



**National Alliance of Floral Associations (NAFA)  
Meet in Minneapolis, MN**

Leaders in the floral industry met in Minneapolis, MN at the Embassy Suites for the National Alliance of Floral Associations (NAFA) annual meeting October 1 - 3, 2011.

The meeting kicked off on Saturday at the Mall of America with the NAFA National Designer of the Year contest. Contestants from MI, TX, MN, GA, CT, OH, SC, IL, FL, WI, LA and CO competed for the coveted national title. Each of these representatives won their state / regional design contest earning the right to compete in this National competition featuring the “best of the best”. Over 1500 members of the public viewed the contest throughout the afternoon and were awed by what they saw. NAFA officials spoke to the attendees about the benefits of shopping with their local professional florists. Second place (\$250) runner up was Jerome Raska AAF, AIFD, CF, PFCI from Blumz by JRDesigns in Ferndale / Detroit, MI. Jerome was representing the Michigan Floral Association. 1st place (\$500) runner up was Daniel Stober AIFD, from the Chicago Home & Garden Show in Chicago, IL. Daniel was representing OFA - The Association of Horticultural Professionals. The winner (\$1000) and 2012 NAFA National Designer of the Year was Tony Palmieri AIFD, from Datura, A Modern Garden in Middletown, CT. Toni was representing the Connecticut Florists Association. Congratulations go out to all the contestants that participated, they are all winners. Teleflora sponsored the prize money. They winners were acknowledged at a dinner Saturday evening that was sponsored by BloomNet. The following companies donated the product for the contest: Bennett Farms, Bill Doran Company, Len Busch Roses, Syndicate Sales and Smithers Oasis.

Following the design contest Saturday afternoon attendees boarded a bus and traveled to the renowned Bachman's ([www.bachman.com](http://www.bachman.com)) on Lyndale Avenue. Paul Bachman, President, and 4<sup>th</sup> generation Bachman, welcomed everyone to the main location. After being surprised with copies of the October issue of *Floral Management* magazine, which featured a photo of Paul on the cover along with team members whom recently won the retailer Floral Management 2011 Marketer of the Year title, humbly agreed to autograph a few copies for some lucky guest. Everyone was treated to refreshments and a short video showing the history of Bachman's. Afterwards the group split into two for tours of the operations and the Ideas House. It was very interesting and the group thanked Paul for opening his doors to them for such an intimate insight.

Sunday morning Rich Salvaggio AAF, AIFD, PFCI, VP Industry Relations Teleflora presented a program entitled “The Winning Attitude”. Rich’s session was very informative and took an in depth look what does and doesn’t make a good leader. At noon the group broke for a delicious lunch sponsored by Syndicate Sales.

Sunday afternoon Ardith Beveridge AAF, AIFD, PFCI, educational director at Koehler Dramm, presented a program on judging for competition. This is a wonderful set of guidelines that will set a standard level of criteria to be used for judging design competitions in our industry. Ardith is willing to share this information and it will soon be available for download in PDF format at [www.aboutnafa.com](http://www.aboutnafa.com). All attendees were very impressed with Ardith’s worked and thanked her for her efforts and willingness to share this with the industry.

Sunday evening attendees were treated to a special tour of Len Busch Rose Gardens ([www.lenbuschroses.com](http://www.lenbuschroses.com)). Patrick Busch, President and CEO, gave the tour. After the tour was complete Patrick and his wife Dianna treated everyone to a cookout and campfire at their home. It was a wonderful way to wind down after spending a couple of days in the hotel. FTD, Inc. sponsored the Sunday evening dinner.

Monday morning the meeting continued with open round table discussions. Topics covered included the national Certified Florist program ([www.certifiedflorist.com](http://www.certifiedflorist.com)), conferences and conventions, non-dues revenue programs, marketing efforts to drive consumers to local florists, addressing the phrase “In lieu of flowers” and much more.

After the morning break the meeting concluded with election of officers for 2012 and the announcement of next years meeting location and dates. Bob Heffernan, Executive Director of the Connecticut Floral Association (CFA) will serve as President. Michelle Gaston, Director – Education & Events at OFA will serve as Vice President and Rod Crittenden Executive Vice President of the Michigan Floral Association will serve as Secretary / Treasurer. The officers serve a two-year term. The CFA will host next years meeting in Litchfield, Connecticut from October 5-7, 2012.

Any state, multi-state, or national non-profit floral association is eligible to apply for membership. Interested parties should contact NAFA President, Bob Heffernan at (203) 268-9000 or visit the NAFA website at [www.aboutnafa.com](http://www.aboutnafa.com) to download a membership application.

NAFA would again like to thank these fine companies for their support. Without it this meeting would not be possible! Listed alphabetically:

Bennett Farms  
Bill Doran Company  
BloomNet  
FTD, Inc.  
Len Busch Roses  
Mall of America  
Syndicate Sales  
Smithers Oasis  
Teleflora

NAFA would also like to give a special thank you to Kym Erickson AAF, CF, MNCF and the members of Minnesota State Floral Association for hosting the meeting this year!

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Photo caption:

2011 NAFA conference attendees from L to R: **1<sup>st</sup> row (bottom):** Dianna Nordman AAF, Texas State Florists' Association; **2<sup>nd</sup> row:** Bob Heffernan, Connecticut Florists Association; Kym Erickson AAF, CF, MNCF, Minnesota State Florists Association, **3<sup>rd</sup> row:** Paul Simpson AIFD, Nebraska Florist Society; Kathleen Johnson AIFD, Wisconsin Upper Michigan Floral Association; **4<sup>th</sup> row:** Candy Cannon, Wisconsin Upper Michigan Floral Association; Gary Tharnish, Nebraska Florist Society; Sylvia E. Samuel NAFD, Nebraska Florist Society; **5<sup>th</sup> row:** Randy Wooten AIFD, GMF, PFCI, Georgia State Florist Association; Pat Phillips AIFD, Ozark Floral Association; Mary Ann Blood, Floral Association of the Rockies; **6<sup>th</sup> row:** Pat Berry, Texas State Florists' Association; Bob Larson AIFD, Wisconsin Upper Michigan Floral Association; Michelle Gaston, OFA; **7<sup>th</sup> row:** Annie Whittaker, Utah Professional Florist Association; Jody Brown-Spivey AIFD, OCF, OFA **8<sup>th</sup> row (top):** Rod Crittenden, Michigan Floral Association