Funeral Consumers Alliance
Teleconference Board Meeting Minutes
11 AUG 2011

Present: Josh Slocum, Joyce Mitchell, Barbara Van Droof, Don Mertic, Ruth Bennett, Rodger Erickson, and Jim Bates participating. Absent: Laurie Powsner and Nancy Petersen.

BIENNIAL

Discussed hotel options for the Biennial (June 7-9, 2012) and it was unanimous that we use the Holiday Inn. The national office will finalize the deal.

Topics for the Biennial might include Ron Zack of Tucson on elder law issues, Josh has spoken to Randy Garner of the VT Funeral Directors about being a speaker, Dave Morrison volunteered to talk about attorney rip-offs and things to be aware of.

BIG KIT

Laurie has sent out the BIG kit revisions and the committee members, Joyce and Barbara (and Josh) will finish their reviews by the end of AUG.

OFFICE

The 800# is being phased out as a cost saving measure.

Jim will help Josh put out our annual affiliate questionnaires electronically.

Ruth will finalize the Survey Monkey with Josh.

Barbara suggested the next national newsletter have a short blurb requesting affiliates to update their board members as changes are made.

Jim is still working on the database security issues which should be resolved by the OCT meeting.

Josh said that administrative duties at the office are progressing well regarding dues.

AR CALLS

Some folks have had problems downloading affiliate relations info. Barbara suggested printing in landscape rather than portrait page orientation.

Rodger has been talking to struggling affiliates and is concerned about the lack of enthusiasm of some, though most think highly of FCA.

Barbara has been making affiliate calls and has found folks at affiliates friendly, open and grateful to have been contacted.

Don has been calling affiliates and found folks very positive. Most have shared their membership lists with national. No one had complaints and all seem to have strong affiliates. CMS is moving to reassert their control over the trust and it should be resolved within the next few months.

Dave has been calling affiliates and the question he gets often is “How do we attract young people?”

Joyce has been re-contacting board members whose affiliates are in the doldrums. She has been trying to work with paid administrators at several affiliates.

FUND RAISING

There was a discussion about whether selling things such as license plate holders will cause tax problems. We decided that if we make enough, we will pay the taxes! Joyce will move forward with her license plate holder idea and solicit slogans for them.

MISC

The election committee (to find board candidates) is comprised of Barbara, Rod Stout of PMA and Isabel Berney of FCA of the Virginia Blue Ridge.

Rodger asked that we all contact our local VA cemeteries and ask if families can do their own funerals. The VA national director says as long as state law permits it, then it is OK with the VA. The caveat is that all funerals must be scheduled through the St. Louis VA office. Some local VA cemeteries have been denying families this right.

Josh has presented a proposal to the legal committee that we file an amicus brief in a PA case a funeral director has filed against the state Funeral Board.

Ruth reported that the Southern Arizona affiliate will be raising dues to 15% effective JAN 1 2012. She will also poll her board about sharing the membership list.

Jim reports that there is a company selling cremations on line throughout Texas and Jim is working with government entities on regulating this new twist. Josh suggested that all cremation sales online firms be required to post their GPLs on their websites.

Thanks to Josh for running the meeting in Laurie’s absence.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 PDT time.