



Other Sources to Find Speakers

by Scott Fitzgerald

There are numerous ways to find someone to present a program for your society.

- **Look Within** - The societies' members are probably one of my most used sources for programs. Your members can speak about their research, research trips, software programs, web sites, reunions, or projects they are working on. This resource can be a valuable source but it also can be easily overused. Be sure and ask your members if they know any good speakers.
- **Look Around Your Area** - There are many people in your area that can speak about topics that may have wider appeal. Your District Clerk, County Clerk, Justices of the Peace, or Judges can talk about their jobs and their duties. Their jobs and duties would also apply to most if not all of the same positions in other counties in Texas and even other states. Someone from the local funeral home could talk about their records, history, or funeral practices. Find someone to speak about the libraries, archives, or museums in your area. Ask them to spotlight their collections that are not well known, underutilized, or their favorite.
- **Look To Your Schools** - Look beyond the history department, which can be a very good source. The computer science department has people that can talk about web pages, blogs, programs, databases, and search engines to name just a few topics. Another program could be given by someone who teaches about communications, whether it be writing or interviewing. Speakers could also be found in the journalism or social science departments.
- **Look Beyond Your Area** - One of the best sources I have found is the genealogy or historical society in the next county or nearby. Be sure and join their society, Facebook page, Twitter, or Instagram feed or e-mail list. Bookmark their web page or blog that lists their programs.
- **Look Up** - There are many other directories available that list speakers. The Genealogical Speakers Guild (GSG) publishes their members on their web site at: <http://www.genealogicalspeakersguild.org/>. The Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) has listings for their members who do lectures or seminars at: <https://www.apgen.org/index.html>. There are likely more directories from other organizations.
- **Look To Your Friends and Acquaintances** - This is called networking. Go to conferences, seminars, or other societies' meetings and programs. Ask the speakers "do you have any reason to be in my city or area?" I found a speaker that way whose sister-in-law moved recently to my town. That speaker has now done several programs for my local society.

I am sure that there are other tips that I have overlooked. If you have any suggestions, please let me know and we will include in any updates of this article. When you find a good speaker, it is in your society's best interest to learn how to treat them like the treasures they can become. Be sure and read Barbara Wiley's article about taking care of speakers.