

**2015 NHFA Member Meeting,
October 3, 2015
Los Gatos, CA (71 people in attendance)**

Song – Sarah Crews sang a song

Announcements – Kateyanne opened meeting with announcements, passing out tickets for free drawing

Opening – Claire Turnham

- Shared a mantra (poem) that a family gave her when she first did a home funeral. “With Love in My Heart.”

Move to Accept 2013 Annual Meeting Minutes – Kristine Bentz

- Kristine thanked Claire and said that Beth Knox always asked “What Would Love Do?” which is in keeping with the poem that Claire read.
- Asked for vote to approve the 2013 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Kristine introduced Lee Webster

President’s Address – Lee Webster

- Lee gave two-year recap of activities within NHFA
 - Membership map. In 2013 we had 138 members, in 2014-498 members, 2015-869 members. We have about 98 international members. Lee mentioned Zalene Corey and Sarah Crews as membership committee co-chairs.
 - Back of the house – Lee mentioned the tools that we are using such as Little Green Light to keep track of members, develop volunteer program and enrich the donor program. We send out newsletters and special announcements using MailChimp. Recognized Donna Belk.
 - Website – redesign, reorganized and this made us #1 on Google for Home Funeral searches. Lee recognized Kateyanne for her leadership on this but mentioned that NHFA is a consensus organization and everything is done in committee. Also mentioned Donna Belk for her assistance as well.
 - Directories – developed directories which is critical because this is how people out there looking for services can find our members. The directories are clear and concise and give the information so that the public knows that people (NHFA members) listed in the directories can be trusted.
 - Media – major publications have carried articles about NHFA (Newsweek, The New Yorker, The New York Times, Yes! Magazine, the guardian, the Huffington Post, and more).
 - Social media – We had a huge year in social media. We have Twitter which has grown 500% in one year, FaceBook likes are up over 100%. Conversations between each other via FaceBook is what is going to start things rippling out into the world. Lee recognized Kateyanne for her work on this.
 - YouTube video channel – Donna is doing Kitchen Table talks, but we need more. This is what increases our awareness within communities. Lee asked for people to send in their videos so we can post them on the YouTube Channel
 - Call in programs – our monthly teleconference is one of the most popular offerings we have. We have gone into partnership with Karen Wyatt of End of Life University and we are now able to provide for our members the monthly call which we do which is limited to home funeral conversations, but we are also offering members a discounted rate if you want to listen to her podcasts. We wanted to open it up so that our calls are focused on home funerals and members are invited to host a call. Lee acknowledged Heather’s work on the conference call and said that we hope that Heather comes back to do some guest pieces and we are looking for more participation from everyone.

- Partnership – our work with Funeral Consumers Alliance on family rights (we work with them on advocacy issues), the Green Burial Council (natural transition from home funeral into green burials, “What every funeral director needs to know about green burial”). These are our allies. Through the partnership with the GBC we were able to bring a document to the Department of Veterans Affairs about why home funerals matter to veterans. The VA has decided to put together a pilot green burial cemetery in Monterrey, CA. This is enormous. This is one of the ways these partnerships work because we fly on the coattails because home funerals go hand in hand with green burials. The Funeral Ethics Organization, Lisa Carlson, has offered select documents for us to use.
- Thought leadership – this is what Lee is trying to accomplish and she’s trying to get other people to get involved as well, such as the ICCFA where she did a presentation in San Antonio, Why Home Funerals are a Veteran’s Issue, Restoring Families’ Rights to Choose, What to do when families’ rights are challenged, Clearly Defined: Matching Our Terminology to Our Intentions, Position on Licensure and Standards. These documents are on the NHFA website and Lee urged members to read them.
- Publications – Home Funerals 101 done by the Education Committee done by Susan Oppie and Resource Committee, Essentials for Practicing Home Funeral Guides, Planning Guide and Workbook for Home Funeral Families written by Lee and Donna. These last two were written recently and we sell them on Amazon and every penny goes into NHFA coffers.
- Fundraising – we’ve started sending an appeal once a year to get people to donate. Also using AmazonSmile we can receive money. The Tribute Page (envisioned by Peg Lorenz) is a way to honor a loved one for anything, and this is a way for NHFA to earn money as well. Lee honored Sara Williams for heading up fundraising committee and said that she’s never had so much fun as working with Sara.
- Promotional materials – we now have a one sheet fact sheet on our website for members to print. But now we are using an infographic and Lee urged people to take them home.
- Presentations – on our website we have a “Healing Presence” slide show available for members to use and customize for their situation. It is distilled down to the finest points and it is especially for members use. There are additional slides that you can plug in as well – photos. Lee urged people to send us home funeral photos that are high resolution so we can share them with others which will help get the word out about home funerals.
- Outreach – Home Funerals for Veterans is a challenge to offer at least one slide show to a veteran’s organization in every state in the coming year about home funerals. We have handouts to go with it to explain why this is important to veterans.
- Advocacy – we call this our Legislative Committee. We’re at a point now where we need to reawaken our duty and mission to make sure that families have access to home funerals, especially since our loss of Alabama. The current restrictive states (that can tell us to hire a funeral director) need to get our attention. We’re nearly losing states and the NHFA needs to be getting ahead of this and being on the offensive and attacking as a constitutional right not a state right. AL now requires people to hire funeral director for funeral services. We need help from people all over the country. Sarah Crews is taking over as chair of this committee after Peg Lorenz handling this for years.

Committee Reports – Lee asked if there is approval of committee reports. Everyone said Yea and applauded Lee.

- Sarah Crews – Legislative Committee
We want to keep track of what’s going on legislatively. Sarah wants home funerals to be a national constitutional issue not a state-by-state right. Terry Skovronek is on the committee as well.
- Anne Murphy – Education Committee
We are joining forces with the communications committee (Kateyanne). If you have talent or interest in sharing

videos, writing, conference calls, please join the committee to help create this. The Room of Remembrance is a way we got people involved, the 101 Home Funeral document, are some of the ways we educate each other. She invited people to come in and share what they know and also learn from each other.

- Kateyanne Unullisi – PR committee

The PR committee is being repurposed as the Communications Committee. If you want to help with images, words, newsletters, editing, video, if you like to get information out, or you want to come in and be mentored a bit, it is a good way to learn about NHFA.

- Zalene Corey – Membership

Zalene needs everyone's help to spread the word about NHFA and that is what will grow the membership. If there are questions, call Zalene and she will answer your questions. Little Green Light has done a lot to streamline the administrative needs. The biggest need out of Membership is the regional working so we find other members and keep things flowing.

- Sara Williams – Fundraising

Sara only said "Show us the Money"

Approval of New Officers – Lee Webster

- Bringing on Terry Skovronek and Lauren Carroll

- Lee acknowledge two outgoing officers, Lynn Barnett and Susan Oppie. Susan had to leave her post a little early. What she accomplished while she was on the board was excellent and Lee especially thanked Susan.

What members want to do for the future? – lead by Trish Garrigan

- We're looking for answers to those questions – either say what you want, or write it on the index cards provided and we'll look out it later.
- Thoughts, hopes, concerns, requests that members want to put out?
 - Esmerelda Kent – is going to donate 5% of all her shroud sales to NHFA. There is a 10-page article in the American Funeral Director magazine, and American Cemetery magazine she wrote about 16 pioneering women and their stories.
 - Claire Turnham – my hope is that home funerals around the world look to the NHFA as the guiding light for everyone. For Claire the dream is that we all somehow become a part of the bigger wider world picture.
 - Jody Good – Quaker faith group would like to see more care groups grow, spiritual care communities, Threshold groups. Some of those groups are non-profits, but she is talking about people who come together, they register for each other and act as the person in charge, not promoted to the public, for the members. Lee mentioned that one of the directories we have on the website is Community Care groups.
 - Heather Wahanik – FaceBook chat page to talk about North Bay area, can there be regional FB pages so there are regional conversations happening but they are somehow connected to the national page? As a hospice nurse she would like to see a way to connect with other hospice people to help spread the word to hospice social workers, outreach.
 - Rebecca Senoglu – wants the world to know that families can take care of their own children.
 - As a hospice volunteer, how do you draw the line ethically about promoting home funerals? It is a balance. Sara Williams is a hospice volunteer and she did a presentation and the last sentence is, "Instead of asking their dying patients what funeral home do you want us to call, you say, "What would you like us to do now that you know the options?" Lucy Basler said that as a hospice chaplain she has the opportunity to hear what patients ask about and patients will also ask about "What funeral home should I go to?" Not all hospices are pro home funerals because the funeral industry donates to hospices.
 - Lee Webster said another thing we were going to do is start a blog this year and this conversation needs to move to that so it will keep going.

- Trish asked people to think deeply as they talked to groups of three about what they would like to see. The question is “What needs to happen in America to have more home funerals?”
 - Put in obits that families are in charge of home funeral and the telephone number
 - Press and media coverage, tell the family stories and beef up our work with allies/partnerships
 - Understanding and accepting death on a one-to-one basis
 - To get the word out that it is an option to have a home funeral (someone famous has a home funeral and their family talks about it publicly)
 - When we have finished a home funeral there is a great opportunity for people who have attended and they will want to do it for their own families – follow up with them
 - Media exposure – movies, have the younger generation become the hybrid of bringing together the old ways and the new ways and using the knowledge of women who have been doing this for years
 - Strengthening relationships with allies – Ex: Green Burial Council and NHFA and we all have those groups and we can create those bridges. Create bridges.
 - Public education – increase it, change the dialog about death being off bounds, more death cafes
 - Advance directives – there could be specific language on advance directives
 - Call yourself an End of Life Nanny which brings up lots of questions from others
 - Radio show host Margy Henderson will interview people
 - Team up with NOLO press and create how to have your own home funeral book
 - Diversify the conversation by class, race, religion and gender
 - Create a revolution because of the funeral industry which is being controlled at much higher levels than any of us are aware of and the more we come together to have that kind of power against an institution we will be making a voice of home funerals becoming part of society’s fabric
 - Need home funeral guides who are available 24 hours a day and to be clear about people who are educators and who are fully trained ready to hit the ground home funeral guides
 - Need high profile clients. Big face. A Brittney Maynard for our movement. Jimmy Carter
 - Not shaming people who are dying, giving them the space to talk about their experience, open up conversation to people who are dying
 - Uncertainty, finding ways to have as many people as possible involved, literally walking into a vigil space, the experience is what is powerful
 - Working with nursing homes
- Trish asked what the NHFA should be working on. Given all that you’ve heard, what should NHFA be focusing on at this point in time? What can we do to be most effective at this point in time?
 - Not running away from the dead and staying with the body – not fearing the deceased, “hang out with the corpse”
 - From time of death to final disposition – have videos so people can do this on their own
 - Find funeral homes who can bridge the gap in areas where there are no home funeral guides
 - Would we allow an outside corporation to donate \$5 million? Have standards to protect the organization. Having set standards of traditions that we hold dear to protect the organization.

Conversation – education – people have fears and don’t think they can do it themselves – it’s not a one size fits all and it’s a team – conversation needs to happen before it is needed – people get trained and then don’t do anything for a year and they lose their confidence – getting word out there that home funerals don’t have to be in the home.