

**VMGA BOARD MEETING
SUFFOLK, VA, OCTOBER 11, 2014
Host: Suffolk Master Gardeners
MEETING MINUTES**

Attending: List of attendees attached.

The meeting was called to order at 9:58 a.m. by President Christy Brennan, Hanover.

Christy introduced Wanda Gerard, Suffolk VMGA representative. Wanda introduced Marcus Williams, the VCE Agent for the City of Suffolk. Marcus welcomed the attendees. Wanda provided an overview of the projects in which the Suffolk Master Gardeners are involved.

Christy thanked the Suffolk MGs for hosting the meeting. She welcomed the attendees, who introduced themselves and their units.

Secretary's Report

Mary Ann Kincaid, Virginia Beach, in the absence of Joan Richards, Secretary, presented the minutes of the August 9, 2014, VMGA Board Meeting for approval.

The 8/9/14 minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Pat Reilly, Prince William, treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report as of September 30, 2014. The report follows these minutes.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted for audit.

Vice President's Report

Angela Cingale, JCC/Williamsburg, Vice President reported on her committee's work on how to improve communications with all the

Virginia MGs and units. Following are recommendations from the committee.

1. Establish a regional buddy system to share ideas, programs, speaker's bureaus. This could be done with the regional officers and interested MGs getting together on a quarterly basis.
2. Mail by post the VMGA newsletters, roster and educational events to non e-mail members.
3. Inform the new AG/ANR agents about the function of VMGA for all MGs. Ask Dave and John to inform the agents about VMGA. Or perhaps forward the new agents information and have the VMGA President contact them.
4. Encourage all units to become associations and establish rules to govern their unit. This is especially helpful if there is an interim agent when a unit does not have an AG Agent.
5. Encourage additional educational opportunities on a regional level. VMGA can help them with lists of speakers and officers' presence.
6. Have a separate non-technical Communication or P.R. Committee.
7. Establish a Standards of Behavior for Virginia MGs similar to the ones that have been established for the 4-H volunteers.
8. Use personal touch whenever we have meetings and at MG College. Use kinder, friendlier and gentle approach when meeting MGs anywhere.

Standing Committees

Communications

Frank Reilly, Prince William, chair, reported the following:

Members: David Banks, Tom Bolt, Kathryn Debnar and Chair Frank Reilly and whomever else we can get.

Since the August regularly scheduled meeting there have been 2,552 unique visitors to VMGA.net and they visited more than 12,936 pages.

Since the August regularly scheduled meeting, the web page has been updated on 37 separate occasions. Most all of our visitors come through the front page of our site. Our favorite visitors come from the US but next is Ukraine, then Finland.

We need more Calendar entries. The Calendar is routinely one of the top three most visited pages on the website. Listing your activity can definitely help drive participants to your event. Kathryn Debnar recently totally recreated the Calendar page which has several views available to check out events. If you have submitted entries from now out until March 2015, please look to see if we have recaptured them. If they're missing, please let Kathryn Debnar know.

Our webmaster David Banks has been keeping up with changes, and gradually updating some of the old pages.

Remember that we can help you host your site for a while under certain conditions.

Unit Support

Frank Reilly, chair, reported the following:

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

Unit Support Committee was created to help Units discover how other units accomplish things, help with any difficulties that may arise and aid units that have lost their Agent.

Unit Support Committee has begun a weekly report to the Unit Representatives. We began just yesterday. If you are the

representative and did not get one, please make certain we have your correct contact information.

Since the last regularly scheduled meeting the Unit Support Committee has no requests for assistance.

Education

Robyn Puffenbarger, Central Shenandoah, chair, reported as follows:

Current members of the education committee: Robyn Puffenbarger, Wanda Gerard, Betty Jo Hendrix, Ben Capozzi

The Permaculture event sponsored by VMGA and VSU took place Saturday, September 27, 2014. We had 45 registrations (31 VMGA) and seven speakers attend.

Costs were \$1,952.47 (honorarium, mileage, catering, program printing) and registration fees amounted to \$1,290.00. The VMGA costs were \$662.47; this is the total not covered by registration. If you take the costs and divide by the number of attendees, the cost per person is \$14.72. For VMGA members alone, there were 155 total hours of continuing education at a VMGA cost of \$4.27/VMGA member CE hour.

The evaluations were extremely positive about the location (12 positive), time, topics (23 positive), speakers (15 positive), and organization. Several positive comments included, “wonderful,” “timely” and there was even a call for a permaculture certification for MGs, along the lines of the tree stewards. In terms of not meeting expectations, Education will take a line from Project Grows and say we got “feedback not failure.” Several comments included speakers were too rushed (4), where was the recycling (4), a digression by speakers into their personal lives (4), parking (2), directions (2), too much food (2), have bottled water and diet sodas (4). At the top of the evaluation, the responses were on a Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) –Disagree (2) –Undecided (3) –Agree

(4) - Strongly Agree (5). In 39 evaluations with a potential for 312 responses, only SIX were 3 or less! This is a 2% 'poor' response rate, so 98% 4 or 5's! Finally, the evaluation asked for idea for future meetings/topics, community gardens at 5 responses is the top vote getter. Urban trees (3), garden art or garden aesthetics (2), MG projects (2), native plants and sustainability (2), backyard gardening (2), tree care and installation (2), forest flora (1), local food (1), food production for food banks (1), urban farms (1), rain gardens (1), soil fertility (1), water catchment (1), symbiotic relationships of the garden and sustaining them (1), pollinators (1), and beneficial insects (1).

We are in discussions with Joel Koci at VSU about another educational symposia for VMGA in September. We will need ideas for speakers and if VMGA wants symposia to be 'themed' as the one in Sept. 2014 on permaculture or organized in other ways. We are also looking to partner with other organizations like the Virginia Master Naturalists to bring continuing education of interest to both groups. If your unit would like to partner with VMGA to put on an education event, please get in touch with the Education Committee. If there are any other questions, ideas, or concerns, please send those to Robyn Puffenbarger as well (rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu or 540-908-7335).

Marilyn Riddle, JCC /Williamsburg, asked that a non-football date be chosen for a fall event at VSU.

Christy Brennan thanked Robyn and the Education committee for a well planned, valuable event.

Membership

Deb Straw, Hill City, chair, reported as follows:

The total membership is now 515; 37 have been added since August. 347 are active members, 6 auxiliary, 6 emeritus (4 life and 2 annual) and 156 life members.

Of the current membership, 45 have no email address, 70 requested postal delivery of the newsletter, 72 requested postal delivery of the roster.

Newsletter

In the absence of Jan Worthy, newsletter editor, Christy Brennan reported that unit reports are due to Angela on the 21st of the same month as the VMGA Board Meeting. Angela then forwards articles to Jan to be reviewed for inclusion in VMGA Reports.

Joe Kelly, Alexandria, asked if he should have the Alexandria/Arlington newsletter forwarded to Angela. Angela said she would appreciate receiving all newsletters.

Fund Raising

Tina Chalecki, Louisa, chair, reported as follows:

The total of the market value, interest accounts and the deferred donations is
567,936.\$

The inventory of sweatshirts is low, so 9 light blue (a new color we will try) and 3 maroon (L and XL) for a cost of about \$225 have been ordered.

A volunteer is needed to handle the selling of VMGA branded merchandise on a permanent basis. Jody Purches, Appomattox, was thanked for taking care of the sales both at the VSU Education Symposium and at the Suffolk VMGA Board Meeting.

Special Committees

State Fair

Christy Brennan, chair, reported as follows:

Supervisors for the State Fair of Virginia have reported the highest daily attendance for this year's Fair. The weather was great! Funds above the proposed budget were spent to make sure attendees had the educational materials, and we still ran out of items on the last day. The main handout was a list of all VCE publications and the VCE web site, as well as 4 children handouts. This year's theme was "protecting our pollinators" and eleven units helped with the staffing. They included Hanover, Henrico, Chesterfield, City of Richmond, Prince George, Norfolk, Northern Neck, Central Virginia (Louisa), Fairfax, Green Spring and MCRA (Spotsylvania, Caroline,). The childrens' activity was making mason bee tubes and everyone seemed to have fun. A special thank you goes out to everyone that volunteered to make this event a success.

On Sunday we celebrated the 100th anniversary of VCE by being a one of seven VCE display areas for that day. Each fair goer was encouraged to visit at least 5 out of 7 displays for a free back pack. I would love it if VCE did this each year.

Thanks to Dave and John who donated 15 lbs of wildflower seeds, pencils, bags and handouts to educate contacts about protecting our pollinators, VCE and the Master Gardener Program.

I will be able to report the final contact numbers soon as they are tabulated.

Bylaws and Standing Rules

In the absence of Jim Scibek, Fauquier, chair, Christy Brennan reported that the Committee is planning to start over, following the Bylaws changes approved at the VMGA Annual Meeting. A report is scheduled after the first of the year.

Anyone wishing to be a part of this Committee should contact Jim Scibek.

Membership Review

The current membership brochure is being updated. One of Dave Close's staff members is working on the re-design. Mary Ann Kincaid provided a draft of copy for the brochure.

Also to be updated is a VMGA display board for use at MG College and other events.

VMGA MG College Scholarship

Marilyn Riddle, JCC/Williamsburg, chair asked for volunteers for the 2015 Scholarship Committee. The following MGs volunteered: Mary Ann Kincaid, Lynn Jones-Rockbridge, Ted Munns-Northern Neck and Wanda Gerard.

Mary Ann Kincaid suggested Marilyn write a short article about the scholarship and how to apply. This article would be sent out to all reps asking them to place it in their local MG newsletter.

Extension

John Freeborn reported as follows:

Leadership trainings are complete, and we had almost 100 attendees across the three trainings. We completed trainings in Rustburg, Culpeper, and Williamsburg. Topics included inclusion, screen volunteers, working with youth, and running effective meetings.

We have launched our new website, which is divided into three sections: I want to be a MG, I am a MG, and the Coordinator's Section. This last section is password protected and includes a great number of resources for marketing and communications. In this section we have logos, PowerPoint templates, banners, a marketing toolkit, and other resources. The address is <http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/>. MGs are asked to send photos of MG events to John for inclusion in the web site.

We are currently working to revise both the MG Training Handbook and the Coordinator's Manual. There will be new chapters added, Chapter 17 concerning volunteerism and the MG Program will be moved to the front, and we anticipate having the new books complete in June of 2015.

MG College planning is progressing well. We have 6 keynote speakers confirmed, including Joe Murray, Rick Fell, Ed Gilman, Richard Olsen, Bob Lyons and Tom Smiley. More news will be available as topics are determined.

Dave recently returned from a Master Gardener conference in South Korea. While there he visited a number of MG Projects and enjoyed excellent hospitality. They discussed volunteerism and the structure of the MG Program both there and here in the States. There were a number of attendees from the US, but also from other countries across the world.

The Southern Regional MG Conference is in Baton Rouge this fall, October 21-24. John will be attending it, while Dave travels to New Brunswick, New Jersey, October 27-29, for the National Extension Master Gardeners Coordinators Conference. More information will be given after the sessions are complete.

In regard to the Leadership Training, Pat Reilly noted that she found the training valuable and reminded MGs that they can attend more than once. In addition to the training, Pat found the opportunity to network with other MGs at the training session.

President's Question

Christy Brennan noted that occasionally she is asked by outside organizations, such as magazines, to recommend a Master Gardener to write an article on a specific topic. Christy said it would be helpful to have an existing list of those Master Gardeners who do write well that she could recommend.

She asked that, if the writer specializes in a topic, that be noted, i.e. herbs, native plants, etc.

It is requested that VMGA reps talk to those in their unit who have writing skills and ask if they would allow their name to be added to this list. The reps are asked to forward the information to Christy Brennan.

Fran Shelton asked for clarification of copyright issues.

It was suggested that units' Speakers Bureau would be a good source for writers. Those who have put together a Power Point presentation could make the presentation into an article.

It was suggested that VMGA put together a catalog of available speakers, writers and subject matter experts for all units to use. Tom Bolt, Norfolk, agreed to chair the committee. Robyn Puffenbarger and Angela Cingale volunteered to be on the committee.

New Business

Honorary VMGA Members

Christy Brennan reported a suggestion that all VCE agents and paid MG Coordinators be made honorary members of VMGA. This was prompted by a request at the time of the VSU Education Symposium by an agent that they be able to attend at the discounted (VMGA member) rate.

Discussion was held. A motion was made to continue discussing ANR and paid coordinators as honorary VMGA members. The motion was replaced with the following motion: VMGA member rates will be available to VCE agents and staff at all VMGA sponsored education events.

The replacement motion was approved unanimously.

VMGA Awareness

Christy Brennan advised that the awareness of VMGA is low among Virginia Master Gardeners and VCE agents.

Discussion was held on various way to improve awareness.

Mary Ann Kincaid reported that the MG College Advisory Committee had discussed having “I (heart) VMGA” pins in the MG College packets of all VMGA members. This would require access to these packets prior to the beginning of College.

It was suggested that a tall VMGA banner be produced for use at MG College and other events. Fran Shelton, Virginia Beach, will provide information regarding a source.

Standing Rules

Pat Reilly noted that the Standing Rules should be modified to include current Education rules, including the motion approved earlier.

Communications

Christy Brennan brought forward the issue of how to keep VMGA members, who do not have email access, informed.

Discussion was held. Suggestions included posting the information in the MG office for all to read and a 2-tiered membership whereby members pay more if they need communications mailed.

Mary Ann Kincaid agreed to mail all VMGA communications to those without email. In the meantime, Deb Straw will send each rep a list of those in their unit without email and ask the rep to verify and get back to her.

Pat Reilly volunteered to check with those VMGA members who have no email and no rep to verify the need to mail information.

MG Scholarship Donations

A policy is needed to codify how donations to the MG Scholarship fund should be handled. Mary Ann Kincaid volunteered to draft the policy statement which would be finalized at the December 2014 VMGA Board Meeting.

MG College Scholarship

For 2015, the MG Scholarship application will include the question “What is the amount of scholarship funding you need to assure you can attend MG College?” John Freeborn will provide the financial information on MG College tuition, housing and meals as soon as they are available so that total can be included as the maximum scholarship amount available.

VMGA Board Meeting December 13, 2014

The December meeting will be held in Lexington, hosted by the Rockbridge MGs. Meeting information will be sent to all reps by mid-November.

Mary Ann Kincaid
Acting Secretary

Treasurer's Report
Virginia Master Gardener Association
Meeting of the Board of Directors
October 11, 2014 Suffolk, VA

FY 2015 Income and Expenses to Budget
June 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014

INCOME		FY 2015	FY 15 Actual
Income-Admin	Membership Dues FY2015	\$ 4,524.00	\$ 1,716.80
	Membership Dues FY2016 – FY2024	\$ 1,440.00	\$ 432.00
Income-Fundraising	Fundraising (Merchandise Sales)	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,465.00
	MG College Scholarship Donations	\$ -	\$ 92.15
	Coordinator Endowment Donations (pass through)	\$ -	\$ 48.60
Income-Programs	Education Events	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,114.91
Total Income		\$12,464.00	\$ 3,705.95
EXPENSES			
Expenses-Admin	President	\$ 250.00	\$ -
	Vice President	\$ 25.00	\$ -
	Secretary	\$ 75.00	\$ -
	Treasurer	\$ 100.00	\$ -
	Professional and Legal Fees	\$ -	\$ 400.00
	Membership	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 289.96
	Subtotal Expenses-Admin	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 689.96
Expenses-Fundraising	Fundraising (Merchandise Purchase)	\$ -	\$ -
	State Coordinator Endowment	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 64.01
	Subtotal Expenses-Fundraising	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 64.01
Expenses-Programs	State Fair	\$ 500.00	\$ -
	Education	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,952.47
	MG College Scholarships	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
	MG College Sponsorship	\$ 500.00	\$ -
	Merchandise Profits to VT Foundation	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -
	Newsletter	\$ 100.00	\$ -
	Communications	\$ 250.00	\$ -
	Gift to VT Foundation (Coordinator Endowment)	\$ -	\$ 48.60
	Subtotal Expenses-Programs	\$ 9,550.00	\$ 4,501.07
Total Expenses		\$12,200.00	\$ 5,255.04

ATTENDEES* – VMGA BOARD MEETING
10/11/14 SUFFOLK

Appomattox	Jody Purches
Arlington/Alexandria	Joe Kelly
Bedford	Pat Waring
Central Shenandoah Valley	Robyn Puffenbarger
Central Virginia/Louisa	Tina Chaleki
	Edna Musser
Chesapeake	Robert Kelley
Chesterfield	Lynne Foote
Fairfax/Green Spring	Cyndi Bishop
Franklin	Nelda Purcell
Gloucester	Bonnie Bernard
Halifax	Charles Stallard
	Loretta Stallard
Hanover	Christy Brennan
Hill City/Lynchburg	Elsie Morris
	Deb Straw
	Yolan Williams
James City County/Wmsbg	Angela Cingale
	Jeanne Millin
	Marilyn Riddle
	Kendra Swann
Norfolk	Linda Ahlgrim
	Tom Bolt
Northern Neck	Ted Munns
Prince William	Frank Reilly
	Pat Reilly

Roanoke	Bert Boyd
Rockbridge	Lynn Jones
Suffolk	Wanda Gerard
	Sue Evans
	Annette Etheridge
	Ben Shockley
	Jean Long
	Kathy Harp
	Cheryl Plsani
	Nell Wall
	Heather Linville
	Pam Sanders
	Sharon Scheppe
Virginia Beach	Pinky Derieux
	Jim Kincaid
	Mary Ann Kincaid
	Fran Shelton
VT/VCE	John Freeborn
Western Tidewater	Betty Jo Hendrix
	Brenda Peters

*Reflects names of those who signed in at registration table.