



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

Contents

Upcoming Meetings	p 1-3	Brick Wall Queries	p 7	About Us	p 10-11
June Meeting Recap	p 3	Conferences	p 8	Membership	p 11-12
President's Message	p 3-4	Free Local Events	p 8-9	Newsletter Info	p 12
Articles	p 4-6	Calendar	p 9-10	Contact Us	p 12-13
				Email Updates	p 13

Upcoming Meetings

July 2019 Meeting – (July 10 at 6:30 not July 3!)

Our July 10th presenter will be Kathleen Reilly, local History and Melville Collections Supervisor at the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, MA. Kathy's presentation will focus on the extensive and rich collection of genealogical resources at the Athenaeum.

The Berkshire Athenaeum has long been a popular place to conduct research, because of its extensive New England state resources, and French-Canadian parish repertoires and other resources.



When the Sylvio Conte Branch of the National Archives in Pittsfield closed in 2011, the Berkshire Athenaeum acquired the books, finding aids, and microfilm collection of that branch. The microfilm collection includes US & State census records, naturalization indexes, compiled service records for Revolutionary war soldiers, Revolutionary war pension and bounty-land warrant applications, index to New England naturalization petitions from 1796 to 1906, ship manifests, and more.

The Athenaeum is also a FamilySearch affiliate library providing access to many FamilySearch databases that are only accessible at a center. Kathy's presentation will pique your interest and help you to maximize a research trip there.

Please note that due to the Independence Day holiday, our July meeting will be held on July 10th at 6:30pm in the Veterans' Room at the Agawam Senior Center.

Annual trip to MOSH - (note change in date)

Our annual trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History will take place on **Wednesday, July 17th from 6-8 PM**. We've had to change the date this year, at the request of the Museum due to an upcoming employee medical leave. While we were also hoping that we could offer a daytime session, they'll be unable to accommodate us.

Our annual visit provides an exclusive opportunity to a night of research and a private tour of the archives. It's a great opportunity to learn about the genealogical resources at MOSH.

The Springfield History Library and Archives houses an extensive collection of Springfield research resources, including Springfield vital records (several different collections available), topical newspaper clipping files, obituaries, maps, telephone books, high school and college yearbooks, Annual Voter Lists by ward & precinct, Voter Registrations of Naturalized Residents (1880s-1980s), and Public-School Attendance Records. **MOSH** also houses a rich collection of early Springfield and Western Massachusetts historical documents, maps, family histories, and books.

Manuscripts, narratives, diaries, photos, and documents of the 31st Massachusetts Infantry Regiment of the Civil War are available at the Archives. Some documents, which have been transcribed and digitized, are available at the Archives website. There is a searchable index available.

NOTE: Due to space being limited to 25 attendees, **sign up is required**. This is a Members-Only event, with **no fee**. To register for the event, you must send an email to us at westmassgen@gmail.com. Put MOSH in the subject line. The **first 25 members** will be placed on the list and will receive a confirmation email containing instructions on where to meet and time of arrival, as this event is held after the museum closes to the general public. If there are more members who sign up, we'll place those members' names on a waiting list, in the event that there's a cancellation.

If you can't make a visit, be sure to check out the online resources at their website:

<https://springfieldmuseums.org/about/museum-of-springfield-history/springfield-history-library-archives>

August 2019 Meeting



Do you have boxes of old family photographs just sitting in your closet? Are they fading, yellowed, damaged, water stained, or do they have mold damage? The solution is to scan them and then restore them, turning them into digital files. Does the idea of tackling that project overwhelm you? Do you even know how or where to start?

At the August 7 WMGS monthly meeting, Dave Lapierre, WMGS Vice President and Website Coordinator, will do a presentation/demonstration on “*Photo Scanning and Restoration*”. If you were at Skills Night on June 5, you may have had a chance to watch some of the photo scanning features Dave was demonstrating.



He will be expanding his presentation from Skills Night to include information on:

- what file format to save scanned photos in
- what's the difference between a JPG and a TIFF file, and which format should you use when

- ❑ the steps to take when tackling that box of photos
- ❑ software programs for photo editing and photo restoration (there is a difference), and
- ❑ the options available for saving/storing your scanned images

June 2019 Recap

Our 2nd Skills Night was another success! Our volunteer genealogy experts again offered a variety of table topics, including Irish, Military, NY State, Palatine, Revolutionary War, Canadian- Quebec & Provinces, Brick wall, Road Trip- Do's & Don'ts, DNA Painter, Photo Scanning & Editing, and Census Records – Beyond the Obvious. And our much-appreciated Consults with a Pro to discuss individual research problems were available, as well.

Thanks go to our members who hosted table topics, including Fran Malone, Wayne Weatherwax, Bruce Cortis, Joseph "Chi" Fleming, Melissa Curran-Blowers, Edie Bowen-Wilcox, Jeanne Leblond, and Dave Lapierre. And, we send thanks to Ed Strickland and Dave Robison, who provided their consultation services in our Consults with a Pro feature. Thanks also to Bob Whitney who helped to keep the event flowing smoothly!

We had a great crowd and members seemed to truly enjoy this event! So many topics, so little time to explore them all! Stay tuned for some exciting news about future events coming to WMGS this fall.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Message from the President

Jeanne Leblond

Spring has finally arrived in New England. I love this time of year. As the various flowers in my garden come into bloom, they trigger fond memories of the ancestors who gave me cuttings from their gardens.

My Nana's pink shrub roses return every year. They're the strangest roses I've ever seen, scrubby, covered in tiny thorns, almost weed like, but with an incredible number of waxy petals. And, oh, so fragrant. I've never seen roses like these anywhere else, making me curious as to where they came from. I recall a family story that my maternal grandmother received a cutting from a friend, Mrs. Popo, in the 1920's. If that story is true, the roses in my garden are descended from bushes that were in bloom perhaps more than a 100 years ago!

Then there's my godmother, Aunt Ruth's purple Japanese irises. They're taking over my garden, reseeding themselves annually, along with my Nana's lily of the valley. Cousin Ed's Rose of Sharon provides color all summer. And, my grandmother's pink and white phlox reseed themselves all over the yard!

All of these plants help me remember my ancestors, but they also make me laugh, as I struggle to corral the plants each year. They've multiplied and multiplied, as has my family tree! Hours of pulling out seedlings is needed to keep them neat, but I could never eliminate them from my garden, as I now feel responsible for continuing the tradition of growing them. I've given slips of several of these plants to my daughter-in-law, so the next few generations can enjoy them as well.

Like many of you, when I first started working on my family history, I was focused merely on finding names, dates, and places. That's important, of course, but experts are encouraging us to also focus on recording our

family histories, traditions, and memories to share with future generations. In a way, this is a metaphor for those of us who work on our family genealogies, with one generation continuing the gardens and keeping family traditions alive.

WMGS is trying to help all of us with those goals by providing programs and resources, not just to find information, but to also to record the stories, traditions, and memories for our descendants.

You may not have plants from your ancestors' gardens in your yard, but that's okay. Dig up some springtime memories.

Put those research tasks and brick walls aside for a moment. Take time to stop and smell the roses. It will bring life to your research and joy to your heart.

Happy springtime!

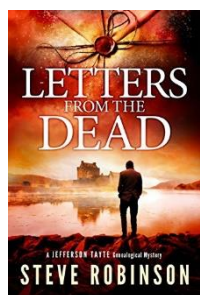
[Return to Contents page](#)

Articles

Summer Reading for Genealogists

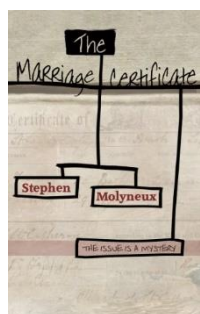
List compiled by Erin Binney
Book summaries courtesy of Amazon.com

The field of genealogical research uncovers true stories about real people. But that doesn't mean it hasn't inspired works of fiction as well. Genealogical fiction covers all sorts of genres, including mystery, supernatural, and history, to name just a few. Here are six books to add to your summer reading list.



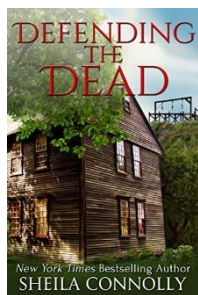
Letters from the Dead by Steve Robinson

When genealogist Jefferson Tayte is hired to prove the identity of a black sheep in his client's family tree, he unwillingly finds himself drawn into a murder investigation with nothing more to go on than a 150-year-old letter and a connection to a legendary ruby that has been missing for generations. As more letters are mysteriously left for him, Tayte becomes immersed in a centuries-old tale of greed, murder, and forbidden love. (*Letters from the Dead* is the seventh book in the Jefferson Tayte genealogical mystery series, but it can be enjoyed as a stand-alone story).



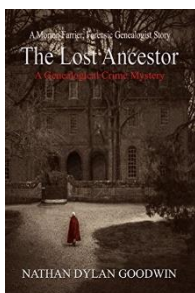
The Marriage Certificate by Stephen Molyneux

What prompts amateur family historian Peter Sefton to buy the marriage certificate he sees on display in an antiques arcade? Is it because he thinks it should be private and he wants to remove it from public view? Is it the prospect of researching the individuals named upon it? Or is it something else, happenstance perhaps, which leads him toward a potentially lucrative discovery and a long-forgotten family secret? Peter finds himself pulled along to uncover a series of sad and tragic events that connect the marriage certificate to a modern day-mystery.



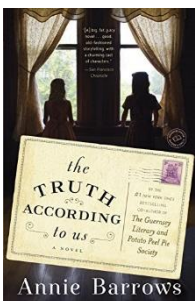
Defending the Dead by Sheila Connolly

Abby Kimball has slowly accepted her recently discovered ability to see the dead, but none of the harmless sightings she's experienced could have prepared her for the startling apparition of a centuries-old courtroom scene—where she locks eyes with a wicked and gleeful accuser. Thrown back more than three hundred years, Abby realizes she's been plunged into the Salem witch trials. As Abby witnesses more fragments from the events in Salem, she's suddenly confronted with a pressing personal question: Were one or more of her ancestors among the accused?



The Lost Ancestor by Nathan Dylan Goodwin

When forensic genealogist Morton Farrier is called upon by Ray Mercer to investigate the 1911 disappearance of his great aunt, a housemaid working in a large Edwardian country house, he has no idea of the perilous journey into the past that he is about to make. Morton must use his not inconsiderable genealogical skills to solve the mystery of Mary Mercer's disappearance, in the face of the dangers posed by those others who are determined to end his investigation at any cost. (*The Lost Ancestor* is the second book in the Morton Farrier genealogical crime mystery series, but it can be enjoyed as a stand-alone story.)



The Truth According to Us by Annie Barrows

In the summer of 1938, writer Layla Beck is assigned to cover the history of the remote mill town of Macedonia, West Virginia. She secures a room in the home of the unconventional Romeyn family and soon discovers that the truth of the town is entangled in the thorny past of the Romeyn dynasty. Layla's arrival strikes a match to the family veneer, bringing to light buried secrets that will tell a new tale about the Romeyns. As she delves deeper into town legend, everyone involved is transformed—and their personal histories completely rewritten.



The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton

A tiny girl is abandoned on a ship headed for Australia in 1913. She arrives completely alone with nothing but a small suitcase containing a few clothes and a single book—a beautiful volume of fairy tales. She is taken in by the dockmaster and his wife and raised as their own. On her twenty-first birthday, they tell her the truth. With her sense of self shattered and very little to go on, “Nell” sets out to trace her real identity. Her quest leads her to Blackhurst Manor on the Cornish coast and the secrets of the doomed Mountrachet family. But it is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell's death that all the pieces of the puzzle are assembled.

This Trick Will Solve Your Research Problems

By Michael John Neill

The reality is that there is no trick or instant solution to genealogical research problems. However, generally speaking the following approaches are helpful:

- citing your sources;
- learning as much as you can about all the records in the area;
- learning the history of the area;
- having contemporary maps;
- obtaining as many records as possible;
- using compiled sources (published genealogy books, online trees, etc.) as stepping stones to original records;
- realizing assumptions may not be true;
- continuing to learn about genealogical research in general;
- proofing and double checking your work.

Not one trick and not a guarantee, but these general suggestions will go a long way.

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 05 Jun 2019

2019 Annual Survey Results

We've compiled our 2019 survey results and are much appreciative of the information that our members have provided. The results are helping us to determine what our members interests, needs, and goals are for their genealogical research, as well, as providing information on whether our society is moving in the right direction. Members listed current interests in a wide-variety of genealogy topics from basic to advanced skills, ethnic research, immigration, DNA, software & computer skills, Western Mass resources, military, writing, photo scanning & editing, immigration, and more!

One theme that emerged is that members would like more skills-based and sharing events. Members also indicated that they'd be interested in participating in discussion groups about various topics.

We have a sizable membership that lives outside of Western Massachusetts and we've heard from many distant members that they appreciate our webinars and online resources.

The Board and Program Committee will use the results and member comments to help us focus our work, plan our future speakers, and website content. We're currently looking into starting Special Interest Groups, holding training sessions, and possibly providing skills-based classes.

One glitch - several members volunteered, but didn't provide contact information. If you would be willing to help with database design or website management, social media, or writing newsletter articles, please let us know at either a monthly meeting or by sending an email to westmassgen@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your answers are much appreciated. You can also send your comments, feedback, and questions to us at any time, by sending an email to westmassgen@gmail.com.

Are you Tech-Savvy? We Could Use Your Help

If you are good with computers or technology and are looking for a way to get more involved in WMGS, we have opportunities available and would welcome the opportunity to have your help. We have two areas where we need some assistance.

First, we need some help with setting up our online meetings using *Zoom*. This is the tool we use to broadcast our online meetings when we have Presenters who are remote. This would involve helping to setup the online meetings, getting everything working the night of the meetings, and recording the presentations if/when the speaker has agreed to have the presentation recorded. For anyone interested in helping, we'll setup some practice sessions and ensure that you are trained.



The other area where we could use some technical help is in maintaining the *WMGS website*. We have both routine monthly website maintenance that needs to be done, as well as a longer-term goal to re-design the website. We use WordPress to maintain the website. Dave Lapierre has been maintaining the website over the past 10-12 months and would welcome some assistance. Training would be provided.

If you would like further details, or are interested in helping, please send an email to westmassgen@gmail.com letting us know.

Brick Wall Queries

How to Submit or Respond to a Query:

Submitting: Queries and responses should be sent via email to westmassgen@gmail.com or submitted through the Contact Us section on our website. Members may also bring their prepared queries or responses to our monthly meeting or to one of our research clinics. Non-members should submit their payment (\$5.00 per query) via the Donate tab on the website. Members are entitled to post three (3) queries per month.

Responding: Please send your response directly to WMGS. To aid in matching answer to question, please Identify the question you are answering by using the month of the Newsletter and the question number. (example Oct 2018Q1, Oct 2018-Q2) Answers submitted should include the source(s) of information found or specific information on a website or database. WMGS will forward the response to the person who asked the question, post it in the next newsletter, and archive it on our website.

Note: Because of space limitations, WMGS reserves the right to limit the number of queries that are listed per newsletter. When necessary, queries will be posted in the next available issue. WMGS and its members are not responsible to conduct research, to provide answers for the query, or for the accuracy of the information posted or received. Always verify any information received by checking its source.

News and Upcoming Conferences



Pioneer Valley History Network

proudly announces the 4th annual



Your Homespun History Un-Conference

Saturday, July 27, 2019 at the

Kittredge Center at Holyoke Community College.

History Camp is the un-conference dedicated to all things history. Everyone is welcome to attend, but registration is required, and anyone can present, assuming we have a time slot open. More information on History Camp, including photos, quotes, and the profile of attendees from earlier History Camps, is [here](#).

The goal of History Camp Pioneer Valley is to break even – there are no paid staff, no paid speakers, and no one will profit. We will charge the lowest possible fee to cover the costs of the venue and lunch, but to allow the greatest number of people to attend. This year the fee is \$26.

There will also be plenty of opportunities for networking and an exhibit area for selling books and other history-related products.

To Register to Attend or Present, go to: <http://historycamp.org/pioneer-valley> For more Information, contact us at: pioneervalleyhistory@gmail.com

Free Local Events

Several local libraries are hosting presentations on genealogy topics. If you know of an event happening at a local library, let us know so that we can include it here. These presentations are funded by the libraries and free to the attendees. All you have to do is register.

July 16, 6:30 PM, Chicopee Library - "*10 Tips to Jumpstart Your Genealogy*" with Sara Campbell. Sara is a historical and family history educator who shares her love of history and genealogy in speaking engagements throughout New England. Whether you are a novice or experienced genealogist this talk will help you get going with your work. This program is supported by a grant from the Chicopee Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

July 16, 6 – 8 pm, Palmer Public Library, *Powerful Online Search Strategies*, 1455 North Main St, Palmer, MA 01069, (413) 283-3330

July 23, 6 – 8 pm: Palmer Public Library, *Setting Up Family Interviews to Tell the Stories* 1455 North Main St, Palmer, MA 01069, (413) 283-3330

August 15, 6:30 – 8 pm, Hubbard Memorial Library, *The Cities That William Pynchon Built – Emphasis Ludlow*, MA, 24 Center St, Ludlow, MA 01056. Contact Melissa Rickson at (413) 583-3408 for reservations.

Need Help with Your Research?

Come to one of our research clinics! WMGS offers research clinics on the 3rd & 4th Thursdays of each month from 6pm-8pm at the Agawam Senior Center. This is a free benefit for WMGS members, with a \$10 fee for non-members.

Can't make a clinic or need more help? The Chicopee Public Library sponsors Open Genealogy Labs, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-3pm, and again from 6pm-8pm. Check the library's website at www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org or call them at 413-594- 1800 to confirm that the clinic is being held.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 10 Jul 2019 6:30 – 8:30 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center – Kathleen Reilly on <i>Resources at the Berkshire Athenaeum</i> ***
Wednesday, 17 Jul 2019 6 - 8 PM	MOSH field trip - Registration Required, Members only – email interest to westmassgen@gmail.com.
Thursday, 18 Jul 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center. ***
Thursday, 25 Jul 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center. ***
Wednesday, 7 Aug 2019 6:00 – 8:00 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center – Dave Lapierre “ <i>Photo Scanning and Restoration</i> ” ***
Thursday, 15 Aug 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center ***
Thursday, 22 Aug 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center ***

***** Please be advised that there may be travel delays related to construction on the Morgan Sullivan bridge leading from West Springfield into Agawam through 2020. Currently, traffic is limited to one lane in each direction. It is recommended that members and visitors allow extra time to their travel or seek alternate routes.**

Genealogy Research Clinics are free to WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members. Annual WMGS membership is just \$30.

Ride Sharing

Are you driving to our meetings from a distance? Would you like to form a carpool with other members? Do you need a ride, because you are no longer able to drive when it's dark?

We'll have a form at our Welcome table for members to list their names, city or town, and contact information, along with their interest in ride sharing, their need for a ride, or their willingness to pick up another member.

If you would like to participate, but can't make it to meetings without a ride, send us an email at westmassgen@gmail.com, along with your name, city or town, and contact information. With your permission, we'll add your name to the list.

And don't forget to look at the form each month for any updates.

About Us



The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society was founded in Springfield, Hampden County, Massachusetts in 1972, and officially incorporated on 6 February 1973. We are devoted to the research and documentation of our family ancestry and history. We also assist others in the pursuit of discovering their ancestry.

We meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts. We welcome non-members and beginning genealogists. Please join us!

We currently have about 187 members, approximately 80% living in the Western Massachusetts area. The other 20% are residents of other states but with ancestry from Massachusetts or New England.

We receive numerous inquiries each month via U.S. & e-mail from people looking for information on area families. Our members are happy to volunteer to research these requests

Jeanne Leblond – President

Dave Lapierre – Vice President

Deborah Woodford – Treasurer

Jeanne Lockhart – Assistant Treasurer

Dorothy Cichonski – Secretary

Dave Lapierre – Webmaster & Technology
Coordinator

Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor
 Jeanne Leblond – Surname & Queries Editor
 Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator

Bob Whitney – Fundraising Coordinator
 Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator
 Diane Ascoti – Founder

Carol Lynne Bagley, Hillary Schau, and Terry Pearsons – Directors

Meeting Details

We generally meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month. On rare occasions, a holiday or other significant event may disrupt that schedule causing a meeting to be held on the second Wednesday. You would be informed of date changes well in advance. Other than our annual trips to MOSH, our meetings are held at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts.

Our genealogy research clinics are offered on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center. The cost of the computer class is \$10 for non-members; free for members of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

We look forward to you joining us at our next meeting!

[Return to Contents page](#)

Membership

Like most things in life, membership is not free - but for our reasonable annual membership fee (\$30), you get a lot for your money.

Reasons to Join Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

1. Meet people with similar interests of family history and genealogy
2. Attend monthly meetings featuring local and national presenters
3. Receive assistance from our members on your family research
4. Attend our free genealogy research clinics held twice per month (3rd & 4th Thursday of month - \$10 / session non-members)
5. Share our library of resources including books and CDs
6. Access to recordings of many past WMGS meetings and to the recent DNA boot camp and handouts in the members only section of the website.
7. Opportunity to serve as a volunteer, coach or be a member of the Board of Directors

One of our key 'member benefits' is access to the members-only page containing archived recordings of speakers from around the US: Judy G Russell, Maureen Taylor, Connie Fitzpatrick, Elissa Scalise Powell, Dr. Shelley Murphy, Nora Galvin, 'DearMYRTLE' a/k/a Pat Richley-Erickson, Russ Worthington, Melissa Barker, Jennifer Alford and our own Panel of Pros. The page also includes the handouts from most of those meetings and historical copies of 'American Elm,' the original WMGS newsletter publication.

Membership Dues

Annual membership runs from 1 September to 31 August each year. Membership rates are:

- \$30 for an individual membership
- \$45 for a couple of the same household
- \$15 for students
- \$500 for Lifetime membership

If you are new to our organization, click [here](#) for the WMGS Application for Membership; the image is near the bottom. Click to open the pdf to view, save, and print.

There are three ways to join or renew your membership:

- Pay by cash or check at the monthly meeting
- Print and mail an application, found on the Join/Renew page of our website (if a new member) along with your check, or, if renewing, just the check to
WMGS, PO Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090-0418
- Use the secure PayPal button on our website (you **do not** need to have a PayPal account, just use your debit card or credit card). Here's the link to our Join/Renew page: [JOIN](#)

Note: All first-time members must submit an application by mail or in person at a meeting, even if using PayPal, so that we have all the necessary information for our membership list.

Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 July 2019.

We are looking for articles written by our members. Have you been to a repository or a federal or state archive? Have you been to where your ancestors lived? Have you tried a new gadget or software? You do not have to write the article yourself. If you would like to do an interview about a subject, that would be helpful as well. What are you interested in? Tell us, share your knowledge.

How to Contact Us:

Have a question, comment, or suggestion for someone at WMGS?

Need information about your membership status or how to access our Members Only material?

Want to send in a query or provide an answer to one?

Have a comment or suggestion for us?

There are two options available for contacting us via email:

Our **Contact Us** page on our website has an easily completed form to use. Just enter your name, email address, topic, person to whom email is being sent, write your message, and click on Submit.

Or, you can send an email directly to us at: westmassgen@gmail.com .

Of course, you can also correspond with us by sending mail to:

WMGS, Inc.
P.O. Box 418
West Springfield, MA 01090-0418

Note: Please do not write directly to any board member's personal or business email. For legal reasons, our board members cannot conduct WMGS business using emails, other than through WMGS. Thank you for your consideration.

E-Mail Update

Please let us know if you have changed your e-mail address, mailing address and/or phone number. We want to make sure that you continue to receive all of our updates, meeting reminders and electronic newsletters. Just send your name and new email address to us at WestMassGen@gmail.com.

