

American Local History Network

Board Meeting Minutes

By E-mail on the Board List - November 5, 2013 beginning @ 8:13am

Board Members Present:

Joyce Gaston Reece, President
Darlene Anderson, Vice President
Rebekah Headings, Secretary
Sharon McCormick, Treasurer
Cyndy Cox, Membership Coordinator
David Johnson, Parliamentarian
Barbara Hutchinson, Volunteer Coordinator

Agenda:

1. Approval of October minutes

2. Providing Links to other, reputable web sites...a special page on national site for that

3. Reports:
 - a. David – Meeting Format
 - b. Barbara – Volunteer Committee
 - c. Rebekah - Marketing ALHN

4. Mission Statement/Tagline

5. New Business

Call to Order:

President Joyce Gaston Reece called the November meeting of the ALHN to order via email at 8:13 am on November 5, 2013. Roll call was taken by an email response to approve the October Board Minutes. Darlene Anderson, Rebekah Headings, David Johnson, Sharon McCormack, Cyndy Cox, and Barbara Hutchinson voted to accept the October Minutes as corrected.

Rebekah then made a request of the board. “I have a request. In the interest of simplifying the minutes, please make sure you are responding to calls to vote, discussion, etc on the appropriate **THREAD** and **BOARD**. In quite a few cases this month we all have been replying on threads that are not necessarily connected to the conversation we are replying to. I have been guilty of

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this, too. So, please make sure if you are responding with discussion, to roll call, or voting that the thread(and board) is the correct place for your reply. Thank you!”

Rebekah also requested that Joyce repost the agenda for the November meeting.

Joyce announced on the ALHN-Board on Yahoo Groups that the minutes from the October meeting were approved as corrected. Moving on, Joyce said, “The first agenda item is one that we spoke of before but never had a vote on. Placing links to reputable web sites on alhn.org. The original conversation was several months ago. We need to re-visit this in order to get it into the minutes.

The issue is now open for discussion/questions. I’m open to suggestions....perhaps appointing a couple of board members and volunteers to seek out and make recommendations on web sites.”

Cyndy commented, “Since I link to other sites and blogs on my own pages, I would support linking to some on the main site. Since the main site so broad, how would we choose? I think Chronicling America would be a good example.”

Darlene responded, “I think that linking to off-site links from the national page (secondary page) is taking folks away from ALHN and we wouldn’t want them to find a web site that might be more interesting. This means they would go on to the more interesting page and away from ALHN. My 2 cents worth.”

Joyce then posted, on the Yahoo Group, a response to Rebekah’s request for the agenda, “For the ALHN Board list (ON rootsweb) beginning November 5, the agenda is:

Approval of October minutes

Providing Links to other, reputable web sites...a special page on national site for that

David – if you have anything more to add to the meeting format issues please get that prepared.

Barbara – Your thoughts and ideas concerning the Volunteer committee’s

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efforts.

Rebekah - Your report on marketing ALHN and discussion from the others

Do we want to create a tagline/logo for alhn. And do we need to revisit the Mission Statement.”

David then questioned the proper mailing list and group for the November meeting. “Is this supposed to be the correct mailing list? I was leaving this email address and almost missed these emails.

Any meeting format changes are no longer a consideration. There's nothing more out there that I can offer. I want to also remind you that we never voted to place the minutes on the ALHN site in the October meeting due to the urgent matters in the changes in the board. I also had withdrawn the motion.”

Joyce responded to David’s question on the Rootsweb ALHN Board list in a new thread entitled corrected list. “We are now on the correct list...thanks to David. My apologies to everyone.

Wednesday morning update, November 6, 2013

I’m sure Rebekah is very appreciative of everyone’s efforts in including more clarification in your email replies. I sure do. It helps me keep up with what is being voted on in this, often, delayed form of meeting. I had asked David Johnson to seek alternate ways to meet and the effort has not produced anything that would cover all the problems we have had and still keep us within the bylaws so we will have to proceed on as we are so please keep up the good work.

1. The meeting minutes have been accepted as corrected.
2. We have two comments on providing links to other reputable web sites...Cyndy in favor, Darlene in opposition. It also occurs to me that this would be a very good thing if we asked other web sites to provide links to ALHN when at all possible. Reciprocal links would be a great way to get the word out about alhn. I also think the membership would be a great resource to tap into to get places to link to. We all spend a lot of time surfing the ‘net for information and we’ve all learned to sort the good from the bad so we should, perhaps, be willing to help others along. Perhaps in the TOPICS pages?

Is there further discussion?

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3. David informs me that we have failed to call for a vote on the subject of posting the minutes on the web site and I do believe he is correct. With the chaos we experienced last month we did not vote on this. Please vote by saying “yes to post the minutes” or “no, that we do not post the minutes”

All board members voted in favor of posting minutes to the website.

Darlene then made a motion to include the ALHN minutes on the alhn.org website. David seconded the motion.

David began to discuss links on the ALHN website. “On the topic of links to non-ALHN websites, yes we can lose traffic by detouring it to other sites. I suggest that reciprocal links would increase our traffic and also our ranking in the internet search engines. If a smaller web site is being linked to, both sites will benefit, and perhaps. If that site was of interest to ALHN that maybe we could draw them in to join their site to ALHN. If we actively searched for such sites, we might be able to solicit members who have never heard of ALHN.

Even familysearch will give us reciprocal links if we join in their wiki. They have a wiki of links for every county.

Be very selective about who is linked to from the ALHN web site, and only link to sites benefiting us also. No for-profit commercial sites to be linked from the ALHN web site. the ALHN site should not do free advertising for any for-profit entities.

Maybe consider something like this as acceptable. We won't lose traffic in this case, because most everyone already knows about familysearch, but we will gain reciprocal links:

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Societies_and_libraries

I would consider making a motion along these guidelines, with the stipulation that the links be approved on a case-by-case basis by vote of the board, weighing the benefits vs. any disadvantages, and that the wording of this general resolution be placed in the standing rules. If considered, the wording needs improvement.”

On the same thread, corrected list, but switching topics, David added, “A suggestion concerning member contact information.

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First create a privacy policy as is required by law in these situations, stating that personal contact information will be directly received by and kept by the Membership Coordinator in an offline database that will not be shared with anyone except his/her successor and with the other board members, and that names, phone numbers and addresses will not be shared with anyone outside the board except by subpoena or search warrant from a court. That the email addresses and website information already appearing on the member's websites have already been made public and may be used to correspond by email with that member.

Next I suggest that the information including the member's mailing address and phone number be considered optional, but the statement made that this information will always be sought for the purposes of contacting that member in the case that email communication has not been successful. Also I think we should offer the alternative for a member not wishing to provide their mailing address and phone number to offer the membership Coordinator an email address of a secondary contact person who will know the status of the member.

No person should be driven off due to privacy concerns. Also our policy should not be an obstacle to a person joining in the first place. We should lose no person, but absolute anonymity cannot be allowed, We need to know who our members are, hence the need for name and email address and url.

I would also suggest that the members who have privacy concerns be able to send their information by US mail to the Membership Coordinator, or by any means with which they feel comfortable that their privacy will not be violated.

Also assurances that are given to the board that more than one person is in charge of or involved in the website be sufficient, but that at least the name and email of one of the others involved be requested.

It should also be in writing that the reason for requesting this information is to contact a member to ascertain their status, and to request that they donate the site as a legacy site in order that ALHN be able to continue to offer the information in the website to the public.”

Darlene commented on the corrected list thread, “I understand where some of you that have communicated on this issue are coming from. However, have you looked at USGenWeb, AHGP, Genealogy Trails? I did not find a link on their pages to anyone except to pages within the project itself. If we want to promote ALHN, post our main link to any search engine we can find, Cyndislist, and others.

The key to success is to create great content that visitors want to use, search engines will love and other websites will naturally link to. Send out press releases to sites that are free.

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Write articles and submit them to websites accepting author submissions. Blog about ALHN. SC's and CC's could write articles about their state or county then submit the article to anyone that will take it. This would be sorta like a training session about a county or state, i.e., when formed, who named for, were there any courthouse fires, when did vital records begin and so on.

If we want folks to visit ALHN, we gotta create something for them to come look at. How about creating a project, articles about genealogy, how about a blog (this will drive folks to ALHN)?

I don't know, I'm just throwing ideas out and I stole the ideas in paragraph 2 btw. I'm not that creative! I just feel that posting a bunch of links on a webpage within ALHN's site is great advertisement for the sites we're linked to. County sites are a whole 'nother ballgame though and unless it directly deals with the county I manage I don't link. We have to grow ALHN's web site, not anyone else's.

And, this is my 2 cents about this topic.”

Darlene also agreed with David’s statement regarding member contact information.

Joyce weighed in, “Assurances that the info will be held in confidence is already in the SR's.

Perhaps secondary email addresses and/or secondary person? Mary Saban and her husband has their sites....one reason I felt assured that their sites were secured.

DAVID, Would you get a copy of the standing rules and write in the voting procedures, mailing list descriptions, the domain info as needed as well as the revised contact info and submit to the board for approval? If you see other things that need clarifying then please let us know.”

David requested the rest of the evening to create appropriate language regarding this for the Standing Rules.

On November 7 in a new thread entitled Thought, Joyce posted, “I’ve been bouncing around a thought for awhile and thought to see what you all thought.

Rather than confine our state coordinators to seeking county sites we offer regional sites. That may or may not work for all state coordinators. But I know that here in southeast Tennessee it is a huge mistake to confine research to one county. IE, we have one community now in McMinn that was in three other counties first. The families in the area show in records for all 4 counties. Early county lines in east TN were constantly changing. We could offer clusters of counties???? Or at least plant the idea as an option??”

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Darlene responded, "I'm not sure if this would work because we don't have volunteers to do 1 county in a lot of states much less a volunteer for a cluster of counties. I think ALHN needs more work and more volunteers for this to be a viable option for us. Maybe if enough folks see that ALHN is changing we can increase the county site volunteers. This is my hope anyway. And from these volunteers, we can encourage them to take on more than 1 county to create the cluster. For example, in Middle Tennessee, I volunteered for Hickman and Maury and I could volunteer for Williamson and Dickson (not volunteering yet though) and this would be a cluster.

I don't know that we need an additional person to manage the cluster. Maybe what we need to do first is write an article for the county cluster project explaining what it is. Have a county coordinator maintain the web sites and then ask for volunteers to help with transcribing documents, taking photographs, and so on. Maybe a county transcriber, county indexer (there are tons of books not indexed). We could pick up folks to volunteer for something other than doing web sites.

Joyce, I think the idea might work. Just needs planning, ideas and so on. My 2 cents worth.

Joyce replied, "Actually I was thinking more of ONE web site that covers information from a specific cluster of counties. NOT one person trying to keep 3-4 different sites. For example, we have Polk, McMinn, Monroe already, did have Meigs and Paul Puente was good enough to take it. So we would have 'south-east Tennessee, cluster #1???' Simply combine all the counties into one web site, perhaps. We could cluster 3-5 counties Then another volunteer could cluster another 3-5 counties for cluster #2.

Nathan had a good suggestion that Sharon and I have often used in the past and that is volunteer transcriptionists. Much of the data on www.rootsweb.com/~tnmcmmin2 is data that was transcribed by volunteers. Same on the Monroe site that has several long lists of circuit court indices at www.rootsweb.com/~tnmonroe."

Barbara added, "As Volunteer Committee Chairperson, I agree with Darlene. Darlene's reasoning in this matter is very understanding. As we are able to obtain volunteers for the Counties, there may be a time that this could be a considered option with some planning and acceptance from volunteers."

Cyndy added, "I agree, with one exception, if a person wants to take two counties whose histories are related and create one web page, then that could be considered a cluster. For example, my friend could combine Loudon and Roane Counties into one website. They could still be listed as the site for both counties. Just thinking about flexibility."

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To which Joyce said, “we need to think on this a while longer. not every state had the crazy moving lines we did. I know where you're talking about... several censuses listed it different counties but the location hadn't changed just the county lines.”

Joyce then called for a vote via the Thursday Morning, Nov 7 thread. “Concerning the subject of providing links to other web sites. I see no more comments.

Do I hear a motion to add reputable links to the National web site?

Please vote yes to do so

Please vote NO to not do this.

We will consider means of how to accomplish this, if needed, after this vote. You have 24 hours to place your votes. thank you.”

Voting began, but David pointed out that no motion had been made.

Voting continued. The proposal to place external links on the ALHN website failed. Joyce stated, “The vote to place external links on the national web site has been defeated. Any who have requested the subject be revisited at some point in time will be expected to introduce the subject into the agenda at which time the board will reconsider the issue.

The discussion on increasing volunteerism and marketing alhn will begin on Monday morning 9 am est. Discussion will progress for 48 hours.

On November 11, Joyce gave a status report of the meeting thus far. “Status

Minutes Approved

Issue of adding links to national page is defeated

Meeting Format – David please report on that this morning.

Next agenda item:

We are forming a committee that will act as a Marketing ALHN and Volunteer Recruitment.

Members:

Cyndy Cox, Membership coordinator

David Johnson, Parliamentarian

Barbara Hutchinson, Volunteer Coordinator

Rebekah Headings, Board Secretary & creator of Facebook page

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Dan Matney, Voting Member, state coordinator for Oregon and Montana
Colleen Pustola, Publicity Coordinator.

The function of this committee will be an ongoing one. It will be responsible for creating ways and means to improve ALHN's use and public appearance. Provide volunteers with ways and means of improving their web sites as needed. Recruiting new volunteers for vacant state / county / topics. Improving usage of ALHN's face book pages or any other conceivable means of improvements.

First order of business concerning this is: WHICH list do you wish to meet on? I would suggest the alhn-general list since everyone can participate on that list OR we can subscribe the members to the board list, temporarily....which is allowed. Or we can create a separate list for this purpose.

Secondly- It wouldn't hurt to have at least one more volunteer so you have a total of 7 and a quorum of 4

Third- I had appointed Rebekah chair of this committee but since she is only available for communications in the late afternoons I think we should appoint a co-chair...David Johnson, to conduct meetings.

Discussion is now open for the ways and means of this committee.

Membership volunteers and comments are most welcome!!"

David stated, "I am seeing notices that people are unsubscribing from the lists quite a lot lately, especially from the board list, and I suspect it is due to the large number of emails flooding their inboxes. While it would be very good to have the wholen membership participating, I think it would be best to create a new list, and also not to flood the board list with this. If this was added to the board list it would make sorting out meetings from this committee difficult.

Any person who wished to follow this and comment could subscribe to the new list."

Barbara asked for clarification on her role as volunteer coordinator.

David reiterated his earlier post, "I sent this response once to the board, but neglected to "reply-all"; so I'm resending this for the general list.

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Any person who wished to follow this and comment could subscribe to the new list.”

Joyce responded to Barbara, “The publicity coordinator is responsible for providing input that would make alhn more publically visual. Colleen said she had a 'ton' of ideas for publicity so I begged and bullied her into volunteering for the committee.”

Joyce continued, “I had appointed you chair of the volunteer recruitment committee. Having thought about how busy you seem to be with your grandchildren as well as seeing how the Marketing and recruitment initiatives were going to be I thought it might be best to combine the two committees. I really don't care who chairs the committee I just didn't want to overburden you. I will withdraw and allow the committee to choose their own chair.

The Volunteer coordinator is responsible for actively seeking new volunteers for alhn...creating ways to make people interested in volunteering. Once they have agreed to do a web site and need help with it then David, Dan, and others can help guide them thru the process.”

The Meeting was adjourned on November 13.