



Chenoweth Family Newsletter

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Dear Cousins,

I regret to inform you that, in an abundance of caution, the Board of Directors of your Chenoweth Family Association has decided to cancel the 11th Biennial Gathering of the Association, previously scheduled for July 2-5, 2020 in Little Rock, Arkansas, because of the current global pandemic of the nova coronavirus, otherwise known as COVID-19. Registrations paid to date will be refunded.

I want to specifically recognize and thank Sue Ellen Peglow, Patti Airoidi and Lawra Duy, for the very large amount of effort they have put into preparing for and organizing the planned Gathering in Little Rock. We are all very much in their debt.

The decision to cancel this Gathering has been made because our first responsibility is to protect the health and safety of our members and the public. Very little is known about the coronavirus at this time, but what is believed tells us that this disease is easy to spread and is most dangerous to people who are over 60 years old, and who have underlying health issues, such as diabetes, heart conditions, or other conditions. This describes many of the cousins who historically have made up a significant part of our attendees at previous Gatherings.

Holding the Gathering also involves a significant financial obligation for the Association, in order to reserve and get favorable hotel room rates for the Gathering. To arrange for our meeting rooms, food and other services, we have to guarantee the hotel that a certain number of rooms will be rented by our attendees. If that requirement were not met, the Association would be

required to pay thousands of dollars it doesn't have. With the concerns accompanying the coronavirus, there is a very real possibility that many cousins whom we expected to attend might instead decide to stay home and leave the Association with an obligation it could not pay. It isn't responsible for us to do that. We had to make the decision whether to cancel by April 2, 90 days before the date we had set for the Gathering, and there really wasn't any other responsible choice. We will reschedule another Gathering when we can.

We have looked at the small amount of information about the coronavirus that is available at this time. Some of that is from China, which, in the last two months has seen the daily rate of new infections go from near zero in mid-January, to about 4,000 in mid-February, and back to near zero in mid-March. That was with draconian restrictions on the Chinese population that probably are not realistically possible in the United States. Additionally, it ignores the rapid spread of coronavirus that has occurred throughout the rest of the world, and the continuing increase in reported cases, despite the absence of any comprehensive testing to determine who does or does not have the disease. Furthermore, it isn't known whether China or other countries will experience echoes of the surges of cases as new exposures occur.

With over 300 million people here in the United States, and extensive traveling still happening from many countries that have reported coronavirus cases, it is reasonable to expect that many more Americans will be exposed. Because there is virtually no testing being done to determine whether any particular American has been exposed, or has contracted the coronavirus, we are operating with no way to predict how severe this epidemic may get. So, we have to be cautious.

Now, as an Association, we need to decide how to proceed from here. For the last year, we have spent lots of time planning for the Gathering in Little Rock. That is off the table now. Instead, for the foreseeable future, the Chenoweth Family Association's Board of Directors will work on improving our communications with you. Our new website is just coming on-line and we will be spending a considerable amount of time improving it. We will be continuing to post information on our Facebook page. We hope you will frequently check out both of these sources for current information. We invite your input and suggestions regarding the future directions of the Association. Post your suggestions on the Facebook page, or send your ideas to us through the Association's website, which you will find at www.chenowethfamily.org.

Another reality we need to face is that biennial Gatherings have been our primary source of funding for the Association's ongoing expenses. Without this year's event, we can expect to have a shortfall in funding for our various activities. The Association's website is not free. We have to pay for web hosting and other website-related expenses. We have annual registration fees for the corporation. We have expenses for postage and stationery. We have expenses to document the research of our genealogists.

So, this is the place where I remind you that your Association is a public charity and that your donations are tax-deductible under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. I invite you to make a contribution, in any amount you are comfortable donating, to help the Association continue with its work until we have our next Gathering.

I am always available to answer your questions, if you don't find what you are looking for on our Facebook page or on the www.chenowethfamily.org website.

Sincerely,

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