

Minutes of the December Regularly Scheduled Meeting of

The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc.

December 14, 2002

Hanover County, VA

Attendance

(Chesapeake) Pauline Price; (Fairfax) Charlie Hood; (Fauquier) Lenore Plissner, Jim Scibek; (Gloucester) Florace Arnold, Sherry Ratcliffe; (Hanover) Pamela Armstrong, Bill Bonwell, Christy Brennon, Colleen Calderwood, Joie Carter, Judy Durant, Cheri Haggerty, Willie Mills, Evelyn Parker, Harland Patch, Maryann Rice, Vicki Scheffler; (James City /Williamsburg) Angela Cingale, Dale Firestone; (Lynchburg) Karen Sacasky; (Northern Neck) Jinny Estell, Susan Lindsey; (Prince George) Cheryl Sebera; (Prince William) Frank Reilly, Pat Reilly; (Roanoke) Lynn Snider, Shelby Snider; (Rockbridge) Caroline Norrington, Chuck Norrington; (Stafford) Micheal Holmes, Don Saunders; (Virginia Beach) Paul Campbell; (Virginia Tech) Sarah Lineberger, Diane Relf; (York) Jackie Lohr, Lanna Rackley.

Call to Order

President Jim Scibek called the meeting to order at 1002.

Introductions

Willie Mills, President of the Hanover Master Gardener Association, gave an overview of what is happening in Hanover. He promised that the Brunswick stew for lunch was all local animals and critters but no road kill. (Actually the Black Creek Volunteer Fire Department and Mrs. Fearnow prepared it.)

He noted that Hanover Master Gardeners have been around since 1982 and the association was incorporated in 1993. Hanover has trained over 600 Master Gardeners, holding both afternoon and evening classes. There over 300 MGs on the mailing list with 125 - 150 MGs actively turning in hours. Some of the their projects include the State Fair, the demonstration garden at Black Creek Volunteer Fire Department, Virginia House and Agecroft Hall. Hanover MGs also volunteer at Maymont and Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. In the past, they have worked at local elementary schools. They hold two plant sales a year with the proceeds going towards \$500.00 scholarships to each of the four county high schools. In the past 5 years the MGs have logged over 33,000 hours and have volunteered over 4000 this year. In July, the MGs sponsor a booth at the Tomato Festival where the attendance was over 30,000 with 500 stopping at the MG booth. Not only has the extension office been moved this year but also their agent retired. The MGs picked up the slack at the VCE office but also found time to write letters about the effect of the budget cuts on Hanover VCE.

Minutes

President Scibek asked that reference to Unit Reports be included in the minutes. The adjournment time will also be included. The minutes of the October meeting were accepted with the aforementioned amendments.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Shelby Snide reported:

Checking Account Balance as of December, 2002	3955.55
Money Market Fund	5393.28
Endowment	3618.76
Certificate of Deposit	6363.21
Total Funds	19330.80

Shelby reported that she did not have information on the CD so last month's figure was used in this report. She is to check with the bank on the amount. The treasurer's report was accepted.

President's Report

President Jim Scibek reported under New Business.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education

Lenore Plissner, Chair, reported that over 50 people attended the program in Leesburg with four new VMGA members signed up. Inadvertently the program cleared over \$685.00. Consequently, the committee decided to adjust the amount they will need to charge for future programs. The committee was surprised that more local people did not attend (only eight were from Loudon with 10 from Fauquier).

The next event will take place March 8 at Virginia State University. The topic is "The Organic Garden of Eden, Herbs, Flowers, and Fungi ". The morning session, presented by Andy Hankins, will be "Organic Production of Specialty Crops" including vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, composting, natural pest control and fresh cut flowers. There will be two breakaway seminars in the afternoon given by Chris Mullins (VSU) on Small Scale Greenhouses for the Home Gardener and Lynn Trott (James City County MG) on Successfully growing Dahlias.

The committee is considering programs at Monticello and Lewis Ginter. In March 2004, the program hopes to be including the symposium in Prince George in memory of Tom Geer.

Lenore hesitated to name her committee members because she was afraid someone would steal them from her.

However, they include Ann Gorrell, Mike Holmes, Fran Shelton, Pinky Derieux, Louise Livinghouse, Margaret Van Winkle, Debbie Hamilton, Joan Clements, George Graine, Nicole Call and Cheri Haggerty.

Newsletter

Florace Arnold reported that the newsletter staff was thankful for the great support from everybody. She would love to have articles on gardens or places off the beaten path. What they really need is Unit news.

Membership

Julie was unable to attend but sent her report via President Scibek. There are 366 members and no new life members since her last report. She reminded members to download the current application from VMGA .net. A brief discussion was held on membership getting the applications first then forwarding to the treasurer. No decision was made to change the current system of the treasurer getting the applications first..

The committee has come up with a Draft generic recruiting brochure. It was passed around for the membership to review. Once she gets the updated Unit Reps list, it will be distributed to them for distribution.

Unit Support

Consists of Kerry Goldmeyer, Karen Sacasky, Pat Reilly and Frank Reilly, Chair. Since the last meeting, Karen Sacasky has visited with the new Master Gardener training class in Nelson County. She gave a presentation covering MG program history, VCE and VMGA. Bob Carlton, the new non-paid coordinator for Warren, Page, Clark, Shenandoah, and Frederick counties along with Susie Howard met with Pat Reilly to get information on educational programming, needs assessment and planning development

Communication Committee

Members: Julie Cochran, Cheri Haggerty, Angela Kahn, Shelby Snyder and Chair Frank Reilly.

November 12 marked the 4th anniversary of vmga.net. It has grown from a single page giving the minutes of the last meeting to a large web site with more than 200 pages of content. Since the October meeting there have been 8,229 visitors to the site. Outside of the U.S., visitors came from 29 countries with Canada having the most followed by The Netherlands and the UK. Since the October meeting, the web page has been updated on 17 separate occasions. 66 people downloaded registration forms for the last Education event.. The most popular pages in the past 3 months have been Membership, links to member's pages and the Forum. Interestingly enough there were many more links to the directions to this meeting than to last month's Minutes. (Apparently folks were more interested in coming to "Cheri's party" than reading her minutes!).

Angela Kahn is accepting changes to the Calendar page while Cheri Haggerty is accepting sites for the Useful Links pages. Membership applications are available for download from the site. Updated Master Gardener College CDs are not finished yet.

State Fair

Evelyn Parker reported that 126 MGs from all over the state contributed 555.25 hours before, during and after the State Fair. That works out to a \$10,977.29 donation to the taxpayers.

Education Endowment Fund

Pat Reilly donated \$100 received from the last Education event.

Extension Liaison Report

Unfortunately, this is Sarah's last meeting. She has been offered a very good opportunity in Fort Bend, Texas. She will be a Horticultural Extension Agent. She has enjoyed working with us for the past 21/2 years. The position will be filled later this spring.

The e-mail address for handbooks, certificates and recordkeeping is vtmg@vt.edu.

Coordinator manuals have been delivered to unit offices.

Frank Reilly has agreed to "take the lead" on MG College.

She also reminded us about the International MG Conference in Cincinnati in 2003. The International MG Conference has a program called "Search for Excellence". There are monetary awards for those programs selected in this process. There is more information in the winter Leadership Newsletter.

Recordkeepers are being asked to update awards information when submitting hours.

Nametag orders have been placed on hold until the first of the year.

Sarah's last official words were "I will not miss the snow or the ice!"

Dr. Relf expressed an enormous thanks to Frank for assuming the MG College lead. She and her husband will be in New Zealand from the middle of January to the middle of April. She will be working with the University there and doing a lot of touring. She reinforced that Sarah will be replaced!

Unit Reports

The Unit reps attending gave reports. Cheri Haggerty presented a draft list of Unit reps and asked that the membership review it and offer corrections. This will be distributed to the reps and all committee chairs for their information. Unit reps were reminded to keep their reports brief and turn in a written copy to the Secretary.

Unfinished Business

Before resuming unfinished business, Colleen Calderwood, Hanover Coordinator, presented an overview of their town hall meeting with Delegate Frank Hargrove on December 2, to discuss the budget cuts and the resulting effect on VCE. Delegate Hargrove felt the budget cuts were a result of poor analysis of revenue. He was confused about VCE funding and that legislators as a whole appeared to be uninformed about what VCE and MGs do. He recommended that MGs meet with the general assembly and educate them about what we do as MGs and continue getting out the word about the education programs that Master Gardeners represent.

Pat Reilly brought the first edition of the VMGA's "VCE Master Gardener Volunteers Summary of Impacts - 2002". This covers the different kinds of impacts the Master Gardeners make statewide. It Uses Sarah's

summary of hours and include an introduction by Sarah. The information is archived in past newsletters at www.ext.vt.edu/anr/hort.

We have made available approximately six copies for each unit to distribute to their legislators and local supervisors. Discussion was held on the best way to achieve this distribution. Mailing is not acceptable. Meeting face to face with the legislator or their aides will be more effective. Pat presented guidelines on a cover letter to accompany the brochure. Suggestions included using local letterhead not VCE or VCE penalty mail, add statistics to back up your information or one or two pictures representing your projects.

Stress that we are a non profit organization and are self funded as you keep them both informed and educated on the MG program.

Pat also suggested to ask for their support on the \$1.04 million extension budget amendment and for restoring fund to VCE. This amendment would return money to the municipalities who are picking up the state's portion of VCE funds. This amendment would cover funding for four high priority extension specialists in Turf, Cotton, Corn and Small Grains and Horse and 19 field agents (9-ANR, 9-4H and 1 FCS).

Dr Relf said that we should reinforce that MGs are about education - hands on face to face- and about changing behaviors. Homeowners cannot get that from the Web. She also suggested that you invite your delegates to serve a role as a speaker or attend any special events you might have locally.

Karen Sacasky recommended that you meet locally with your delegates before January 7 rather than going to Richmond during the assembly session. The key is that you would have their attention.

New Business

President Scibek received a letter from Barbara Geer requesting VMGA co-sponsorship of a Prince George Symposium being presented in memory of her husband, Tom Geer. Tom was a longtime MG, well liked, and respected VMGA member and representative. She asked for the co-sponsorship beginning with the event in the spring of 2004. Lenore Plissner said that she is meeting with Barbara at the March 8 education event to discuss VMGA involvement. Pat Reilly brought up that many MGs have asked for an alternative to MG College in that area of the state. She also informed us that funding from the Geers is already in place.

Frank Reilly reminded us that the purpose of education events is to educate not generate revenue. We all are required to have 8 hours of education a year. He also said that support comes in many forms, not just financial.

Karen Sacasky commented that we are committed to four education events a year and that partnering with someone will make that easier to accomplish.

After lengthy discussion, the membership present voted to "support co-sponsorship in principle and further task the Education Committee to work out the details." of the Prince George Master Gardener Association annual symposium. This will be a permanent VMGA-PGMGA partnered event.

In other New Business, the VMGA presented Sarah with a gift certificate to Brent and Becky's and thanked her for all the wonderful things she has done for us. We will miss her!

Dr. Relf presented Sarah with a picture of SNOW from VCE.

Announcements

The next board meeting is in York on February 8, 2003 at 1000.

The next two meetings will be hosted by:

April, 2003 – Fairfax

June, 2003 - Blacksburg

James City County-Williamsburg has offered to host the August meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1335.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Haggerty

Secretary

VMGA