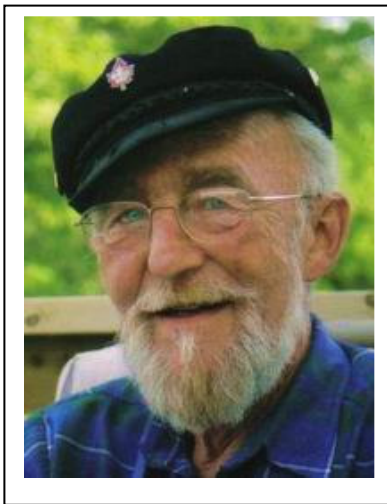


### Family Reunions Becoming Popular



Family reunions are a marvelous opportunity for genealogists and family historians as well as a lot of fun. Of course they are a lot of hard work to organize but the opportunity to meet relatives, share our findings with them, stimulate and maintain their interest, get those mysterious people in our photographs identified, and gather new information and support are well worth the effort.

There is a branch of my Mason family that holds an annual get together in Michigan and reports from it this year are very encouraging. In mid-August Margaret McGregor hosted the first one for her family since 1933, in Perth. It was very successful and she had a great turn out. The displays of photos, copies of archival material, and family trees were real grabbers. Guest speakers added a further dimension and, of course, the opportunity to meet other family members made it a very memorable occasion. A lot of family history was also shared and enthusiasm for it kindled or strengthened.

It didn't happen by itself, however, and Margaret began working on it a year ahead. She equates the planning of it to something like

preparing a thesis or boning up for a final exam.

Rick Libbey of Almonte recently attended the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of the Libby Family Association. It has to be some sort of record for a family association to have thrived for so long and is a real credit to its active members.

Libby family members have gone on to found The Libbey Glass Company (Edward Libbey 1854-1925) which has been in operation for 186 years and Libby Foods (Albert Albion Libby 1831-1899) whose labels we find on our grocery shelves.

That association was founded to continue the genealogical research begun by Charles Libby in 1879 and today it boasts 870 members. If you have a connection to the Libby/Libbey family, you might want to drop Rick a line at: [poppa\\_libbey@hotmail.com](mailto:poppa_libbey@hotmail.com)

Rick is also the editor of the Libby Family Association Newsletter and you can get a flavor of what's in store at the reunion by reading the on-line version at: [www.libbyfamily.org](http://www.libbyfamily.org). It is an excellent newsletter and could well serve as a model for others.

I have never organized a family reunion, so I am not about to give any advice, but I was intrigued by Margaret and Rick and decided to find out something about it. Without even trying, I found 13 books that have been written on the subject. This gave me a hint that it was a much bigger subject than I had envisioned. There is a magazine dedicated to it, half a dozen software programs to help you plan, and innumerable websites.

Even Kentucky Fried Chicken had a site on family reunions, so naturally I checked it out. While the proposed menu was predictable, the rest of the information was an excellent summary of what various other experts were presenting and they have a proposed planning calendar.

Apparently the trend in family reunions is to longer ones (3 to 5 days) so that families can make it a destination for their holidays. Potluck meals and backyard barbecues are giving way to catering the meals. At least 20% of all reunions include a game of golf. It seems that genealogy and golf are two of the most popular reunion activities.

George Morgan, a popular genealogy speaker, strongly recommends having a theme for the reunion and this is echoed by other experts. Edith Wagner, the editor of *Reunions* magazine and author of *The Family Reunion Sourcebook* and *Reunions Workbook and Catalogue*, has several on-line columns filled with useful advice.

If you too are intrigued and considering planning a family reunion, you will find a portal to these on-line resources and more at: [www.cyndislist.com/reunions.htm#planning](http://www.cyndislist.com/reunions.htm#planning). Personally, I think I would like to attend one or two before I tried to plan one, but maybe I'm not as adventurous as some others.