

Editor's Farewell

By Pamela Alford Thompson
Editor, AAFA ACTION

This, the 46th issue of AAFA ACTION, is the last one I'll be editing for a couple of years. It's been my honor and pleasure to deliver AAFA's news and "Alford" research to you since our first 8-page issue in June 1988. Many of you have written articles, contributed photos, sent information you've found in printed sources and online, and shared your family histories. You've helped make this quarterly interesting to readers with a casual family interest as well as valuable to serious Alford genealogists.

Now I need a break! In 1988 I was five years into the revision and update of a Cole family genealogy and expected to be finished in a couple of years. I've barely touched it since then, devoting my genealogy time to Alford's instead of Coles. And not even my own Alford's! Progress on my personal lines has also been on hold.

Eager as I've been to finish my book and get back into personal research during the past few years, I was still able to devote time to AAFA until two other activities, long on the horizon, came closer into view. My husband Bruce and I are designing a new home and having it built on five acres we've owned for fifteen years near Sacramento, CA. We expect to be moving sometime in 2000. Then we'll buy a boat, take a year off, and travel around the eastern U.S. waterways. About a year ago it became obvious that continuing to edit the quarterly would be impossible!

AAFA ACTION won't have a new editor—it will be compiled by a team of dedicated and competent members who will continue to deliver quality content. Judging from preliminary

page drafts of the Winter issue, they've got some great ideas for innovative changes that I think you'll love! (As always, the team needs and welcomes your help with any aspect of the production.)

One of the striking changes you'll notice right away in the Winter issue is the inclusion of mini-biographies and photos (when available) with each new member lineage. This feature is a great way to get acquainted with members, especially those who can't make it to the meetings. Not long ago a member wrote that it isn't until we publish an "In Remembrance" article that we learn about the life of our members. With this new feature, we'll begin to correct that!

We'd also like to begin including a "Getting to Know...." article in each issue featuring longtime members. So I'll say good-bye with the first of what we hope will be a series of articles—and I'll see you in a couple of years!

Getting to Know ... Pamela Alford Thompson AAFA #30

I'm a California native—the San Francisco Bay Area and Silicon Valley, to be precise—born here in 1948. My father, Ray Dorte Alford, AAFA #459, was born in Louisiana in 1911, the second of five children of James Maxie Alford and Isabel Vogel. They lived in East Texas for a few years, moving to California in the 1920s. My mother, Marie Arnst, was born in Wisconsin in 1918, the fifth of nine children of German immigrants from the Volga region of Russia, David Arnst and Sophia Pfister.

My parents met right after WWII in San Francisco. My mother's oldest sister Emily had married a Californian and was the first of her family to leave Wisconsin. When Emily opened a restaurant in San Francisco, my mother joined her. After the war, my father decided to set himself up as a fisherman in San Francisco, but after buying

At the Saturday night banquet in San Antonio, President Gil Alford, on behalf of everyone in AAFA, presented me with a special proclamation, honoring me as the "Alford Woman of the Decade" for the 11 years that I've been the editor of AAFA ACTION.



a boat, he found out that he got too seasick. He met my mother because he was a regular customer in Emily's restaurant!

They married in 1947 and had four children. My father became a sheet metal mechanic and invested in real estate. When I was eight, they moved 50 miles south to Santa Clara, where the weather was warmer, houses had big backyards, moms didn't work, and there were kids everywhere: the suburbs. From the late 1950s, we watched the Santa Clara Valley change from an agricultural economy—one of the major fruit-producing and packing areas in the country—to its current position as a world technology center.

After high school—I graduated as valedictorian, but could actually have pushed myself a lot harder academically!—I went to college, majoring in English with the intention of becoming a high school English teacher. I graduated from San Jose State University in 1971 and got my credential there the next year, but after teaching for a year, I decided it wasn't for me.

During this time, I married Patrick James Cole (1968). Pat was born in 1949 in Grand Rapids, MI, and moved to California with his family in the 1950s. He majored in Business Administration at San Jose State and worked at a local paper, the *Palo Alto Times*, in the circulation department.

In 1972 our son Nathan Alford Cole was born. For the most part, I stayed home with Nathan while he was young. I got interested in genealogy when Nathan was born, and I had a lot of time to devote to research while I wasn't working!

In 1980 Pat and I were divorced. In 1982 I married Bruce Alan Thompson, who was born in 1944 in Erie, PA. He was lured to California in 1978 by—what else?—technology. He has worked at a number of high tech companies as an engineer and manager. Since we've been married he's gotten two masters degrees—computer science and MBA—and most recently a law degree! (He's promised: no more school!)

In 1983 I began working at Apple Computer in the Event Marketing department—we managed the sales meetings, trade shows, and product introductions. Apple was only five years old when I joined—a wild and crazy time that everyone who was there remembers as “the old Apple.” The new Apple laid me off in 1990, but they weren't finished with the Thompsons yet. Bruce joined Apple

about a month after I left and stayed there seven years!

I continued working as a contractor for this company I loved until they rehired me in 1995 as a Product Manager in the K-12 Education Sales and Marketing department. In 1999 I joined the elite group of people who've been laid off twice from Apple! And I'm now back there working as a contractor again....

Late in 1997 Apple laid Bruce off from his job in Corporate Development. He declared himself semi-retired and seized the opportunity offered by Apple's generous layoff package to launch his new career as a patent consultant. It worked! He got a client right away and continues to work part-time, usually from home (we love the Web), helping companies patent their inventions.

Nathan is on the home stretch of his 10-year college plan. He's majoring in Computer Information Services at Hayward State University and can't wait to graduate! We see Nathan, his girlfriend, and their Jack Russell terrier frequently and have a lot of fun together.

Bruce's son, Chad Alan Thompson (also born in 1972), lives in Cleveland, OH, where he is a firefighter/paramedic. He's just been promoted to Lieutenant in the Cleveland Fire Department, and at the same time he was given responsibility as Emergency Medical Services coordinator. We keep hoping Chad will move back to California, but he's doing so well in Ohio that it's not looking good!

We are looking forward to the changes in our lives and are eager to see what the next century will bring us. ♦



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Nathan, Chad
Pam, Bruce