



Minutes Board Meeting

*Tuesday, January 20, 2009:10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
State Fair office, Mechanicsville, VA*

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. with the following people present: Lin Diacont, Jeff Miller, Cary Gouldin, Sylvia Wright, Gwynn Hubbard, Mary Williams, Cheri Haggerty, Cary White, Duane Shumaker, Herman Ellison, Joyce Latimer, Joel Koci, Marlene Larios, Luis Coral and Rose Jowdy.

President's Comments - Lin Diacont

Lin Diacont welcomed members and incoming officers representing member industry groups. Current members were thanked for their continued support.

The VGIC will continue to reach out to industry groups trying to bring in more input from the industry as a whole. Lin will be trying to speak with industry groups not already members to encourage their support.

Continued use of websites is encouraged, www.VirginiaGreen.org more geared to industry and www.VirginiaGardening.com more toward the consumer.

Jay Lugar with The State Fair of VA gave a talk about developments at The Meadow Event Park, new home of the State Fair of VA. A walk through of the State Fair grounds was given using the current layout map. It is an \$81 million project on 360 acres with 112 acres on the north side of Route 30, where most of the facilities and activities will take place, with parking on the south side of Route 30. SFVA looks forward to continuing their relationship with the VGIC in the Garden/Crops area.

Herman Ellison, with the National Agricultural Statistical Service, gave a Green Industry Survey update. Due to budget cuts and employee shortages the survey results are on hold. When results will be available is unknown. Herman will keep Jeff informed with any information available.

Marlene Larios and Luis Coral, with Telamon Corp., spoke about worker protection safety standards. VDACS has renewed their funding to continue this program. They will provide a class on your site, to train your migrant/seasonal workers in pesticide safety and use. They will record who has participated and provide a certificate. This is an EPA requirement and is VDACS enforced.

Executive Director's Report – Jeff Miller

A letter has been sent out to industry groups soliciting funds to help with the cost of the economic impact analysis. Lin thanked the groups responding for their support. The groups responding so far are: VNLA, VSLD, VFGA, and MAC-ISA.

Jeff reports that both the consumer and commercial website hits are up this year.

News release article response is about the same as last year. Farm Bureau newsletter picked up the WaterWise article for one of their issues.

Treasurer's Report – Jeff Miller see attached

VGIC will be covering Lin's expenses for recruitment. Motion to approve Cary Gouldin, second was made by Cary White and carried.

Cary Gouldin suggests we encourage advertising on our websites for a fee as a source of funds.

Minutes for the last meeting were approved. Motion for approval was made by Joel Koci second by Cheri Haggerty and carried.

Communications Report – Sylvia Wright see attachments

Rose Jowdy, with Cox Radio, was present to express an interest in partnering with the VGIC on some of our green events.

Membership – Mary Williams

We had nine associations as members in 2008. The hope is to continue to expand membership both of individuals and associations.

The joint application with VNLA is working well. We hope to try to expand this cooperation with other organizations.

Program and Education – Rick Baker See attachment

The Virginia Garden Festival will be held on September 12, 2009, at the Science Museum of Virginia.

First Market Bank will be holding a “Get Your Green On!” program on April 18, 2009. Lin will follow up on involvement with this program.

Legislative

Mary has requested support for the Invasive Species Working Group she has been involved with. This group wishes to educate Legislators as well as the public on what invasive plants are and how to curb their spread in areas that they are a problem. The VGIC has agreed to lend their support per Mary’s direction.

Cary White reported on the fertilizer applicators legislation. Cary has been involved in two meetings discussing who will be licensed (individual or company) and who will provide testing and enforcement. VGIC supports having one person on a job site being certified.

Activities

Thank you letters for support of Agribusiness Banquet support have gone out. See the attached list for donors and labor support.

The VGIC was invited to support the State Fair Student garden project by supplying the funds for the premiums awarded to the winning schools. Gwynn will get those numbers to Jeff for consideration at a future meeting.

Please pass on to Gwynn any suggestions for a student garden theme for this year.

The Master Gardeners and CVNLA will hand out VGIC information at the Garden show on Feb. 19th-22nd.

Robert Wright Professorship – see attachment

Nominations

Cary White presented the following nominations for office for the VGIC for 2009:

- Lin Diacont – President
- Cary Gouldin – Vice President
- Gwynn Hubbard – Secretary
- Jeff Miller – Treasurer

The motion to accept these officers was made by Cary White and a second was made by Joel Koci. The motion to accept these officers was carried.

The next meeting date will be March 17, 2009 from 10:00 – 3:00.

Adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectively submitted, Gwynn Hubbard, Secretary

Reports

VGIC Accomplishments in 2008

Virginia Agribusiness Council Appreciation Banquet: Provided centerpieces for the tables at the banquet and other decorations and each piece had signage with the VGIC logo along with information about the Green Industry, which helps make our industry more visible to our legislators and their aides.

Arbor Day – Co-sponsored the Virginia Arbor Day Ceremony on the Capitol grounds. With representatives from the VGIC, VNLA and VDACS, Tony Griffin (Capitol Building & Grounds) and Todd Haymore, Commissioner of Agriculture, who accepted the tree for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The 3rd Virginia Garden Festivalsm was successfully completed on Saturday, September 20 at the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond with many exhibitors and educational programs in the stand-alone event. The program featured Andre Viette's live radio show "IN THE GARDEN". There were keynote presentations by Richard Nunnally, Tim Gwaltney (Encore Azaleas), Mike Lockett (Iris) and others. The VGIC had sales of \$927 from donated plant material from Virginia growers.

State Fair Horticulture Gardens: The VGIC members provided a bountiful supply of plant material to provide and enhanced color landscape for these gardens during the State Fair, which were then sold at the end of the Fair, generating additional revenues (\$3,515) for the Council.

Monthly Bulletins on current events and updates were continued this year by Sylvia Wright.

Gardening News Releases: The VGIC released seasonal news releases that were used, reaching over 2,175,470 contacts in daily and non-daily newspapers, websites and magazines.

Monthly GoGreen gardening articles were written by Jeff Miller, Virginia Certified Horticulturist, and submitted to newspapers statewide by VDACS and by the VGIC office. The WaterWise article was picked up by the August Farm Bureau News magazine.

www.VirginiaGreen.org (the trade website) continues to be the "go to" website for the most extensive green industry calendar of events, as well as industry information and resources.

www.VirginiaGardening.com (the consumer website) continues to grow with resources and information for Virginia Gardening information from all segments of the green industry.

Publicity – Sylvia Wright continued to provide an extensive array of news releases and articles promoting the VGIC, resulting in coverage of the VGIC and events in numerous state, regional and national publications.

Public Relations Report as of January 2009

VGIC publications -

Nov, Dec and Jan **Bulletins** created and distributed via email.

GoGreen column – work with Jeff to write columns, distributed by VDACS for publication (syndicated – need to develop a series before we try to syndicate)

Prior columns by Jim May available at

<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/marketing/gogreen.shtml>

Press release – announced 2008 officers and published by Mid-Atlantic Grower

announced notice of March meeting and topic to business editors

announced notice of June meeting and topic to business editors

announced first release of 2008 VA Garden Festival at national level

announced notice of Jan 2009 meeting and topic to business editors

One Visible Face/Spokesperson – Jeff is the visible VGIC face/spokesperson.

Media Relationships – VA Gardener, DC Gardener, NC Gardener, also VA Home

Grown, Viette, McGrath, etc. (removed VA Gardener from www.viriniagardener.com because magazine failed to provide reciprocal advertisement)

VA Extension Agents –

Notify agents of quarterly meeting through use of 'press release' and/or member notice; and, receiving requests from State groups to include their events in the VGIC newsletter.

Other –

Host a booth at the Innsbrook Earth Day Event.

Awards –

Continue to investigate and nominate VGIC for awards

Nominated for Leadership Award sponsored by Richmond Technology Council and was requested to participate in award luncheon.

VGIC marketing plan – continue to update with membership suggestions and opinions solicited outside of the Industry.

Pending projects –

Membership card "GO GREEN" that lists membership benefits.

Community project **to create PR** visibility – 'shoes for a walk in the woods' – James River Park – sponsor Dicks? Approve? - pending

Publication -

Va Business – continue to notify of activities.

VNLA continues to reprint VGIC notices and articles.

Providing (as Industry professional) a monthly column for the **Mid-Atlantic Grower** on the topic of Green Industry communications and whenever possible include VGIC symbols, etc.

Agreed to 'blog' for TD's **inrich.com** – provides ability to tie to other web sites – never implemented by TD; so, I'm blogging ofn HGTV - green.

Published a back-page opinion column with Garden Center Today that reference VGIC in bio.

Continue to use writers' market to investigate additional publications, make initial contact and solicit publication/advertisement opportunities.

Solicited topic suggestions for 2009 from Green Industry – potential topics:

VA Natural Resource Leadership Institute – environmental and leadership training

VA Master Naturalist – similar to master gardener but habitat and wildlife management

VA Open Space Easements – enable open space and provides reduced property tax

Environmental Compliance - buying carbon offsets – allows compliance avoidance

Picture collection – Continue to collect – presently soliciting more red, white & blue. Celebration has issued a 'garden contest'.

2008 VA Garden Festival –

Date selected Sept 20 and site Science Museum (same weekend as heritage festivals, days of the past, VA Valley fruit festival, LGBG plant sale)

Celebrity spokesperson – Richard Nunnally accepted

Featured **Speakers** – Mike Lockatell (encore iris), Tim Gwaltney: Encore Azaleas, Andre Viette;

Exhibitor '**special events**' – Richmond Indigenous Gourd Orchestra – confirmed and Captain John Smith – confirmed.

Festival **Media/Web** – more than 3500 web link references to Festival - listed by VA Tourism, Industry participant/assoc web sites plus media.

Festival **poster** – distributed to Industry and community sites

Festival **bookmarks** – distributed during community events

Festival **press release** – distributed at national level June 1st. And then, each following month as details were confirmed. Final product was a one-page notice with a referral to web site details.

Festival **sponsors** – worked with Rick to obtain sponsors.

Festival **Media/Web** –

Article - **Turf Matters** - <http://www.landscapeonline.com/research/article/11022>

State-wide community newspapers – most unknown but are aware of

Rappahannock Times, Petersburg Progress-Index, Star-Exponent Sunday & Culpepper News, Rappahannock Record,

CVNLA May newsletter and follow up Oct newsletter

Yorktown Advisor newsletter

VSLD newsletter

Garden Writers Assoc. newsletter June issue and Aug/Sept

HouseTrends – Sept issue advertisement

Sept. Washington Gardner magazine – advertisement

Sept NC Gardner magazine

Most local community newspapers carried event in their calendar plus

Fifty Plus spotlight calendar

Sept. 15 TD Home & Garden Bulletin ** limited TD coverage because do not promote activities in which one of their own – Richard Nunnally – participates.

Sept. Mid-Atlantic Grower newspaper – VA Garden Festival - article

TV - spotlighted by channel 12 on Wed p.m. news, by channel 8 on Wed at noon and 6 had a newsperson walking the Festival to cover for their blog.

VA Home Grown advertised during their August 2008 show

Radio - Viette, McGrath (NA), Merrifield Garden Center, and James

Orband to promote via radio, aware of Viette on WRVA and Merrifield

Garden Center

2008 **Festival Media Analysis** – (tallied through encore plant give-a-way) be aware most consumers see/hear an advertisement up to 8 times before they pay attention.

Related to the **2008 Festival media** influence – radio coverage increased, 'word of mouth' almost doubled, Richmond's inner city Style newspaper became the newspaper although they only carried a calendar listing, Internet doubled; when you add local TV to VA Home Grown, the influence is still lower than 2007 even through we had more stations cover the event; influence of on site signage almost doubled, and of interest - same as 2007, little or no one mentions the glossy gardening magazines.

Details:

Attendee **2007** population - 66% local Richmond, 33% VA outside of Richmond, 3% out of State. (not provided for 2008)

Related to forms of 2007 **advertisement/media** -

- 31% newspaper advertisement/article
- 20% word of mouth referral (question is how first identified)
- 18% TV coverage
- 13% radio coverage
- 4% internet (would expect to be higher)
- 4% Industry organization (Master Gardeners)
- 3% signage at entrance gate
- 3% magazine (mainly VA Gardener)
- 3% host site web site (LGBG members)

Attendee **2008** population - (not provided for 2008)

Related to forms of 2008 **advertisement/media** –

- 17% radio coverage
- 17% word of mouth referral by friend/family (question is how first identified)
- 16% word of mouth referral by Industry (question is how first identified)
- 11% unknown
- 10% newspaper – primarily Style Weekly
- 8% internet
- 6% TV coverage by local stations
- 5% TV PBS TV VA Home Grown
- 5% drive-by signage
- 3% hard copy glossy magazines (mostly HouseTrends)
- 1% Industry business on site signage
- 1% ‘save the date’ bookmarks
- 0% host site web site (SMV members – failed to advertise)

Result of **Featured Speaker** session –

Overall, participants enjoyed this aspect of the Festival. In fact, there were a few who opt to stay in the area the entire morning and listened to these speakers and even returned at 2 p.m. to hear Viette. The room held approx 100. For Richard and Tim, the room was 1/4 full, for Viette - more than 1/2 full and Mike Lockatell attract 5 people, the same 5 that stayed for all speakers.

Suggest for 2009 (and future Festivals) –

Alter format to **two-day event** to accommodate expectation of participating vendors.

Negotiate a '**rent free**' site at the new Fair Grounds.

Because 8 of 10 people want to acquire 'green products/services' and very few people presently regard their self as gardeners, **change name of event** from VA Garden Festival to VA GoGreen Expo, garden and more!

Require host site as a condition of SMV's contract to post the event and 'any special offers' on their web site as well as forward in newsletter format to their membership; also, include a clause that allows for cancellation of event.

PR Report submitted by: Sylvia Wright, January 2009

Virginia Garden Festival 2009 Report

Date: September 12, 2009

Place: Science Museum of Virginia

Purpose: Showcase Virginia green organizations, products, activities and individuals to the general public so that they can be encouraged to buy green and live green.

Sponsor: Virginia Green Industry Council and its' affiliated members.

History: Three years of increasing exhibitor participation with reduced attendance and diminishing receipts. We have offered a good mix of exhibits, speakers and organizations.

With the assistance, guidance and participation of each one of you on the VGIC board and the groups you represent we are going to produce the 4th Annual Virginia Garden Festival.

I know that Sylvia would like this activity to be even greener than it is already. We will discuss a name change that better reflects our intentions and will hopefully attract a larger audience.

Key features like the Andre Viette radio show, the plant sale and speakers will return.

The Gourd Band will not be asked back this year. We ask each of you to give the Garden Festival committee suggestions for activities and exhibitors. We will follow up with contacts and consider how they match up with our overall program.

The Science Museum of Virginia has a great outside venue. We got very positive comments from exhibitors and the public. We also had great support from then Director of Museum Operations – Barry Hayes. Barry has since retired. We will be working with Karen McKenzie this year. I will be meeting with her on January 21 to go over the details of the Garden Festival.

I will start to contact past and potential exhibitors in the next several weeks. Three exhibitors from last year have already contacted me for this year – 2009 – I hope this is a good sign.

- Rick Baker

Honoring a Leader and a Friend

The Robert Wright Professorship in Applied Nursery and Landscape Research

Dr. Robert Wright, highly respected academic nursery researcher and tireless champion of the nursery industry, is retiring. His impact on the industry cannot be overstated – without him it would not be what it is today. To honor his outstanding career and his landmark contributions to urban horticulture and the nursery industry, we invite you to join with others in the field to create the Robert Wright Professorship in Applied Nursery and Landscape Research at Virginia Tech.

Dr. Wright's career at Virginia Tech began in the 1970's. He was instrumental in developing practices that are taken for granted today, but were unknown at the time — how to overwinter, what kind of media to use, how to manage nutrition, and more. The "VT Pour-Through Method" for monitoring the nutritional status of growing media is famous all over the world. Fertigation regimes he developed early in his career are still used by progressive growers. Most

recently, he has developed a novel container media made from ground pine logs, which is much less expensive than current alternatives, and creates a sustainable opportunity for private wood lot owners.

Robert Wright brought the container nursery industry through uncertain times and his influence continues through his many Ph.D. students, who are also now leaders in academic research and teaching. The Robert Wright Professorship in Applied Nursery and Landscape Research will create a prominent and permanent faculty position at Virginia Tech to continue the type of practical, industry-centered research pursued by Dr. Wright during his career. The duties of the Robert Wright Professor will be allocated 75% to research and 25% to teaching future generations of industry professionals and researchers.

A named professorship is a prestigious position that honors the career contributions of a faculty member to an academic discipline, to the university, and to the greater society. Professorships are often funded through endowment gifts from many individuals who wish to honor a former faculty member. The Robert Wright professorship will be awarded to a career researcher and teacher whose work in applied nursery research shows outstanding promise, or to attract new faculty of the highest caliber.

The Robert Wright Professor will be advised by a committee made up of industry professionals, appointed by the head of the Virginia Tech Horticulture Department. The holder of the professorship will submit an annual report of activities to the advisory committee, and meet with the committee once each year. The annual report, with the advisory committee's input, will also be submitted to the Horticulture department head and the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Your contribution to help establish the Robert Wright Professorship in Applied Nursery and Wright at work Landscape Research will honor one of the truly great contributors to the field while assuring a long and productive relationship between university research and industry needs. Future generations of industry professionals, researchers, and scholars will begin their careers with solid, practical training and experience and a deep appreciation for their role in supporting a thriving industry.

We deeply appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this proposal, and we look forward to a bright and productive future.

*Contact Dawn Lerch, Virginia Tech College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Development Office
at dhlerch@vt.edu (540) 231-9086*
