as well as a few associated non-military groups and government agencies, such as NOAA. It even includes files for some non-US nationals, including veterans of the Philippine Commonwealth Army and Philippine Scouts and Guerillas, who served prior to and during the Second World War.

In 2018, the non-profit organization Reclaim The Records filed what would become a multi-year but ultimately successful Freedom of Information Act or FOIA lawsuit against the VA, winning the right to obtain and publish the majority of the BIRLS database. The data was finally handed over by the VA in 2022. Through this website, the BIRLS database is now freely searchable online and even downloadable as free, public, and open data, for the first time.

Finding a name listed in the BIRLS database means that you can make a free FOIA request for a copy of that deceased veteran's full VA claims file, which may contain hundreds of pages of never-before-seen biographical and historical material about the veteran, their military service, and their interactions with the VA.

Cemetery Corner by Janet Richardson The Harper Family

It all began when Arthur Harper who was born in County Antrim, Ireland in 1832 came to the California gold fields in 1855. Arthur came the Peace River in the Yukon Territory in 1873 in search of gold in the Klondike. Arthur then made his way to Fort Yukon with Alfred Mayo and Jack McQuesten and found the geology favorable for mining gold. In 1874, Arthur met and married 14 year old Seentahna, aka Jennie Bosco, at Koyukuk. They had eight children before they separated in 1895. (next page)



Seven of the eight would be educated in boarding schools in San Francisco. Jennie's eighth child, Walter Harper, was raised around Tanana in a more traditional Koyukon lifestyle.

Walter attended St. Marks Mission in Nenana and his exemplary outdoor skills and pleasant personality caught the attention of missionary and explorer, Hudson Stuck. In 1912, Walter accompanied Stuck on the first successful 1913 ascent of the south and highest peak of Mt. McKinley. Walter, who lead the ascent, became the first man to set foot on top of North America's tallest point.

Tragic struck when Walter and his new bride, Frances Wells Harper, perished in the 1918 sinking of the Princess Sophia in Lynn Canal as it headed south from Skagway. They are buried side by side in Evergreen Cemetery in Juneau.

His father Arthur would never know of the great feat his son accomplished as he passed away in San Francisco of



tuberculosis on November 24, 1897 and was buried at the IOOF Cemetery and later reburied at Colma.

Arthur's son, Alfred Mayo Harper, passed away in San Francisco in 1936 and is also buried in Colma. Another son, Samuel Harper, passed away in Fairbanks in 1931 and is buried at Clay Street Cemetery.

AS TALKED ABOUT AT LAST MONTH'S MEETING

For fire damage in CA

<https://recovery.lacounty.gov>



A Message from the President

The Taproot is published most months for members and libraries with the hope that you find it entertaining and educational. We would love to have you contribute a story or informative tidbit or photo.

We are looking for speakers for next year's programs. If you know of someone who would like to share their family history, research skills, or even just practice teaching or speaking, we would love to schedule them. Looking forward to future meetings! ~Amy Stratman



Rootstech is March 6-8, 2025!

Free online classes relating to genealogy can be viewed live or on the website afterwards.

Classes can be filtered by skill level, topic, or speaker.

Some titles include:

- Intersecting Lines: Pedigree Collapse Helps Identify an Ancestor's Parents
- Efficient Locality Research with AI: Discovering New Avenues of Exploration
- Unveiling Family Legacies: Verifying Native American Ancestry and Tribal Affiliation
- Beginning with AI Genealogy: Getting Started with Generative Artificial Intelligence in 2025
- German Gazetteers: Locating Historical German Place Names ...and many more!

Send Your Mail Orders to
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AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY 1909-10 Alaska 183

FAIRBANKS

The metropolis of the Tanana Valley, with a population of 6,000, is situated on the Chena River 360 miles n of Valdez and Cordova, the gateways to the Tanana. It is improved with all the conveniences pertaining to a large city, and is the supply point of the Tanana mining district, including such well-known creeks as Cleary, Fairbanks, Pedro, Dome, Engineer, Chatham, Goldstream, Tenderfoot, Kantishna, Bonfield and Salchacket. The city is supplied with modern fire fighting apparatus, electric light and power plants, water works, telephone system and U S telegraph service. The Tanana Valley Railroad Co makes connections with Chena and all the surrounding creek mining camps. There are 3 banks, Fairbanks Banking Co, with safety deposit and savings departments, the First National Bank and the Washington-Alaska Bank; 3 daily and 4 weekly newspapers, 5 churches, Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist and Christian Science; public grammar and high schools with an average enrollment of 250, and 2 hospitals, St Josephs and St Matthews. The commercial interests are shown in detail in the information herewith presented.

SAN FRANCISCO
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LOS ANGELES

UHL BROS., Wholesale Wall Paper

Burlap, House Linings, Sanitas, Deadening Felt
124 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH SEATTLE, WASH.

MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

Mayor and President of City Council—Jos H Smith
Magistrate and Clerk—Chas E Taylor
Treasurer—F E Barbour
Attorney—John K Brown
Physician—J A Sutherland
Chief of Police—Patrick O'Connor
Chief of Fire Department—J J Buckley
Councilmen—J M Brooks, F W Carter, D Driscoll, J H Groves, M R Sabin, J J Thornton

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief—Patrick O'Connor
Patrolmen—E D Kelly, L J Stevens

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief—J J Buckley
Captain of Hose Co—H J Gohres
Hosemen—Chas A Johnson, Herbert A King
Driver—Wm Roberts
Plugman—Adolph Olson

BANKS AND BANKERS

Fairbanks Banking Co—2d av se cor Turner; capital, \$300,000; E T Barnette Pres, B R Dusenbury 1st Vice-Pres, L N Jesson 2d Vice-Pres, Duncan Michie Cashr

THE PULLEN HOUSE

Elegantly Furnished Rooms,
Baths and Electric Lights,
Cuisine and Service Unexcelled.

THE HOLLAND HOUSE OF ALASKA

SKAGWAY

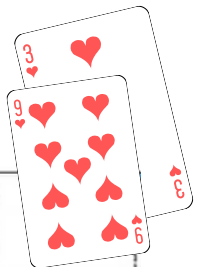
ALASKA

A page out of the Polk's Alaska-Yukon gazetteer and business directory: 1909-10. You can find amazing hints and information in the directories!

INDEX
BINDER
AND
PRINTING
CO.
Engravers
and
Stationers
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Fairbanks Daily Times
Tue, Feb 13, 1912 ·Page 4



ARE TO PLAY HEARTS AT VALENTINE PARTY

J. B. M.'s and H. M. T.'s Will
Make Merry as Guests of
Mrs. Smith.

Tomorrow night, the J. B. M.'s and their H. M. T. gentlemen friends will gather at the residence of Mrs. George Smith at the corner of Fourth and Lacey in a Valentine party. The event will be a sure-enough Valentine affair, both decorations and games being arranged to be in keeping with the day. It is prophesied that the game of the evening will be hearts.

Toastmasters have a long history in Fairbanks. Many restaurants and bars were used as meeting spots. The Switzerland Supper Club was a popular venue for practicing speeches.

The Switzerland was originally located on Gaffney and Cushman St, but moved to 4510 Old Airport Rd in Nov 1963 into a new building shaped like a castle. The owner was Max Fueg. By 1977, it was known as "the Switzerland Castle", then just "the Castle". Although now long closed, many Fairbanksans still fondly remember this iconic restaurant. An ACE Hardware store occupies the land that the Switzerland was on.

Fairbanks Daily News Miner - March 21, 1973

Golden Heart Toastmasters celebrate 20th anniversary

The Golden Heart Toastmasters Club of Fairbanks will observe its 20th anniversary at 7 p.m., Saturday at the Switzerland.

Duane L. Ferdinand, club president, said all former members of the club are invited to the anniversary observance. Highlights of the club's history will be related by Dr. D.E. Hampton, area governor. Charter members are scheduled to speak, and Dr. Hampton will be Toastmaster of the evening.

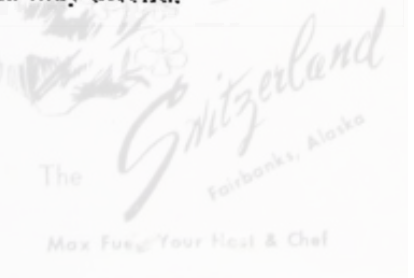
The Golden Heart Toastmasters Club was chartered March 21, 1953. The first president was Don McCune. During its 20-year history, the club has provided speakers for numerous civic events and various campaigns

conducted by non-profit organizations. Several members of the club have served as area and district officers of Toastmasters International.

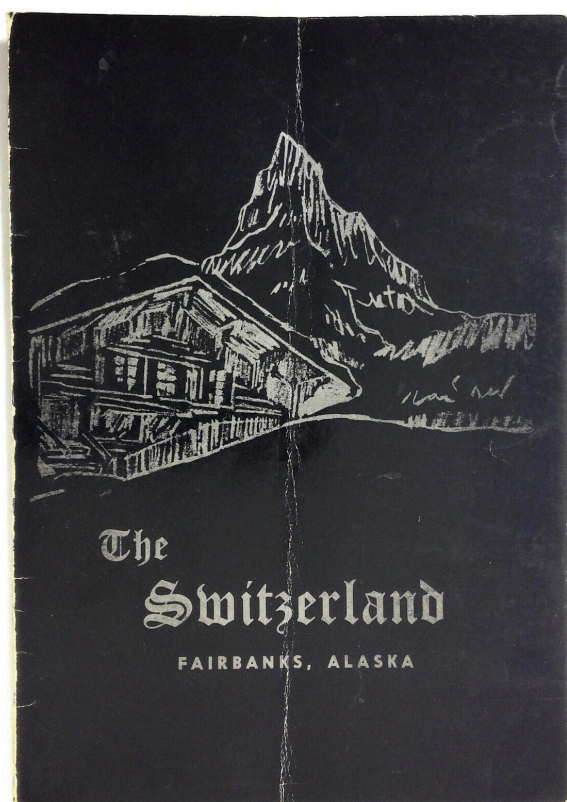
The Golden Heart Toastmasters Club was the 1,240th club chartered in Toastmasters International. The world-wide speaking organization has Toastmasters clubs in countries and territories throughout the free world. The first club was organized by the late Dr. Ralph C. Smedley at Santa Ana, Calif., in 1924.

Members of Tundra Toastmasters for Eielson AFB have been invited to the dinner. It will also be a ladies night, and all wives may attend.

Matchbook, postcard, and menu were all found on ebay



A close up of the chairs



**FAIRBANKS FINEST
BROILED STEAKS,
CHICKEN**

Prawns and our famous Lobster
8 Different Spaghetti Styles

VEAL
A La Florentine with Spaghetti
Scaloppini, Nicoise, Spaghetti
Cordon bleu, Milanaise
French Fried Swissets
Schnitzel Holstein
Breaded Cutlets a la Suisse

CHICKEN
Cacciatore, Spaghetti
Pan Fried
Livers Saute with Mushrooms
Coq au Vin

PASTE
Home Made Italian Raviolis

inside of matchbook

THE SWITZERLAND
"Supper Club"
Gaffney & Cushman

Enjoy the
best —
Dine with
Max!

OPEN 2 P.M. SUNDAY
4 P.M. WEEKDAYS
CLOSED WEDNESDAYS

Still Featuring Our
Popular Daily Special

18 Oz. Broiled **\$2.90**
RIB STEAK
Or Choose From Our Complete
American and Italian Menu

Relax in the pleasant atmosphere
of the Switzerland and enjoy your
favorite drink and the finest food
in Alaska!

**PARTIES AND BANQUETS
A SPECIALTY**

1961 prices on this ad

The Switzerland	
Dinners Served with Relish Tray, Max's Special Salad Bowl, Your Choice of Dressing, Garlic Bread, Coffee	
OUR CONTINENTAL SPECIALS	
SERVED ONLY WITH DINNERS	
DINNER SIZE SHRIMP COCKTAIL	1.00
CHEF'S SPECIAL MINISTRONE SOUP	.85
VEAL	
A LA FLORENTINE WITH SPAGHETTI	4.25
(Veal with Tomatoes, Green Pepper, Mushrooms, Parmesan Cheese)	
SCALOPPINI, NICOISE, SPAGHETTI	4.50
(Choice Veal in Wine Sauce, Mushrooms)	
CORDON BLEU, MILANAISE	6.50
(Stuffed Veal with Ham and Cheese, Wine, Mushroom Sauce)	
(25 minutes cooking time)	
FRENCH FRIED SWISSETTS	4.50
(Paste Stuffed with Beef and Chicken, Special Sauce)	
SCHNITZEL HOLSTEIN	4.25
(Breaded Veal, Fried Egg, Special Sauce)	
BREADED CUTLETS A LA SWISS	3.95
(With Spaghetti, Special Mushroom Sauce)	
WIENER SCHNITZEL	4.35
(Veal Cutlet Fried in Butter, Chopped Eggs, Baked Potato)	
CHICKEN	
CACCIATORE, SPAGHETTI	4.75
(Tomatoes, Green Pepper, Mushrooms, Wine)	
PAN FRIED	3.95
(25 minutes cooking time)	
LIVERS SAUTE WITH MUSHROOMS	4.75
CHICKEN A LA SWISS	4.95
(Sauté in Mushroom and Wine Sauce, Tomatoes, Melted Swiss Cheese)	
PASTE	
SPAGHETTI WITH MUSHROOMS AND MEAT BALLS	4.35
SPAGHETTI WITH MUSHROOMS	3.75
SPAGHETTI WITH MEAT BALLS	3.75
HOME MADE ITALIAN RAVIOLIS	3.95
COMBINATION ITALIAN PLATE	3.95
(Spaghetti, Raviolis, Mushrooms)	
ITALIAN SPAGHETTI WITH CHEF'S SPECIAL SAUCE	3.25
SPAGHETTI A LA CARUSO	4.50
(Italian Sauce, Mushrooms, Chicken Livers)	
BEEF	
BEEF SAUTE PARISIENNE	4.75
(Sliced Beef in Wine Sauce, Tomatoes, Mushrooms, Baked Potato)	

OUR SPECIAL PRIME RIB!	
THICK CUT PRIME RIB	5.75
MAX'S PRIME RIB SANDWICH WITH SALAD	3.95
TODAY'S SPECIAL	
Small New York	\$ 4.65
EXTRA CUT T-BONE STEAK	5.90
FROM OUR BROILER	
RIB STEAK	4.50
TOP SIRLOIN STEAK	5.75
NEW YORK	6.25
THICK CUT NEW YORK STEAK	7.25
FILET MIGNON WITH MUSHROOMS	7.25
STEAK SANDWICH, DELUXE	3.50
SEA FOOD	
FRIED LOUISIANA PRAWNS (HOT SAUCE)	4.25
BROILED JUMBO LOBSTER TAIL (LEMON BUTTER)	6.50
(Prepared with Max's Secret)	
(25 minutes cooking time)	
OVEN FRIED KING CRAB LEGS	4.95
SALADS	
LARGE TOSSED GREEN SALAD, TOMATOES	1.95
CHEF'S SPECIAL	3.25
FRESH CRAB OR SHRIMP COCKTAIL	1.95
FRESH CRAB OR SHRIMP LOUIE	3.25
SMALL SIRLOIN STEAK FOR 2	
with Champagne or Burgundy	10.00
SIDE ORDERS — (Served with Dinners only)	
SPAGHETTI	1.25
RAVIOLIS	1.75
MUSHROOMS	1.00
DESSERTS	
HOME MADE SWISS PASTRY	1.00
ICE CREAM	.75

The Switzerland Restaurant



Key aspects of AI in genealogy:

Transcription:

AI can read and transcribe difficult-to-decipher handwriting on old documents, greatly improving search capabilities.

Image analysis:

AI can identify faces in old photos, colorize them, and even repair damaged images.

Data matching:

AI can compare information across multiple databases to find potential matches and link records together.

Family tree construction:

AI can suggest possible relatives to add to your family tree based on existing information.

A recent development in genealogy research is the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) to transcribe old, handwritten records, identify faces in photos, match data across different databases, and even suggest potential relatives to add to your family tree, making it significantly easier to access and analyze historical information about your ancestors; this includes features like automated translation for records in foreign languages.

Minutes FGS January 26, 2025

President Amy Stratman called meeting to order at 6:03

In attendance

Amy Stratman; Aldean Kilbourn; Karen Tanner

On Zoom

Elizabeth Cook; Cheryl Berrong; Tanya O'Brien; James Bartlett; Shirley Sterner; Janet Richardson

Did all receive Taproot and read minutes? Motion to approve the minutes by Elizabeth Cook, Janet Richardson seconded. Passed unanimously.

Adele Virgin books on display to take if desired. Aldean will bring them to February meeting too.

President's Report:

Received email from Norway, Amy put it on the screen. Morten Bakkeli wanted to know about a man living in Fairbanks as he was doing a story on him for a publication in Norway. What did he do at his jobs? Amy responded where he worked, lived. Dec 12, & Dec 26 - She asked Morton to send a write up that included the information she'd sent him, but he never did. James Bartlett said to look up online to see if Morton posted anything. If it is in Norwegian, Elizabeth Cook said to run it through Google translate. No payment, no "thank you", but Amy said it was fun to look up things in the Polk Directories. Cheryl said she remembered a Speilberg family here in Fairbanks but doesn't remember his first name. Husband, wife and three daughters. Two daughters are still alive she thought. Ann Spielberg was the wife; she worked with the voter registration office. (Update: Dave Speilberg died 6/21/92 and Ann Speilberg died 9/23/97; they are both buried at Northern Lights Memorial Park off Yankovich Rd). According to Amy, the Speilbergs divorced, Dave moved back to Norway, and remarried there. According to Cheryl, Dave came back after that 2nd wife died, and he reconnected with the first wife Ann. According to Amy (via research), Dave was first buried at Birch Hill Cemetery, then exhumed and buried next to his ex-wife Ann at Northern Lights Memorial Park.

Vice President's Report

Janet announced that the next meeting is February 25th, and we will hear the North Pole Toastmasters give short talks about their ancestors. Last time was very enjoyable.

I went on eBay (my last name is Manry, and we are all related) Robert Manry was the 1st to come across the Atlantic in a dinghy. He wrote about the adventure in the book, "Tiinkerbell" . My bagpipe instructor Dennis Stephens, a librarian in his former days, and

in mentioning the story, he had "Tinkerbell" on his shelf. I did find out Ann Manry Kenyon, a well-known illustrator/artist, is my distant cousin. She's done some incredible "southern setting" portraits of famous golfers. She also recently did portraits of the Trump family. She has published a book on her portraits that Janet plans to order.

Janet is looking into whether we can get Mr. WhiteKeys, The Voyage of The Alaska Union: Adventure, Danger, Scurvy , Romance (294 page UAF press) for our April program. On his website, he indicates that he can talk. Possible we can get him on Zoom

Treasurer's report

Aldean

two new dues paid plus Elizabeth's donation of \$25

Explore Fairbanks \$50 check for 2025 dues

\$159.98 reimbursement check for Zoom to Aldean

\$2,409.60 in the checking account as of today 1/26/25

15 cents interest paid for savings account for January 2025; there is \$1,745.75 in savings

Princess Sophia - Pioneers Foundation has offered \$1000 to bring exhibit

Still haven't heard back from Doyon Foundation about \$1000 donation

I still have not gotten confirmation from Jamia Alexander-Bell about the Noel Wien Library hosting the exhibit for the month of March or April.

Her comment to me was "why would anyone in Fairbanks be interested in this?".

Loussac library in Anchorage are interested in having the exhibit after us.

My hope is to have the exhibit in place so school aged children can come as a class to view. According to the reference desk, approximately 25,000 patrons come through Noel Wien library every month.

Cheryl Borrang has a book that lists all the people on the ship and tells the story of the post delivery of bodies in Seattle. A statue recently was put up in front of the Doyon offices of Walter Harper, who died on the Princess Sophia. Aldean asked if Cheryl has the book that Mary Ehrlander wrote on Walter Harper? Not sure, she said.

Cheryl shared on screen "Sinking of the Princess Sophia" by Ken Coates and Bill Morrison.

Elizabeth - Coates was a noted Canadian historian; Walter was going off to become a doctor and come back to Alaska.

Cheryl - I was born at Hudson Stuk hospital in Fort Yukon. I was born in October 1945. Dad was a Federal Marshal, and Mom, a Canadian, was the Commissioner. "He'd bring in the bad guys, and she'd sentence them." We were there from April 1945 to April 1946; then moved to Seattle and Port Townsend;

Secretary - we still don't have one; Molly doesn't respond.

Research questions:

Amy - BIRLS files show up when you're hunting; you can't look at the actual file; now you can order the actual file yourself. She shared the BIRLS database (1900-2003) on the screen; you can see any file with an ancestor's name - just fill in form and ask; WWII records weren't available - burned in the 1971 fire; but this is my grandfather's file (was also indexed on Ancestry but I couldn't get at National Archives) and I ordered it.

Service number or dog tag ssa # can be helpful but not necessary.

The website is BIRLS.org

Shared screen - South California fires.

LA fires maps - can look up childhood homes, or addresses of burned homes and historical structures.

recovery.LAcounty.gov - Amy showed how to find the house that include photos (disaster maps-top menu).

James talked about Electrical fires caused previous fires; Aldean said that days news said Eton fire could have been caused by arcing from a substation and wind caught it.

Palisades is almost completely gone; historical places are gone; Palisades library gone.

Karen Tanner - Show and Tell

I've been working on genealogy for many years; "we are searching for the truth".

Last week I had an experience with DNA; I lost sleep over this.

My dilemma arose over a DNA connection on my husband's side; My husband passed away years ago. But 16% of shared DNA, that's pretty close; who is this person, I wanted to know.? I tried to find out what it was about, so I finally sent a message to find out more.

Ethical challenges in the 21st century can be challenging. What information can be shared and what shouldn't be shared?

Pledge "I will keep confidential unless I receive written permission to tell a third person."

Matches don't get to share with others without personal match permission.

I was about to share the info I learned, and I knew it could cause hurt to certain family members.

Amy - It's like you found your dad; you can't go around saying "that's my dad" like you email others about this info, until you obtain permission.

Someone emailed me (Amy) from Ancestry and said your dad is my dad. She was not my half sister, but it could be this line or that line. She is my cousin's half-sister, not my half sister. It wasn't my job to call my cousin and tell her what I'd been told; it was the responsibility of the person who wrote me to reach out. And she did.

6:50 break for refreshments and look at books; Zoomers - let us know if you have a request

Program - eBay part 2: Fairbanks History presented by Amy Stratman