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**VAFHO VOICE
NEWS BULLETIN
MARCH 2005**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-

I was recently asked why it is necessary to have a state organisation of family history groups such as VAFHO when a national organisation such as AFFHO exists and I thought this would be a good opportunity to detail some of the reasons. Although there are a number of national issues that concern genealogists such as preserving the census records for future generations, most of the archives and repositories used by family historians here in Victoria, such as the State Library of Victoria (SLV) the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV) and the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages are all state run. Regular VAFHO meetings provide a forum for representatives from these organisations and other genealogical groups to share information, discuss concerns and network. A good example of the benefits of the genealogy community working together in Victoria is the new digitising project at PROV

The Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), which is the family history branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently signed a contract with the PROV to digitise the wills and probate files from 1844 to 1925. The first camera team began digitising in November and another camera and two more operators will arrive in the next few weeks to speed up the process. There are over 305,000 files with many documents in each to copy, so it is a big project. These are the most heavily used records at the PROV and contain valuable genealogical data

To maximise the benefits of this project, the digital images need to be linked to a surname index so they can be accessed online via the PROV website, which can only be achieved by manually keying the information contained in the probate indexes into a database and then linking it to the digital images. The GSU has developed new indexing data software that allows this to be done by volunteers in their own homes

All that is required is a PC and internet access to periodically download the data to be indexed. The LDS have agreed to provide a number of volunteers along with the software and technical support. As this will benefit all Victorian family historians, I believe it would be good to also involve other groups so that it becomes a VAFHO initiative. Please let me know if you are interested in being part of this project, even if you have only one or two members who can spare the time

VAFHO is involved in a number of other activities. For several years now I have represented VAFHO on the State Library User Organisations Council (SLUOC). One area in which they have been very proactive is in successfully lobbying the state government for the provision of suitable purpose –built long term storage for the SLV, which was recently announced.

I also represent VAFHO on the State Library Genealogy Users Group, which was formed by Ann-Marie Schwirtlich CEO and State Librarian.

VAFHO is also a regular participant in similar groups organized by the PROV, such as the PROV Stake Holder group, Archives@Victoria Review Group and the Reading Room Review Group. Although our member groups may not see all the work that is being done, there is much going on behind the scenes.

Jenny Harkness

VAFHO President

Treasure Chest, 2006

VAFHO is working to organise a showcase-to be called **Treasure Chest**

Venues have been investigated and almost finalised.

The sub-committee has come up with some wonderful ideas, which we are looking to inaugurate. The date is likely to be in August 2006 .

We hope that societies, individuals and commercial organisations will be interested in this event where you will be able to sell your publications . Further details will be sent to you in May. Mrs Pat Eade is the convenor .

State Conference-2007

This is to be held in 2007.Originally this was scheduled to be held in 2006 but the Commonwealth Games and the Australasian Congress to be held in Darwin have made it difficult to schedule another major event

We have had two societies showing interest in holding this event-in the country.

If any other society would like to be considered , please indicate an expression of interest to us in writing-ie-venue, dates, cost, accommodation available, theme, speakers

Please write to the VAFHO Secretary, details are at the end of this bulletin

The last conference at Mildura was a highly successful event. All who attended were thrilled with it.

AFFHO

Several issues that are of interest to us all are two current projects of AFFHO-the Strays Index, and the Index of Indexes.

Over the past two years AFFHO has become a vital umbrella group for Australasian societies and state associations.

Working together we can all achieve more

AFFHO website is-www.affho.org

Copyright-(from AFFHO Newsflash)

With the introduction of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States on 1 January 2005,copyright duration of many items has been extended.

The copyright period is now seventy (70) years .Items that copyright would have expired on 31 December 2004 are now out of copyright For example, a photo taken in 1945would have expired on31 December. Photos taken in 1955 will now be covered by copyright until the end of 2025.

If a publication's copyright would normally have expired in 2005 (life of the author plus fifty years) this will now be extended until 2025.

For an overview of the changes and brochures with guidance on many areas of copyright, visit the Australian Copyright Council on www.copyright.org.au

Darwin Congress 2006 The July date of this Congress has to be altered It is proposed that it will now take place from **1st -4 June 2006**

For more information check the Darwin website

<http://www.octa4.net.au/genient>

Forthcoming Events-organised by our member organisations

April-Saturday 16th The PROV and Australian Archives are holding a Family History Fair on this day. It will be held at the Victorian Archives Centre , 99 Shiel Street, North Melbourne.-car park accessible from Macauley Road or street parking in Shiel Street.

Time-10am-4pm

What's Happening-Talks, tours, conservation advice, publication sales, local history and family history group displays/stands plus Café 99 will be open for refreshments.

Shauna Hicks. Email shaunahicks@dvc.vic.gov.au

Saturday 21 May, 2005 LDS Open day at Braeside LDS, Springvale road, Braeside. 10-3pm.Speakers, consultants and displays. Entry is free.

Saturday 4 June-South Gippsland Seminar at Leongatha-

More details-Susan Hill.Phone-5682 1982 between 7pm and 8pm

Speakers-Dot Wickham, Clare Gervasoni and others to be announced

Venue to be announced

Friday 30th September-Sunday 2 October

Central Highlands Historical Association is holding its Annual Local and Family History Fair at Aquinas College, Mair street, Ballarat.

This year's theme is-"Communication-Carrier Pigeon to Computers"

A lecture will be held on the Friday evening, and on Saturday and Sunday there will be displays, information stands and further lectures on various aspects of the theme

More information will be on the website

www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/chha/chha.htm

or email the secretary at- centralhighlands@yahoo.com.au

VAFHO Website

At the moment the VAFHO website is undergoing some small changes

We would appreciate a link from your website to ours

www.rootsweb.com/~ausvafho/index.htm

VAFHO Committee-

President-	Jenny Harkness-Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Vice President-	Dot Wickham -Central Highlands Historical Association
Secretary- Group	Di Christensen -Narre Warren & District Family History Group
Treasurer-	Judy Seymour-Wodonga Family History Group

Committee members represent-AIGS, AAGRA, GSV, PROV, State Library, Gisborne Family History Group, and South Gippsland Genealogical Society.

Contact details

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