

**ASSOCIATION FOR LIVING HISTORY, FARM
& AGRICULTURAL MUSEUMS**

ANNUAL MEETING and CONFERENCE PLANNING GUIDE
Updated: November, 2015

PREFACE

This document is a guide for those planning the Annual Meeting and Conference of the Association for Living History, Farm & Agricultural Museums. An ad hoc Committee composed of past conference planners formulated the original document. Regular updates by other conference planners keep this planning guide current to reflect ALHFAM's experience and expertise in planning and presenting great Annual Conferences.

This document incorporates the combined experiences and suggestions of a large number of knowledgeable and informed ALHFAM members. Similar planning guides by other professional museum or related organizations, such as the American Association for State & Local History and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, were also used as a resource for this document.

ALHFAM appreciates the contributions of many individuals who have provided valuable assistance in preparing, editing and updating this Guide.

This Guide and Appendices are available on the ALHFAM website, www.alhfam.org

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE 3
GENERAL INFORMATION.....	PAGE 4
DUTIES OF THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE	PAGE 5
BUDGETS & FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	PAGE 11
CONFERENCE REPORTS	PAGE 15
GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSIDERATIONS	PAGE 17
PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	PAGE 18
LOCAL ARRANGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	PAGE 20
ALHFAM PROCEEDINGS.....	PAGE 27
APPENDIX A: List of Past ALHFAM Conferences	PAGE 29
APPENDIX B: Annual Conference Do's and Don'ts	PAGE 32
APPENDIX C: First Timer's Guide to the Annual Meeting	PAGE 42
APPENDIX D: Conference Coordinator Job Description ..	PAGE 47
APPENDIX E: Additional Conference Planning Tips	PAGE 49

INTRODUCTION

A SHORT HISTORY OF ALHFAM AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ALHFAM ANNUAL MEETING and CONFERENCE

The first “gathering” of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) was held on September 17, 1970 at Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Wayne Rasmussen organized this meeting. John Schlebecker was named the Temporary Chairman of the newly founded organization. An ALHFAM Board of Directors (“the Board”) was appointed at that time, which held three yearly meetings to help define the new organization.

The first of these was held on November 20, 1970 at the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., organized by Ernst Christensen, with William G. Murray being elected President. The second meeting of the Board took place on May 7, 1971 at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, organized by James Short with William G. Murray continuing as President. At this meeting, the Board adopted tentative bylaws and charter of incorporation, and decided to schedule the first Annual Conference of the Association for June of 1972. The third meeting of the Board took place on October 18, 1971 at Utah State University at Logan, Utah, organized by Daryl Chase. The Board pursued incorporation in the State of Maryland, with a Charter of Incorporation being granted on April 27, 1972.

The Farmers’ Museum at Cooperstown, New York, hosted the first ALHFAM Annual Meeting and Conference in June 1972. Minor Wine Thomas organized this conference. (See **Appendix A** for a complete listing of all ALHFAM Conferences.) The custom of holding a meeting of the general membership of ALHFAM mid-year, and a meeting of the Board each fall was established after 1972.

In 1998, a resolution was approved by vote of the membership to change the name of the organization to “The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums.”

In 2007, the ALHFAM membership formally adopted a revised set of bylaws.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Site Selection Process: The selection of sites for the Annual Meeting & Conference (“Annual Conference”, “Conference”) is made by the Board of Directors, based on recommendations from the Future Sites Committee. This committee is chaired by a third-year Board member and consists of the immediate Past President and one or two other Board members.. The committee solicits and evaluates proposals from interested host institutions and makes its recommendation to the Board. Proposals normally include a recommendation for the Conference Chair. The Board also appoints a Board Liaison to each Conference Planning Committee.

Selections of host sites are normally made three years in advance; preferably approved by the Board at its fall meeting; then approved by membership in attendance at the following Annual Conference. It is strongly advised that written letters of commitment from host institutions’ governing bodies be obtained at least 18 months prior to the start of the conference. Many factors are considered in making a recommendation to the board. Some of these include regional location, concentration of members, and economic considerations. The Future Sites Committee is charged with balancing a desire for regional diversity with economic and attendance considerations.

Responsibilities of Host Institutions: Host institutions provide much more than a venue for an Annual Conference. Normally, the host provides the services of staff members to act as Conference Chair (CC) and Local Arrangements Chair (LAC), and provides administrative support. These responsibilities are discussed in greater detail in later sections of this Planning Guide. Further, the host site normally becomes the site for a field trip during the Conference, and typically provides, plans, and coordinates workshop sessions during the field trip. Frequently, the host institution has sponsored a banquet and/or some form of entertainment. Host institutions must be deeply involved in every aspect of the planning process, with ALHFAM’s needs and concerns being addressed at each step along the way.

The costs to the hosts can be quite high, but there are benefits to hosting an ALHFAM conference. ALHFAM has become world-renowned, and this reputation imparts a high degree of prestige within the museum community to a host institution. While these benefits cannot be measured in a quantitative sense, former host sites have been well pleased with the results of their involvement.

Selection of Conference Committee Members: The Conference Committee consists of the following members:

1. Conference Chair (CC)
2. Program Chair (PC)
3. Local Arrangements Chair (LAC)
4. Promotion & Communications Chair (PCC)
5. Financial Chair (FC)

Along with any other team members who may be considered essential (e.g., *ALHFAM Proceedings* Editor, Webmaster, etc.) each “Chair” can be comprised of more than one individual. The Board or President selects the Conference Chair, generally as part of the initial conference proposal. Conference Chairs are selected based on their familiarity with ALHFAM, demonstrated organizational and leadership skills, and willingness to serve. The Conference Chair selects the Program, Local Arrangements, Public Relations/Communications, and Financial Chairs. It is critical that all persons selected to serve as Chairs fully understand their responsibilities and time commitments before accepting their role.

*The Publications Committee, with the Board approval, selects the **ALHFAM Proceedings** Editor.*

The announcement of the selection of the Host Site(s) and Conference Chair should be made when the Conference is at least two years distant. The Chair of the Future Sites Committee generally makes the announcement during the Annual Business Meeting.

Paid Conference Coordinator: An option exists for the Board to hire a paid Conference Coordinator to assist the Conference Committee during emergency situations due to limited time and/or local resources. This course of action, and funding within the operating budget, must be approved by the Board in advance. A job description for the Conference Coordinator is attached within the Appendices.

DUTIES OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE CHAIR (CC)

- Appoints the Program Chair (PC), Local Arrangements Chair (LAC) Financial Chair (FC), and Promotion & Communications Chair (PCC) and other members of the Conference Committee (. The selection of the LAC must be based not only on the organizational skills of the individual, but also his/her familiarity with ALHFAM and our conferences. It is most important that potential LACs have attended previous conferences and know about the activities and arrangements involved.
- In consultation with the ALHFAM Board, selects the date for the conference in conjunction with the host institution and the Conference Office of the University or other facility chosen as the conference venue.
- Approves the conference theme based on recommendations of the conference committee.

- Explores and establishes partnerships with other cultural/educational institutions critical to both the implementation and financial success of the conference.
- Establishes a comprehensive schedule for the meeting planning process, sets meetings of the committee, makes assignments and enforces deadlines for all conference-related tasks (**See Appendix B – ALHFAM Conference Do’s and Don’ts**).
- Provides written and/or oral reports to the ALHFAM Board meetings at six-month intervals, beginning two years before the conference date and ending six months after conclusion of the conference. A written final report of the conference, including reconciliation of all financial matters, is due to the board on or before November 1st following the conference. The CC or designee generally supplements the written reports with attendance figures at the meetings or through other communication with the Board.
- Establishes conference budgets in conjunction with the FC, PC, LAC, and oversees the process of handling funds by the Financial Chair and/or host institution.
- Coordinates evaluation of the conference, both through evaluation forms completed by conference attendees and through post-conference analysis by the conference committee. All written evaluations received should be summarized for the final report, and the original copies of evaluations submitted to the Board.
- Maintains a file with three originals (or good copies) of all official reports to the board. At the conclusion of the conference, the CC collects the permanent conference files and distributes them as follows: One copy of each document to the Past President for inclusion in the ALHFAM Archives, and two copies of each document to the Future Sites Committee Chair for distribution to future conference planners. (These documents may be sent to the Fall Board Meeting along with the Final Report). ***Note: You may not have used all of the following documents but if you do the following need to be retained:***
 - Call for Papers and Presentations
 - Session Confirmation Letter / Audio-Visual Needs Form
 - Proceedings Reminder
 - Presenters Thank-you Letter
 - Vendor Solicitation Letter
 - Vendor Registration Form
 - Vendor Confirmation Letter
 - Vendor Thank-you Letter
 - Sample Contracts (i.e., Speakers, Conference Facilities, Caterers)
 - Sponsorship Request Letters

- Sponsorship Thank-you Letters
 - Press release
 - Registration announcement
 - Registration confirmation letters
 - Conference Evaluation form
 - Final program
 - Final Conference Report
- The CC assumes ultimate responsibility for all aspects of conference planning, financial accounting, implementation and reporting.
 - The CC updates the ***Conference Planning Guide***, if needed, at the end of the conference and submits it to the Chair of the Future Sites Committee.

PROGRAM CHAIR (PC)

- Participates in conference planning and implementation as a member of the Conference Committee. Usually appoints a Program Sub-committee to assist with the program planning process.
- Recommends conference theme to the CC. When determining the program theme and content, the PC and CC should consider recent past programs in order to provide program variety and to provide for the development of appropriate ideas and topics from year to year.
- Determines the mix of workshops, panels and field trips for the conference, and coordinates with the LAC for inclusion in the conference schedule.
- Creates and distributes “Call for Presentations.” Organizes sessions, determines schedule, and confirms participation by all presenters.
- In conjunction with LAC and venue, assigns meeting rooms for specific presentations.
- Ensures accuracy of session information in conference program.
- Coordinates audio-visual needs of sessions with the venue and LAC. Establishes budget for audio-visual rentals if required.
- Orients session chairs with respect to conference expectations: beginning and ending times of sessions, formats, and other expectations.

- Assists with managing the portion of the conference budget devoted to program expenses. (Generally the FC includes the program budget in the official conference budget, and handles disbursement of funds to speakers).
- Coordinates with the *ALHFAM Proceedings* editor to solicit papers by program participants for inclusion in the *Proceedings*, including author release forms.

LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS CHAIR (LAC)

- Serves as a member of the Conference Committee and is specifically responsible for local arrangements. Usually appoints a sub-committee to assist with the design, organization and implementation of conference details related to local arrangements, and works closely with the CC and PC to assist in the development of theme, structure and schedule of the Conference.
- Arranges for and provides conference facilities to accommodate various aspects of the Conference, including venues for the Conference workshops and sessions, off-site visits, accommodations, transportation, meals, refreshment breaks, and all other support options required for speakers, registrants or other participants.
- Works with the other Chairs to prepare the conference budget.
- Organizes and implements conference registration including pre-registration, final program, financial responsibilities, e-mails and web postings, etc. Works with the ALHFAM Webmaster to set up electronic registration through the ALHFAM website.
- Provides support for such ancillary activities as receptions, fund-raising events (such as the annual auction), entertainment, Presidential Banquet, field trips, etc. as required by ALHFAM and approved by the CC. He/she also schedules and secures appropriate meeting space for business meetings, committee and regional meetings and Board of Directors meetings as required throughout the Conference.
- The LAC should contact local businesses or distributors to attempt to secure sponsorships or donations for various events wherever it seems appropriate. If working with a college or university conference office, be sure to check with them to see that donations of food or drink used on their site do not violate their rules. Businesses that contribute should be recognized in publicity, at the event, and with a thank-you letter. Donations can mean a significant savings to the conference, and ultimately to ALHFAM members. The value of in-kind contributions should be indicated in the final report to give other planning committees an accurate reflection of conference costs.

Works with the Board's Membership Chair to coordinate mentorship program that matches first time attendees with experienced conference goers. The registration page should have an opportunity for people to sign up to mentor and be mentored. A short survey of interest can be send to both groups to determine interests.

PROMOTION & COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR (PCC)

- Serves as a member of the Conference Committee and is specifically responsible for coordinating all conference publicity, advertising, promotions, and sponsorships. This includes all electronic and print media.
- Ensures that all printed and electronic materials reflect ALHFAM's standard branding guidelines, available on the ALHFAM website.
- Works closely with the LAC and PC on the design and implementation of conference theme.
- Ensures details related to theme, local arrangements, cost, structure and schedule of the Conference are accurately promoted and publicized to the general membership of ALHFAM and other likely interested parties through available and appropriate media, including the ALHFAM Website, *Bulletin*, *E-Update* and other electronic means.
- Works in partnership with the ALHFAM Webmaster and *Bulletin* editors to ensure all conference advertising and promotions are properly integrated into the *Bulletin* and ALHFAM Website. Conference dates, theme, site, logo and call for presentations should be ready to launch on the ALHFAM website at least one year prior to conference. Keeps Webmaster apprised of updates.
- NOTE: There should NOT be separate conference websites, Facebook pages, or other social media sites to avoid confusion and extra work. All conference information should go through regular ALHFAM sites.
- Ensures that the conference is properly announced and advertised with other related museum and professional affiliates (AASLH, AAM, SPOOM, MOMCC, etc.) and educational institutions including local universities, high schools, and the general public.
- Works closely with local Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), the local/state/provincial Office of Tourism and the local museums and cultural attractions community to help promote the conference.

- Works closely with the CC, FC, and LAC to promote conference fundraising and development efforts

Works closely with the PC and LAC to create conference announcements and registration materials.

- Works with the ALHFAM Webmaster, Communications manager, and Secretary/Treasurer to post and distribute conference announcement and registration materials. NOTE: These materials are normally available on-line by the February preceding the conference (March at the latest).
- Serves as the public relations representative for the Conference Committee

FINANCIAL CHAIR (FC)

- Works with the other Chairs to develop the conference budget.
- Works with the LAC and PC to negotiate all financial contracts needed for the operation of the conference. Maintains all the contracts and ensures that the agreements are abided by.
- Works with the LAC and PCC to provide administrative support for all conference sponsorships and donations
- Generally acts as Treasurer of the Annual Conference, establishing a Conference bank account in a convenient bank, or a dedicated account within the accounting system of the host institution; receiving operating funds from ALHFAM's Treasury, registration fees and other receipts; and paying all bills or accounts related to the conference. **Although the CC is ultimately responsible for the financial health of the conference, the FC is responsible for submitting a final report of conference finances.** Often the host institution provides these financial functions.
- The FC is responsible for receiving all fees and funds raised through sponsorships and donations, and depositing all funds realized in the Conference account, and coordinating any materials related to registration.
- Ensures that the conference (and ALHFAM) is protected by sufficient liability insurance.

BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Advance of Conference Funds

Six months before the conference, the Board authorizes an advance of \$3,000 US for conference expenses, which will be repaid from conference receipts. Any money remaining following the completion of the Conference and the payment of all debt pertaining thereto, will be returned to ALHFAM's Secretary/Treasurer, along with a full financial report, as soon as possible, but no later than the Fall Board meeting following the Conference..

Auction Proceeds

Note that the funds resulting from the Auction donations to the ALHFAM treasury are not to be used to balance the books for the conference, but are separate funds. Usually there is a standing Auction Committee that handles the financial and many practical arrangements of the Auction. If not, note that cash received from the Auction should be counted, recorded, and given to the ALHFAM Secretary-Treasurer as soon as possible after the Auction. As soon as all checks and credit card transactions are cleared, a check for the remainder of the Auction proceeds should be sent to the ALHFAM Secretary/Treasurer. Payment to the Treasury of all auction proceeds *must* occur no later than the Fall Board Meeting following the Conference. The Auction income and payments of those funds to the treasury shall be noted in the Conference's final financial report on a separate line.

Program Budget Considerations

The Program Chair, with the authorization of the Conference Chair, will determine whether or not to offer honoraria, waive registration and/or accommodation fees or offer traveling expenses to speakers. **As a general rule, however, ALHFAM does not waive costs or provide financial remuneration to ALHFAM members who contribute to the program.** However, at the discretion of the CC such consideration may be offered, particularly to non-member speakers or participants who are contributing to the conference in some significant way, such as keynote speakers. Contracts should be written for any paid presenters, and should include permission for publication of their papers in the Conference *Proceedings* and in the ALHFAM ASK database. Presenters at Workshops should not be expected to pay the registration fee for the workshop in which they are involved, however.

Tips on Establishing a Budget

- Budget in a profit of \$5,000. This is an important part of ALHFAM's overall annual income. Any surplus revenue is welcome, but a surplus of at least \$5,000 is a given.

- When establishing a conference budget, the Conference Committee should examine budgets for the last few years' conferences. Their format, level of detail, and actual costs should be evaluated. Attendance estimates should be based on attendance at past conferences in the region.
- The budget presented to the board at the Fall Board meeting prior to the conference should be based on number of people expected to attend the conference. It is wise to work up several sets of figures based on differing numbers of attendees and let the Board help decide which figures are the most likely to be realistic.
- All factors, both fixed and variable, should be included in the conference budget. Many expenses are based on specific numbers, such as participant meals, but other expenses remain the same regardless of the number attending, such as rental of AV equipment.
- This budget should assume that all participants are included in all meals. Do not try to separate specific groups. That said, very often some people leave early, so numbers for final dinner and breakfast of day of departure are often reduced. Consult with previous conference hosts for advice.
- Separate fees may be charged for workshops, or possibly some special activities, but this should be kept to a minimum, as it becomes an administrative problem.
- All activities should be budgeted and divided by the number expected to attend to arrive at an estimated per-person cost.
- Do not cut estimates too close. While costs to participants should be as low as possible, ALHFAM does expect that the Conference will return a profit for the organization. It is permissible to add, say, a 5% contingency figure to a projected budget when not all costs are yet known, but every effort should be made to identify all costs prior to the Fall Board meeting preceding the conference.
- Most attendees are members, so the budget should be calculated assuming that all attendees are members, with the goal of achieving the lowest price possible and still making a profit for ALHFAM.
- After the Board approves a proposed budget and per-person price, please note that a higher fee should be charged to non-members. This higher fee includes their membership dues for a year. This fee should not be calculated in the budget, but merely included in the conference registration materials. *It is important to charge the higher fee to non-members, as a reduced conference fee is a promised benefit of ALHFAM membership. The additional fee for non-members automatically gives*

them a year's ALHFAM membership. Return the names and contact information of those people to the Secretary/Treasurer.

**Sample Preliminary
Budget
ALHFAM 2014 Annual Meeting & Conference**

	150	per person	125	100	175
ALHFAM BUDGET					
Revenue					
Advertising / other sponsorship	500.00		500.00	500.00	500.00
Start-up loan	3,000.00		3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Registration 150 x \$400	60,000.00	400.00	50,000.00	40,000.00	70,000.00
Total Revenue	63,500.00		53,500.00	43,500.00	73,500.00
Expenses					
Facility Rentals (Hotel)	5,425.00		5,425.00	5,425.00	5,425.00
Other F&B (Hotel)	18,000.00	120.00	15,000.00	12,000.00	21,000.00
Opening Reception	5,250.00	35.00	4,375.00	3,500.00	6,125.00
Site Visit - Day 1	6,499.50	43.33	5,416.25	4,333.00	7,582.75
Site Visit - Day 2	9,000.00	60.00	7,500.00	6,000.00	10,500.00
Promotion / Registration	6,850.00		6,850.00	6,850.00	6,850.00
Credit card fees on registration	1,800.00		1,500.00	1,200.00	2,100.00
Start-up loan repayment	3,000.00		3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Contingency 3%	1,674.74		1,471.99	1,269.24	1,877.48
Total Expenses	57,499.24		50,538.24	43,577.24	64,460.23
NET TO ALHFAM	6,000.76				9,039.77

2,961.76 (77.24)

***Heritage Park Revenue
Contribution:***

Alberta Tourism / HP	24,500.00		22,666.67	20,833.33	26,333.33
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Expenses

Presidential Banquet	8,000.00	53.33	6,666.67	5,333.33	9,333.33
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Delegate gifts	3,000.00	20.00	2,500.00	2,000.00	3,500.00
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Printing	3,500.00		3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
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Transportation	8,000.00		8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
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HP Staff registration	1,200.00		1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
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Volunteer meals	800.00		800.00	800.00	800.00
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Total Expenses	24,500.00		22,666.67	20,833.33	26,333.33
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Sponsorships

The PCC and LAC should contact local businesses or distributors to attempt to secure sponsorships or donations for various events wherever it seems appropriate. If working with a college or university conference office, be sure to check with them to see that donations of food or drink used on their site do not violate their rules. Businesses that contribute should be recognized in publicity, at the event, in the conference program, and with a thank-you letter. Donations can mean a significant savings to the conference, and ultimately to ALHFAM members.

The PCC and LAC should consider approaching the following potential sponsors:

- The host institution(s)--to sponsor special program activities, meals, and entertainment while at the host site;
- Friends or auxiliary organizations of the host institutions for similar support;
- Municipal governments for grants to support conference expenses;

- Foundations or Museum granting agencies that could underwrite costs of specific sessions or keynotes;
- Food-service companies for discounts/donations on catered meals during site visits;
- Beverage companies, including soft drink, water, beer and wine vendors, to supply hospitality rooms and for site visits;
- Museums and sites visited for waiver of admission and facility use fees;
- Transportation companies, including discounts or donations for airport shuttles, buses for site visits, or van rentals;
- Airline companies for conference discounts, complimentary tickets for keynotes, and other assistance.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

The CC is required to submit four reports to the ALHFAM Board of Directors. Reports should be submitted TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE of the meeting to allow Board members time to evaluate them.

1. At the Annual Meeting one year prior to the conference, a report will be submitted to the Board of Directors that includes:
 - Overview of conference planning to date, including Conference Committee members and functions;
 - Written letters of commitment from the governing Boards of the host institutions;
 - Description of venue/accommodations and proposed site visits;
 - Proposed conference theme;
 - Outline of program components and conference schedule;
 - Schedule for Conference Committee's planning activities and deadlines;
 - Firm proposal and pricing from conference venue
 - Conference budget with estimated registration fees based on several attendance levels.

In addition, the Conference Committee will make a presentation to the ALHFAM membership at the Annual Business Meeting one-year prior. The presentation promotes the conference and encourages members to attend. It normally includes a brief Power Point slideshow or video as well as a verbal report. Brochures of the host sites or other sites local interest are often distributed to the membership at this meeting.

The CC or a designee from the Conference Committee is expected to be present at this meeting to report in person. Because the meeting is held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting no funds are allocated to support travel to this meeting.

2. At the Fall Board Meeting held six months prior to the conference, the report should include:

- Written report updating previous report to the Board
- Revised, detailed budget projections
- Signed contract with venues
- Detailed conference schedule
- List of confirmed or potential sponsors
- Proposed registration fees
- Preliminary Draft of Conference Registration Booklet

Board actions at this time include approval of the budget and registration fees, and appropriation of a \$3,000 advance, to be repaid from conference proceeds.

The CC (or a designated representative of the Conference Committee) should attend the Fall Board Meeting in person to report on the progress of the Conference Committee. If the CC confers with the Board via Skype or teleconference, which is also acceptable, a brief written report should also be submitted one week prior. \$500.00 is available upon request to support attendance at this meeting. The LAC or any others designated by the CC may also attend but no additional money will be allocated.

3. At the Board Meeting held immediately before the beginning of the Conference, the Conference Committee's report will include:

- Written report that updates previous reports, including number of registrations received;
- Financial report of any anticipated changes to budget projections;
- Review of the final program, local arrangements, and other details.

In addition, the Conference Committee should provide periodic announcements during the conference to attendees – especially of any changes to the printed program. A brief verbal report at the Annual Business Meeting is customary, stating attendance figures, Auction proceeds, and other items of interest.

4. At the Fall Board Meeting or by November 1st following the conference, a comprehensive written Final Report shall be submitted to the Board. That report should include:

- An outline or summary of the successes and problems encountered. This should include input from the CC, PC, PCC, LAC, and FC.

- Final financial report documenting all receipts and disbursements for the conference, with a comparison to the Board-approved budget. The financial report should be submitted both as a one-page summary and a detailed listing of all financial transactions with payees and purposes for payment listed.
- A list of participants including total number;
- A summary of evaluations by participants, and attachment of the original evaluations;
- **The date of this meeting is the absolute deadline for the transfer of Conference net proceeds, including any Auction proceeds not yet transferred, to the ALHFAM Secretary/Treasurer.**

The report may be presented in person if desired, but attendance by the CC is not required. A conference call in conjunction with a written report may be requested if deemed necessary by the Board.

At this time, electronic copies of all conference reports and documents produced by the Conference Committee should be turned over to the Future Sites Chair to be passed on to future conference planners. A hard copy should be given to the Past President to be sent to the ALHFAM archives.

GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSIDERATIONS

Conference Date Selection: The dates for the Annual Conference are to be selected by the Conference Chair, through discussions with the LAC, the host institution and the Conference Office of the University, hotel, or other facility chosen as the conference venue. While the ALHFAM bylaws only stipulate that “the Annual Meeting be conducted no later than June 30 of each year,” Annual Conferences have traditionally been held during the months of April to June. Mid to late June has been the norm. Considerations such as climate (e.g. heat in southern areas) and availability of conference/housing facilities often mandate conferences be held earlier than in June.

Care should be taken to coordinate the ALHFAM Conference with the conferences of other major organizations, such as the American Association of Museums, the Canadian Museums Association, etc. so that there is no conflict of dates. With the considerable airfare reductions provided by most airlines for trips extending over a full weekend, it may be advantageous for Conference planners to provide a program that either includes one weekend, or provides pre-Conference activities to encourage early arrival by Conference registrants. Conferences run four full days, usually alternating two days of presentations and meetings with two days of site visits. Usually a day of optional professional development workshops is offered prior to the start of the conference, and sometimes a day of optional post-conference tours/visits is also

offered. Conference hosts also have the flexibility to plan the conference to begin any day of the week they prefer to take advantage of reduced conference housing and/or meeting accommodations, air fare reductions, etc.

Venue Selection: The CC, with input from the LAC and the host institution, is responsible for selecting the site(s) where the conference will actually occur. Universities have often been chosen in the past for the facilities they have available and the normally proficient Conference Offices they usually operate. However, a number of successful conferences have also been headquartered at hotels and/or conference centers. The Conference Chair is free to recommend the use of any of these options, or other appropriate and economical venue. It is important, however, to recall the ALHFAM tradition of frugality, both in regard to venue selection and in the general course of conference budgetary planning. Since most ALHFAM member institutions are small, low-budget operations, and since many individual members attend our conferences at their own expense rather than with institutional support, our conference planners have always been encouraged to avoid high-cost options in order to keep our conferences as accessible as possible to as many members as possible.

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Conference Theme

While a theme is normally chosen for the Annual Conferences it need not be considered an essential feature. If a theme is selected, however, the program should present that theme from several viewpoints. Appropriate keynote speakers, other speakers or panelists, even field trips, site visits or social events can help to flesh out a theme. Conference planners are encouraged to develop themes which have universal appeal and connections to a large cross-section of the ALHFAM membership.

Once a theme has been determined a conference logo should be developed in conjunction with a graphic artist. This will be used on the ALHFAM website, conference programs, registration and promotional materials, T-shirts, and possibly tote-bags and other conference related items. The logo supplements and does not replace the regular ALHFAM logo and branding guidelines.

Professional Development Workshops

Workshops have proven to be valuable and desirable additions to the Conference Program, and perennially popular with members. The inclusion of such programs allows the program to be extended one additional day, facilitating cheaper airfares for Conference registrants, while providing greater opportunity for more in-depth workshops on specific topics. Typically, these workshops are coordinated and sponsored by standing committees of ALHFAM and by the host site or sites.

Professional Development Workshops are held the day before the formal conference program begins. Speakers and presenters at these sessions should not be expected to

pay any registration fee for the professional development workshops, but should be encouraged to remain for the duration of the meeting to share their knowledge and interact with registrants.

Note: The term “professional development workshops” should be used and the term “pre-conference workshops” avoided, as many organizations will not support their staff in attending anything labeled “preconference.”

Panels and Workshops

In order to simplify and clarify program development, the terms "panel" and "workshop" may be used. While the use of panels and workshops within the context of an Annual Conference does provide the CC with programming options, there is often confusion as to the exact meaning of this terminology; The American Association for State & Local History has defined these two frequently used terms as follows:

- A “Panel” examines and interprets historical or professional problems or issues. It offers differing perspectives on a problem or issue; usually two or three speakers and a chair present it.
- A “Workshop” teaches special skills in a small-group setting. One to three experts aided by appropriate handouts lead workshops. Enrollment (should be) limited to a manageable number. Many ALHFAM workshops feature a "hands-on" element, involving the participants more fully in the specifics of the topic at hand.

Program Proposal Forms

Considering the needs of the membership is important. The PC should solicit proposals or ideas for sessions at the previous year’s conference via a Program Suggestion or Session Proposal Form. The form should be sent to the previous year’s conference committee for inclusion in the registration packet.

Program Development Tips

- A balance between practical and theoretical approaches to different appropriate issues is desirable, and helps to meet the varied needs of the ALHFAM membership. Some recent programs have identified learning streams based on skill areas (e.g. Administration, Programming, Heritage Skills)
- Scheduling is a real challenge: a lot to do and only so many hours in a day and days in a conference. Remember that not every proposal has to be accepted.

- The PC will work closely with the LAC to ensure that program components fit into the available time, space and support structures, and to ensure that parts of the program use the strengths of the host institution(s).
- The PC will attempt to secure speakers and panelists who are leaders in their field or subject specialty, as well as nationally recognized keynote speakers with expertise in the areas to be addressed during the conference, in keeping with the conference theme. The PC is encouraged to arrange for **video documentation** of the keynote and plenary speakers **and the historical skills workshops**. Permission to do so must be obtained from these speakers **and presenters** in advance.
- A written contract should be made with keynote speakers and other paid presenters specifying the terms of their participation—including submitting their papers to the Annual Proceedings for publication, and permission to record their presentation, if appropriate.
- Every effort should be made to get paid presenters to provide a written form of their presentation for publication in the Proceedings, and on the ALHFAM website. This is especially important for the keynote speaker(s), and should be negotiated in advance. While the Proceedings is copyrighted, permission is freely given to reprint papers in other publications.
- It is strongly recommended that the CC provide all program participants, whether they are chairs, presenters, panelists or commentators, with a written, individual schedule and brief instructions on session expectations. Their participation should be confirmed prior to posting the conference registration material.
- It is customary for the PC to arrange for thank-you gifts to be given to each speaker following their presentation. Money should be included in the budget for this expense, and/or efforts made to secure donated gifts by working with the CC and LAC.
- The PC is strongly encouraged to have either a co-chair, or an equally competent second in command.

LOCAL ARRANGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Certain activities have become either essential or traditional to the Annual Conference and should be included in the Conference Program. These include:

Reception for First-Time Conference Attendees: This is a 1995 addition to the ALHFAM Annual Conference tradition. Held immediately prior to the Salted, Smoked and Pickled reception (SSP), it provides an opportunity for first-time attendees to be greeted by the President, the Board, and the Membership Chair. The LAC should coordinate plans for the reception with the Membership Committee Chair. This reception can occur close to the SSP reception in order to take advantage of the same setups, but a separate room for the reception is preferable. This event and the SSP reception are quite 'sponsorable.'

Salted, Smoked and Pickled Reception: A reception the first night of the conference featuring local and regional foods, many of which are brought by members. It is often sponsored by the region in which the conference is being held, and features foods of that region. It may be given another name that more accurately reflects the foodways of the region. Conference attendees should be encouraged to bring foods from their own regions, subject to applicable customs and importation regulations. That said, some years donated foods are lacking, so arrangements for catered foods should be made as well.

Annual Business Meeting: The bylaws of ALHFAM state: "An Annual Meeting of the members to conduct ALHFAM business shall be held no later than June 30 of each year." This meeting takes place during the Annual Conference, and must be incorporated into the overall schedule. Sometimes this meeting is scheduled to take place during a formal luncheon, although there is no stipulation to this effect, and in general most meetings should not coincide with meals. At other times it has been scheduled as a dedicated session, usually in the morning. Further, the bylaws require notice to all members "at least 30 days in advance" regarding the time and place of the Annual Business Meeting. The Conference Registration Form should incorporate this notice in some form to ensure this bylaw is followed. At least 90 minutes should be provided for the Annual Business Meeting so that the full range of business and committee reports can be completed.

Presidential Banquet: Traditionally the most formal event during the Conference, the Presidential Banquet normally takes place one evening during the Conference. An Address by the Past President occurs every other year (the year after the new president has been elected). During alternate years, when the Past President's address is **not** scheduled, the PC should plan some sort of program for that evening. The Banquet may take place at any suitable venue, and may include entertainment, dancing or other social events following the dinner and any Past-Presidential Address. The President of ALHFAM traditionally takes the role of Master of Ceremonies during this event. The Presidential Banquet is also typically the venue of the presentation of the John T. Schlebecker Award, should it be awarded in a given year. The President of ALHFAM will inform the Conference Chair if the Schlebecker Award will be presented that year. A printed program is usually provided for the Banquet and includes a list of Past Presidents, an In-Memorium listing of deceased members from the last year, and

Current Board and Committee Assignments Most attendees wear either business attire or period clothing. An announcement to that effect should be included in the Program Schedule and in the Registration materials. Time should be allowed between the day's programming to allow attendees to change for dinner on this night. A period fashion-show is often planned (working with the Historic Apparel and Textiles, or HAT, Committee) during the evening for members who wore their period clothing.

ALHFAM Forum: A one-hour "town hall meeting" or open Forum is often incorporated into the overall schedule of the conference. This provides conference participants an organized, but informal, opportunity to discuss topics of interest and/or concern directly with members of the ALHFAM Board of Trustees. This can take place at the main venue or during a site visit if sufficient space can be found.

Annual ALHFAM Auction: This event has become one of most popular and significant of all social happenings during the Conference. The funds realized during the auction provide an important financial boost towards the ALHFAM budget, and the event should be planned and orchestrated with a great deal of care.

As with other Conference activities, the Auction is one that comes with several traditions. Background information on the auction and details on how to register and bid should be clearly outlined to new attendees.

The LAC should communicate early on with the Auction Committee to ensure that auction needs are met. The LAC should appoint a liaison to work with the Auction Committee to ensure that the essential logistical and promotional arrangements are made (detailed below). The circumstances each year are different, so *it is essential that the LAC and the auction committee agree on the division of labor so that nothing falls through the cracks. Having food and drink on hand is essential. So is Wi-Fi for credit card transactions.*

Auction personnel who must be recruited include auctioneers and spotters, who tend to come from a pool of ALHFAM regulars. The auction committee (or the LAC) should nonetheless double-check on their attendance and participation. Two or three clerks are needed to handle record keeping, receipts and cash-handling the night of the auction. The auction committee has in recent years provided the numbered bidding cards, which are distributed as the crowd arrives. The cards are purchased for a minimal fee (\$1.00), and the buyers' names recorded. Successful bids are recorded by the clerks according to number (with the help of spotters on the auction floor), and buyers pay for their purchases at the end of the evening.

Recommend keeping the Auction under 2 hours. A perennial complaint is that the Auction takes too long.

Typically, the LAC's auction responsibilities include:

- Identifying a secure room in which to store auction items prior to the auction.

- Accepting and registering donations items at the registration desk.
- Setting up of the PA system, chairs, tables for auction items, and a bar at the auction site.
- The receipt of and the delivery to the conference/auction site of items that may be shipped weeks in advance of the conference.
- A method of marking the donations so ALHFAM members can examine the objects and know their origin. Again, coordinate this with the Auction Committee, as they often have forms available that donors fill out when the items are dropped off.
- The Auction Committee, using the ALHFAM PayPal account, now typically processes credit card payments, but check with them, and make sure there is Wi-Fi at the auction venue for processing payments.
- Providing numbered bidding cards if necessary (again, coordinate with the Auction Committee, as typically they now handle this).
- Coordinate with the Auction Committee to ensure the proper and secure handling of cash after the auction (see Financial and Budget Considerations)

The large number of items normally received for the auction led to establishing a “silent auction” held during the early part of the auction. Smaller, more common items are selected (generally items not expected to fetch a high bid or provide high entertainment value) and placed on tables with silent auction forms (usually provided by the auction committee). Bidders write down their bids on these forms, and then revisit the tables periodically to see if they are still the successful bidder. Silent auction tables are usually closed at intervals throughout the live auction, rather than all at once. The high bidder at the close of the silent auction, whether it is closed in sections or all at one time, is that person whose bid is the highest one listed on the silent auction form attached to the object. The decision of the Auction Committee as to the highest bidder are final.

The Conference Committee asks vendors to donate an item for the auction. These should be tagged at time of receipt. During the auction the auctioneer should be sure these items are highlighted properly, mentioning the vendor’s name and giving recognition. We need to make sure these items are sold early in the auction to avoid embarrassment at a late hour when things get lumped together. We never reveal to the donor the price realized at the auction.

Vendors’ Room: Consideration should also be given to providing a space for vendors to exhibit their wares of interest to ALHFAM members at the conference. This activity is popular but optional and could be for only a portion of the time during the conference. The important thing is to plan carefully so there is the opportunity for conference attendees to visit the vendors during the time they are present. The space should be located close to regular activities so ALHFAM members will have easy access to the

exhibitors, it should be located within reasonable distance of any parking areas, and it should be secured after the room closes each day.

The arrangements and deadlines for vendors should be described in detail in a solicitation letter. This letter should include the charge per space or table (if there is one); number of space available (if known); if tables, chairs, and/or table skirts will be provided; availability of electrical hook-ups and Wi-Fi access; dates and times the room will be open; and the name, address, and contact information for the person in charge of vendor room arrangements. Vendors should fill out a registration form and return it with payment (if required) so that the person in charge of the vendor room can plan accordingly.

After the meeting, the person in charge of the vendor room or another designated person should send a thank-you to each vendor that includes the location of the following years' meetings so that the vendor can participate, if desired.

Committee Meetings: ALHFAM's many standing Administrative Committees, Regions, and Professional Interest Groups (PIGs) must be provided time and space to meet during the Conference. In addition, early on the President will need to meet with PIG Chairs, and the Vice President with Regional Representatives, , etc. Communications with Committee Chairs will assist in determining the venues, times and sizes of meeting spaces required. The times of these meetings should be such that participation by as many interested registrants as possible is ensured since active committee life and networking are important aspects of ALHFAM's mandate. **Meetings should NOT be scheduled during meals.**

Transportation: Conference planners should not attempt to provide transportation to and from local airports on their own. So much work needs to be done at the start of the conference that providing transportation becomes a real burden. Participants who are flying should be notified of their public transportation options (shuttles, cabs, etc.) Every effort should be made to secure favorable rates through a preferred conference transportation company.

Bus transportation provided during the conference for site visits can be quite costly. One way to reduce these costs is to find out if people who drove to the conference plan to drive on their own to the site visits. Some conferences that are held in areas with high local and regional attendance have many drivers, enabling planners to reduce their costs. Find out how much notice is needed to cancel a scheduled bus, and consider asking registrants if they plan to drive.

Registration Desk: This is one of the key elements of a successful Annual Conference. The planning for and the running of the Registration Desk is the responsibility of the LAC. The Registration Desk must be established at the Conference

in a convenient location, and be manned by trained and competent people at all appropriate times.

This is the front line of any Conference, where all questions or complaints will be presented, and those working the desk must be well-prepared to address them. Staff for this area is most often paid or volunteer staff of the host institution(s) that are familiar with the conference schedule, the local area, and the lodging arrangements. In some instances staff of the Conference Office of the University or College at which the Conference takes place should be available as well. A map of the local area should be provided at the registration desk, noting the closest available stores, restaurants and other items of interest.

Pre-Conference Mailings: Pre-conference mailings generally given way to emails and other forms of electronic communications. Nonetheless, electronic postings should always be clear and professional.

Conference Registration “Booklet”: Usually by the February preceding a conference, or March 1st at the latest, conference announcements should be emailed to members and other interested parties, directing them for details and registration to the ALHFAM website. Coordinate this with the Webmaster.

As much detail as possible should be provided to assist conference attendees in their planning, particularly for those only attending part of the Conference. The information presented should also take into consideration those who may never have attended an ALHFAM Conference, to more fully inform them about venue, accommodations, social events and so on. All material should be edited and proof-read, preferably by an ALHFAM member not directly involved in its writing, as well as one or more persons not familiar with ALHFAM. A good technique is for the proofreaders to fill out the registration form as if attending the conference and see if there is any essential information missing. Work with the Webmaster to adjust the basic registration template.

The electronic conference “booklet” should be professionally designed so as to be both attractive and easily used, not just a list of information created as a MSWord document.

A check box should be provided for registrants to mark if this is their first conference. This will allow the LAC to plan for the number of attendees at the First-Timers’ Reception. Electronic copies of the “First Timer’s Guide” (**See Appendix C**) should be emailed to new attendees. In addition, some type of indication (a sticker or ribbon) should be put on the badges of first-time attendees.

Confirmation letters: Ensure that electronic confirmation of registration is sent automatically.

Directions

Make sure to include clear directions to the conference including correct GPS coordinates or addresses.

Audio-Visual Requirements: All AV and PA requirements should be determined as a joint venture between the PC and LAC. An AV questionnaire should be sent to all speakers by the PC, and returned to the LAC, who then ensures that the requested equipment is provided. It is important to ensure that the University or other venue for the Conference is prepared, informed and ready to provide the AV needs of the Conference on time and as needed. Appropriate staff should be provided by the Conference venue to handle AV problems. If this cannot be ensured, the PC and LAC must develop other plans to meet the needs of Conference speakers .

Insurance: ALHFAM carries liability insurance. If required, proof of insurance may be obtained from the ALHFAM Secretary/Treasurer.

Other Arrangements: There are many other arrangements that should be considered during the development of an ALHFAM Annual Conference. These include such things as:

- Participants/Speakers lists, prepared ahead of time and included in the registration packet, or information included as to where those lists can be downloaded.
- Detailed printed program listings, with full descriptions of all sessions, learning tracks, site visits, timing and location information. Also include an abridged “day at a glance” listing in printed form.
- Name tags: Large names, easy to read from a distance, including institutional affiliation, if appropriate. Ribbons to designate President, Vice President, Past President, Secretary/Treasurer, Board members, speakers, and conference committee members . Stickers or ribbons are also used to designate first-time attendees.
- Souvenirs: Conference T-shirts, coffee mugs, etc. are often available for pre-purchase in the registration materials.
- A tote bag of some sort is customarily provided for the conference materials, as well as flyers and brochures from local sites, etc. It may be customized or not.
- Signage to assist delegates in finding meeting places, accommodations, etc.
- Times and places for announcements during the conference
- Bulletin Board at Registration Desk, for Job Mart, Rides Wanted, Messages Tables or Vendor Display area for site information, brochures, etc. from participating sites, craftspeople, suppliers, etc.
- Storage room for incoming auction items prior to the auction. Security for these items must be considered.
- Notices sent to Workshop leaders listing participants

All members of the Conference Committee should make sure their calendars are free the last two weeks prior to the conference. Past experience has proven the need for almost total devotion to preparations for the conference during this period.

ALHFAM PROCEEDINGS

It is very important that the Publications Committee appoint an Editor (or editors) for the *ALHFAM Proceedings* very early in the development of the Conference. Often the CC will suggest an editor for "their" *Proceedings*, but the Publications Committee must approve the appointment. If the CC has no appropriate editor in mind, the Publications Committee should be consulted for a recommendation and assistance in securing an editor. The Editor is responsible for working with the PC before the Conference to coordinate the acquisition of submissions of presentations in writing (preferably in electronic form), and for collecting these papers at the Conference. If necessary, the Editor shall send reminders to presenters until a reasonable number of papers have been received to produce an *ALHFAM Proceedings*.

The Editor shall be responsible for establishing a conceptual framework and organization for the publication, either drawn directly from the organization of the Conference, or from common themes in the available papers. In consultation with the PC, the Editor should also write an introduction to the publication, explaining the overall theme and organization of the *ALHFAM Proceedings*.

He/she shall also review all articles, establish a format for design of the publication, and proofread all material at various stages throughout the production of the *Proceedings*. The Editor should work with the Chair of the Publications Committee and/or previous editors for advice on standard formatting, as well as production sources. The final responsibility is to coordinate the production of the publication, and ensure a professional and high quality product. *It is important to complete the **ALHFAM Proceedings** and have it ready to distribute by the time of the following year's conference.*

The ALHFAM Board of Directors through the Publications Committee provides advance funds for development and production costs. Other sources of funding may occasionally arise. For instance, the regional group of ALHFAM in whose area the conference was held may provide partial funding towards "their" *ALHFAM Proceedings*. Other sources can be sought, upon the initiative of each Editor, with the approval of ALHFAM's Publications Committee, and Board of Directors where necessary. Such additional funding opportunities should be used to subsidize the production of these publications, so that members' purchase prices can be reduced.

A production budget for the *ALHFAM Proceedings* of the current year (e.g. 2007 Proceedings that will be published in 2008) should be developed very early in the

editorial process, and be presented to the Chair of the Publications Committee for discussion and approval by the Board of Directors. A production budget and request for funds must be in the hands of the Chair of the Publications Committee prior to the Fall Board Meeting, which is normally held in November.

Appendix A:

Past ALHFAM Conferences:

September 17, 1970: ALHFAM began at Old Sturbridge Village

May 7, 1971: Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA

June 15-18, 1972: Farmers' Museum, Cooperstown, NY

May 7-10, 1973: Living History Farms, Des Moines and Ames, Iowa

June 16-18, 1974: Agricultural History Center, Davis, California

April 23-25, 1975: Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

June 6-9, 1976: Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation, Edgemont, PA

May 1-4, 1977: Georgia Agrirama, Tifton, GA

June 5-8, 1978: National Museum of Science and Technology and University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario

June 11-14, 1979: Old Cienega Village, Sante Fe, NM

June 14-18, 1980: Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA

April 6-9, 1981: Golden Pond, KY

June 20-24, 1982: King's Landing, Fredericton, New Brunswick

June 12-16, 1983: State Historical Society and Old World Wisconsin, Madison and Eagle, WI

June 17-21, 1984: Four Mile Historic Park and University of Denver, Denver, CO

June 16-20, 1985: Colonial Williamsburg, VA
Organizer: Wayne Randolph

June 22-26, 1986: Ontario Agricultural Museum, Guelph, and Milton, Ontario

June 21-25, 1987: Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, Dearborn and Ann Arbor, MI

June 19-23, 1988: Old Bethpage Village Restoration and Hofstra University, NY

June 25-29, 1989: Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement, Indianapolis, IN

June 16-21, 1990: Old Sturbridge Village and Plimoth Plantation at Brown University, Providence, RI

June 15-20, 1991: Reynold-Alberta Museum and Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village at University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

June 13-18, 1992: Old Salem, Inc. at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

June 19-24, 1993: Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN

June 19-23, 1994: The Farmers' Museum, Hancock Shaker Village, and Hanford Mills Museum at Russell Sage College, Troy, NY

June 17-21, 1995: Kennedy Center, Hiram, Ohio / Hiram College

May 17-23, 1996: Fort Bend Museum and George Ranch Historical Park, Houston, Texas /University of Houston

June 15-19, 1997: Museum of American Frontier Culture, Staunton, Virginia

June 21-25, 1998: University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada

June 11-18, 1999: Kansas City, Missouri

June 11-16, 2000: Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut/ Old Sturbridge Village and Mystic Seaport

June 10-15, 2001: Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia

June 23-27, 2002: Fortress of Louisburg, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada

June 22-26, 2003: Princeton, New Jersey

June 20-24, 2004: Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan

June 12-16, 2005: Living History Farms, Des Moines, Iowa

June 4-8, 2006: LSU and its Rural Life Museum, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

June 1-5, 2007: El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, Santa Fe, New Mexico

June 22-26, 2008: Upper Canada Village, Ottawa, Ontario

June 6-9, 2009: Old Salem Museums and Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

June 20-24, 2010: Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts/ Worcester State University

June 4-8, 2011: The Farmstead at WVU Jackson's Mill, Weston, West Virginia

June 9-12, 2012: Farmers Branch, Texas

June 14-18, 2013: Hale Farm and Village/ University of Akron, Ohio

June 21-25, 2014: Heritage Park Historical Village, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

June 19-23, 2015: Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Virginia / College of William & Mary

June 12-16, 2016: Louisiana State University Rural Life Museum, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Appendix B

ALHFAM Annual Meeting Do's and Don'ts

Updated November 2015

Overall:

1. **Be welcoming & hospitable.** This may be the first and only time that some ALHFAMers come to your city/site, and they'll remember how friendly (or unfriendly) you were.
2. If necessary, hire someone to work full-time on conference details for the last two months before the conference, especially if conference committee is over-extended. This will pay big dividends.
3. Give as much business as possible to the venues providing conference services (university, hotel, conference center) especially if they are being very helpful.
4. Pursue sponsorships from and partnerships with as many related cultural institutions and/or businesses as possible to help ensure financial success.
5. Make the conference fun and memorable by incorporating good local culture, cuisine, drink, etc. Try and plan the conference around local festivals or special events to offer conference attendees "added value" opportunities.
6. Make sure there are rain plans for every outdoor event.
7. Have an emergency/disaster plan in place in the event of major emergencies.
8. Always assume that there will be newcomers in the crowd. Take the opportunity to fully explain events and acronyms that may be new to people.

REGISTRATION AND LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Make sure instructions/directions to rooms are really clear so there is no confusion regarding which buildings are being used.
2. Name Badges - Be sure to put them together in advance so you're sure parts of it aren't missing or broken. The name of the person's institution should be large and include its location. Attach ribbons to the badges to identify officers, board

member, presenters, and conference planning group. First timers should also be identified.

3. Choose the location of registration carefully, and avoid moving it. If it must be moved, don't change the location of registration without telling everyone, both with announcements and in the program.
4. Make sure those at registration table know the following:
 - a. Wi-Fi information
 - b. Copy machines or copy facilities both on and off campus (Staples, Office Max, etc.);
 - c. How to get more towels and blankets if necessary.
 - d. How to contact conference services office at host college/university, hotel to get problems solved, questions answered, etc., especially for after-hours problems.
- 5.. Have directional signs to conference registration at the entrance to the campus or registration location.
6. Make sure **all** directions—whether to the meeting location (campus), dormitories, or programs—are accurate, including mileages.
9. Date the list of registrants (e.g., "as of June 5, 2007").
10. If using college/university housing: registration confirmation forms should include a detailed list of what is included with dorm rooms: e.g., towels (amounts and how frequently changed, if at all, and reminder to bring bigger ones with you if want to); wireless connections, desk lights and a list of things they should bring with them (i.e., bar soap & plastic carrier, coat hangers, bathroom shoes that can get wet, blow dryer).
11. Make sure airport/train/bus station transportation arrangements are precise and that contingency arrangements are made well in advance if the original plans fall through or develop problems.
12. Include map of the city/vicinity where the campus is located and, if possible, highlight locations of post office, drugstore, convenience store, etc.
13. If applicable, include easy public transportation information - nearest stop, fare, operating times, and hours—so that people can find their own way if they need to.

14. Make sure there is a large table available for the site brochures—there are always more than you think will be there.
15. If the campus or conference center recycles, make sure there are recycling containers for various materials at every possible place.
- 16.
17. Make it clear in the meeting announcement and in the registration confirmation that the night of the Presidential banquet is “dress-up” night - if you have a costume from your site, that’s the night to wear it, and if you don’t, it’s the one night to wear business dress.. This is especially important for first-timers to know so they don’t feel uncomfortable.
18. Have plenty of people involved in registration and keep the registration/information desk manned from early morning until late at night. If that’s not possible, make sure conference services people are available.
19. Have a sticker on the name badge of those who requested special meals so they can be readily identified, or provide a card that they can present to wait staff
- 20.
21. Create a Lost & Found Box at the Registration desk and announce its existence and location.
22. Have a means of replacing lost name badges easily at the Registration Desk. Consider having a laptop & printer available for printing out extras as needed.
23. Confirmation or pre-registration information should list an emergency number to give to family members prior to our arrival.
- 24.
25. Consider a “Problem-Solver’s Desk” adjacent to the Registration Desk manned by 2 people to handle problems. This will free up the Registration Desk. Potential problems could include dorm rooms, lost luggage arriving from an airport, illnesses/injuries (first aid kit or information as to the location of closest pharmacy or clinic).
26. Have a Message & Jobs Posting Board [with labels] near the Registration Desk. Have pushpins, golf pencils, and notepads available nearby. Announce at the first meeting that there is a Message & Jobs Posting Board and its location.
27. Have vendors in an area close to sessions and easily accessible. To create “traffic”

for them try the SEMC trick of giving a vendors' card in each registration packet. This card has the list of vendors on it or has a map of where particular vendors are located. When a person visits a vendor their card gets stamped. After seeing all vendors and their card is completely stamped, they drop it in a box for a drawing later, a prize or prizes could include gift certificate, free registration to next year's conference, a gift item.

28. Consider having a committee member “host” the hospitality suite each night – someone to ensure the room is shutdown at night, someone to deal with any issues that arise with the venue etc. By sharing this responsibility, you can spread around the “late nights” for the committee.

Food

1. Try out the food before deciding on menus for the conference, if you can. This is very important so that you can find out what they seem to do best.
2. Take the food service's word on what they do best—it'll probably pay off because that way they won't be trying out new recipes on the group.
3. Have cold water and/or non-caffeine soft drinks available at every meal, on-site or off-site.
4. Make sure a vegetarian entrée is available at every meal. This does not mean that the green salad that is available for everyone is the vegetarian entrée, nor does it mean that the vegetarian meal is the regular meal minus the meat! This is especially important for the off-site meals, and it is important that if only a limited number of vegetarian entrees are available, that they be set aside and not put out for general consumption. Ask for food allergies / dietary restrictions on the registration form. Many venues will be able to provide alternative meals provided advance notice is given.
5. Ask the food service not to put hot water for tea in urns or containers that have previously held coffee. The coffee oils stick to the sides of the container and make the water taste like bad stale coffee—and when the tea is made, it tastes awful.
6. Work with the food service to make sure logistics of serving the food are clear from the beginning. And make sure they put up enough lines to handle everyone in a reasonable length of time! All buffets and coffee breaks should have 4 service lines, at least.

- 7.
8. Spell out the details of “Smoked, Salted, and Pickled” for attendees, so that those bringing food know where to put it. In addition, make sure that the college and/or conference food service allow this. If bringing in food is not allowed by the food service, make other arrangements.
9. If not already included for everyone, make arrangements for dinner the evening before the conference starts for those who wish to take advantage of it, especially in meeting locations that are in rural locations or are not within walking distance of restaurants.
10. For those arriving two days before the conference starts (such as those traveling with board members), provide information regarding where they can get a quick bite to eat within walking distance or have a hospitality suite available with fresh fruit, cold cuts/sandwich fixings, chips and soft drinks/bottled water.
11. Start dinner earlier the night of the auction so that auction can start earlier. Do not hold auction in the dining hall if at all possible—the acoustics are usually poor and it’s usually not comfortable to sit in for a long period of time.
12. Have an alternative beverage during the coffee breaks for the expected warm weather, i.e. lemonade. Also be sure there are a variety of drinks at the break (i.e., coffee, tea, ice tea, water, and soda).
13. Provide bottled water particularly on the buses for site visit days. Or consider re-fillable water bottles for attendees’ bags.
14. Try to maintain the quality of the food provided the majority of the time.
15. Be sure the box lunches are adequate. Be aware of the beverage choices. Have water, diet drinks, etc.
16. The Newcomers Reception - Be sure the refreshments are adequate.
17. Protect the vegetarian meals for those who requested them.
18. Make sure there’s enough time to eat meals and allow for informal networking opportunities
19. Avoid scheduling meetings during meals.

PROGRAMS

1. Provide Map to buildings - Label buildings with the name of building, not coded by numbers. Make sure that alternative building names are in the program, especially if the name on the building is not the name by which the building is commonly known.
2. Provide directional signs within buildings to get to sessions and have large signs outside each room listing the programs. Use large point size so it can be seen 20 feet away and signs should look professional.
3. Once sessions have begun, check to make sure there are enough chairs to accommodate everyone in the room. If not, try to bring in extra chairs so no one has to sit on the floor the whole time.
4. Tell presenters to have enough handouts for at least 50. If they don't have many attending the session and do have extras, have a table near the Registration Desk so people can pick up handouts for sessions they weren't able to attend.
5. Newcomers Reception - There should be an official welcoming by the Board..
6. Check on ventilation and other equipment (computers, video projection equipment, slide projectors, screens, VCRs,) in meeting rooms. Make sure the A/V equipment works before the session or lecture begins. All session moderators need to know how to adjust equipment if necessary. If renting AV equipment, it may be possible to book an on-site technician to help trouble shoot.
7. Advise speakers to arrive early for their sessions to allow themselves time to practice with A.V. equipment. Provide a designated spot for speakers to check in (e.g. registration desk)
8. Professional Interest Group meetings - please spell out the PIG names for the newcomers.
9. **PROOFREAD EVERYTHING TWICE AND HAVE TWO PEOPLE LOOK AT IT, INCLUDING SOMEONE NOT INVOLVED AT ALL IN THE PLANNING.**
10. Make sure that your security and guest services personnel know about the meeting and that they have a conference program so they are aware of the schedule.
11. Make sure that every room used for conference activities and sessions is clearly identified and signed from the very beginning of the conference.
12. Catchy session titles can be misleading (i.e., International Space Station). Be

sure the title explains what the topics of the session are going to be.

- 13. Remember to thank everyone—conference committee, presenters, and first-timers.**
14. Times of the meals should be listed in the conference program for each day. Make sure there's enough time to eat meals.
15. Include overview of each day in the conference program
16. Let presenters know what support there is for computer assisted presentations (i.e., Power Point). Discourage presentations with special needs (i.e., artifacts, furniture) that cannot be brought to the conference by the presenter.
17. Make sure the presenters in the “put together” sessions [put together from proposals that came in independently] have a clear idea of the session organization and length and can get in touch with each other prior to the session to arrange everything.
18. Consider placing sessions on the same topic in the same room if possible on the theory that someone interested in one aspect of the topic will be interested in another aspect of the same topic.
19. Make sure there aren't too many concurrent sessions for the number of attendees so that there aren't a whole lot of sessions that have as many presenters as listeners.
20. Consider a reception one afternoon before dinner to be hosted by several programs that provide museum training (e.g., Cooperstown Graduate Program,, Seminar for Historic Administration, Eastern Illinois University).
21. Plan time late in the afternoon for a “Forum” / “Town Hall Meeting.” One hour – 90 minutes is usually sufficient.
22. A member of the organizing committee needs to be present at every session to introduce speakers, present the token of appreciation, and make sure that everything is set up correctly. This is a great way to engage staff and volunteers at your site and introduce them to ALHFAM
23. Find separate meeting rooms for PIGs and regional meetings—they should not be meeting in the dining hall in separate corners if at all possible.
24. If at all possible, program committee people should drive the routes of the field trips ahead of time to make sure that the directions are correct and to know the

timing of the individual legs of the trip.

25. Assign knowledgeable “bus captains” to ride on each tour bus to handle any problems should they arise.
26. Make sure bus drivers have correct directions and maps for all field trips, along with the timing for each leg of the trip.
27. If possible, include route and/or map of field trip for each participant.
28. Double-check on the buses the day before the trips to make sure they know where to pick up people and that enough buses have been reserved.
29. Trips to museums should include “behind-the-scenes” opportunities—these arrangements need to be made when the trips are planned.
30. Have buses for evening programs leave at scheduled intervals, beginning early (especially on the last day) and make sure they don't leave before they are supposed to.
31. Choose session proposals that appeal to ALHFAM newcomers as well as long-time meeting attendees.
32. Make sure meeting rooms are matched well to speakers, especially if many people are anticipated at a particular session. Conduct an e-survey of program sessions preferences to help in assigning rooms for various sessions if necessary.
33. If there is a fashion show, make sure the stage is high enough for everyone to see, that there is a runway of some type for people to walk down, and that there are separate ways to get on & off the stage.
34. If possible, find a way not to have the PIGs meet at the same time. Try scheduling PIG meetings twice during the conference so everyone will have a chance to attend at least two different PIGs.
35. T-shirts: pick a design that can be screened instead of having to be painted or ironed-on; don't always use off-white as the background color. To avoid having left over stock, have attendees pre-order t-shirts with their registration.
36. Distribute fliers about the meeting to local college history departments.
37. Do not have the auction on the night of the first full day, if at all possible. It's better to wait until the 2nd day, when people know each other better, and those who

have attended previous meetings can talk it up to the newcomers.

38. Program in free time and detail alternatives in the program, with directions on how to get there (nearby museums or attractions to visit; parks to walk in; etc.).
39. Include a program/meeting evaluation sheet not only in the program book but make enough extra copies to have available the last two days of the meeting at the registration table. During general announcements remind everyone to fill them out and return them and then be sure to read them all and pass all of the recommendations on to the chair of next year's meeting.
40. Allow time between sessions for attendees to get from one session to the next and allow time for presenters to set up (e.g. avoid back to back 45 minute sessions)

Accommodations

1. Discuss with conference services what is provided in each room including desk, chair, lamp, wireless connection, number of towels, linens, blanket, and soap; whether replacements are available and how to get those replacements.
2. If you're using college/university campus housing: make arrangements with one or (preferably) two nearby off-campus hotels/motels for those attendees who do not want to stay on-campus.
3. Pre-registration material should provide information about available accommodations after post-conference activities. Try to get a local hotel to provide a discounted rate for ALHFAM members staying before and/or after the conference.
4. Make every effort to offer rooms with wireless connections. This ensures conference attendees can keep current with work and/or personal email.
5. If using dormitories, try to have irons/ironing boards available.
6. Confirmation material should mention whether laundry rooms are available in or near the dorms and the cost of using washers, dryers and purchasing detergent.
7. Emphasize to local conference services people that normal maintenance such as replacing beds, changing locks, etc., should be done before or after the conference; that locks and ventilation systems work; and that all rooms must be

checked for insects, etc.

8. Work with local conference services people to see if dorm rooms can be assigned by gender and alphabetically instead of only alphabetically. This should help reduce the problem of one gender having to go upstairs or completely to the other end of the hall to use the facilities.
9. If using college/university dormitories: arrange to have towels changed at least once during the conference.
10. If using a hotel, ensure an adequate room block to accommodate those arriving early or staying beyond the conference days.
11. Confirm with the venue (whether hotel or university campus) who should be contacted in case any issues arise and ensure that the planning committee knows how to contact them.

Appendix C:

First Timer's Guide to the ALHFAM Annual Meeting

Welcome to your first ALHFAM annual meeting! Usually about 1/3 of attendees are first-timers like yourself; 1/3 more have been to a conference or two before; and the rest are seasoned veterans who attend most years. Many people cite networking as one of the best parts of the meeting. We hope that you find the people friendly and the program worthwhile. Like any event, it is what you make of it.

This is an overview of what to expect, where to go and what to wear. More information is in the conference program and on the ALHFAM website, www.alhfam.org. The conference organizers usually have contact information in the conference booklet and the conference website if you have any additional questions. Don't be shy: if you have a question, ask it so that you can relax and better enjoy the conference!

Packing for the ALHFAM conference

Check the local weather forecast for the conference before you leave. Attire is less dressy than at most other professional conferences and typically ranges from t-shirts and jeans or shorts to business casual, depending on one's personality and profession. Bring a light jacket, comfortable walking shoes, rain gear, and a sun hat if you like. Also, please bring something to donate to the annual auction (books, site t-shirts, and craft items are usually popular) and for the "Salted, Smoked and Pickled" reception (see more below). Some also like to bring brochures from their site or business; there is usually a table for this literature.

Lodging

In an effort to make the conference affordable, sometimes dormitory lodging is offered, depending on what is available at or near the host site. Typically sheets, towel and sometimes a washcloth are provided with dorm rooms, but check the registration information to be sure. Many dorm veterans, especially if driving, also like to bring their own fan, iron, alarm clock, clothes hangers, an extra pillow, an extra towel, reading lamp and extension cord, soap and shampoo. If you want/need fresh linens daily, toiletries, multiple towels, a television, private bath, better or bigger bed or other such amenities, you might consider staying in a nearby hotel instead. The conference organizers can advise you as to local options.

Only hotel lodging is available some years. Again, check the registration information for details and consider your own needs and budget.

Meals

Most meals during the conference are provided as part of your conference registration, ranging from simple but satisfying (e.g., most breakfasts) to fancy (e.g., the Presidential Banquet). Check the program booklet for details and accommodations for those with special dietary needs.

Check-in

The registration table should be your first stop upon arrival. Conference staff will give you your name badge (please wear it!), final conference schedule, a list of participants, and other information. Depending on local arrangements, they might also check you into your lodging or direct you to where to do that. They can also answer routine questions such as where to find an ATM, convenience store, etc. Drop off your donation for the auction (see below). If you brought brochures to make available to others, they can tell you where the literature table is located. After checking in, many like to settle into their room and review the schedule and other registration materials.

Workshops

Many people register for one or more professional development workshops before the official start of the conference, which may include focused trips or hands-on instruction. Pay attention to times and any recommendations in the workshop description. Dress comfortably for the weather and activity, and realize that you may get dirty if it is a hands-on workshop.

First-Timers' reception

Please come to this official kick-off of the conference! This is an informal opportunity to meet your hosts for the conference, including the President of ALHFAM and the board of directors. Refreshments are provided. As with nearly all events at ALHFAM, wear whatever you like. This tends to be a very informal conference! This event segues right into . . .

“Salted, Smoked and Pickled” (the general opening reception)

If possible, bring your own or your region’s food or beverage specialty to share. Old friends meet and greet, new friends are introduced, and everyone enjoys casual conversation and music over regional and local food and beverage specialties.

Hospitality Suite

Usually there is a designated room for after-hours gathering, talking, music-playing, singing, and casual socializing. Sometimes other ad hoc gatherings also develop. Everyone is always welcome. Don’t worry if you don’t know anyone; just come in and introduce yourself! Some of the best friendships and contacts are formed after hours.

Keynote and Sessions: The First Full Day

The conference proper typically begins with a greeting from the conference organizer at a plenary session, followed by important announcements about last-minute changes and sundry reminders. A keynote address immediately follows. After that there is often a coffee break before a series of concurrent sessions are held throughout the day. Read the schedule and session descriptions carefully to decide which are of the most interest to you. Some fill up fast so arrive early for a good seat. Presenters sometimes dress in business casual attire but others and most non-presenters dress comfortably for the climate.

The second day of sessions is similar to the first, though there may not be a keynote address. The annual business meeting takes place on one of these busy days, as do the meetings of the local regions and the professional interest groups

Regional Meetings

ALHFAM members are also automatically members of a geographical ALHFAM region. You should attend your regional meeting to learn what is going on in your area and help plan its future meetings and activities.

Professional Interest Groups (PIGs)

Please attend and participate in the meeting of whichever group best matches your own personal or professional interests; there is no extra fee and everyone is welcome! You may notice that most “PIGs” have creatively themed acronyms. See www.alhfam.org or the back cover of the *Bulletin* for more information.

Vendors' Room

Often a room is set aside for those who provide products and services of interest to ALHFAM members. Many enjoy perusing the offerings during breaks between sessions.

Auction

This ALHFAM fund-raiser is a great time with some terrific buys, and always entertaining! There are both live and silent auctions, with something for everyone. Please bring a donation from your site to be auctioned off (e.g. a t-shirt, book, craft item, or gift basket) or something of your own choosing that might interest meeting attendees. There are sundry traditions that long-timers will share with you if you ask, but the auctioneer usually explains the more cherished ones as they come up. Get your bidding number for \$1 at the door and prepare to stay for a while. Relax and enjoy! Beverages are available for purchase, sometimes with the first one or two complimentary. Proceeds support fellowships to future conferences.

Annual Business Meeting

ALHFAM is its members. The business meeting is the real reason for the conference, as a yearly meeting of the membership is required in the Bylaws. You should definitely attend and participate. It is an opportunity to get to know the leaders of the organization and the issues we face.

Presidential Banquet

Many attendees choose to wear period clothing to this event. Modern attire is just fine as well, although nicer clothing ("business casual") is recommended. The most recent past president gives an address in alternate years, and there may be the conferring of awards as well as a fashion show so that attendees can show off their period attire.

Tours and Site Visits

Usually the conference includes two days of sessions and one or two days of site visits and/or local tours. Be sure to check the schedule carefully. Wear comfortable shoes and clothes for site visits. Be sure to bring along everything you might need for the entire day, including rain gear and a camera. Some years a pick-up game of early baseball called Town Ball is organized during the visit to the host site,

although sometime folks are too hot or tired to play. If there is a game, anyone is welcome to participate... or watch.

Plowing Match

The plowing match, which occurs more or less annually, keeps the ALHFAMily close to its agricultural roots and typically takes place during the visit to the host site. All are welcome to join in. Instructors are ready and willing to help anyone try their hand. There are categories and prizes for every skill level.

Closing Banquet

The conference typically concludes with dinner and dancing at the end of the visit to the host site. Most attendees then return to the conference headquarters and depart for home after breakfast the next morning. We hope you will be back next year!

Revised 2010 by Tom Kelleher

Revised 2015 by Martha Katz-Hyman

Appendix D: Conference Coordinator

Introduction

Under extraordinary circumstances the ALHFAM Board of Directors may decide to seek and hire an ALHFAM member who has experience organizing and hosting ALHFAM annual conferences to serve as a paid conference coordinator. A possible special situation might be, for example, when the originally scheduled host organization withdraws its invitation and a substitute host and/or Conference Chair cannot be found. The Conference Coordinator works with the local conference planning team to ensure that the annual ALHFAM conference will take place according to ALHFAM organizational conference norms. In such extreme situations the Board typically decides to forgo the normal budgeted conference revenue to pay the Conference Coordinator's stipend.

Conference Coordinator Position Description

The Conference Coordinator shall be a part-time consultant position, operating under contract to the ALHFAM Board of Directors for a specific conference. The main purpose of the position is to advise and to support the Conference Planning Committee so that they are able to meet the usual expectations for ALHFAM Annual Meetings, of the Board, the membership, and conference participants. In effect, the Conference Coordinator acts as a paid de facto Conference Chair, although the Conference Planning Committee may have a nominal Conference Chair as well.

The Conference Coordinator shall have the following qualifications:

1. Be an ALHFAM Member in good standing.
2. Attendance and participation in 5 or more ALHFAM Annual Meetings.
3. Extensive experience planning/hosting conferences, seminars or workshops, including participation in ALHFAM Annual Meeting planning teams or ALHFAM regional meeting planning efforts.
4. Intimate long term knowledge of the ALHFAM Annual Meeting and its format, operations, quirks and expectations.
5. No official affiliation with institutions hosting that year's ALHFAM Annual Meeting.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the position, the Conference Coordinator will:

1. With the Conference Planning Committee, use the Conference Planning Guide to organize and execute an ALHFAM Annual Meeting/Conference.
2. Report on the Committee's progress to the Board.
3. Supply technical support to the Conference Planning Committee, ideally beginning 2 years ahead of the Conference date. Answer questions by telephone or email and provide other services as required.
4. Develop a task calendar for conference planning.
5. Meet with Conference Planning Committee on a regular basis as necessary. Visit all conference venues.
6. Review contracts for local arrangements and other services. Advise Conference Committee and Board of proposed adjustments when necessary.
7. Make arrangements for the June Board Meeting with Conference Planning Team.
8. Consult with Conference Committee on conference theme development and follow-through in the development of the Annual Meeting Program.
9. Watch out for logistical considerations and prevent nitty gritty details from "falling through the cracks."
10. Review insurance situation with Planning Team and major vendors. Coordinate needs for upgraded coverage with the Secretary-Treasurer.
11. Perform quality control function to ensure that the presence and products of the organization, from T-shirts to resource expenditures, meet the established expectations of the membership.
12. Make scheduled written reports to the Board for the June and November Board Meetings, and to the President, or his/her designee, on a regular basis.
13. Be in residence at the Conference location three days ahead of the conference start date. Support launch of annual meeting, respond to last minute emergencies, and generally ensure a well-executed conference.
14. Deliver a written final report of the conference, including financial balance sheet, to the Board on or before the 1st of November following the conference.

Appendix E:
Additional Conference Planning Tips
(Tom Kelleher, 2010)

Most conferees are pleasant, patient and quite appreciative, but no matter how accommodating or anticipatory you try to be, expect some complaints. No matter how much information you provide or how clearly or often you give it, expect questions. (Provide a name and phone number of someone who can give those answers) **If you realize these two truths going in, your life will be better for it!** The best you can hope for is that complaints will be about things beyond your control and questions will be about things you have already told them. Smile!

Read and re-read the conference-planning guide; it is very long but quite helpful, and the fruit of many minds and conferences. Look at the forms and mailings from the past several conferences for ideas as to what you want to repeat and what you want to improve.

The board expects a \$5,000 profit. Budget this as a line item, but try to keep the total registration fee as low as possible, as many pay their own way, and ours is not a lucrative field.

Set clear deadlines and stick to them for registration, cancellation, etc. Be firm but fair: bend rules with reason and try to help when you reasonably can, but recognize that you are not responsible for other people's whims or carelessness.

Make a day by day to-do check-list so that tasks are done in a timely manner, and you are not wondering, "Did I remember to...?" Include follow-up confirmation with transportation, meal, entertainment, etc. vendors.

Offer an early bird discount (really a late registration penalty) on guest and daily registrations **as well as** full registration. It motivates many not to wait until the last minute to register. It gives you plenty of cash on hand to pay bills and gives you a good idea of registration numbers pretty far out.

Conference T-shirts have long been offered. A mistake made by several past conferences was offering them on the registration form for \$15, and then ordering too many extra, and being forced to sell them at the conference at ever-falling discount prices, or hoping to. Order t-shirts based on pre-orders.

The LONG established ALHFAM policy is that presenters pay and register like everyone else (an exception is made for the keynote speaker or certain specially invited presenters). On average 1/3 of attendees are also presenters. In bold type prominently displayed on our call for papers state “**NOTE: All presenters are expected to register for either the full meeting or the day on which they will present. ALHFAM does not pay honoraria or travel expenses.**” Remind speakers of this again when you send acceptance emails. Six weeks out send reminders to all speakers who have not yet registered, asking if they still intended to present, and follow up with phone calls or emails.

Many speakers check every media option they are given. Instead clearly **request** them to **tell you** their specific media needs, if any, and work with them as best you can to accommodate them. In the long run it will be easier.

Make it clear what people can expect, especially with the lower priced lodgings such as dorms. Since many pay out of their own often shallow pockets, it is important to keep affordable options at ALHFAM conferences, and whenever possible refrain from only offering hotel rooms at conference centers, (albeit so much easier for conference organizers, though!). Most conferees are easy-to-please but a few can be amazingly demanding! The point is that some people truly expect 4-star hotel luxury at dorm room prices. Offer hotel information but keep in mind that the concept of “you get what you pay for” will be lost on some people. See the paragraph about lodging in the first timer’s guide.

On field trips, take another vehicle along for emergencies.

Some ALHFAMers come as family units, which is great. Just be aware of it.

The evaluation sheet should primarily for improving NEXT year, and secondarily learning how this year went.

Finally, expect questions, especially in the week before the conference. Of course most were ones that a quick reading of the mailing or the confirmation letter could have answered, but you have to just give the answer with a patient smile.