

2023 ELECTION RESULTS FOR VICE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Vice President (Six Year Term – Two VP, Two Pres, and Two Past Pres: June 2023 to June 2029)



Mark Texel, Mid-Atlantic

Professional Qualifications and Experience: Mark has worked professionally in living history museums/parks since 1988. Currently Administrator for the New Jersey Office of Historic Sites, he directly oversees 50+ state historic sites, 20+ history professionals, and 24 nonprofit partners. He previously served as Director of the NJ State Park Service (including Office of Historic Sites) from 2012 – 2021. Mark holds B.A.'s in American History and American Music, and a Certificate in Historic Preservation. He has portrayed both civilian and military as a member of progressive living history units and leads the NJ Living History Advisory Council.

History with ALHFAM: Active in ALHFAM as an individual and/or institutional member since 1988, he served on the Board of Directors 2003 – 2006; chaired/co-chaired 4 regional meetings (Mtn. Plains & Mid-Atlantic) and served on 2 Annual Meeting and Conference committees in 1995 and 2003.

ALHFAM's most pressing issue and how they may be addressed: "A pressing issue facing ALHFAM is expanding its leadership role in living history. Another is attracting new members with diversity in age, gender identification, race, and culture. ALHFAM must champion the complexity of those who 'peopled' the lands and preserved cultural resources. We must focus on ALHFAM's core messages through a vibrant online presence to attract new members and showcase the organization's role in preserving historic trades, skills, and knowledge."

Board of Directors (Three-Year Term, June 2023-June 2026)



Sarah Edwards, Western Canada

Professional Qualifications and Experience:

Feb 2022-present – Interpretation Manager – Heritage Park Historical Village
2016-2022 – Supervisor of Interpretive Entertainment, Domestic Programs, and Costuming – Upper Canada Village
2014-2016 – Interpretation Supervisor, 1920s Era – Fort Edmonton Park
Prior to entering living history full-time, I worked in local museums for several summers developing programming and as a frontline interpreter.

History with ALHFAM:

Sarah first heard of ALHFAM in 2014 and listened to stories from coworkers who attended the conference hosted by Heritage Park in 2014, after which she immediately became a member. Sarah had the opportunity to attend her first conference at Genesee Country Village in 2017, and then to present at the 2019 conference at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. Sarah is also a member of the PIE, FPI, and Historic Foodways PIGs.

ALHFAM's most Pressing Issues and how they May be Addressed:

Although not the full ALHFAM experience that everyone loves, the 2020 and 2021 virtual conferences made it financially accessible for many people from an organization to participate in sessions and discussions, opening up the benefits of the conference to many more than usually attend. This was particularly true for frontline and seasonal interpreters, who were able to connect directly to each other and get the full benefit of conference panels and presentations. As travel becomes more expensive and budgets become tighter, it will become more difficult to maintain regular attendance at conferences for more than a few people from each site, and the resultant dissemination of best practices may become more irregular. Finding ways to foster and facilitate those connections across organizations and regions, particularly for new interpreters, and to increase virtual access to national and regional conferences will help lower the financial barrier and increase participation in ALHFAM to keep our organization strong.



Melissa Vickers, New England

Professional Qualifications and Experience:

Melissa began at Old Sturbridge Village in 2016. There, she demonstrated early 1800s hearth cooking and taught culinary and domestic history of rural 19th century New England to visitors. Since 2018, she has been employed at Strawberry Banke Museum, where she successfully restructured and led the hearth cooking workshops, including training staff and planning menus. Melissa researched domestic and social content specific to the Puddle Dock area and has interpreted utilizing both 1st and 3rd person techniques.

History with ALHFAM:

Melissa joined ALHFAM in 2017. In 2020, she was elected New England Regional Representative, and co-chair of the Historic Foodways P.I.G. She served a two-year term in both positions, and in 2022 was re-elected as co-chair of the Foodways P.I.G. She has worked with its members on many projects, particularly through the Facebook page, to both engage and foster fellowship amongst current members and to also inspire non-members to be more involved in both Historic Foodways, and ALHFAM as a whole.

ALHFAM's most pressing issues and how they may be addressed:

"As our senior historians begin to retire from their crafts, ALHFAM must document their skills and knowledge, and also facilitate the passing their knowledge to the next generation. In addition to the SKILLS Database, funding hands-on training classes, as well as virtual classes and lectures could aid in this."



Jennifer Frazee, Mountain-Plains

Professional Qualifications and Experience: Jennifer earned a BA in History and Masters in American Studies (specializing in Native studies and military culture). She serves as the Director of Fort Gibson Historic Site for the Oklahoma Historical Society. Jennifer has experience in living history, interpretation, research, program development, etc. She is also a professor of history at Connors State College, teaching Oklahoma History, U.S. History to 1865, and U.S. History Since 1865.

History with ALHFAM: She has helped and learned from the organization since 2013. Jennifer was part of the conference committee that hosted the 2014 regional meeting and the 2016 annual meeting, and she's been educated and enriched at every annual meeting she has attended.

ALHFAM's most pressing issues and how they may be addressed: "I grew up understanding the concept of 'medicine' as not only healing medically but also non-medically. ALHFAM does this with the preservation of skills and cultural practices. My medicine is the blessing and obligation of caring for history, including that of cultures and cultural practices nearly forgotten, erased, or maligned. The difficulty in interpreting some of this history is

one of our most pressing issues. I believe we can address it by helping historians develop tools to interpret all history, including the hard bits, in ways that build and strengthen community. That's powerful medicine. By teaching skills, crafts, trades, and the history of the cultures they come from, we not only engage public interest, we empower folks to take the care of their own history into their hands."

Nominating Committee (Three-Year Term, June 2023 to June 2026)



Mary Seelhorst, Midwest

Professional Qualifications and Experience:

Mary is a museum professional who held several positions at Old Salem and The Henry Ford before becoming an independent contractor in 1997. Since then, she has specialized in concept development and label writing for exhibits, and interpretive planning for automobile museums and historic sites, with a side of historic furnishing plans. She holds a Master's in Folklore from UNC Chapel Hill.

History with ALHFAM:

She calls herself "the fiddle player." She also claims the distinction of knowing all the words to *El Paso*. Mary is a former board member, membership committee chair, and longtime communications committee member.

ALHFAM's most pressing issues and how they may be addressed:

"In terms of how the nominating committee can affect ALHFAM's trajectory, continuing to engage new members in the organization's administration and diversifying its leadership are essential to our long-term success. Recognizing people with good ideas and being open to change is the only way we can stay relevant to museum attendees around the world."