

GSHA Members:

I want to thank the GSHA Board and you for the support I have received on assuming the role of President of GSHA. I hope I can fulfill this role with the honor and dignity that GSHA deserves.

As I step into the position of President, I see that we are at a crossroads for the continuation of GSHA. Looking at our Mission Statement, I see nothing has changed in our quest for genealogical, educational and historical knowledge. When GSHA and its subsequent chapters were formed, the internet was still in its infancy; research was limited, DNA testing was non-existent or extremely expensive.

Jump ahead 30 years and we are inundated with internet information; the cost of DNA testing has dropped by hundreds of dollars and new research tools are almost too numerous to decide which is best to use. In fact, a whole new class is needed just to decide how to best research your family tree. But the best method is still reading and gathering of like-minded people to get started on an adventure of a lifetime, because the more you know, the more you want to know.

There are two areas I see that need to change or, at the minimum, be refined. The first is the continuing struggle year in and year out of recruiting board officers and committee members for the various committees. As stated at the 2019 Annual Business Meeting during the conference, this organization cannot continue without a board and cannot operate without committees to accomplish our goals.

I don't know the answer to this problem, because the chapters themselves face this very situation every year as well. Many of us on the GSHA board are also performing duties on their respective chapter's boards. The easy answer is that more members need to step up to the challenge.

Some of these positions are not easy and at times can be and are time consuming. But the rewards can be incredibly satisfying both on a professional as well as personal level.

As John Kennedy stated, "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win, and the others, too."

So you can be sure we will be looking for solutions and reaching out to our members in the coming months.

The second of my concerns is the financial stability of GSHA, some of which has been alleviated because of the last two conferences being quite profitable which I will address more later in this message. First, I will give you a brief review of what led the GSHA board to take the actions we felt were necessary in the last few years

In 2017, under the leadership of President Paul Gomez, we decided to arrange our finances into three categories: an operating account, a conference account and a savings (reserve) account, so we knew exactly what funds we had to operate GSHA. With the creation of the conference and savings accounts and the conference profits from 2018 and 2019, we are now in a more stable financial position to meet the needs of our conferences and day-to-day expenses, as well as having money available for future projects.

In the past, the GSHA operating account has shown that we are spending more than we bring in. Most of our revenue comes from membership fees and a small amount from journal sales. This does not cover our operating expenses, and we have relied on conference profits to cover this shortfall. That is not a good practice to embrace, and you would not do that on a personal basis, let alone a business basis. We cannot and should not rely on our conferences being profitable every year and using it as a backup to our operating expenses.

We have recently instituted some cost-cutting in the areas of reducing conference calling costs by 87%, (approximately \$500.00 to \$700.00 per year) over the last two years, and we will be moving to a smaller PO box size for an additional savings of \$142.00 per year. I will also be meeting with the Finance Committee soon which has already come up with some other possible cost cutting ideas and suggestions on generating more income. At this point, there is no sacred cow; all items will be looked at and evaluated as to its benefit to GSHA.

Getting back to the profits made from the last two conferences, there were special circumstances that made this possible. One, we held them in a public venue (library) where, in this case, the Pueblo City/County Public Library did not charge for meeting room space or software training facilities. Nor were we charged for audio/visual equipment and technical assistance.

We also saved on the creation and printing of our conference program thanks to two long-time GSHA-SC members: Cathy Romero, who volunteered her graphic arts expertise and Donie Nelson who volunteered her editing expertise. In addition, the conference program printing costs were donated by the Pueblo City/County Public Library.

These benefits may not be available in the future and should never be assumed they will be when budgeting for our conference.

In all, our savings were between \$5,000.00 to \$8,000.00, which fortunately went straight to the bottom line the last two years. I would strongly encourage any future conference committee to consider this model in the planning of future conferences.

Because we are a non-profit does not mean we cannot seek profit for our organization. We, as well as any for-profit business, cannot afford to incur a deficit on its operating side as GSHA has had for the last few years.

As I stated earlier, we are at a crossroads. I do not mean to alarm or suggest that GSHA is on its last leg, but it does have one leg tied to a post and it needs to break that rope.

You can help us move forward and break that rope by volunteering a few hours of your time for a board position or committee, paying your membership dues on time at the beginning of each year, sending us your suggestions to the Finance Committee, Ron Maestas, rnrball@gmail.com for improving our financial status and inviting your friends and neighbors to join us as members of your chapters and this great Society.

Contact any of your board members now with your ideas and check the GSHA website often for updates and news.

Respectfully,

Bob Craig

GSHA President