

# Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 1 March 2008

## From the Director

Welcome to our first ever ISOGG newsletter! Our newsletter strives to keep you up to date on the latest happenings in the genetic genealogy community and what's new in ISOGG. Of utmost importance is the coming deadline for ISOGG's Save GINA Contest:

"GINA" is the acronym for the Genetic Information and Privacy Act (H.R. 493) which is stalled in the Senate by a hold placed on the bill by Senator Tom Coburn (OK). If you might be on the fence or perplexed as to how GINA is related to you or to genetic genealogy, read the following letter/contest entry and it should help you to understand why its important that you support GINA:

*"Knowing ones genetic makeup is an invaluable tool to know what diseases to keep a close check for. For myself, finding out that our family group had Ashkenazi Jewish lineage discovered through family genealogical DNA testing, which we did not have prior knowledge of, lead me to have a DNA test for the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene, which revealed a peculiar mutation. I have relatives who likewise need be tested, but are fearful to do so because "GINA" has yet to be brought to the floor."*

If people are fearful of testing for medical genetic information, it will cross over to genealogical DNA testing as well. To someone who doesn't know the differences, a DNA test is a DNA test, is a DNA test. There is a recent update in regards to GINA, since H.R. 493 cannot be approved in the Senate until the hold is removed or until House Majority Leader, Senator Harry Reid (NV) brings GINA for a floor vote, Rep. Louise Slaughter has attached GINA to the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Act of 2007 which has passed the House. Enter the "**Save GINA Contest**"<sup>(link removed)</sup> for a chance to win a free DNA gift bag worth approx. \$150 and let your senators hear their constituents voice!

-Katherine Borges  
ISOGG Director



## DNA Testing & Native American Tribal Membership

by Shoshone Peguese-Elmardi

I did not awake one day and decide that I would be an "Indian Princess". There is no such thing. Us Native Americans know that. I cannot count how many times people that I have encountered those who tell their stories of a "Cherokee" Great Grandmother or a "Black Foot" Ancestor. For me, this was serious journey deep into my ancestral past so that I would have something to pass on to my children and their descendants in the future. I have always known I was Native American. As far back as anyone can remember in my family, our family has always resided in the "Carolinas" of the Southeast.

I spent ten years researching my maternal line trying to find some answers on my G-G-G-grandmother. No, she was not Cherokee. The Cherokee were one of many indigenous tribes that inhabited the Carolinas. In the Southeast at that time, being an Indian was not talked about. All of the smaller tribes were pushed off their land and forced to live elsewhere and assimilate; many losing much of their culture or language, reclassified and simply not allowed to exist. Many Native people and their descendants lived in small groups, mingling with others along the way, some managing to keep the oral history alive of who our people were. Others kept to themselves as best they could.

My mother would tell stories of our Indian "Uncle Frank". My grandmother would grow squash, pumpkins and gather nuts and fruits much as her Indian ancestors had done long ago. Time had passed our family and we only had the oral history of our Indian ancestry left to pass on. Many of our ways were gone. As a young girl, I was the last hope. It would be left up to me to document and find out as much as I could. I asked lot of questions, my grandmother would take us to the Pee Dee River to fish and tell stories on our summer trips to visit the Carolinas. There was something hauntingly beautiful about that river that flows between North Carolina and South Carolina. I felt a strong and deep connection to this place. Was it something genetic?

After researching for ten years and coming up with some clues, I hit that infamous brick wall. I needed something to take me over it. I wanted to know if this family lore of our native ancestry was true, and if so, what tribe was she from? I never heard Cherokee. Many of the family elders said she was Indian but they did not know what tribe. They told me somewhere from around the Pee Dee, we have relations there. That is most of what they knew. By this time, I had already sent off my DNA test kit. I knew that at anytime, I would be sitting face to face with Dr. Spencer Wells on the computer from the Genographic Project to unravel my ancestral mystery. He would give his personalized description of the journey of my ancestors and their origins and where they lived and settled. There it was! 15,000 or more years of my history right there before me. Haplogroup A2. My people had been some of the first to populate America. Me learning to make and bead moccasins, attending pow-wows, and leaping and participating in my culture was something in my genes...in my DNA.

I took this DNA information and all of the genealogical work including documented interviews from family elders I had done and contacted one of the tribes of Pee Dee Indians in SC. My family's surnames started to tie in as well with some of the Indian families there, further verifying a connection. I asked for an application and asked if I could submit my DNA proof with my application. The tribe was very interested in looking at the DNA results along with my genealogy. I sent my years of hard work off to see if I had found my rightful place and tribal connection. I was notified that it had been accepted by the tribal committee and that my children and I would be tribal members and placed on their tribal rolls! I have since received my tribal certificate in the mail.

My family was very proud of me. To be honest, they were amazed at how DNA was used to help in tracing our family tree. I am sure my ancestors were also. I could feel it. DNA testing has proved that the Native people that once lived for thousands of years in that area and their descendants are still there and they will live on through me and my children, and hopefully future generations.



## *The Armchair Geneticist*

*when hobby produces science*

Thomas Bopp, retired professor of chemistry from the University of Hawaii, once said that "Genetic genealogy is the only other science hobby besides astronomy where the hobbyists make discoveries." This section is devoted to recognizing those discoveries and their applications in science.

**12 March 2008** - Published genetics study "[The Phylogeny of the Four Pan-American MtDNA Haplogroups: Implications for Evolutionary and Disease Studies](#)" utilizes a mitochondrial DNA sequence uploaded to Genbank by a client of Family Tree DNA. This is the first known instance of a study using data submitted through a commercial testing company being used for science. Accession# [EF648602](#)

**Mar 2008** - "Cluster analysis of extended Y-STR haplotypes leads to discovery of a large and widespread sub-clade of Y Haplogroup J2 [abstract 994]. by Bonnie Schrack, Whit Athey, and James Wilson and presented at the annual meeting of The American Society of Human Genetics, October 2006, New Orleans, Louisiana was cited in the genetics study "Differential Y-chromosome Anatolian Influences on the Greek and Cretan Neolithic".

The [ISOGG YSNP Tree](#) is a phylogenetic tree compiled from all available published or commercial Y-chromosome haplogroup SNP data. While many on the ISOGG Tree Team are scientists, the ISOGG Tree is a volunteer collaborative effort. Recent citations of the ISOGG Tree by the scientific community:

**13 Feb 2008** - ISOGG Tree cited in genetics study "Pinghua population as an exception of Han Chinese's coherent genetic structure".

**30 Jan 2008** - Personal genome company, DeCODEme provides a link to the ISOGG Tree in the results section.

**20 Jan 2008** - ISOGG Tree cited in genetics study "A Rare Y Chromosome Missense Mutation in Exon 25 of Human USP9Y Revealed by Pyrosequencing".



### **Famous DNA - James "Earthquake McGoon" McGovern**

The first American combat fatality (along with his co-pilot) in Vietnam, James "Earthquake McGoon" McGovern was a WWII fighter ace. On May 6, 1954, his plane was shot down over Laos. The remains were discovered in 2002 and DNA testing was conducted in 2006.

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

### **Famous Haplogroups**

Chris Haley (Alex Haley's nephew) and David Paterson (NY Governor) added to Famous Haplogroups:

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

### **Ancient DNA - Lichtenstein Cave Bronze-Age Family**

Through anthropological DNA testing, the first prehistoric family tree has been established. From a group of forty human remains found in the Lichtenstein cave, near Dorste, Lower Saxony, Germany, viable DNA was extracted from three related individuals.

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

### **DNA in the News**

[Indian DNA Links to Six 'Founding Mothers'](#) - ABC News - 12 Mar 2008  
[Genome studies show that humans are all mixed up](#) - Philadelphia Inquirer - 22 Feb 2008  
[The Lt. Governor's DNA: A Citizen of the World](#) - NYNow - 13 Feb 2008

For more articles:

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

#### DNA Stories

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

#### Presidential DNA

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

#### NEW to the ISOGG Speaker's List:

Dirk Schweitzer

**Region:** Indiana, Michigan, Illinois

**Specialty:** Circu-mediterranean DNA

**Bilingual:** English & German

**Terms:** [Contact](#)

Need a DNA Speaker?:

<http://isogg.org/resources/speakers.html>

For upcoming DNA Presentations:

[http://isogg.org/resources/meetings\\_and\\_events.html](http://isogg.org/resources/meetings_and_events.html)

#### ISOGG on Social Networking Sites

[Facebook](#)

[GenealogyWise](#)

LinkedIn (Send request for [invitation](#) - ISOGG-members only site)

[MySpace](#)

[Twitter](#)

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*Featured  
DNA Project*



If you or a family member is mitochondrial haplogroup H, and have tested through Family Tree DNA, Genographic, African DNA, or iGENEA, then you need to be in the [mtDNA H Haplogroup Project](#)! Administrator Rebekah Canada has spent many, many hours working on the [project's 2008 annual report](#). There is also a sale going on for H members

where they can purchase a full genomic sequence test (FGS) also known as the "MEGA" for a reduced rate - but hurry, its a limited time offer.

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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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