



GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

HIGHLIGHTS

103rd GCV ANNUAL MEETING

May 17-18, 2023

“Cultivation - Restoration”

Hosted by Winchester-Clarke Garden Club
Winchester

The Winchester-Clarke Garden Club hosted the 103rd GCV Annual Meeting in Winchester. President, Mary Serock, Annual Meeting Chairman – Patsy Smith, Incoming President – Pam DeBergh

Total attendance for the 103rd Annual Meeting was 119, including 7 Former GCV Presidents, 21 members of the Board of Directors, 7 Standing Committee Chairmen, 3 Special Committee Chairman, 45 Club Presidents and 42 Delegates, 1 BOG 2022 Co-Chairmen, and 3 GCV Staff.

AWARDS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

2023 Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement was awarded to **Ann Gordon Evans**, The Huntington Garden Club, GCV President 2012-2014. Taken completely by surprise, Ann Gordon was gracious and heartfelt in expressing her appreciation for this recognition.

Conservation Awards Chairman Marie Thomas announced the following awards:

The recipient of the **2023 de Lacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation** is:
Mary Louisa Pollard, The Garden Club of the Northern Neck.

The **Bessie Boccock Carter Conservation Award** recipient is **Albemarle Garden Club** for their project “*Cultivating Conservationists: Promoting Native Species, Pollinators and Nature Literacy at the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont*”. President Catherine Bolton accepted the award on behalf of the Albemarle Garden Club.

Future Nominations Deadlines for Conservation awards are:

Conservation Educator Award: June 1, 2023

Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Conservation: June 1, 2023

Lisa Richards, President of The Lynchburg Garden Club presented the final report of the 2021 Bessie Boccock Carter Award who along with the **Hillside Garden Club**, advanced the **Roadside Biodiversity Native Perennial Beds** project.

Special guest speaker, **Liam O'Connor**, London architect, presented an in-depth account of the design and completion of the World War II Memorial at Ver-sur-Mer, France, a partnership of Great Britain and France to honor those soldiers and civilians lost in the June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion of Normandy on Gold Beach. The memorial was supported with a gift from GCV to continue the legacy of giving made by the GCV during and just after WWII to the people of Ver-sur-Mer in reciprocation for the rescue of Richard E. Byrd on their shores earlier during a transatlantic flight.

Special guest speaker, **Dr. Laurie Fox, Horticulture Associate, Virginia Tech, Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center**, educated the attendees about the critical nature of **Horticulture-phytoremediation**, the use of plants to clean up, immobilize or break down pollutants and contaminants before they are widely dispersed into the environment. Dr. Fox was highly complementary about the member club horticulture exhibits comprised of plants that contribute to phytoremediation.

Olivia Smith, 2022 recipient of the GCV Conservation and Environmental Studies Fellowship, delivered her report, **Restoration of Eastern Coastal Forests**, via video as her graduate work has secured her a position at Acadia National Park beginning May 15. Ms. Smith assured all of us that ‘deer browsing’ and overpopulation of deer has significant impact on forest health.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer Tricia McDaniel reported that the Garden Club of Virginia is in a healthy financial standing nearing the end of FY23. Tricia reported on behalf of Mary Bacon, Chairman of the Finance Committee that despite general market volatility, GCV investments have performed very well over the past year, with advisors positioning investments for long-term gains.

First Vice President and Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee Kris Carbone stated the Committee is actively addressing objectives in *The Path Forward*, the GCV 2022 Strategic Plan. Priorities to improve communications, connections and education include: redesign of website in process, development of a guide to clarify GCV committee roles and responsibilities, and, a task force investigating the best alternatives to transition GCV to a technology based organization.

Artistic Design Committee Chairman Cathy Lee congratulated all involved on the success of Daffodil Day and reminded there are still openings in all categories for the June 21 Lily Show hosted by the Dolley Madison Garden Club. Breaking news was the exciting **“History Blooms”** two-day event of flower arrangements, guest speakers and workshops to be held in partnership with the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond, October 6-7, 2023.

Restoration Committee Chairman Jean Gilpin expressed her appreciation for three member clubs who reached out to the Restoration Committee for support in their local restoration sites:

Petersburg Garden Club, Center Hill boxwood, Harborfront Garden Club for the Moses Myer House, and The Elizabeth River Garden Club for the Courthouse spruce up.

Executive Director Andrea Butler added information to her report with the news that GCV now has a Presidents' Group Facebook page! This comes at the request of presidents gathered at Presidents' Day in 2022 who wanted a means of communication that enabled presidents to share information directly. Andrea also shared a video of a charming guest, Zari St. Jean, at the April 21 KVH Open House. Ms. St. Jean expressed her thanks to GCV for confirming her career choice in horticulture. Sarah Blackburn, GCV's new Communications Director was handed the podium to share her vision of how she plans to enrich GCV communications.

Madeline Mayhood, Editor *GCV Journal*, emphasized, "*The Journal is your magazine!*". With 10 issues in print with the new format the articles focus on GCV club news, while feature articles are geared to topics of interest to all GCV members. Madeline encouraged each club to submit articles for any category as you are her source. The Journal committee would welcome new members if you are interested.

Becky Farrar Common Wealth Award Committee Chairman listed the 2023 Common Wealth Award candidates. Member club voting on this award is due by September 30, 2023. Details are available on the website.

- **The Boxwood GC, The James River GC, Three Chopt GC, and The Tuckahoe GC of Westhampton:** The Virginia War Memorial Public Green Space
- **Gabriella GC:** HOME Pocket Park A Perennial Garden Oasis Within Its Urban Setting in Downtown Danville, Virginia
- **The Garden Study Club and The Martinsville GC:** The Nature Garden Along the Smith River Paw Path at the Smith River Sports Complex

Allison Clock Horticulture Committee Chairman's report is chock full of information. Allison was pleased to focus attention on the recipients of the 2023 GCV Horticulture Award of Merit:

- Jane McClure Booth, The Virginia Beach Garden Club
- Amy Walker, Chatham Garden Club
- Kathy Watson, The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton
- Sonya Wodicka, Hillside Garden Club

Fran Carden Historic Garden Week Committee Chairman announced the 90th Anniversary GCV Historic Garden Week Tour was a "glorious success". The tour set both an attendance record with over 22,000 visitors and a revenue record that exceeds \$800,000 in proceeds! Fran thanked each club and each president and tour chair for making this a record setting year due to their sustained hard work. Karen Ellsworth, Director of Historic Garden Week added her thanks to all GCV members. Tour visitors hailed from 42 states and 12 countries. Survey results from tour visitors will be used to further hone the HGW tour experience. Karen encouraged all presidents to attend the HGW Boot Camp on June 14 with their tour chairs.

Sarah Hellewell Conservation & Beautification Committee Chairman announced the 2023 65th Conservation Forum will be held in Charlottesville at the CODE Building and will address the

uplifting subject of “Ecolandscaping”. It will be a hybrid (virtual/in-person) event. Sarah introduced the video presentation by the Environmental Studies Fellowship recipient Olivia Smith. (See above.) The 2023 Fellowship recipient is Marlena Hamilton a graduate student in biology at Christopher Newport University who will explore – Understanding the Red Salamander.

Nina Mustard wore two hats as chair of *Follow the Green Arrow III* and Historian. She reminded all club presidents to submit their club histories to Kent-Valentine House archives with the hopes those histories will include a small notebook of club meeting minutes. *Follow the Green Arrow III* work continues to build the digital GCV history from 1996-present. Club presidents can go to the website to reference examples of the club history information she is seeking for this historical record. Please go to: history@gcvirginia.org. to see examples and inspiration.

Kelly Johnson Development Committee Chairman explained the GCV funds and how those donations are restricted except for the Annual Fund that keeps GCV operating. Kelly’s special challenge to The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club to donate to the GCV Annual Fund brought life and laughter to the task of development and the goal to have all GCV members contribute to the fund. Her philosophy to keep the message of need and opportunity in front of members on a continuous basis is a critical component to success.

Janet Rosser Membership Committee Chairman has steered her committee through expanded responsibilities. Janet highlighted the all member GCV orientation “Dig In” that the Membership Committee produced at the Daffodil Day Flower Show. The GCV committees represented at the orientation described the work of their committee and ways members could become involved. The second initiative, “Cultivating Conversations” is planned as an online monthly “conversation” among interested GCV members on a wide variety of topics ranging from flower arranging to beekeeping to virtual garden tours. Look for conversations to launch this fall.

The DAL’s nearly brought the house down as their report contents were highlighted by the full cast of the Lucille Ball Show! Kathryn Angus, Virginia Gillock, Katie Spencer, Paula Irons, Jennifer Kelley and Carrie Goodman in the guise of Lucy, Ethel, Ricky, Fred and friends shared the results of the questions posed to the member club presidents to answer:

- What information do presidents want to take away from Presidents’ Day?
- What are each club’s unique projects, traditions, programs, or fundraisers they wanted to share?
- What are the strategies used to identify and retain new members?
- What topics of interest do you want to see included in “Cultivating Conversations”?

Stay tuned!

Kris Carbone, on behalf of Catherine Madden, Nominations Committee Chairman, along with Debbie Lewis conducted the election of three new District at Large representatives. Elected to DAL positions are:

District 2
District 5

Michelle Jennings
Suzi Worsham

Rivanna Garden Club
Leesburg Garden Club

District 6

Stephie Broadwater

The Nansemond River Garden Club

Clarkie Eppes, Chairman of the Annual Meeting and Board of Governors Committee introduced ML Coolidge, Chairman of the **2024 Annual Meeting to be hosted by the Rivanna Garden Club in Charlottesville May 21-23, 2024**. Clarkie reminded presidents the **2023 Board of Governors Meeting will be hosted by The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore, October 17-19, 2023**.