

Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 2 April 2008

Celebrate [National DNA Day](#) April 25!

From the Director -

Untangling the DNA Companies

Genetic testing for genealogy has been commercially available for eight years now. In less than a decade, there have been so many mergers, acquisitions, and affiliations, that it is enough to make your head spin! It seems like an appropriate time to untangle the history of these commercial connections.

Family Tree DNA (FTDNA), founded in 2000 in Houston, Texas by Bennett Greenspan, was the first company to market Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA testing solely for genealogy. For a brief period beginning in 2003, FTDNA was a reseller of the AncestrybyDNA test (see below.)¹ FTDNA now offers a line of autosomal DNA tests as a result of their 2006 acquisition of the Berlin, Germany-based DNA-Fingerprint.² From 2003 until 2007, FTDNA had an agreement with Ancestry.com that when a site visitor on Ancestry.com entered their surname in the search field, it would link to a Family Tree DNA project for that surname if one existed.³ Family Tree DNA currently has testing partnerships with *African DNA*, *iGENEA*, *National Geographic Genographic Project*, and *DNA Ancestry and Family Origin*. Testing is performed through the University of Arizona and Family Tree DNA's Genomics Research Center.⁴

Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation (SMGF) Began as a DNA testing project launched by James LeVoy Sorenson in 2000 at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Students could contribute a DNA sample along with a four generation pedigree chart, and receive \$10 for their efforts. In 2003, the BYU project was relocated to Sorenson's headquarters in Salt Lake City and became known as the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation (SMGF) project. Testing is through Sorenson Genomics laboratory.⁵

In 2001, Sorenson launched a commercial genetic genealogy-oriented company, Relative Genetics. Ancestry.com purchased Relative Genetics in 2007 and renamed the company DNA Ancestry; testing is still performed through Sorenson Genomics.⁶

GeneTree, originally a paternity testing company based in San Jose, California was purchased in 1997 by Sorenson.⁷ In following years, the company offered genetic genealogy testing through Relative Genetics and was a reseller of the AncestrybyDNA DNAPrint test. After the sale of Relative Genetics to Ancestry.com, Sorenson announced in early October 2007 that GeneTree and Indentigene, a Houston, Texas based company that Sorenson acquired in 2006 would be merged. GeneTree then debuted as a social-networking genetic genealogy company tied into the SMGF database in late October 2007.⁸

DNAPrint Genomics - Founded in 2000 and headquartered in Sarasota, Florida, DNAPrint produces the AncestryByDNA test which utilizes autosomal DNA. DNAPrint acquired Richmond, CA based Trace Genetics in 2005.⁹

(See footnote #4 for more company info and links)

Sources:

¹<http://www.familytreedna.com/faqdnaprint.html>

²<http://www.dna-fingerprint.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=11&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

³<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/genealogy-dna/2004-05/1084463529>

⁴<http://www.isogg.org/ydnachart.htm>

⁵<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/1,1249,600129402,00.html>

⁶http://www.sorensongenomics.com/latest_news.html

⁷<http://web.archive.org/web/19981111184319/http://www.genetree.com/>

⁸<http://eon.businesswire.com/releases/genetree/sorenson/prweb563424.htm>

⁹<http://eastbay.bizjournals.com/eastbay/stories/2005/06/20/daily24.html>



Congratulations to Maylene C. who won the Save GINA Contest! She won a signed copy of "Trace Your Roots With DNA", a Family Tree DNA tote bag, t-shirt, pen, and \$99 worth of testing which she plans to apply towards an mtDNA full genome sequence upgrade!



Many thanks to Family Tree DNA for donating prizes and profiling the contest in their newsletter, "[Facts & Genes](#)". Below is a map of the GINA contest entries of letters sent to U.S. senators by their constituents:



Additionally, thirty-two letters were sent to Sen. Tom Coburn (OK) and thirty-seven were sent to Sen. Harry Reid (NV). The Sierra Club estimates that every letter sent to a legislator represents between 8 to 10 constituents. In applying this estimate to the GINA contest, this means that entrants represented over 1,700 registered voters!

Thank you for making your voices heard on this important issue! While the contest is officially over, no action has been taken on GINA in the Senate so if you have not already done so, you can still make your opinion count by sending a letter to your senators:

<http://www.isogg.org/savegina.htm>

Thanks also to Megan Smolenyak-Smolenyak, Blaine Bettinger, and Emily Aulicino for profiling the contest in their blogs. (Notice that the highest number of entries were from Oregon? Kudos to Emily, ISOGG Pacific Northwest Regional Coordinator!)



*Free & Fun
DNA Stuff!*

Who doesn't love FREE stuff, especially when its DNA stuff!

[FREE Human Genome poster](#) - it takes about three months to arrive, but is well worth the wait. (Available to U.S. residents only)

[FREE DNA T-shirt transfer](#) - download and iron-on

Take this fun genetic genealogy quiz! Test your knowledge!

[Your Genetic Genealogy Smarts](#)

Quiz created by Blaine Bettinger, PhD - ["The Genetic Genealogist"](#)

And of course, [ISOGG](#) is FREE!



RootsTelevision.com Wins Four Telly Awards in Its First Year

PROVO, UT, March 26, 2008 – RootsTelevision.com, an online channel dedicated to all aspects of genealogy and family history, has been recognized in the 29th Annual Telly Awards for four of its original productions. Selected from more than 14,000 shows were “DNA Stories: A Tale of Two Fathers” (documentary), “Heir Jordan: Extreme Genealogy” (entertainment), “Roots Books: Psychic Roots” (talk show), and “Flat Stanley’s Family Tree” (children’s audience).

“We’re delighted,” said RootsTelevision.com co-founder, Marcy Brown. “To receive this kind of recognition during our first year of existence is remarkable, and winning in four different categories is even more astonishing. We take this as an indication that our decision to pioneer online programming for the substantial but neglected niche of millions of genealogists was a risk worth taking.” The four winning shows include an episode of “DNA Stories,” a series that focuses on the exploding hobby of genetic genealogy and shows how avid roots-seekers are using DNA testing to solve family history riddles. The award-winning “Tale of Two Fathers” episode features Bob Zins and his efforts to determine whether the man who raised him was really his father.

http://rootstelevision.com/players/player_dna.php?bctid=240040765

Founded in 1978, The Telly is the premier award honoring outstanding local, regional and cable TV programs, as well as the finest video and film productions. The Telly Awards, a highly respected international competition, annually showcases the best work of the most respected production companies in the world.

RootsTelevision.com was co-founded by producer, Marcy Brown, and professional genealogist, Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak (yes, her real name). Marcy and Megan, who frequently refer to themselves as “two chicks and a channel,” launched online in late 2006 and already provide more than 1,000 videos – free, on-demand and 24/7 -- for family history enthusiasts around the globe. For more information, please visit www.rootstelevision.com.

NY Times' Amy Harmon awarded a Pulitzer

APRIL 2008 - "For a distinguished example of explanatory reporting that illuminates a significant and complex subject, demonstrating mastery of the subject, lucid writing and clear presentation, in print or in print and online, Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

Awarded to Amy Harmon of The New York Times for her striking examination of the dilemmas and ethical issues that accompany DNA testing, using human stories to sharpen her reports."

<http://www.pulitzer.org/year/2008/explanatory-reporting/>



DNA in the News

DNA in the News

The most recent DNA articles appearing since our last newsletter -

- [DNA tests could force a rewrite of city's history book](#) - L.A. Times - 6 Apr 2008
- [Tamil Nadu Family Traces Roots to 70,000 Years Back](#) - Ground Report - 5 Apr 2008
- [Computer Program Reveals Anyone's Ancestry](#) - LiveScience - 4 Apr 2008
- [DNA may solve mystery of Anastasia](#) - Charlotte Observer - 3 Apr 2008
- [New Evidence of Earliest North Americans](#) - The S.F. Examiner - 3 Apr 2008
- [U.S. scientist seeks Dene saliva swabs to track human journey](#) - CBC News - 1 Apr 2008
- [When oral history meets genetics](#) - The Jerusalem Post - 30 Mar 2008
- [Crusaders sowed seeds of modern Beirut](#) - Times Online - 28 Mar 2008
- [Finding deep roots, new genomics software infers ancestry with high accuracy](#) - Stanford News Service - 19 Mar 2008
- [Mi'kmaq people one step closer](#) - Advertiser - 13 Mar 2008

For more archived articles:

<http://www.isogg.org/newsarchives.htm>

The ISOGG newsletter is a membership benefit of the world's first society founded for the promotion and education of genetic genealogy, ISOGG - The International Society of Genetic Genealogy. Membership is FREE! Members automatically receive the newsletter to share the latest news and happenings in the world of genetic genealogy.

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