

Minutes of the December Regularly Scheduled Meeting of The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc. December 16, 2004 Kilmarnock

Attendance

(Amherst, Campbell, Lynchburg) Karen Sacasky, Al Thompson; (Chesapeake) Pinky Derieux, Kerry Goldmeyer; (Fairfax) George Graine, Edward Munns, Jr.; (Fauquier) Jim Scibek; (Gloucester) Florace Arnold, Bonnie Bernard, Sandy Pait; (Goochland/Powhatan) Joe Florino, Chuck Miller, Charlie Rogers, Nancy Talbert; (Halifax) Bill McCaleb; (Hanover) Cheri Haggerty; (Mathews) JoAnna Brown; (Norfolk) Donald Snipes, Sue Veir; (Northern Neck) Jinny Estell, Matt Lewis, Pat Rogers; (Prince William) Frank Reilly, Pat Reilly, Bill Scott; (Roanoke) Kathryn Debnar; (Rockbridge) Ted Jenks; (Virginia Beach) Paul Campbell, Liz Maurer, Fran Shelton, Betty Villers; (Virginia Tech) Dave Close; (York) Jackie Lohr, Sybil Przypek

Call to Order

President Bill McCaleb called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Introductions

President McCaleb welcomed all to the December board meeting in Kilmarnock and thanked the Northern Neck group for hosting the meeting. President McCaleb asked Jinny Estell to tell us something about the Northern Neck. She introduced Matt Lewis, the VCE Agent and Linda McConahey, MG coordinator. Northern Neck is a peninsula made up of four counties, Richmond, Westmoreland, Northumberland and Lancaster Counties, Kilmarnock and Warsaw being the largest cities. It's a wonderful area of Virginia, forgotten by time. Life here is like it use to be 30 to 50 years ago in other places, a delightful place to live. The economy is primarily based on the water and farming.

Introductions followed around the room with names and units represented

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Pat Reilly reported:

Overall Balance of Accounts

Checking Account Balance	\$6,276.80
Money Market (including PDR EEF of \$4217.41)	\$7,622.00
CD Balance	\$6,396.51
Total Overall Balance of Accounts	\$20,295.31

Checking Account

Balance as of 10/16/2004	\$5,159.82
Income	
Membership	\$656.00
Treasurer (banking)	\$9.95
EEF	\$100.00
FY06-FY12 dues	\$2,130.00
	\$2,895.95
Expenses	
Newsletter	-\$503.18
Membership	-\$956.71
State Fair	-\$53.99
Secretary	-\$13.74
Communications	-\$251.35

	-\$1,778.97
Balance as of 12/11/2004	\$6,276.80

Year to Date Income & Expenses to Budget

Income YTD

Committee	Budget	Income	Remaining
Membership	\$5,000.00	\$2,089.00	\$2,911.00
Education	\$0.00	\$216.57	\$0.00
Total	\$5,000.00	\$2,305.57	\$2,694.43

Expenses YTD

Committee	Budget	Expense	Remaining
Communication & Unit Support	\$450.00	-\$414.35	\$35.65
Membership	\$1,500.00	-\$1,111.84	\$388.16
Newsletter	\$1,875.00	-\$1,683.27	\$191.73
State Fair	\$50.00	\$53.99	-\$3.99
Gifts	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Marketing	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Nom & Elections	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
President (SCC)	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$75.00
V Pres	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
Sec	\$50.00	\$13.64	\$36.36
Treas (banking)	\$175.00	-\$52.35	\$122.65
Total	\$5,000.00	-\$3,329.44	\$1,670.56

Budget year ends May 31, 2005.
Report was accepted pending audit.

Minutes

The October minutes were accepted as corrected. The month was corrected from August to October. Cheryl Sebera should be on Fund Raising committee instead of George Graine. Spelling of Don Snipes name was corrected.

President's Report

President, Bill McCaleb is really pushing for units to attend board meetings and to get involved in VMGA. We have 51 units around the state and it would be great to see all represented every time we come together so everyone has a piece in the business of the VMGA. We have endorsed a grant to VNLA (Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association) to extend research work around the state. It will be expanded into Southside Virginia where agriculture/horticulture is changing. Southwest Virginia AREC will be included in this \$271,000 grant as will Reynolds Homestead AREC, Hort Greenhouse, Blue Ridge Development Center in Henry County, Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, Paul C. Edmunds Park Evaluation Center in Halifax County, and Clayton Nature Study Center in Bedford. Will be looking for MGs to volunteer with these programs. There are more than 4,000 MGs statewide. Will hear more at the February meeting. Have advertised nationwide for a coordinator.

Committee Reports

Education - Fran Shelton and Pinky Derieux, Co-Chairs

When Education Committee approached Ginter Botanical Garden about a MG program in the spring, they found out the Chesterfield MG unit had already made plans to have a spring program at Ginter, April 21. The Chesterfield unit is going to open up the program to all MGs throughout the state. Since everything is in place including speakers for this program, the Education Committee recommends we use this program as our spring VMGA Program for accreditation and hours. Another spring program would have been difficult because of local training classes and the VMGA supported Good Gardening Symposium, March 12, in Petersburg. The Education Committee will help with the publicity on the website. The Committee is there to facilitate anyone who needs help giving a program. If anyone would like to give a program open to all MGs, you would need to get approval from Dave Close and the Board and

the Committee would be glad to help any group. With fifty-one units, it is difficult to find dates not in conflict with other units. If you are planning a program open to all MGs, please notify Dave and a member of the education committee.

The committee recommends a cancellation policy for VMGA education programs. In the case of a national disaster or projection of a major storm, the committee will give 48 hours notice. This should be sufficient for those traveling to cancel lodging and committee to cancel food orders. Those with emails will be notified by email of cancellation and others will be notified by phone. Monies will be refunded after the day of the event. The committee also recommends we adopt a refund policy of five days. The next registration form will indicate you have five days prior to the event to cancel and receive a refund. The next newsletter will carry this information.

The fall VMGA educational program will be September 10th at the Hampton Roads AREC, hosted by the Virginia Beach MGs.

After the Education Committee report, a motion was made and accepted that we support the three recommendations.

Newsletter - Florace Arnold, Editor

Thanks to all the unit representatives for their news around the state. There were more reports this month than we have ever had and reports had to be cut and font size reduced to include everyone. It is requested you list the major activities going on right now, the things that are pertinent before the next newsletter comes out. Thanks for the articles and the timeliness in which they are submitted. The deadline for the next issue is January 1.

Electronic newsletter – Pat Reilly asked unit reps to remind people in their units VMGA is looking for a volunteer to do the electronic newsletter. Check the back of the last VMGA newsletter for details. The volunteer would receive the publisher file from Florace and make it into something that could be emailed to members who would choose to receive it electronically instead of receiving a paper copy. The membership roster spreadsheet will indicate if person wants a hard or electronic copy. Once the volunteer got the mailing list, it would be about an hours work to send the electronic copy to the membership. This would cut our overall expense to mail the newsletter. Question was asked about membership expiration date being on mailing label. Will make sure the expiration date is on the membership roster spreadsheet.

Membership - Pauline Price, Chair

Pauline was not present.

Communication/Unit Support - Frank Reilly, Chair Unit Support

Consists of Pat Reilly, Karen Sacasky, Pinky Derieux, Frank Reilly and whomever else we need.

Karen Sacasky visited a Master Gardener training class in Nelson County and gave a presentation covering the subjects of VMGA, VCE, history of Master Gardener program and history of the land grant university. Unit support does maintain articles for MG units about merits of becoming an association rather than incorporated, tax changes that effect our non-profit status, sales tax, and job descriptions.

Communication Committee

Members: Cheri Haggerty, Shelby Snyder, Kathryn Debnar, and Chair Frank Reilly and whomever else we need.

- ❖ We have about 15 percent bad email addresses down from 40 percent five years ago.
- ❖ Seven percent of people that got emails, their service provider indicated they didn't recognize our Webmaster. The provider asked us to fill in a form and they would ask if the receiver wanted to receive our emails.
- ❖ November 12th marked our sixth anniversary as VMGA.net and we have grown from a single web page to a website of more than 200 pages.
- ❖ Since the October meeting there have been more than 13,963 hits. Nearly all of our visitors come directly from VMGA.net. Since October the web page has been updated on 40 separate occasions. Most popular pages in the last two months have been the hort update and the minutes.
- ❖ Kathryn Debnar is currently accepting changes to the calendar. Directions to submit changes are right on the calendar page. Cheri Haggerty maintains the links page. She recently completed a major overhaul.
- ❖ Membership applications are available online. We continue to provide files that can be downloaded for a paper membership application.
- ❖ Currently working on the MG College recruiting CD. Still looking for photographs of activities.

Members were reminded they can use the electronic membership form to make email address changes.

State Fair - Christy Brennan, Chair

Christy was not present.

Finance Committee – Bill Scott, Chair

The committee brainstormed some cost-cutting ideas. Second, it was decided to assign Finance Committee members to serve on each of the standing committees. The purpose of this person is to get with the assigned committee to discuss what funds they will need to complete the committee's assigned tasks, and help prepare the budget for that committee. Deadline for a completed budget to the Executive Board is May 15th. Third, they will be reviewing quarterly the results of VMGA investments and will prepare a report for the Treasurer, Pat Reilly to present to the Board.

Fund Raising Committee – Cheri Haggerty, Chair

Not much to report now, they will be meeting during lunch. Have been talking by Internet and those that volunteered seemed very energetic in helping to get something together.

State Coordinator Endowment Committee – Pat Reilly

Committee members include Pat Reilly, Jim Scibek, Dave Close, Jane Pratt, Carol Dixon, Angela Cingale, Kathryn Debnar and Bill McCaleb as exoficio member. Max Bales (VaTech) has been working very closely with the committee. Pat passed out copies of the draft agreement and FAQs about the endowment including a summary of the agreement. A summarized version was in the Nov/Dec VMGA Report. Pat read through each section of The Virginia Master Gardener Association Endowed Fund Agreement draft, explaining each section while taking questions on information or clarification. (The draft of the Fund Agreement is included at the end of these minutes.)

Wording under Disposition of Annual Distributions section was corrected to read "VCE leadership will involve VMGA leadership on the interview panel" instead of "VCE leadership will be involved with VMGA leadership on the interview panel".

Pat has received very positive responses from the information that was posted on the website and in the newsletter. There was concern about where we're going to get the money. Information indicates when writing matching grants there are large sums of money available. We will be challenging each unit to give \$100.00 to show we are all in this together. Already have a \$50,000 matching grant. Will name the endowment after the first person who gives us a donation of six figures. Ohio is on their way to establishing an endowment and Georgia the same.

The committee and Max Bales' office are producing a power point presentation for committee members' use in making presentations to the local units. Checks should be made out to Virginia Tech Foundation.

Committee made a motion that VMGA enter into this agreement and the committee be tasked with executing the endowment. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Will plan for a big announcement in January.

Lifetime Membership Committee – Karen Sacasky

Committee members include Karen Sacasky, Caroline and Chuck Norrington, Barbara Geer and Paul Campbell. Karen presented the committee's Report and Recommendations to consider the Lifetime Membership Category of the VMGA Bylaws, Article III, Section 1, Paragraph (b). (Report and Recommendations including rationale are included at the end of these minutes.) Karen read each of the five recommendations, followed by discussion and vote.

1. The Lifetime Membership Category be retained as a part of the VMGA Bylaws.
VOTE: Passed
2. The fee for Lifetime Membership be set at ten times the amount of the annual dues (10 x \$annual dues). It is understood that no refunds will be made if the Lifetime Member does not meet the "Active" status.
VOTE: Motion made to accept recommendation #2 as part of the standing rules. Passed
3. Each Unit Coordinator be contacted by the VMGA Membership Chairman to determine if the VMGA Lifetime Members in their unit are qualified as "Active". This would be done on an annual basis. If it is determined that the Lifetime Member is no longer a qualified Virginia Master Gardener or Emeritus Master Gardener, the VMGA President write a letter advising the member of the conditions under which they may remain a Lifetime Member and that their membership is in jeopardy if hours are not brought up to date. If the current Lifetime Members are unable to qualify within 12 months of the notice, their names be dropped from the VMGA membership rolls. Any future Lifetime Member who does not meet the requirements will be given 6 months to meet the "Active" provision or be dropped from the rolls. When the unqualified Lifetime Member is dropped from the VMGA membership rolls, all benefits will cease.
DISCUSSION - There was concern that we have a group of people made up of those who can't physically volunteer the necessary hours to be active or are Lifetime Members who are costing the Association more

than nine dollars a year. Right now this is about a quarter of our membership which could become a big drain on our monies. Some of the Lifetime members may no longer be active. It is up to the units to keep their rolls current. Pat Reilly suggested we may want to consider a new category of membership called "Friend of Master Gardeners".

VOTE: Motion made to accept recommendation #3, as written, as part of the standing rules. Passed

4. The qualifications to become a Lifetime Member be increased. In addition to being an Active Master Gardener, the applicant for Lifetime Membership must have been an Active Master Gardener for a minimum of two consecutive years and/or completed 400 Master Gardener Career hours. The VMGA membership form include a provision for verification of the applicants qualifications by the Unit MG Coordinator. VOTE: Defeated
5. If the qualifications for Lifetime Membership are changed, then all current Lifetime Members be grandfathered in as long as they are "Active". Those that became Lifetime Members prior to "Active" being added to the bylaws or those that were/or are in the future awarded a Lifetime Membership by VMGA as an honor shall remain Lifetime Members without completing the required hours. Honorary Lifetime Members should be so noted in the Membership Database and Directory.
DISCUSSION - Wording was changed to read "All current Lifetime Members be grandfathered in as long as they are "Active". Those that became Lifetime Members prior to "Active" being added to the bylaws or those that were/or are in the future awarded a Lifetime Membership by VMGA as an honor shall remain Lifetime Members without completing the VCE required hours. Honorary Lifetime Members should be so noted in the Membership Database and Directory."
VOTE: Motion made to accept recommendation #5, as ammended, a part of the standing rules. Passed
6. The foregoing recommendations be accepted and included in VMGA By-Law changes to be presented for vote at the 2005 Annual Meeting and be effective upon acceptance.
DISCUSSION – Because everything was added to the standing rules this is not needed.

Unit Reports –

Motion made and carried we dispense with reading of unit reports. They will be posted at www.VMGA.net.

Extension Liaison - reported by Dave Close, MG Coordinator

Nametags – met with Charlie Stott (Director of Ag and Extension Communications) on November 29 to work on new system for ordering nametags; are working toward a monthly ordering process with order confirmations. Trying to work with printing company on orders smaller than fifty. Still working on a final policy of when nametags should be ordered.

State Record Keeping System – database and interface have been moved to a new server that will hopefully be more stable and a little faster. If you made any modifications on Tuesday, December 7th between 12:40 and 1:00, those changes were probably lost. URL is still the same: <http://dorian.ext.vt.edu/mg/>.

SOD Initiative – task force met at VDACS lab in Richmond on December 8, toured facility and were showed the entire process for detection. Virginia is one of only a few states that is actually taking a proactive stance on this directly involving MGs. Training manual will be complete by mid January; PowerPoint training complete by first of February; will be ready to roll out to Extension personnel by early spring.

MG College 2005 – June 21 -26; advisory Team meeting again in January in Charlottesville; Frank Reilly is working on modifying CD

Newsletter In Season – first edition out. Had hoped second edition would be out by now. Will check when he gets back in the office. Winter edition should be out by end of January.

New website - is up and running; web address is still the same:<http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener>. Has a new look and Dave welcomes any comments.

Miscellaneous information -

* **Master Naturalist program** - There is an effort to get the program here in VA. It would be a cooperative effort between the DEQ, DCR, DOF and Cooperative Extension. It's based on environmental stewardship similar to the MG program but a little more broad in its training topics. Meeting December 13 to discuss how the Department Heads of the DEQ, DCR and DOF are going to ask us to proceed.

* **Tree Stewards program** - Met with Rebecca Pokorny, Trees Virginia and Adam Downing, VCE Forester to discuss Tree Stewards program; had met with Paul Revell (Urban Forestry Coordinator for state) earlier in year to discuss similarities and differences in the two Tree Steward reigning programs in the state. One version is produced by Cooperative Extension and the other by Trees Virginia. Looking to develop a single training program that can be used by either group. If we go that route, there will be additional requirements for MGs to become Tree Stewards. Looking for feedback.

* **Water Stewards program** - Need to know who and how many are interested. Please contact Dave as soon as possible.

* **Water Quality** - Submitted an abstract to the Urban/Rural Interface Conference in March in Atlanta; abstract was accepted; will be discussing proactive approaches for dealing with pressures of urban sprawl on water quality.

* **Master Gardener count** - Have been trying to get a realistic count of MGs in the state. Six units have not responded but right from what he has been told there are 3500 truly active certified MG volunteers. If you add in those who have not responded that would be about 300 - 350 more, for a total of about 4000 active Master Gardeners statewide.

* **Emeritus status** - One of the policy issues that will be coming up for consideration is the Emeritus Status. If you have any thoughts or comments on that, Dave would like to hear them before he formulates a decision. Will also be looking at an Honorary Master Gardener Status, trying to develop a statewide minimum requirement for that.

* **Regional training classes** - At the local units, give some thought to having regional training for some of the units who have trouble getting enough people to do their training.

Questions: Nametag Confirmation - with the new system, you will receive immediate confirmation by email that your order was accepted, is being processed and will list the names submitted. They should not be ordered until you are guaranteed the individual will complete the required 50 volunteer hours. Nametags are \$5.10 a piece and are looking at 1000 nametags a year. If there is any way he can cut the waste on that he will.

Difference between **MG Tree Stewards and Trees VA Tree Stewards**. Trees VA Tree Stewards like to go out and prune trees and mulch. MG Tree Stewards are more than that. The basic training should be the same. There are fewer Trees VA Tree Stewards than MG Tree Stewards. Already there are three or four MG Tree Stewards groups.

Unfinished Business

Fund Raising Committee – decided there would be two separate committees, the Endowment Committee and the Fund Raising Committee. The Fund Raising Committee will come up with items of general interest that will generate funds and assist the Endowment Committee in any way they can. They will make available logo items for MGs and VMGA members. Will have more to report in February.

VMGA Meeting Schedule - President McCaleb passed around the VMGA meeting schedule for 2005 and 2006 for signups. Goochland/Powhatan agreed for December, 2005 and York County signed for December, 2006. February 2006 date is still available. There is a new Master Gardener unit in Appomattox.

New Business

EEF Scholarship Committee: President McCaleb appointed the following to serve on the committee: Paul Campbell, Al Thompson, Sybil Przypek, George Graine, and Susie McCrea. Last year a letter to a coordinator/Extension Agent was mailed with a promotional CD along with scholarship information. Guidelines that the original committee set up stated that the person must be going to MG College. Each year the selection committee can decide what criteria they want to emphasize in a particular year. The goal is to get more people to attend MG College but also to reward those that under take a leadership role. The nominations should come from a coordinator/Extension Agent. It's a once in a lifetime selection.

Frank Reilly made a motion that VMGA consider **additional classes of membership**. A lot of associations and clubs have normal membership plus others. Now that we are in the business of trying to fund several endowments we should consider some other types of memberships that others have such as sustaining member or supporting member. It would take a bylaws change if we added a new type of membership. After discussion Pat Reilly moved that we refer Frank's motion to a committee of three to five people to report back at the February meeting. Committee members include Frank Reilly, Kerry Goldmeyer, Pauline Price, Kathryn Debnar, and Ted Munns.

Announcements

Next meeting February 12, 2005 in Hanover.

Chuck Miller announced Goochland/Powhatan's 1st Spring Family Fling is April 30th.

Pat Reilly announced the Coordinator Endowment Fund has grown by \$415.00.

Don Snipes reported he has more than 250 signatures for the Virginia Master Gardener License Plates.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Villers
Secretary
VMGA



The Virginia Master Gardener Association Endowed Fund Agreement

INTRODUCTION AND SOURCE OF GIFT

In order to document the intentions and understanding of the parties, the **Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc.**, (the "Donor"), and the **Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc.** (the "Foundation"), in support of **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University** ("Virginia Tech"), for use of a gift intention of \$1,000,000 to be given by members and friends of the Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc. on or before December 31, 2007, and all other contributions directed to the Fund created herein, the Donor and the Foundation agree as follows:

BACKGROUND AND USE OF GIFT

Recognizing the continuing need for endowed funds to support the Virginia Cooperative Extension programs at Virginia Tech, the Donor directs that the above-referenced gift, along with all other contributions to this Fund, shall be held in an endowed fund, specifically the **Virginia Master Gardener Association Endowed Fund**, (the "Fund"), to provide program support for the Virginia Cooperative Extension-Master Gardener ("VCE-MG") program at Virginia Tech. The Donor has made this commitment to help ensure that the mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension ("VCE enables people to improve their lives through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs"), in relationship to the Master Gardeners, is carried on in perpetuity.

Since inception in the 1980's, the VCE Master Gardener program has disseminated the unbiased, research-based information of the land grant universities in Virginia toward the VCE mission. Requiring specialized training, Master Gardeners are dedicated to working with the community to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management educational programs. Community needs are assessed, programs developed and delivered. Impacts are reported and programs evaluated. Programs are delivered through lectures, consultations, field days, demonstration sites and publications, with Master Gardeners administering all aspects of the programs.

The position of State Coordinator is critical to focus local VCE-MG volunteer efforts on relevant issues. The State Coordinator must develop and disseminate educational materials that serve the changing needs of the units in response to horticultural and environmental issues and train VCE-MGs throughout the state so that they can better serve the mission. The State Coordinator is necessary to provide a unified voice and consistent directives from the state level to maintain the strength of the collective group. It is the vision of the Virginia Master Gardener Association Endowment to provide full-time leadership at the state level in perpetuity.

MATCHING FUNDS AND FUND MANAGEMENT

It is understood and agreed that this Fund's earnings shall qualify for such matching funds as may be provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia, or any other state, and under any applicable public or private program. This endowed Fund shall be maintained and managed by the Foundation in accordance with the Foundation's endowment management and accounting policies. The Donor and others may make additional contributions to the Fund over the years.

DISPOSITION OF ANNUAL DISTRIBUTIONS

Annual income distributions from the Fund, as determined by the Foundation's endowment policies, shall be used to provide funding support for the State Master Gardener Coordinator position in the Virginia Cooperative Extension program within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, using the following guidelines:

- 1) Funds will be used to provide program support for the position of a state coordinator for the Virginia Master Gardener program, an educational outreach program utilizing specially-trained

volunteers to extend university-based research to the citizens of the Commonwealth in horticultural and environmental stewardship. In particular, funds will be used to support salary, benefits, travel and program expenses associated with the position of State Coordinator of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteer program.

- 2) As has been the practice in the past, VCE leadership will be involved with VMGA leadership on the interview panel at such times when the state coordinator position is vacant and the hiring process has commenced.

In the event no funds are used in a given academic year or there are remaining unused funds, the Donor directs that the unused annual distributions be returned to the principal of the Fund in order to increase the corpus.

DISPOSITION OF FUNDS UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event the Fund created herein cannot be used for the purpose intended because the purpose is no longer appropriate, necessary, practical, or possible, or if for other substantial and lawful reasons the purpose cannot be accomplished, the Foundation may, in its discretion, and in consultation with the donor, use the distributions from the Fund for a substantially similar purpose, or for such other purpose as will foster and promote the growth, progress, and general welfare of Virginia Tech, as the Foundation may specify, keeping in mind the original intent of the Donor.

William McCaleb, President, VMGA
Donor Representative

Signature _____
Secretary/Treasurer

Date _____

VIRGINIA TECH FOUNDATION, INC.

By: Raymond D. Smoot, Jr.
Chief Operating Officer and

Signature _____

Report and Recommendations
from the Committee to consider the Lifetime Membership Category
of the VMGA Bylaws, Article III, Section 1, Paragraph (b)

1. The Lifetime Membership Category be retained as a part of the VMGA Bylaws.

Rationale: The Committee did not feel that removal of the category would affect our financial health. If the average life of a Virginia Master Gardener is 3-4 years, we are actually ahead with the one time dues; if they stay 10 years we have broken even. We did not find a valid reason to eliminate this membership category.

2. The fee for Lifetime Membership be set at ten times the amount of the annual dues (10 x \$annual dues). It is understood that no refunds will be made if the Lifetime Member does not meet the AActive@ status.

Rationale: The Committee felt the Lifetime Membership Dues should raise in relation to the annual dues. The Lifetime Membership Dues have been 10 X \$annual dues for a number of years until the latest increase in annual dues.

3. Each Unit Coordinator be contacted by the VMGA Membership Chairman to determine if the VMGA Lifetime Members in their unit are qualified as AActive@. This would be done on an annual basis. If it is determined that the Lifetime Member is no longer a qualified Virginia Master Gardener or Emeritus Master Gardener, the VMGA President write a letter advising the member of the conditions under which they may remain a Lifetime Member and that their membership is in jeopardy if hours are not brought up to date. If the current Lifetime Members are unable to qualify within 12 months of the notice, their names be dropped from the VMGA membership rolls. Any future Lifetime Member who does not meet the requirements will be given 6 months to meet the AActive@ provision or be dropped from the rolls. When the unqualified Lifetime Member is dropped from the VMGA membership rolls, all benefits will cease.

Rationale: The Committee feels the major problem with the Lifetime Membership Category is a number of members are no longer qualified for that category, but are still receiving all benefits. Initially, 12 months is given to come into compliance because VMGA has never contacted these members about their membership. After we start purging our membership on an annual basis, 6 months should be adequate to come into compliance.

4. The qualifications to become a Lifetime Member be increased. In addition to being an Active Master Gardener, the applicant for Lifetime Membership must have been an Active Master Gardener for a minimum of two consecutive years and/or completed 400 Master Gardener Career hours. The VMGA membership form include a provision for verification of the applicants qualifications by the Unit MG Coordinator.

Rationale: The Committee feels the Lifetime Membership category should not be open to anyone with a quick checkbook, but rather to those individuals who have demonstrated active and sustained participation in the organization. Unit verification at the time of application would eliminate the necessity of the Membership Chair contacting the unit regarding the new applicant.

5. If the qualifications for Lifetime Membership are changed, then all current Lifetime Members be grandfathered in as long as they are AActive@. Those that became Lifetime Members prior to AActive@ being added to the bylaws or those that were/or are in the future awarded a Lifetime Membership by VMGA as an honor shall remain Lifetime Members without completing the required hours. Honorary Lifetime Members should be so noted in the Membership Database and Directory.

Rationale: The Committee does not want to eliminate any of our Lifetime Members who were either awarded that membership as a honor or those who became members prior to the bylaw including AActive@ as a qualification.

6. The foregoing recommendations be accepted and included in VMGA By-Law changes to be presented for vote at the 2005 Annual Meeting and be effective upon acceptance.

Submitted by:

Paul Campbell

Barbara Geer

Chuck and Caroline Norrington

Karen Sacasky, Chair