

The PAGC
Newsletter is
brought to you by
the Membership
Committee

Editor: Jessia
Goehring, MS, CGC

Amy Kunz, MS, CGC

Julia Stone, MS, CGC

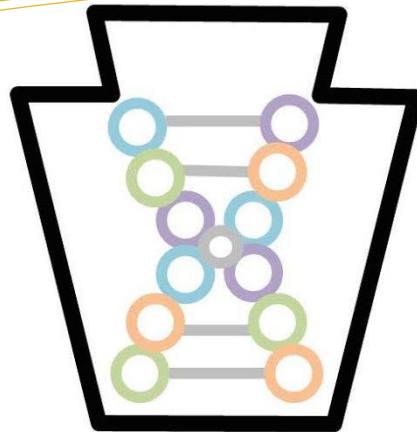
Susan Walther, MS,
CGC

Kallyn Stumm, MS, CGC

If you have anything that
you would like to share
including upcoming events,
seminars, an exciting new
career role, etc, please
contact us at :
pennsylvaniaGC@gmail.com

PAGC Mailing Address:
2021 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Website:
www.pennsylvaniaqc.org



This issue:

2020 Annual PAGC Meeting	P.1
Genetics Entertainment	P.2
Welcome to PA	P.3
Featured Genetic Counselor and License Renewal	P.4
Featured Genetic Counselor	P.5

2020 Annual PAGC Spring Meeting Online

In lieu of the 2020 Annual PAGC Spring meeting, the PAGC Education Committee is offering an **online course** featuring most of the material that was planned for the 2020 Spring Meeting!

This course includes approximately 6.2 Category 1 contact hours (0.6 CEUs) and encompasses the Sessions and Accepted Abstracts that were slated to be presented at the in-person meeting.

Purchase Information

If you paid for registration and the CEU fee for the Spring Meeting, any funds that were paid toward the meeting will cover the cost of the recorded version. A \$25 CEU fee is still due to claim CEUs if you had not previously paid them online. If you instead desire a refund, please reach out to us at pagcmembership@gmail.com so that can be coordinated.

If you were not planning to attend the Spring Meeting but are interested in watching the series for CEUs, the information to purchase this course can be found below.

Purchase Type Price

- PAGC Member: \$50 (includes CEU fee)
- Non-member: \$100 (includes CEU fee)
- Student: \$25

Course Format

The course consists of pre-recorded presentations by the speakers. The presentations include the presenter's lecture, fully synchronized to the slide presentation. Participants can listen to presentations on their own schedule.

Accessing the Course

The course recordings will be available this summer and an email with a link to the recordings and quizzes for CEU credit will be distributed to participants as soon as they are available.

Continuing Education

The Education Committee is working on NSGC CEU approval now and further information will be disseminated by email and through the PAGC website as soon as possible. **Those interested in obtaining CEUs will need to do the following:**

- **Complete viewing the course recordings by 10/15/2020**
- **Take all quizzes and receive a score of at least 80% by 10/15/2020**
- **Complete the course evaluation forms**

Additional Remote Learning Opportunities

In addition to this online series, the Education Committee is planning a **quarterly webinar series.**

PAGC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

President & Chair:

Margaret Harr, MS, CGC

Vice President:

Juliann McConnell, MS, CGC

Secretary:

Megan Marshall, MS, CGC

Treasurer:

Dr. Andrea Durst, MS, DrPH, CGC

East Regional Rep:

Tanya Bardakjian, MS, CGC

West Regional Rep:

Amy Biery Kunz, MS, CGC



This webinar series will include the two panels that were planned for the 2020 Meeting, as well as other content. CEUs will be available for this webinar series as well, and more information will be available soon. Stay tuned and watch your email inboxes!

Cont. from p. 1 PAGC Annual Meeting

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Education Committee at pennsylvaniagc@gmail.com.

PAGC Education Committee

Natalie Carter
Dana Farengo-Clark
Megan Marshall
Emily James
Wendy Glatfelter
Tara Schmidlen
Donna McDonald-McGinn
Maegan Smith
Becky Milewski

The Ataxian

Movie available on Amazon Prime

Directed by Zack Bennett and Kevin Schlanser

Starring Kyle Bryant, Sean Baumstark, John Lockwood and Mike Mellott

Review by Susan Walther, MS, CGC

The Race Across America (RAAM) is the world's toughest bicycle race. It starts in Oceanside, CA, spans 3,000 miles, climbs 175,000 feet, crosses 12 states, and finishes in Annapolis, MD. A team of four cyclists must relay 24 hours a day, regardless of weather, to complete the race in 9 days. Any endurance-trained cyclist would find the endeavor grueling. Now imagine the feat of endurance for a team of four men that includes two cyclists affected with the neurodegenerative disease Friedreich's ataxia (FA). And one of those men affected with FA is riding a recumbent trike.

The feature-length documentary, "The Ataxian," spotlights Kyle Bryant, whose will



and determination carry him and his teammates across a continent under almost impossible conditions. Their attempt to get to the finish line is inspiring, and it is the act itself that sparks others to action in their own lives to fight the endless progression of their FA disease.

Kyle went on to start the fundraising program rideATAXIA. Each year his program raises over \$1 million to fund translational research for FA. If you would like to join the virtual rideATAXIA Global Challenge, please visit https://secure2.convio.net/fara/site/TR?fr_id=1681&pg=entry.

Note: I work with Kyle Bryant at the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance. He is indeed a superhero.

Congratulations and Welcome to GCs with New Roles in Pennsylvania

Whether you are someone who relocated for work in PA or you are a student who recently graduated and accepted a job in PA, PAGC wanted to give a shout out to welcome you!

Victoria Bacon
Cardiovascular, adult, and prenatal genetics
UPMC
Previous role: University of Pittsburgh 2020 graduate

Stephanie Betts
Cancer genetics
Allegheny Health Network Cancer Institute
Previous role: University of Pittsburgh 2020 graduate

Caroline Bong
Prenatal genetics
Temple University Hospital
Previous role: University of Pittsburgh 2020 graduate

Adam Buchanan
Director of the Geisinger Genomic Medicine Institute
Previous role: Associate Professor at Geisinger

Hannah Campbell
Cancer genetics
Fox Chase Cancer Center
Previous role: Johns Hopkins/NIH 2020 graduate

Sarah Charles
Clinical genomics
Division of Genomic Diagnostics at CHOP
Previous role: Arcadia University 2020 graduate

Laynie Dratch
Neurology genetics
University of Pennsylvania
Previous role: Johns Hopkins/NIH 2020 graduate

Alyson Evans
Genetic Counselor/Research Coordinator, Geisinger
Previous role: University of Pittsburgh 2020 graduate

Alexis Heidlebaugh
Neurodevelopmental Genetics, Geisinger
Previous role: Johns Hopkins/NIH 2020 graduate

Ashley Lahr
Pediatric genetics
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
Previous role: University of Pittsburgh 2020 graduate

Rachel Lasher
Cytogenetics Laboratory
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
Previous Role: The Ohio State University 2020 Graduate

Laina Lusk
Neurology genetics
CHOP Neurology (ENGIN)
Previous role: AtlantiCare Cancer Care Institute in New Jersey (formerly part of Geisinger)

Rachel Paul
Neurology genetics, clinical and research
University of Pennsylvania
Previous role: Arcadia University 2020 graduate

Gabrielle Shermanski
Cancer Genetic Counselor/Research Coordinator at Geisinger
Previous role: Sarah Lawrence College 2020 graduate

Eric Tricou
Cardiogenetic and Cancer Genetic Counselor/Research Coordinator at Geisinger
Previous role: Stanford University 2020 graduate



EYE ON IT

PAGC Membership

Remember to renew both your NSGC membership and your PAGC membership for 2020. Being a current member of NSGC is required to be eligible to hold a full PAGC membership.

Enjoy the benefits of being a member of PAGC, including discounted registration fees for the annual Spring conference, access to our quarterly newsletter, and more! Scroll to the bottom of this [website page](#) to renew today!

New members and committee volunteers are always welcome!

Featured Genetic Counselor: Robin Grubs

This quarter the PAGC would like to feature the career and contributions of Robin Grubs, PhD, CGC to the field of genetic counseling. After serving as Program Director of the Genetic Counseling Program at the University of Pittsburgh for 22 years, she recently stepped down. She will continue to focus on teaching and mentoring in the Genetic Counseling Program as Associate Professor of Human Genetics. Dr. Grubs shared that, "These aspects of program leadership have always been the greatest source of my professional satisfaction."

Robin Grubs, herself, attended the Genetic Counseling Program at the University of Pittsburgh and graduated in 1991. She shared that her interest in the field of genetic counseling began during her undergraduate studies while she was pursuing a major in biology. "I took a number of psychology courses and nearly accumulated enough credits to have a psychology minor. I began to look at professions that would combine both of these disciplines but could not identify a career that seemed suited to my interests." She went on to say that during this time frame (1987) genetic counseling was a young and scarcely heard of profession. An astute and devoted undergraduate advisor, who had a prior student pursue genetic counseling, recommended that she research the profession. Dr. Grubs stated that reading about genetic counseling and speaking with several genetic counselors convinced her that she found her ideal career.

Throughout her career Dr. Grubs has had the opportunity to watch the ever-evolving landscape of professional opportunities for genetic counselors. Upon her graduation in 1991, she recalls

... cont. page 5



Attention Program Directors and Researchers

Are you or do you know a genetic counseling graduate student or researcher from Pennsylvania looking to recruit participants for a research project being conducted in Pennsylvania? The PAGC is now accepting research postings to be included in our quarterly newsletters.

Please email PAGCmembership@gmail.com if you have a project to advertise in an upcoming edition.

Professional Development and Continuing Education

Upcoming Events

- **American Society of Human Genetics 2020 Annual Meeting**
 - October 27-31, 2020
- **National Society of Genetic counselors 39th Annual Conference**
 - November 18-22, 2020
 - Watch for Earlybird registration



License Renewal Time

Pennsylvania Genetic Counseling Licenses expire on Dec. 31, 2020 (biennially on even numbered years). An email notification will be sent from the State Board to the email on file when the renewal period opens. Be sure that your email address is correct; you can verify your address or change it by visiting:

<https://www.pals.pa.gov/#/page/default>

The Members section of the PAGC website is updated with the links to the PA Board of Medicine and other licensure-related details. You will need to login to access this section.

LICENSE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS:

- ☑ 30 hours of NSGC/ABGC approved continuing education (3.0 CEUs)
- ☑ 2 hours of Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting training. Child abuse clearance must be submitted within 60 days of license renewal. A list of approved training resources can be found at:

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/professionallicensing/boardscommissions/pages/act-31.aspx>

Featured Genetic Counselor: Robin Grubs

pediatric and perinatal genetics were the two main practice settings. Cancer genetic counseling and additional opportunities began to arise later in the 1990's. "Over the past two decades we have seen genetic counselors enter a diverse array of settings such as cardiovascular genetics, neurogenetics, psychiatric genetics, as well as others. In addition, while genetic counseling initially focused primarily on direct patient care, non-patient facing roles have rapidly expanded and more genetic counselors have entered industry positions." During her early years in program leadership, Dr. Grubs recalls that students often were not able to find a position in their desired geographical location and/or practice setting. The landscape has evolved and now students can choose from multiple positions which, "has created the ability to negotiate for important items such as salary, budget for continuing education, memberships and other benefits."

Dr. Grubs would like to emphasize that it is always important to listen to your inner voice. Early in her professional career she worried that she lacked certain skills and essential knowledge to be successful. She admits that this concern led to missing out on some opportunities, such as volunteering with the NSGC and other organizations. "Overtime, I came to appreciate the importance of listening to one's inner voice, the voice we cultivate as a genetic counselor. When you listen to your inner voice and trust your instincts as well as your training, it is easier to seize upon opportunities that will enhance your professional satisfaction and advance your career." She also learned the valuable lesson that embracing discomfort can lead to the development of new skills. "The willingness to dive into uncomfortable situations is important throughout our professional careers since we need to acquire new knowledge and skills continuously. Sometimes, we become incapacitated by fear and stay in our usual routines. However, the familiar way is not always the best or most productive way. When we leave our comfort zone, we gain new knowledge and strive for accomplishments that we never imagined."

After working in the field for a couple of years, Dr. Grubs overcame her hesitation and started volunteering for the NSGC. Over time she became more involved with the work of various committees and appreciated the tremendous value of contributing to the efforts of an organization. Volunteering cultivated lasting collaborative relationships with genetic counselors as well as new skills and knowledge. Dr. Grubs recalls that co-chairing the NSGC Research Special Interest Group (SIG) was her first experience leading a committee and it allowed her to learn from others about their research and the different research methodologies. This experience prompted her to volunteer for other genetic organizations. "One of my most memorable volunteering experiences was serving on the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) Board of Directors from 2005 to 2009. I learned a

great deal about credentialing and accreditation and this knowledge has been invaluable as a Program Director." While on the Board, one of her fellow members encouraged her to serve as the President. She admits that at first this prospect was overwhelming, but she decided to pursue the opportunity knowing that her fellow board members were hardworking, dedicated, and supportive. "It was a time of major change for ABGC; we moved to a management company and changed the structure of the exam. We were committed to serving as good stewards for the profession and making the best decisions possible to advance the profession. Serving as President was hard work but worth every moment!" Dr. Grubs continues to volunteer with the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), ABGC, NSGC, and American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG). "With each experience I acquire new knowledge and develop a deeper appreciation of leadership skills."

When asked if there was a pivotal occurrence that opened a career opportunity, Dr. Grubs shared that it was the advertisement for the PhD in Human Genetics with a focus in genetic counseling. She spoke with the Program Director and pursued applying. "While I was not certain what I would do after completing a PhD, there were aspects of my practice that I wanted to further study." She initially assumed she would return to clinical practice after finishing the program due to her enjoyment in working with patients. However, upon entering the PhD program, the Genetic Counseling Program Director, Betsy Gettig, involved Dr. Grubs in teaching and mentoring genetic counseling students. She discovered that she really enjoyed working with students. When Betsy Gettig took a career sabbatical, she asked Dr. Grubs to serve as the Interim Program Director. "My experience as Interim Program Director confirmed that I wanted to continue my involvement in education and when Betsy returned, I was offered and accepted the position of Assistant Director of the Genetic Counseling Program." Dr. Grubs stated that as a new genetic counselor she never imagined that she would be involved in program leadership or doctoral studies. "Serving as Interim Director were pivotal in taking my career in this unexpected direction."

After a long career and one that undoubtedly has impacted many students, genetic counselors and patients, Dr. Grubs' passion for the profession is unwavering. She continues to marvel at the growth in number and variety of practice opportunities, and in the demand for genetic counselors and excitedly awaits to see what other opportunities will emerge in the future.