

Minutes of the April Regularly Scheduled Meeting of The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc. April, 2004 Fredericksburg (Stafford County) (Draft)

Attendance

(Chesapeake) Pinky Derieux, Pauline Price; (Fairfax) George Graine, Teri O'Brien, Frank Solis; (Fauquier) Lenore Plissner, Jim Scibek; (Halifax) Bill McCaleb; (Hanover) Pamela Armstrong, Christy Brennan, Cheri Haggerty; (JCC-Williamsburg) Angela Cingale; (Loudoun) Jane Shilling; (Lynchburg) Karen Sacasky; (Prince George) Cheryl Sebera; (Prince William) Frank Reilly, Pat Reilly; (Rockbridge) Ted Jenks; (Roanoke) Kathryn Debnar, Shelby Snider; (Stafford) Ann Gorrell, Betty Marcum, Guy Mussey, Don Saunders; (Virginia Beach) Paul Campbell, Liz Maurer, Fran Shelton, Betty Villers; (Virginia Tech) Dave Close.

Call to Order

President Jim Scibek called the meeting to order at 1009.

Introductions

President Scibek welcomed us all to the April board meeting in the Central Rappahannock area. He then introduced Guy Mussey, their VCE Agent. Guy mentioned several of their programs. "First Saturday in the Garden", held on the first Saturday of the month includes topics such as Organic Gardening and Roses, held at various locations in the area. Another program is the "Tree and Shrub ID " at Mary Washington Campus. A landscape series that covers topics for homeowners runs for 8 weeks, two hours a session.

Don Saunders, President of the Central Rappahannock MGs, welcomed the VMGA and introduced his hospitality team, Anne Gorrell (Alternate Representative) and Betty Marcum (Vice-President).

Minutes

The February minutes were accepted as corrected. The month was corrected from December. The year in Unfinished Business was corrected to 2004. Copies of the 2003 Annual Minutes were made available to the members present.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Shelby Snider reported:

Checking Account Balance as of March 31, 2004		<u>\$3769.72</u>
Income		
Deposit - Membership Income	551.00	
	Total Income	551.00
Checking Account Balance		<u>\$4320.72</u>
Expenses		
Membership	41.60	
Education - Maymont	200.00	
Newsletter	667.01	
Communication	208.99	
Bank Expense - PC Banking	19.90	
Elections	362.29	
Gifts Given	735.56	
Treasurer	14.80	

SCC	25.00	
	Total Expenses	<u>\$2275.15</u>
Checking Account Balance		<u>\$2045.57</u>
Money Market (Interest \$3.11)		5428.94
CD Balance		6396.51
Diane Relf Endowment Fund (Interest \$2.06 + \$20.00 donation)		4158.83
Total Overall Balance of Accounts		<u>\$18029.85</u>

Gifts given were detailed as \$500.00 to Flora of Virginia Project, Gift Basket to Dave Close \$35.36 and \$200.00 to Partners of the Potomac. In the future an expense category titled Marketing will be designated to accommodate expenses such as Maymont and Partners of the Potomac.

President's Report

President Scibek reported that the donation to the Flora of Virginia Project was approved at an earlier meeting but was not acted on. President Scibek also read a letter from J. Christopher Ludwig, of the Flora of Virginia Project thanking us for our donation. Frank Reilly introduced our new State Master Gardener Coordinator, Dave Close.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education - Lenore Plissner, Chair

The second Good Gardening Symposium convened at the Randolph Farm Extension Pavilion of Virginia State University under the co sponsorship of the Virginia Master Gardeners Association and the Prince George Master Gardener Association. The topic "The Forgotten Seasons" was covered by Brent Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs and Peggy Singlemann, Manager of Horticulture at the Maymont Foundation.

There were 118 registrants, 12 of whom joined the VMGA.

The Education Committee is already looking forward to the next continuing education program, "Savoring Blandy Farm", which will be held on September 18, 2004, at the Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm near Winchester. Plans include choices of walks/talks to various parts of the arboretum and a lunch hour presentation by Dr. David Carr, curator of the arboretum. Registration forms will be available at MG College.

Newsletter - Florace Arnold, Editor

Florace was not in attendance. No report available. However the members present discussed the ink color and asked that we go back to the darker green.

Membership - Pauline Price, Chair

We now have 596 members and 89 Life members. Renewals will be sent in April reminding the 2004 members to renew. If renewed by May 15, a VMGA window cling will be given. The brochure is finished and was presented to the members present. It will be available at vmga.net.

Communication/Unit Support - Frank Reilly, Chair

Unit Support

Members: Pat Reilly, Karen Sacasky, Pinky Derieux, Susie McCrea and Frank Reilly and whomever else we need.

A page is being maintained to track information about the Critical Staffing Initiative. The Amendment has many cosigners, and there is more information about it at the web site. We have sent an email solicitation to every member with a current email address.

Communication Committee

Members: Cheri Haggerty, Shelby Snyder and Chair Frank Reilly and whomever else we can get. Kathryn Debnar has joined the committee to maintain the Calendar page.

1. Since the February regularly scheduled meeting, there have been 13387 visitors to VMGA.net.
2. Since the February regularly scheduled meeting, the web page has been updated on 31 separate occasions.
3. 279 visitors came to the Budget Hearings page after our March 7 email solicitation.
4. The most popular pages in the last three months have been the Hort Updates, the Minutes and the Prince William web site, which is being incubated at VMGA.net.

Miscellaneous Reports

Maymont Flower and Garden Show: Cheri Haggerty reported that over 635 contacts were made and well over 200 soil test kits given out. The highlight of the event was Peter Warren and his hissing cockroaches. The most asked question during the shift times covered by Cheryl Sebera, Pamela Armstrong and Cheri Haggerty was "Where is the Chesterfield Extension Office located?" They also distributed over 10 handouts from units statewide for events in their areas. Next year will be announced well in advance of the show dates so more VMGA members can volunteer at the Plant Clinic booth.

Potomac Watershed Partnership: Frank Reilly and Jim Scibek represented the VMGA at the one day seminar presented by this tri-state organization held at Behnke Nursery in Maryland. The purpose was to educate people in the garden industry and the general public about the benefits of using native plants, avoiding invasive species, enviro-scaping and using good stewardship practices. There were approximately 185 attendees. It was a good workshop.

Unit Reports

The Unit reps attending presented written reports or have e-mailed them to the secretary. They will be posted at www.VMGA.net.

State Fair - reported by Christy Brennan

Christy Brennan announced that she is now accepting volunteers for the State Fair. The State Fair will again be in Richmond from September 23 - October 3. This is a great way to educate the public, brag about your group's accomplishments (Master Gardeners Brag Nite boards are welcome) and to have fun. Dates will be assigned on a first come-first serve basis. Please sign up to work through the entire day and evening. September 25 (Hanover), September 26 (Fairfax) and October 3 (Hanover) are already scheduled.

Extension Liaison - reported by Dave Close, MG Coordinator

Dave reports that he has been reviewing the MG Coordinator Handbook and it has become his Bible. He is most appreciative that Diane Relf has offered her knowledge and assistance. One of his priorities is the state recordkeeping system. He is going to try to offer online training for anyone who currently enters hours or will be entering hours in the state recordkeeping service. He welcomes any comments from Master Gardeners. He is currently updating the Coordinator List Serv. He requests that you notify him of your e-mail address if you are a coordinator. Another priority is the update of the VCE Intranet and updating MG Coordinator information on the Department of Horticulture's web site. Hopefully these sites will become more visible. He is very encouraged by the support from everyone at Tech.

He will be attending the Chesapeake Regional Advanced Training on April 24. He also plans to "get out in the field" to visit units but will concentrate on regional events at first.

He will be looking into Advanced Steward Modules in the near future.

Director of Extension interviews are currently being conducted on campus. They are from all areas of the country.

MG College Report - Dave Close and Frank Reilly

Dave would like all hours turned in by April 16 for MG College.

Frank reports that there are over 60 speakers lined up for College. The schedule will be available on VMGA.net with online registration around May 1. There will be single day packages available this year. CDs should be distributed within the next two weeks to the Coordinators/Agents. A reminder was given for Brag Nite Posters and the Herb recipe contest on the first night.

Unfinished Business

Life members must be active Master Gardeners in Virginia in order to continue receiving the benefits of being a VMGA member. This stipulation went into effect with the By-laws as amended in 1997.

President Scibek asked that we continue our efforts with the Critical Staffing Initiative, SB30, amendment #246, since the state budget has not been decided yet.

New Business

Scholarship Committee: The Scholarship Committee members for Master Gardener College are Paul Campbell, Karen Sacasky, Pat Reilly and Cheri Haggerty. Applications for nominations will go out with the CD to Agent/Coordinators. In 2003 we awarded twelve scholarships at \$50.00 each. This year we will award six \$100.00 scholarships with the stipulation that the recipients are VMGA members. Key criteria include being a role model for Master Gardeners and first time attendees to MG College.

Funding for the MG Coordinator Position at Tech: Jane Shilling, Loudoun, gave a presentation on the possibility of the VMGA setting up a trust fund to help fund the position of Master Gardener Coordinator. The following is the overview she shared with us:

What: *We need to generate partial financial support for the MG Coordinator position at Virginia Tech. To illustrate: at a salary of roughly \$70 thousand, we would need to generate just \$35,000 to provide 50% support for the position each year. If we create an endowment (like a Faculty 'Chair'), it would take \$700,000 (based on standard assumptions that endowments use 5% of interest on capital. The requirements can be calculated in the same way for other salary assumptions.*

Why: *The MG Coordinator is our position - MGC supports us, and our work!*

How: *Raising money is not as hard as it seems! Americans give billions to charity each year - and finding worthy causes is harder than finding money to support them. Gardening is one of the biggest interests of the American public! And Master Gardeners already has non-profit (501 C-3) status, making us eligible for tax-deductible contributions. If we truly believe this is a worthy cause - that it has real impact on the well being of citizens in Virginia - we can find the money. The first step is to prepare a 4 case statement' that makes the case for why this cause is worthy of support. The second step is to go find the money. There are basically two ways to do this:*

Grants: *Search computerized data bases for State agencies, foundations, and family foundations that support gardening, environment, nature, education, training, and/or volunteer and community efforts. Learn their requirements, and write grant proposals.*

Private Donors: *Identify friends, family, and especially Master Gardener Chapters who would be willing to help! Large (known as 'lead') gifts are sought first, and should cover about half of the need. Smaller gifts are used to make up the remainder.*

Who: *We could approach this by:*

- ❖ *making a contribution from MG funds, and asking a task force to coordinate with chapters to raise the money by doing it ourselves. And/Or,*
- ❖ *allocating some funds from the MG treasury to support the efforts of a fundraising task force (preparing a great 'Case Statement', printing materials, traveling to meet with potential donors).*

In either case, it is essential to coordinate with Virginia Tech's Development Office -both because they have the capacity to support our efforts, and because they have their own well-considered fund-raising efforts and we want to be sure we are working together, not tripping over the same donors!

Members present asked for this information to take back to their units. The Secretary will send this information to all representatives as soon as possible. The information will also be presented at the Annual meeting in June after the representatives have had a chance to present it to their units.

Audit Committee: Ted Jenks volunteered to be a member of this committee. Several representatives offered to supply President Scibek with names of other MGs to serve on this committee. The statement period covered will be through May 31.

Proposed Budget: The executive board and committee chairman will meet after the meeting to go over the proposed budget.

Ready, Set, Grow: George Graine asked if the units actively involved in this program could get together to share what they are doing. It was mentioned to use the List Serv as a contact point or perhaps get together at MG College to go over their programs.

Announcements

Board meetings for 2004 are scheduled as follows:

June 10 at 11:00 am	MG College at Litton Reeves Hall	Southwest District
August	To be announced	
October 16	Chesapeake	Southeast District
December 11	Northern Neck	Northeast District

The meeting was adjourned at 1359.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Haggerty
Secretary
VMGA