

**Minutes of the August Regularly Scheduled Meeting of
The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc.
August 14, 2004
South Hill (South Central)
(Draft)**

Attendance

(Amherst, Campbell, Lynchburg) Bill Morton, Karen Sacasky, Al Thompson; (Brunswick) Cynthia Gregg; (Chesapeake) Pinky Derieux, Pauline Price (Fairfax) George Graine; (Fauquier) Jim Scibek; (Goochland/Powhatan) Chuck Miller; (Halifax) Bill McCaleb, Grace Elliott; (James City County/Williamsburg) Angela Cingale, Ann DeForest; (Northern Neck) Jinny estell, Pat Rogers; (Prince William) Frank Reilly, Pat Reilly; (Rockbridge) Ted Jenks; (Roanoke) Kathryn Debnar; (South Central) Lola Edwards, Barbara Matthews, George Pace; (Virginia Beach) Fran Shelton; Betty Villers (Virginia Tech) Dave Close, Max Bales; (York) Jackie Lohr

Call to Order

President Bill McCaleb called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Introductions

President McCaleb welcomed us all to the August board meeting in South Hill. He then introduced Cynthia Gregg, Extension Agent, Brunswick County, who works with MGs of South Central VA (Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, and Nottoway counties). She thanked everyone for coming out in such bad weather with the hurricane due to arrive later in the day. Her MGs have volunteered 2300 hours and made 10,000 contacts. Some of the projects include youth and senior programs, the horticulture hot line, and home visits. From roses to tomatoes to water gardens the MGs have added volunteer hours valued at \$134,000 to South Central Virginia. Attending with her were Barbara Mathews (Mecklenburg); Lola Edwards (Lunenburg): George Pace, Celia and Dick Elway (Nottoway).

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Pat Reilly reported:

Checking Account Balance as of 6/8/2004			<u>\$3,161.92</u>
Income			
	Deposit - Membership	\$2,506.00	
	Donations to EEF	\$507.75	
	Total Income		\$3,013.75
	Checking Account Balance		<u>\$6,175.67</u>
Expenses			
	Membership	\$44.85	
	EEF Recipients	\$600.00	
	Newsletter	\$682.63	
	(June & Aug printing, June postage)		
	Bank Expense (May)	\$9.95	
	Total Expenses	\$1,337.43	<u>-\$1,337.43</u>

Checking Account Balance	<u>\$4,838.24</u>
Money Market	\$5,435.28
CD Balance	\$6,396.51
Relf Endowment Fund	\$4,200.91
Total Overall Balance of Accounts	\$20,870.94

Will maintain checking account daily collected balance above \$2,500 to eliminate bank charge. Suggested we put some of Money Market balance in checking account to avoid the charge. As membership numbers are rising she would like to introduce an option to pay dues by PayPal which we can link to our website. It is secure and a lot of people use it. As people do banking online, they can pay their dues on line as well. On the website at the membership page to pay by PayPal one would click on the PayPal icon, that takes you to PayPal site where you enter some information. It generates all that information to Pat that the deposit has been made to the VMGA account and then Pat will notify Pauline (membership) the person has paid dues and transfer any necessary information such as name and address. Cost is 65 cents per transaction. Anticipate there will be options for people to contribute to the endowment fund. Will save us time and we'll have more accurate records. Can have it up and running next week.

Motion made and carried to accept Treasurer's report as presented. Motion made to accept PayPal as part of our payment program. PayPal report will indicate what person bought, dues, life membership, etc. Amendment to motion - VMGA will accept membership payments via PayPal. Members can still pay by check.

Minutes

The June minutes were accepted.

Committee Reports

Education - Fran Shelton and Pinky Derieux, Co-Chairs

The Education Committee met while at MG College on June 11 to discuss plans for the September 18 Continuing Education trip to the State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandy Farm. Margaret VanWinkle will be handling the registration form for the newsletter and website. Joan Clements will be responsible for the continental breakfast on the morning of the seminar and will be asking for help from the MGs located in that area. Debbie Hamilton and Louise Livinghouse will handle all registration forms and monies for the Blandy trip. Cut-off for registration will be September 6th, must notify Blandy number of MGs attending in order for them to provide sufficient guides. Program cost more than usual as we are giving a donation of \$200 to Endowment Fund of the Arboretum, a \$75 gift certificate to Dr. Carr (for a book company), and paying \$75 for tent set-up. We will provide lunch for speakers and bottled water for all those attending. MGs will have to purchase sodas for lunch as they were not provided in cost of lunch. Need 45 attendees to break even.

Hope to have next program in Halifax/Danville area as it is very central in the state. Education committee is trying to move the programs around to different areas of the state to get more MGs involved statewide. More information at October meeting.

Newsletter - Florace Arnold, Editor

Florace was not in attendance. The deadline for the next issue is September 1. Looking for handy tidbits, local units and members who receive awards should let others know about it.

Membership - Pauline Price, Chair

We now have 636 members and 107 Life members. It should be noted that 239 have not renewed. Pauline passed out a list of those not renewing and asked those attending to check for names in their unit and contact them. If they are not renewing, ask why. As an organization it would be nice to know why people are not renewing.

Communication/Unit Support - Frank Reilly, Chair

Unit Support

Members: Pat Reilly, Karen Sacasky, Kerry Goldmeyer, Cheri Haggerty and Frank Reilly and whomever else we need.

1. Northern Neck requested job descriptions for paid MG Coordinators. We poled the paid coordinators we know and provided job descriptions for 5 different positions. Most MG Coordinators have duties in addition to MG Volunteer coordination. These job descriptions will be posted on the web site at the Unit Support Committee page, since it seems likely that additional units will realize the advantage of providing a paid coordinator.
2. Pat Reilly and Dave Close appeared on Farm TV in mid July to discuss MG issues.

Communication Committee

Members: Cheri Haggerty, Pinky Derieux, Kathryn Debnar, Shelby Snyder and Chair Frank Reilly and whomever else we can get. Since the June regularly scheduled meeting, there have been 15,082 visitors to VMGA.net. About 65% of our visitors visit the front page during their stay. New stuff gets mentioned there

1. The single site giving us the most referrals in the past month was <http://vphc.com/> - Virtual Parrot Heads Club. They were closely followed by Vitkovice Shipyards in Czechoslovakia and Texas Fishing Forum. We got 24 visitors from the Farm Radio web page after Pat Reilly and Dave Close appearance.
2. 380 visitors viewed the educational events page since the notice was put up about our September educational event. Applications for the Continuing Ed event at Blandy are available at the web site.
3. Since the June meeting, the web page has been updated on 45 separate occasions. All of the officer and committee chair information have been updated to reflect the regime change. Likewise the Membership page and application materials have been changed to reflect the dues increase.
4. The most popular pages in the last three months have been Hort Updates, College Home Page, Educational Events, Minutes, Calendar, Unit Reports, MGPW and News.
5. We sponsored an Essentials of Web Authoring class in association with MG College, and more than 25 attended. They all constructed their own web site before they left the room.
6. Kathryn Debnar is currently accepting changes to the calendar. Cheri Haggerty maintains the links page. Both pages have been updated and you can expect more there soon.
7. Interested in getting pictures from MG College so that we can begin to produce the MG College recruiting CD for next year in time for a December delivery.

State Fair - Christy Brennan, Chair

No report. Calendar is on website, there are still a few empty slots. The State Fair will again be in Richmond from September 23 - October 3.

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 and in the next newsletter.

During the unit reports the VCE Civil Rights Compliance Review came up. President McCaleb stated every extension office maintains records showing they are trying to reach out to all facets of the population and as MGs we need to do the same as we advertise for our classes.

Extension Liaison - reported by Dave Close, MG Coordinator

MG Name tags - MG nametags can be ordered quarterly; March, June, September and December. All this is contingent on the budget. As long as there is money available you will have nametags and there doesn't seem to be a problem this year. The nametag information was forwarded to Pat Sobrero, new Extension Director, and Dave is waiting to hear from her when to issue nametags to volunteers. Once he gets the final word, he will let us know. Pat Reilly reminded Dave the number of nametags will go up as the requirement that they be issued to volunteers of continuing responsibility is dropped. Dave will make sure Pat Sobrero is aware of that. Final word should be coming out soon.

State record keeping system - The process will start early next spring as Dave sits down with programmers to

overhaul the state system to iron out bugs that have been persistent since the beginning. Will take 12 to 18 months as they look for something new for everyone to work with. It will be improved, different program language, interface will be a little more user friendly. Asking everyone to keep sending comments and suggestions. Local units will still send hours for service awards. Looking at July 1, 2006 for new system to be in place.

Sudden Oak Disease (SOD)- There is a national effort to get MGs involved as front line detectors of SOD. They're asking each state to develop a plan to deal with increased samples and diagnosis. Dave met with a 40 state teleconferencing group and a state group is meeting August 31. This group will develop the framework for Virginia. Another nationwide training teleconferencing will be scheduled for October. Initial training will be offered to MG coordinators and agents who have some level of responsibility with plant diagnostics.

MG College - There were 225 to 250 MGs attending this year, the largest group ever. Send photos to Frank Reilly or Dave. Hope to top 300 MGs attending in 2005, June 22-26. A group will meet in September to review comments from this year's MG College.

Listservs - There is a MG coordinator's listserv (MG coordinators or record keepers of the local units) and a MG volunteer listserv (187 MGs currently). Just send email to Dave if you want to be on the listserv or signup online. Purpose of listserv - MGs to talk among themselves within entire state to share ideas and get suggestions on how to do projects that you might consider for your unit. Good way to get information quickly from all parts of the state.

New faculty - Director of Cooperative Extension, Pat Sobrero came on board July 1. President McCaleb has already sent her a welcome message from VMGA. She has already had interaction with MGs in the state and is impressed with the strong leadership. New Director of Agriculture Resources, Jim Riddell assumed role as Associate Dean and Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), August 10.

Leadership Development Newsletter - Newsletter is being redesigned, new look, new format, new title (In Season), cover in four colors. Should be out in next few weeks. If you're in state record keeping system you should be getting it. Dave plans to visit all the local units across the state in the next 8 to 9 months. He will also spend some time overhauling the VaTech website to make it more visible.

Pest Management Guide - There was an in-service session in Hampton Roads in July where comments and recommendations were made. Joyce Latimer is the Extension project leader and will coordinate changes. Because a different individual wrote each chapter, each person will be contacted to adjust their chapter based on recommendations as they come in. Questions about search engines on VaTech website, contact Dave directly with problems. The PMG is going online. There will not be any hard copies until 2005. Dave will check to see if there are any copyright issues in copying the PMG.

Any questions?

SOD (Sudden Oak Disease) - Lynette Swanson in Norfolk is planning a training session for her group. Fairfax and three or four agents/coordinators across the state have already worked on some type of training for their units. President McCaleb commented training is to make sure you can track source to final recipient. There will be a 14-question questionnaire for MG running hort line and when someone calls in and says I think one of my plants is showing SOD symptoms - they can go through this questionnaire with them to determine if homeowner should submit a sample. Concerned there could be utter chaos if media gets hold of this. If sample is needed the MG will go through the process of how to collect the sample. The major portion of the teleconferencing Oct. 26 will be how to go through the process and steps that need to occur. Already in place in CA, MD and WA. Georgia has processed 1500 samples but they're not seeing a large influx of samples based on folks calling in about it because they've got the MGs out there as front line detectors and eliminating false reports. Questionnaire developed by the North Central IPM can be viewed at www.NCIPM.org. Will be taking five questions that Hanover has developed to the meeting in October.

George Graine (Fairfax) shared two informational booklets received from the Fairfax agent. One is Non-native Invasive Plants of Southern Forests, A Field Guide for Identification and Control, USDA and James H. Miller. The other is Caterpillars of Eastern Forests, Forest Health Technology Enterprise, USDA FHTET-96-34, Nov 97, Forest Service. .

Unfinished Business

Education Chair/member serving on MG college Advisory Committee: Dave reported the Advisory Committee is made up of several folks from all cross the state, including a couple coordinators, two extension agents, MGs and the president of VMGA. Dave's feeling is the VMGA is already represented and he prefers to keep it to one representative, but if the president wants someone else to sit in his place that would be fine. Would like to make sure representation on Advisory Committee is broadly across the state and not just with

VMGA.

Elective Electronic Newsletter: Fifty new and renewing members responded to receive the VMGA newsletter by email. Need to let people know they can receive newsletter by email. Discussion followed on format and if on website, it can be downloaded. Will put word out we're looking for someone to take care of sending out newsletter by email. Frank (webmaster) indicated he would not be able to handle this. Chuck Miller (Goochland-Powhatan) recommended someone in his unit. Encourage people to use the website and search engines as a great source of information and resources.

New Business

Endowment Funding: Max Bales, Director of Development of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences said the Endowment is at VA Tech. He has worked with other groups to put together endowments. He has cleared this with the Dean of Agriculture and she is very interested in working with us. The minimum for any type of endowment is \$50,000. If for some reason \$50,000 is all that we raise, then we'll have an endowment set up in place that will start growing. It will grow as VA Tech Endowment grows and will pay 4.7%. Money will be used to offset cost of MG Coordinator position. This endowment protects the position from being booted. We have to reach \$50,000 in five years. If at five years we don't have the \$50,000, we will have to take a look at what we're doing. We can keep adding to the endowment, there is never a time we can't accept an investment into the endowment. VaTech views MGs as being worthwhile. He said you're telling Tech, we will have a presence. We need to think about who to ask for monies. The endowment committee is meeting and will need input and ideas from local units.

Lifetime Membership Committee: The committee will make recommendations at the December meeting.

VMGA Finance Committee: Treasurer and representative from each of the standing and special committees will make up the committee to put together a proposal for the budget as well as look at our investments. Motion made and approved that committee members include Bill Scott, Ted Jenks, Al Thompson, and Margaret VanWinkle.

Special License Plate VMG's: Proposal that we have a specialized MG license plate. Would need to sell 300 with money up front during a 12-month period, and have artwork done. After discussion, it was decided to drop the idea. Pat Reilly proposed an alternative, plastic license frames. There is no set up cost, they would cost us \$3.40 each for 125 and could sell them for \$5.00. Consensus there was interest in plastic frame. Pauline Price and Pat Reilly will look into this and bring back information to next meeting. Pauline will also investigate providing a shirt that would say 'Virginia Master Gardener'. Purchase can be tied with membership.

Increasing Unit Representation: President McCaleb wants everyone to know what the state is doing and that is accomplished by increased unit representation at VMGA meetings. VMGA represents all MGs. Two of his goals for the year include keeping the Association financially solvent and keeping communication running smoothly between VaTech and the Association.

Announcements

Next meeting October 16, 2004 in Chesapeake. The following meeting will be December 11, 2004 to be held in the Northern Neck area.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Villers
Secretary
VMGA