



# national home funeral alliance

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## **2012 Annual Reports**

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Ad Hoc Committee

Education Committee

Events/Conference Committee

Legislative Committee

Membership Committee

Resource Committee

***President's Report, submitted by Char Barrett***

*I am pleased to report that the purpose for which we came together just four years ago is being fulfilled. Every day, some one of us is participating in some way to empower families to care for their own loved ones after death, whether by answering families' calls or speaking to people in our communities, assisting on NHFA committees or in some other capacity. By showing, by telling, or by listening, we are making our presence known, and we are changing the face of funeral care, one step at a time.*

*Here's what your Board has been doing: You will read about activities in more detail in the committee reports, but let me tell you about the Board's accomplishments. It has been a banner year for Board meetings! We have been working diligently to strengthen our position, refine our vision, and lay the groundwork for the future.*

*We have begun initiatives to enhance communication with policymakers and the public through our Legislative and new Public Relations and Outreach committees. We have greatly expanded our website resource listings to give members and the public access to information, ideas and opportunities to learn and teach with a wider scope. We have revised seminal documents that guide us on our path, such as the Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice.*

*Most notably, we have sought counsel on how best to serve families while supporting each other within a structure that affords us flexibility and protection. After thorough debate and a great deal of soul searching, we agreed to apply for tax exempt status as an educational organization with members who both benefit from and participate in carrying out our mission, as a first step in solidifying our position for future organizational steps.*

*As a result, I feel confident that I will be leaving the Board in October knowing that the NHFA will have a firm foundation on which to grow. Thanks to all of you for all your good — and important — work.*

*With gratitude,*

*Char Barrett, NHFA President*

## Vice Presidents' Report, submitted by Elizabeth Knox

The vice president's position began as a co-position with Karen van Vuuren of Natural Transitions. Karen had to drop off the board about a year ago due to the increased needs of her family. Since that time, Beth Knox, the current Vice President, has endeavored to fill Karen's shoes and her own. The main responsibility of the Vice President is to support the President. Char Barrett, as President, is beyond competent. And as her full life as a funeral director and business owner has its own tremendous demands, we often needed to tag team on different NHFA needs. She is an extraordinary administrator, and I therefore could best support her by ironing out wrinkles that hampered our smooth functioning as an organization. I gave doses of water to the various cases of hiccups.

Char and I have been profound sounding boards for one another. As our infant organization tried to ply its way through the IRS, corporate, and sister organization waters, we also had to refine the essence of our mission, and navigate staying true to it. I have been deeply grateful for her vision and pragmatism, reliably giving voice to the core of the issue before us and supporting my own perception of the situation. Our process was such that the solution was usually clearly apparent to us both with little effort – even if it took a considerable amount of time to get to the crux of it!

I want to make mention of a precious experience we had as a board – our retreat together hosted by board member Donna Belk in Austin, TX, and facilitated by the leadership coach extraordinaire, Patty Beach of Boulder, Colorado. This was Phase 2 of our development as an organization and as Patty was there in Boulder for Phase 1, it was a beautiful continuum. We made such progress and had one breakthrough after another due to our well-organized time together- clarifying, processing, distilling. Being in Donna's home and being fed home cooked meals was the ideal vessel for our hard work together. We continue to reap the benefits of this time together. As we are a national, virtual organization, our face-to-face time creates the foundation for all the rest.

In gratitude to my colleagues who have given so much to get us this far,  
Beth Knox, Vice President

## **Secretary's Report, submitted by Donna Belk**

As Secretary I am responsible for calling and scheduling meetings and taking minutes. In addition, I help create processes for organizational purposes.

The Board of Directors began having bi-monthly meetings after our February Retreat. We welcomed two new board members in February – Peg Lorenz and Lee Webster. Our Treasurer, Cari Leverage, resigned in August, 2012.

In June, four members of the board and other NHFA members represented NHFA at the FCA conference in Tucson, AZ. We purchased a booth for the event and had a table with a display. We distributed NHFA brochures and the “white paper” which was done in conjunction with Josh Slocum of the FCA. Both the booth and the white paper were well received by conference attendees.

## Treasurer's Report, submitted by Cari Leverage, August 8, 2012

Accounting for NHFA's cash flow has been pretty straightforward. Everything can be reviewed and confirmed within the Profit & Loss statement below. Below the chart, is a recounting of the financial events and summarization of details as they've transpired since the beginning of the organization – both collectively and in segments.

### NHFA Profit & Loss October 2010 – August 2012

	Total
Income	
Donations	715.00
Events	30,170.67
Membership	6,554.96
Total Income	\$37,440.63
Expenses	
Advertising	420.00
Events	17,300.68
Membership	465.00
Office	2,828.62
Professional Fees to Consultants	1,445.00
Supplies	83.54
Transaction Fees	642.98
Total Expenses	\$23,185.82
Net Income	\$14,254.81

Overall, in the 2 years since the organization's inception, it has grossed \$37,440.63. \$200 of that has been acquired as a donation from the FCA as a contribution towards the white paper created by some on the NHFA board. There have also been some other smaller donations by members of NHFA in contributions to the white paper, rectifying membership dues payments and just giving to the organization to the total of about \$515, bringing the donation total to \$715. That number is not totally accurate as some of that \$500 or so was given to the NHFA towards membership, but the accounting was spotty, so the total amount was applied to donations since it was not clear what the details were.

The bulk of the money earned, \$30,170.67, has come from the 3 conferences on the NHFA books in the forms of registration, sponsorship by supporting vendors, the preconference workshop and the marketplace. The first conference, in October of 2010, was co-hosted by Natural Transitions. Due to them being an already established organization, they managed the finances and gave the NHFA a lump sum after everything had been sorted out. That amount was \$9,082.67 and was given to

the NHFA in June of 2011. They provided those monies with some notes about how it was divided up, but those notes were not clear enough for the NHFA treasurer to enter the numbers by parts, so it was entered into QuickBooks as one amount. The second conference in September of 2011 was the NHFA's first formal event to run solo. As a result they were able to split up the expenses unlike the year before. The event brought in:

\$8,778.75 in registrations  
\$894.00 from the Marketplace  
\$1250.00 from sponsoring vendors  
\$2553.75 from the preconference workshop

There was also \$865.00 that was collected that needed to be refunded in order to correct various mistakes. It was included in the incoming as well as the outgoing amounts. This conference garnered a total of \$14,341.50 with the refund amounts included.

At the 2011 conference, the NHFA held its first formal membership dinner. The NHFA collected \$650.00 for that auspicious event and spent close to that amount putting on the dinner, so the dinner paid for itself and donated the remainder to the NHFA.

As of early August, \$6,746,50 has been received in registrations for the 2012 annual conference.

Overall, the NHFA has collected \$5,904.96 in membership dues since the beginning of the organization. This income is not broken down in key time events like the conference dollars.

Overall, a total of \$23,185.82 has been spent in expenses for the running of the organization leaving a net amount of \$14,254.81 in the NHFA bank account as of August 8, 2012. The expenses have consisted of the obvious for any organization – office expenses; supplies; and transaction fees on all electronic purchases and expenditures. The membership expenses reflect the cost of the first membership dinner. The advertising reflects the NHFA's first public event – the FCA conference. The fees included the cost of an advertising table and a dinner hosting noteworthy guests. The event expenses covered everything related to spending at the 2 conferences the NHFA has sponsored and co-hosted – building rental, copies, postage, refunds, instructor's fees of the pre-conference workshop, etc. The professional fees covered a range of what the board thought as valuable investments for the organization's benefits from facilitation at the NHFA retreat to conflict resolution. That sums up a financial record of what transpired for the NHFA since its existence. This is a summary viewpoint; more details are available through contacting a board member.

## Ad Hoc Committee Report, submitted by Lee Webster

Several ad hoc committees of the Board have been active this past year, completing specific short-term tasks. They are:

**NHFA/FCA White Paper** — In collaboration with Josh Slocum of the national office of the Funeral Consumers Alliance, this committee published a 12-page persuasive position paper entitled *“Restoring Families’ Rights to Choose: the call for funeral legislation change in America”* that will be used by the Legislative Committee in educating policymakers about home funeral options.

**Codes of Ethics, Conduct and Practice** — The previous codes were revised and amended to include both general and specific recommendations for home funeral guides. A comprehensive, collaborative process was used, resulting in a broader understanding of our mission and more clearly defines best practices and appropriate behavior.

**Conflict of Interest Policy** — We updated this Board document, including the reporting form, both as a Board best practice and as an IRS requirement. The changes will be offered as part of the By-Laws revision now in progress.

**1023 Committee** — Newly formed, this committee is preparing paperwork necessary for filing application as a tax-exempt, educational 501c3 non-profit organization, due in January. Additionally, budgets, business plans, and other required documents are being developed.

*Proposed committee addition:*

**Public Relations and Outreach Committee** — With an enhanced focus on public education and the need for a more organized approach to getting the word out, a committee consisting of members from various areas of the country will be critical. This committee will be your go-to guys for answering media questions and for other committees to be getting help with all things meant for the public.

### **Education Committee Report, submitted by Jerrigrace Lyons**

The original purpose of the NHFA education committee was to work on and discuss ways to educate home funeral guides. Over time, it was decided that its purpose did not include any type of certification of home funeral guides.

With the recent decision to apply for 501c.3 non-profit status, the education committee will have a new focus. It will now be working on issues concerning educating the general public, not home funeral guides. The education committee is seeking new leadership and active members.

### **Events/Conference Committee Report**

The events committee is seeking new leadership. This committee, chaired by Donna Belk, organized the 2012 Annual conference/retreat in Techny, IL. As of September 17, 2012, there are 24 participants and 11 board members attending.



## **Legislative Committee Report, submitted by Peg Lorenz**

Legislative Committee Members:

Peg Lorenz, MA – Chair, Heather Massey, MA, Jerrigrace Lyons, CA, Sandy Booth, TX, Peggy Quinn, CO, Marlow Morrison, NM, Amy Cunningham, NY, Lee Webster, NH, Deb Dewey, CO

We have had monthly meetings since in May of this year.

Goal: To create and maintain a network of advocates in each state who will educate state legislators and policymakers about the rights of families to care for their loved ones after death. These advocates will maintain an on-going relationship with legislative staff and relevant committees to monitor their actions as it relates to a family's right to choose a home funeral and will be prepared to intervene when those rights may be lost.

Committee Projects: Committee members have made a commitment to:

- 1) Research the background of their own state legislators
- 2) Research and be very familiar with their own state laws
- 3) Be prepared to do short educational presentations
- 4) Gather materials to present to each legislator
- 5) Document their experiences so we can recreate this process with members in other states.

By November all committee members will have fulfilled their commitment and we will move on to compile our experiences and create a plan to reach out to members in other states.

## **Membership Committee Report, submitted by Merylynne Rush**

As of September 17, 2012, there are 102 members of the National Home Funeral Alliance. Many members are due to renew their membership. The membership process has been simplified. We now have one level of membership and ask for an annual donation, not a membership fee. **There are no requirements for membership in the NHFA.** However, we do ask members to answer six general questions that will help us get to know you.

### Member Benefits:

- Conference and resource discounts
- Monthly teleconferences
- Annual membership meeting
- Update letters from the President
- Mentoring from experienced advocates
- Initial phone call of welcome from a board member
- Involvement on a committee

Individuals may join the NHFA through the website or via US mail. We are continually updating and improving the membership process and trying to keep it simple. There are limitations to the website's capacity for flexibility and it is difficult for many members to negotiate. Another limitation is that we get very little response to emails sent to the membership.

Now that the charter membership period is up and there is no longer a membership fee, I anticipate that we will see a great reduction in income through membership. Help is needed on this committee.

## **Resource Committee Report, submitted by Heather Massey**

The resource committee currently consists of Heather Massey, Chair, with Donna Belk (former Chair), and newest members, Peg Lorenz and Lee Webster.

2011/2012 projects include:

- Monthly meetings: held on the 1st Wednesday of the month @ 4:30 pm EST, (started in October, 2011)
- Teleconference program: held on the 2nd Sunday of the month and open to all NHFA members. Hosted by resource committee members on a rotating basis, often in teams.
- Mentoring program: offered via phone consultation by resource committee members and available to all NHFA members
- Ongoing collection/organization of current and "classic" home funeral and natural death care educational materials
- Review and updates to all NHFA website resources, specifically the links and resource pages and blog
- Creation of new NHFA educational materials including new brochure
- The NHFA facebook page: currently monitored and expanded by Charlene Elderkin

The resource committee is seeking additional members from the NHFA community who are interested in supporting our efforts and contributing on a regular basis to our projects. Donna Belk will be unable to attend regular monthly meetings for approximately the first half of the upcoming year. However she will continue to offer web support during her absence.