

Olenberg/Olemberg Clan's Website Possibilities:

If the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians or the Romans had had their way, our family would have vanished thousands of years ago. Then other tyrannies, including the Inquisition and the Holocaust, would have ensured our destruction. But, in spite of the almost certain probability that we should have vanished long ago, in spite of the fact that the communities that spawned us have vanished almost with no trace...our little family has survived. While not huge, our little group of clans has spread across the globe and thrived in freedom. Olenberg.org has been created to celebrate that survival; to chronicle our roots and ancestry; and to cherish the life of our families that should, by any reasonable logic, not even be the faintest memory.

There are a number of family members who have researched our ancestry and origin. In all likelihood, every person who did so duplicated, to some degree or another, the research that other family members had already accomplished. The family is dedicated to compiling that research, from each available source, and preserving the collective history and memory of our closely related clans, to make it available to our whole extended family.

The website has been designed, and implemented in early June, 2008, to be an easily accessible, online, historical resource. But, it is also intended to serve as a means and method for our small, but diverse, family to get, and keep, in touch with each other. Hopefully, it is serving as a means to bring our widespread members closer to each other. The financial cost has been minimal, but the cost in time, to take it from concept to fruition has been extensive. To maintain its purpose and growth it must be a collaborative effort, consisting of help, contributions and suggestions from the rest of our clan.

The following are features that have already been incorporated into the website. But, it needs your help in expanding this information for more family members, both living and of cherished memory. And, your own thoughts, concerns and suggestions are important for its continued growth. These can be emailed to me at olen3105@yahoo.com Please enjoy our family website. But, more importantly, become a part of it. Contribute your ideas and your content and encourage others to do so.

Olen Berg Soifer, Mays Landing, NJ USA 08-16-2008

Ancestry & Family History:

- Online and Offline Family Tree(s) downloadable & printable for all family members
- Pictures, as available, of ancestors, siblings, spouses, etc.
- Birth/Marriage/Death/Interment Records & pictures of grave markers
- Previous addresses of ancestors, as available
- More detailed biographical info on each ancestor, occupation, anecdotes, etc.
- Ship manifest info...date of emigration, origin, origin of ship, date, destination
- Pictures of ships that brought the family out of Europe
- Scans of historical family documents, birth/marriage certificates, newspaper articles, obituaries, etc.
- Social security numbers of deceased family
- (webspaces permitting...) audios &/or videos, interviews, etc.

Our Origins:

- Research & speculation on "ancient" family history/origins; & origin on family surname(s)
- Research/efforts/results regarding "lost" individuals or branches of the family

Current Family:

- Interviews/Oral histories from our senior members (before they are lost forever...)
- Basic family members' information (Mo/Yr of Birth/location & general, present location)
- Spouses and children

Pictures of individuals and families
Occupation, hobbies & interests
Offers of professional services to family members
Links to family-member-sponsored websites, family-members publications
Contact email/cell phone (*Specific street addresses & home numbers might not be encouraged for security purposes. But, personal contact information can be protected by passwords, etc. Comments on this are invited.*)

Misc. Website Options Already Implemented:

- Global Calendar for birthdays, anniversaries, yahrtzeit, current/coming family events around the world
 - Traditional Recipes...Because we have various cuisines as part of our family (Eastern European, various regions of the USA, Cuban/Latin American, Middle Eastern, etc) plus additional cuisines that have become part of our family thru marriages, these can be very interesting and enjoyable. These recipes could become a lost resource as older generations leave us. This could also be a way to share “new food traditions”...that is, recipes that have become traditions in individual family groups. The various widespread family members could rate each recipe and offer suggestions and variations. This could be like a world-wide Olenberg/Olemborg “cookoff”.
- [PROPOSED] Printed version of a worldwide family cookbook.
- Free Olenberg.info/org or Olemborg.info/org email addresses. (Care must be taken, however, not to allow this to be abused, as commercial uses, spam or large files can begin to cost a lot.)
 - [JUST ADDED] An “Art Gallery” were our family members who are talented in the “fine arts” can proudly show off their works. This could include excerpts of family members writings, even musical clips, films, etc.
 - Free classified ads for family members
 - Search Engine of the website
 - Interactive family forums/blogs to share thoughts, news, advice, misc. genealogical and contact info. Specific contact information could be in a secure, password protected area of the forum.
 - [AVAILABLE THRU THE MAIN WEBSITE OR FORUM, FOR MEMBERS OF EACH] A bulk email generator could facilitate the sending of news/invitations to multiple persons, or the whole clan.
 - An email form function could facilitate emails between family members without exposing them to spam.
 - Free copy of (or link to) Family Tree Builder Software (works in English, Spanish, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, Yiddish, etc). This software is GEDCOM compatible and can print out bilingual family trees in color, etc.
 - Free copies of (or links to) other free software, such as photo-editing software, albums, etc.
 - Free genealogical charts and data sheets to enable transferring rough notes to be more organized, as well as to allow more methodical searches for additional data.

- Links to genealogical databases, books about genealogical research, printers of inexpensive or elaborate (wall chart) family trees, etc.
- Hints for genealogical research and links to other hints
- Family Chat Room with the ability to create private rooms for confidential chat
- A World Portal with a large number of common links that people utilize, with a link to the family website, and "one-click" ability to make it your own internet "home page".
- Games for adults and children to encourage visits to the website.
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Wish List for Revisions and Additions. These will be removed from the wish list as they are implemented:

(Comments, in italics, by OBS)

(Diane Benjamin) We could have an annual family reunion (in the city which houses the oldest surviving family member?) A person, or persons, with the skills to organize such an event could be put in charge of it.

(Olen) I suggest that we have a, sort of, “executive committee” consisting of one of each of the siblings from each family of “our generation” to act as a clearinghouse for potential web material coming from the rest of the family. In addition, it should include those more senior members of the family, who have an interest in the project, as advisors. *(...Just trying to keep this from being a “free-for-all” and make the project a bit more workable and organized Depending upon how this grows, several “committees” might be needed.)*

(Shari Olenberg Nitzan) “There is a website that my friend's family uses (in which) (e)veryone can...put their photo and info. into it and it makes a family tree...and it keeps being updated.” *(...No single website like that provides all of the functionality that I would hope we can provide for the family site. I also fear that a site that is hosted by a third party could be a problem if fees are later instituted, or all information is lost if they discontinued the service, etc. On the other hand, our site must be a collaboration that, at least to some extent, is updateable by individual family members. That is not only a good idea; it is a necessity. Otherwise, the maintenance of the site would be an huge burden on one person A number of the aspect of any site I create, such as the blogs, forums, photo albums, etc already have the built-in functionality for individuals to make corrections, additions, have input, etc.)*

(Olen) In terms of collaboration...I am a technical, math, finance, science –oriented sort of person. Unfortunately, I have not inherited the artistic capabilities that other family members have. I would hope that the artists in the family (such as Paul Chaleff, etc) would be supportive of this with their conceptions, if nothing else. That would help the site to be attractive, in addition to being functional.

(Diane Benjamin) We could have a family historian, curator/archivist, web designer, reunion coordinator, etc... *(...I agree that this could turn into quite an involved project and any family members who want to take on, or divide up, specific needed functions of the project should all be able to do a share of the work and contribute to the project.)*

(Olen) As we are scattered around the globe, it would be interesting for family members to contribute some travel information for their own region (ie: where to stay in Israel or Argentina; where to eat to Boston or Dallas or Atlantic City, etc.) That could be both helpful to those family members who do travel, and it could be a lot of fun. This could easily be done within the family forum and would not need any moderating by a third party.

Taking it a Step Further - "The Olenberg Society"

We could take this proposal a step further by establishing a genuine family organization that goes beyond being a resource of family history and contact information:

(Olen) We could establish a fund to allow us to offer emergency loans, at no interest, to other family members that are going thru a period of financial crisis. *The Book of Exodus (Mishpatim, Civil Legislation - Chapter 22, verse 24) states "Thou shalt not exact interest from the needy among you". Maimonides said, "A loan is better than charity, for it enables one to help oneself." Guided by the precept of Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of loving kindness) and Maimonides' highest level of tzedakah (righteousness), this could provide the means for our family to help other family members make a fresh start, bridge a difficult time in their lives and re-achieve self-reliance. In a dignified, respectful way, these loans could help family members who: Need the money for genuine emergency, worth-while purposes; Are unable to obtain a loan elsewhere; Are able to repay the loan over a reasonable period of time.*

(Olen) We could establish an annual scholarship program to award one or more of our college age family members for high achievement in the arts or sciences, etc. The size of the reward is less important than the whole concept of giving an award for that achievement.

(Olen) We could start a global fund for charitable purposes to aid our favorite regional charities with donations given out in the name of the whole family. The whole family should have the opportunity to offer their own input regarding who would be the beneficiar(ies) of our charity.

(Olen) To support the free loans & scholarships, we could establish a P2P lending function that does charge interest...to offer loans to those persons whose financial need is not of an emergency nature. Generally, these types of loans are, as the name describes, "person to person", but the entity arranging the loans generally shares in the fee & interest income. In our case, we would be that entity and the income would support our benevolent interests.

(Olen) We could further support our benevolent interests by offering the means to market items that our more talented family members create (books, works of art, etc). We could ask that a portion of their profit be donated to our "society" as a reasonable marketing fee. If we published our own family cookbook (which I think would be a real "kick"), the profits could also support our "good works".

(Olen) We could establish a global, family investment club in which every family member would have advisory input, based on their own specific talents and/or regional knowledge. A portion of the club's profits could support our benevolent works.