

**Virginia Master Gardener Association  
Bimonthly Meeting, December 13, 2014  
Lexington, VA  
Meeting Minutes**

Christy Brennan, President, Hanover, opened the meeting at 10:05 AM. She introduced Lynn Jones, Unit Representative from the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners, who welcomed the group to Lexington. He introduced Faith Vosburgh, RAMG President, who spoke briefly on Lexington and the RAMGs. Program. They live in an area with a population of 36,000 and have 85 Master Gardeners. Christy thanked them for hosting the December meeting.

Christy welcomed all attendees and asked each one present to introduce themselves and their unit. The Unit Representative List was circulated for any updates of information.

The Secretary's Report was given by Joan Richards, Secretary, Green Spring. The minutes of the October Bimonthly Meeting were approved as corrected.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Pat Reilly, Treasurer, Prince William. The Executive Committee has approved the use of Pay Pal Here, a card reader working from a cell phone that will enable VMGA to accept credit card payments. Jody Purches has downloaded the required application and is prepared to use Pay Pal Here for Fund Raising merchandise sales. The report is attached and was submitted for audit.

The Vice President's Report on the PR Communication Committee was read by the President in the absence of Angela Cingale, JCC/Williamsburg.

1. VMGA needs to focus on what a member gets out of a membership into VMGA. Investigate the value-proposition for the time and money invested versus payoff for a membership. If a reduced training cost and newsletter is the reward for joining, we may not have enough compelling reasons and therefore we will not be able to increase our membership. VMGA should consider many more advanced education programs around the regions, access to research at VT or some other advantages; then the investment of time and money may sound more appealing.
2. Each local unit communicates in varying ways and amounts to share information and upcoming events at their meetings and newsletter, if they have one. Is it possible that even at the local unit level, we are too focused on administrative activities and not enough on gardening? We should encourage units to follow VCE's mission about educating our communities with whatever our gardening needs may be. Encourage feedback from the public if a unit is not doing this.
3. The discussion we had in the August meeting about giving MG interns a free year of membership is a good idea. No cost and maybe some up-side. We should also consider MG CALS College graduates to become VMGA members. We need to discuss this further with the board and Dave and John.

It was announced that Tom Bolt, Norfolk, will be working on developing a list of people who would like to be placed on the list of speakers, as well as MGs with writing skills.

## **State Coordinator's Report**

WebEx – starting in January, we will be offering online sessions every other month. We have topics set for the first two sessions, but we will be soliciting suggestions for future topics. These are intended for agents, coordinators, and association leaders or leaders-to-be. Adobe Connect is being replaced by WebEx for delivering online training sessions.

Report – we will soon be asking each unit to respond to a call for information for inclusion in the report. Please encourage your agent and/or coordinator to participate.

MG College – it looks like the Holiday Inn will be closed after the first of the year; also Conference and Guest Services has hired a new housing director. John and I will be meeting with them soon.

Policy – background screening policy was released this fall. Also, a timeline has been established for existing volunteers. A different district will be screened each quarter. The timeline was included with the policy announcement email.

Risk Management Module – John has been working with Jeremy Johnson, our Volunteer Specialist, to create a risk management module for agents and coordinators to use locally to teach risk management.

Milestones due soon – since the milestone awards are now based on a calendar year, a request will soon be sent to submit them to the state coordinator's office.

Dave Close, State Coordinator

## **Standing Committees:**

### **Communication**

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

1. Since the October regularly scheduled meeting there have been 2,140 unique visitors.
2. Since the October regularly scheduled meeting, the web page has been updated on 63 separate occasions.
3. 81% of all our visitors come through the front page of our site.
4. Order form, Next Education Event, Gear page and Calendar are tied for visitors after the front page.
5. Remember that we can help you host your site for a while, under certain conditions. We need more Calendar entries. The Calendar is routinely one of the top three most visited

ages on the website. Listing your activity can definitely help drive participants to your event.

Frank Reilly, Chair

## **Education**

Current members of the Education Committee: Robyn Puffenbarger, Wanda Gerard, Betty Jo Hendrix, Ben Capozzi

One connection we would like to build is with the Master Naturalist organization in Virginia. To that end, I drove over to Albemarle County Offices to meet Alycia Crall and Michelle Prysby, two of the Master Naturalist coordinators with VCE. We had a lovely discussion of potential areas for overlap with the two Master programs. Like MG College, their September event is fully sold out, so that is not a way we can overlap. Another idea they mentioned is that they do a webinar a month for continuing education; these are ‘taped’ so that they can be watched or used later. This is a neat idea that the Education Committee might be able to tap into since a great speaker on native pollinators from one area of VA might not be able to travel to MG College, units or our education symposia. We will need to talk to David and John to see if a webinar (or series) would be appropriate for continuing education for MG’s.

Please let us know about your local unit education events and do not forget to put those on the VMGA Calendar via Kathryn Debnar.

We are in discussions with Joel Koci at VSU about other educational symposia for VMGA in September 2015. We will need ideas for speakers and to determine if VMGA wants symposia to be ‘themed’ as the one in Sept. 2014. If there are any other questions, ideas, or concerns, please send those to Robyn Puffenbarger as well. ([rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu](mailto:rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu) or 540-908-7335).

Robyn Puffenbarger, Chair

## **Membership**

As of December 13, 2014 there are 511 Active Members with 6 of those being Auxiliary Members and 154 are Life Members. As a reminder, dues that are paid after January 1, 2015 are good until May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016. There is no need to wait until late May to renew. Sending your dues in a few months early will help the Membership Committee in being able to process the applications.

Deb Straw, Chair

## **Newsletter**

1. The newsletter needs a mission and scope statement.
2. Would a quarterly newsletter meet the needs of the MG Readership?
3. A survey is being developed to send out to members to ascertain their needs, wishes versus *The VMGA Report*.

Jan Worthy, Chair

Discussion followed on locations and time of meetings. A motion was made and seconded to bring to a vote whether to hold meetings in a central location or move around the state as currently is done. The majority voted to continue to hold meetings around the state.

There was discussion on changing from bimonthly meetings to quarterly meetings but no motion was made in support, so the idea was dropped. Alta Jones and Elsie Morris volunteered to assist in the survey.

### Unit Support

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

1. No activity to report since the October Meeting.
2. Recall that the 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.

Frank Reilly, Chair

### Fund Raising

The merchandise sales team consists of Jody Purches and Pat Reilly. Jody has assumed responsibility for PayPal Here, the device that allows VMGA to take credit cards. The device works off a cell phone, so will facilitate sales at any location.

The value of the inventory is \$2,593.38. Since the beginning of the fiscal year on June 1, 2014 revenues from sales totaled \$2,174.71. The team wishes to thank Julie Rogers, Eastern Shore, Mary Ann Kincaid, and Betty Villers, VA Beach, and Angela Cingale, JCC/Williamsburg, for assisting with transport and sales.

The cost of goods sold was \$1,650.76 for a profit of \$523.96 for the State Coordinator Endowment. The price VMGA pays for goods has increased, decreasing the profit. Ideas for additional items and invitations to your association or unit's annual meetings to sell items would be greatly appreciated. We have added sky blue to the sweatshirt colors and zip-up, hooded sweatshirts for \$35.

VMGA State Coordinator Endowment

	1 Feb 14	1 April 14	27 June 14	5 Aug 14	2 Oct 14	2 Dec 14
Market Value	\$270,530	\$271, 439	\$287,986	\$307,776	\$308,842	\$310,023
Cash and Pledge Payments	\$210,817	\$212,319	\$227,016	\$235,514	\$236,114	\$237,815
Outstanding Pledges	\$ 5,075	\$ 5,875	\$ 6,175	\$ 6,275	\$ 5,725	\$ 5,575
Deferred Commitments	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$233,986	\$233,986	\$233,986	\$233,986
Interest Income Account	\$ 14,159	\$ 17,036	\$ 19,931	\$ 19,931	\$ 22,980	\$ 22,980

At a meeting prior to the board meeting the Endowment team made plans to recognize donors at MG College.

Tina Chaleki, Chair.

## **Special Committees**

### **Snail Mail Verification Committee**

The committee consists of VP Angela Cingale, Secretary Joan Richards and Treasurer Pat Reilly. The committee was tasked with contacting members whose email addresses had become invalid or who are listed in the membership database as requiring postal delivery of *The VMGA Report* and the Membership Directory. The objective is to comply with the Standing Rule that states that the newsletter will be distributed by “the most cost effective rate available.”

Printing and mailing the most recent newsletter cost \$5.72 each. Dues of \$12 will not cover printing and mailing six newsletters a year. Electronic delivery is not just the most cost effective rate for delivery of the newsletter, but is also the most efficient and timely method to communicate with members. Note that members without email do not receive any electronic notices of meeting announcements, education event registration opening, announcements of MG College Scholarships or the Silent Auction. While these email notices are not frequent (one or two a month), they are important.

The committee received the list of the postal members from Membership Chair Deb Straw on October 18. The list was divided among the three members. A proposed script was created to address the different scenarios: those whose email had bounced, those with email who are counted as members who require postal delivery and those who have provided no email addresses. Committee members used the provided email address, made phone calls and in some cases addresses to write letters to reach the member. Unit Reps, personal contact within the member’s unit, coordinators and agents were contacted when members were not responsive. Most of the list was completed in three weeks; some are still unresolved.

Of the 63 members on the postal list:

- 5 members are to be deleted (no longer active or affiliated)
- 48 accept electronic delivery
- 8 require postal delivery
  - One does not want to give her email address
  - Two want someone to print the newsletter for them
  - Four do not have email
  - One lives out of state; a letter has been sent

Of the 16 bounced emails:

- Various reasons were found for the emails bouncing
  - 4 addresses worked when checked, but not for the last newsletter (full Inboxes, e.g.)
  - 6 were members that had not updated with Membership
  - 5 were reading/transcription errors from handwritten membership forms

- 1 still not resolved
- 9 are Life members, 6 annual renewals, 1 member's status unknown

Several observations by the committee lead to the following recommendations:

1. Annual contact should be made with every member
  - a. Life Members should be emailed annually at renewal time, perhaps with a “thanks for supporting VMGA, please renew your information and committee interests” request
  - b. Active members with VCE Emeritus status should be emailed annually with the same message as above and ask if still affiliated
2. Utilize all methods to increase the number who join or renew electronically. This will decrease errors from reading handwriting and transcribing from paper to the membership spreadsheet.
3. Modify the Membership Form to state that the member is responsible for identifying an email address to which communications can be sent.
4. Set the expectation through *The VMGA Report*, the website and the Membership Form with all members that it is their responsibility to update their email address with VMGA
5. Implement a feedback loop that when emails bounce, the Membership Committee will make reasonable attempts to contact the member (phone call or contacting the Unit Rep or coordinator)
  - a. Discontinue the practice of defaulting to postal delivery when email connection is lost
  - b. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to follow up and assist Membership with reasonable attempts

Discussion followed and the consensus was to use the modified Membership Application that required an email address and emphasized that it was the member's responsibility to contact the membership chair with any changes in addresses.

Pat Reilly, Chair

Discussion followed and approval was granted to implement the recommendations in the report. The modified Membership Application was passed around for all to view and provide comments.

### **Recruitment Kit Committee**

Two sample Recruiting Brochures were passed around for those present to analyze and provide comments. The Executive Committee will be looking at those to determine what would be most suitable.

### **State Fair**

Christy reported on attendance at the State Fair. The number of contacts the MGs made was 8,544. The effectiveness of the technique used with fairgoers visiting a number of VCE sites and receiving a backpack upon completion, helped with the contacts. She hopes VCE would continue something of this type next year.

### **President's Question**

The question was: What sources of information do you use to compile your Unit Report? Discussion followed on using a template, reporting events and projects, or submitting the unit newsletter. Sharing of vital information helps other units with ideas and information.

Christy will send out questions for Representatives to prepare a response. One concern is retention of MGs and she would like each unit to determine the percentage of retention in their units.

### **New Business**

The February 14 VMGA meeting will be hosted by Hanover MGs in Mechanicsville, VA on February 14. As this will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VMGA, it only seems fitting the meeting will be held where it all began 25 years ago in Hanover. Perhaps we can even have a cake to celebrate. We hope some of the founders of the organization can be present. Frank and Pat Reilly will assist in preparations.

The President asked for volunteers to assist with the By-Laws committee. George Graine and Pat Reilly volunteered to join the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Green Spring

VMGA Secretary

Virginia Master Gardener Association  
 Financial Report  
 Meeting of the Board of Directors  
 December 13, 2014, Lexington, VA

Summary of Checkbook Activity

Balance September 30, 2014	\$9,199.46
Deposits	\$644.00
Withdrawals	\$2,928.91
Ending balance November 30, 2014	\$6,914.55

FY 2015 Income and Expenses to Budget  
 June 1, 2014 – December 12, 2014

<b>INCOME</b>		FY 2015	FY 15 YTD
<b>Income-Admin</b>	Membership Dues FY2015	\$ 4,524.00	\$ 1,991.68
	Membership Dues FY2016 – FY2024	\$ 1,440.00	\$ 540.00
<b>Income-Fundraising</b>	Fundraising (Merchandise Sales)	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,174.71
	MG College Scholarship Donations	\$ -	\$ 107.15
	State Coordinator Endowment Donations	\$ -	\$ 48.60
<b>Income-Programs</b>	Education Events	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,252.33
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$12,464.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,813.54</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Expenses-Admin</b>	President	\$ 250.00	\$ 77.30
	Vice President	\$ 25.00	\$ -
	Secretary	\$ 75.00	\$ -
	Treasurer	\$ 100.00	\$ 5.08
	Professional and Legal Fees	\$ -	\$ 400.00
	Membership	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 289.96
	<b>Subtotal Expenses-Admin</b>	<b>\$ 1,450.00</b>	<b>\$ 772.34</b>
<b>Expenses-Fundraising</b>	Fundraising (Merchandise Purchase)	\$ -	\$ 1,150.02
	State Coordinator Endowment	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 76.62
	Silent Auction	\$ -	\$ 103.69
	<b>Subtotal Expenses-Fundraising</b>	<b>\$ 1,200.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,330.33</b>
<b>Expenses-Programs</b>	State Fair	\$ 500.00	\$ 565.85
	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 (VT Foundation, State Coordinator Endowment)	\$ -	\$ 50.00
	<b>Subtotal Expenses-Programs</b>	<b>\$ 9,550.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,068.32</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$12,200.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,170.99</b>



Statement of Position (Balance Sheet)

<b>Assets</b>	
Cash	\$ 7,208.21
PayPal Balance	\$ 403.16
Reserve CD #1 Balance (MG College Scholarships)	\$ 14,495.32
Reserve CD #2 Balance	\$ 5,018.35
Future Dues CD Balance	\$ 6,111.13
Fundraising Inventory	\$ 2,593.38
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 35,829.55</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Unearned Income – Future Dues	\$ 6,651.13
Coordinator Endowment Funds Payable	\$ 523.96
Restricted Gifts for Scholarships	\$ 107.15
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 7,282.24</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Unrestricted (Current FY Dues, Merchandise Sales)	\$ 4,166.39
Temporarily Restricted (MG College Scholarships, Future Dues)	\$ 24,380.92
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 28,547.31</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 35,829.55</b>

Statement of Activities (Income Statement)

Revenue	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Contributions	\$ -	\$ 48.60	\$ 48.60
Fundraising (Net of Expenses)	\$ -	\$ 523.96	\$ 523.96
Interest Income	\$ 4.89	\$ 2.06	\$ 6.95
Membership Dues	\$ 1,991.68	\$ 540.00	\$ 2,531.68
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,996.57</b>	<b>\$ 1,114.62</b>	<b>\$ 3,111.19</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program Services	\$ 5,068.32	\$ -	\$ 5,068.32
Management and General (Admin)	\$ 772.34	\$ -	\$ 772.34
Fundraising	\$ 1,330.33	\$ -	\$ 1,330.33
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 7,170.99</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 7,170.99</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets (Net Income)</b>	<b>\$ (5,174.42)</b>	<b>\$ 1,114.62</b>	<b>\$ (4,059.80)</b>
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$ 25,912.59</b>		
<b>Net Assets, Year to Date</b>	<b>\$ 28,547.31</b>		

\*Attendees at the December 13 Bimonthly Board Meeting

Lexington, VA

Albemarle, city of Charlottesville

Amherst, Campbell, City, Of Lynchburg

Deb Straw  
Yolan Williams  
Elsie Morris

Appomattox

Jody Purches

Arlington, Alexandria

Joe Kelly

Augusta, Rockingham, cities of Harrisonburg

Staunton, Waynesboro

Bedford

Pat Waring

Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, Nottaway

Carroll, Grayson, city of Galax

Charlotte

Chesapeake

Chesterfield

Clarke, Frederick, Page, Warren, Shenandoah

Culpepper, Orange, Madison

Cumberland, Prince Edward, Buckingham

Danville

Fairfax

George Graine

Franklin

Nelda Purcell  
Cindy Wood

Fauquier

Fluvanna

Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania

King George, Caroline

Gloucester

Goochland, Powhatan

Green Spring

Cyndi Bishop  
Joan Richards

Halifax

Hampton`

Hanover

Christy Brennan

Henrico

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Henry

Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry

James City County, Williamsburg

Louisa

Edna Musser  
Ralph Mason  
Tina Chaleki  
Jan Worthy  
Robyn Puffenbarger

Loudoun

Alta Jones

Mathews

Montgomery, Giles, Pulaski, Floyd

Nelson

Newport News

Norfolk

Northampton, Accomack

Northumberland, Lancaster, Richmond,

Diane Kean

Westmoreland, Essex

Portsmouth

Prince George, Petersburg

Prince William

Pat Reilly  
Frank Reilly

Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig

Kathryn Debnar

Rockbridge, Bath

Phyllis Fevrier  
Gerri Wevy  
Bob Kovach  
Anne Ripley-Buckner  
Barbara Thomas

Faith Vosburgh  
Jim Davis

Scott, Wise, Lee

Suffolk

Tazewell

VCE

Dave Close

Virginia Beach

Washington

Wythe, Bland

York

\*Attendees who signed in at the meeting in Lexington.