

Our Web Master



It began as a search. Upon learning that my surname was Alford, an acquaintance whose father's given name is Alford, named after his uncle Alford, wanted to know where the name Alford came from. I did a Web search and voila! I found AAFA and the information I was looking for.

Then I started thinking. I've heard it's not uncommon for those approaching middle-age to start wondering what their roots are, so I joined.

I received enthusiastic email welcoming me from Gil who then traced my ancestors back to John Alford, Frederick County, VA. I flipped out. I'm surprised Gil didn't filter my email from that point on, I must have inundated him with questions.

Gil shows the character of this association, patience with new members and an enthusiasm and willingness to share information.

As Gil and I exchanged email, I started discovering ways I could be of service. After all, I had almost instantaneously found family that dated back to the late

1600s, it was the least I could do. First, I offered to edit the Online Newsletter, which I still do.

Then, well ... first let me say that I was employed as a Web designer with an internet company when I joined AAFA. So, when I was asked to help Kim with the Website it seemed like the natural thing to do.

Through some connections I was able to find a new home for us that wasn't going to cost us any money. We got our own domain, alfordassociation.org and Kim and I went to work redesigning the Website to make it easier to navigate and more consistent in its look. Both of us were working at the time, so it was slow going but we were making progress.

Fast forward a few months, I've been laid off for the 2nd time in less than a year, Kim is having problems juggling her work and the Website. Kim resigns, I'm asked to take over as Webmaster and then disaster strikes. The hosting service we were using pulls the plug on us with no notice. I am absolutely mortified. I want no more than to crawl under the rug and hide after changing my name to Smyth.

The Web committee goes on a search for a new service. Meanwhile, I am pulling what few connections I have to at least get a backup copy of what was on the old machine so when we land someplace new, we can at least start out where we were before. In the meantime, we forward our new domain (alfordassociation.org) to alford.com/aafa on Jimmie Alford's server. We at least have content even if it's old.

After thorough research, the Web Committee chooses a paid service and I was put in charge of getting our account set up and re-establishing the AAFA Web presence. I'm happy to say that after all the hubbub, we began operation again at the beginning of August, 2002 as alfordassociation.org.

In July, I went back to school but had August off so I have been doing my best to update the Website before classes start again. As you explore, I hope you will find

it easier to get to the information you are looking for. My goal is to eventually have the entire site look consistent and be easy to navigate. I've moved a lot of pages from Jimmie's Web server to the AAFA server, giving them a facelift as I go along.

In the future, we'll be adding a lot more information, including pictures. There's much more to come. Gil has been working on an "Alvord" section he is anxious to get up. My job along the way is to make sure we maintain a strong, vital presence on the internet, offering our members information and education about their ancestors.

I thank AAFA for its patience through these Web growing pains and especially to Max and the Web Committee for not asking me to change my name to Smyth. Their guidance and patient answers to my questions has made this task easier.

As always, if there's something you would like to see on the Website or you have comments about the current content, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'm an email away - SEAMaiden@lunisea.com.

Stephanie Alford, #1163
