

Membership

Max Ray Alford, AAFA 0230, Membership Chair & DNA Project Officer

As the recently announced changes to the Association are implemented, it will become increasingly important for all members to take an active part in not only running the Association on an almost daily basis but also volunteering to help further the goals of the Association. Most of the leadership (with a few exceptions) is getting long of tooth and very, very tired. We need younger and more energetic people to take the helm and steer the ship for a while. We recently sent out a "Special" message from the aafa-ohl newsletter group asking for nominations for officers, Hall of Fame members, and meeting sites. So far, we have received only a single reply and that was a meeting site nomination. We urgently need more participation by our members. We are not asking you to give up your first born or work 30 hours a day for the AAFA. Any volunteer sets his/her own work schedule. The majority of the work we need help on has no drop-dead deadline. You work on it as you can. Most (but not all) of us realize there are more urgent commitments in one's life than the AAFA. Please give volunteering a try. We promise it won't hurt you and we won't harass you about getting it done.

Since the elimination of dues, we have had four new members join. Unfortunately, we have had a larger number of members who have passed away than those who have joined so far this year. We were hoping, with the \$5 one-time charge, for an inundation of new members eager to join such a fine organization as ours. Unfortunately, either the word hasn't gotten out yet or hasn't gotten to the right people.

People purchasing DNA test kits has slowed to an almost crawl. Recently, we have had more non-Alfords joined the Alford Surname Group than we have Alfords. I guess a lot of people are looking for genealogical connections with anyone who matches their DNA. Unfortunately, from what I know about it, DNA testing doesn't work quite that way. You always want some kind of documentation or proof of a DNA connection. That is why when searching for genealogy connections, you should limit it to those with your own surname. Why? Even if you have a perfect match with someone who surname is different than yours, there is no way to document that relationship because the most recent common ancestor probably lived prior to the use of surnames. There are two exceptions to this. One is in the case of an adoption. If you were adopted and you find out the surname of your biological father, you should be comparing your results to the results of those with your biological father's surname and not to the results of your adopted parents surname. The other exception is the case where old family lore suggests there was a name change somewhere in the near or distant past. We have cases like both of these within the Alford Surname Group. I would urge all of you male Alfords to have your DNA tested and you females to get a male Alford cousin to have his tested. You may be surprised at the results. I know the AAFA has been surprised at some of the results.

Hope to see you at the Houston meeting in October.