

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

December, 2013

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **December**, no meeting
- **January 19, 2:00 pm Fort Valley Nursery in Woodstock**, Terry Fogle will be our guest speaker.
Directions: From I-81, take exit #283 Woodstock. Go west on Rt. 42 and take left on Hisey Ave. (just past Tractor Supply Company). Fort Valley Nursery will be located on your left 1/4 mile.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Master Naturalist Training Course March 15 to May 21** on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 PM and on Saturdays from 9 AM to 2 PM. APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 8th. The evening classes will be held at Blandy Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia located on Route 50 just east of Route 340. Saturday field work classes will be held at Blandy and other locations. The Virginia Master Naturalists are a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Cost of the program is \$150. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are available. Classes include nature interpretation, research skills, wildflowers, trees, insects, fish, mammals, birds, geology, soil science, weather and climate, general ecology, land use, aquatic habitats, reptiles, and amphibians. The training is for adults or high school students accompanied by a parent or adult who also participates. For more information about the course contact: Alex Newhart at vmnshenandoah@gmail.com or call 540-837-1626.

MEMBERS OF THE MSVMGA BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES by Cy Haley

Bob Carlton – President

Cy Haley – Past President

Ginny Smith – Vice President

Sandra (Lee) Demko – Treasurer

Suzanne Boag – Secretary

Volunteer Coordinator – Susan Garrett

Clarke County Coordinator – Mary Craig

Frederick County Coordinator – Angie Hutchinson

Page County Co-Coordinators – Elka Thomas, Leslie Mack, Tom Mack

Shenandoah County Coordinator – Carolyn Wilson

Warren County Coordinator – Katherine Rindt

Newsletter/Editor Chair – Richard Stromberg

Education Chair – Helen Lake

Jr. MG Chairs – Helen Lake & Lynn Hutchinson

Communications & Publicity – Teri Merrill

Membership – Sarah Kohrs

Scholarship Committee Chair – Lynn Hoffmann

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Susan Garrett

I thought we had a really fun meeting in November, and I loved honoring those who had made special contributions to our work over this past year:

- Our beloved outgoing president, Cy
- Our brave incoming president, Bob
- Their fellow board members, Helen, Suzanne and David
- Our County Coordinators Mary (Clarke), Angie (Frederick), Tom and Lesley and Elke (Page), Carolyn (Shenandoah) and our outgoing Warren County Coordinator, Marsha Burd
- Our outgoing Education Chair, Symposium Chair, Home-Schooled Jr. MG Coordinator (all of these in one person!) Lynn Hoffmann, and
- Our (very special, in fact outstanding) VCE Agent, Mark Sutphin.

Cy received a shadow box with appropriate mementos of her three years as president, and Bob received a bulldog planter for his tenacity and loyalty to Master Gardeners and his willingness to take on the Presidency again. Board members received gardening gloves to remember that in the midst of administration they need to “keep on gardening” and County Coordinators received small aluminum trays with embossed Virginia Dogwood flowers (in addition, Marsha received a gift certificate in thanks for her many years of service). Lynn received a picnic backpack embossed with the Hoffmann name in thanks to both Lynn and her husband, who also volunteers his services to MG’s. Mark received a plaque of appreciation (check his office wall) and a gift certificate.

But I have to say a lot of fun for me came when we recognized those who had more esoteric claims to fame

- The person present who had been in the earliest NSVMGA Class (Frank Baxter—he was in the **first** class and has been an MG for 20 years)
- The MG who had attended every single meeting in 2013 (Belinda Palmer)
- The youngest MG present (Sally Hale)
- The person who had come the longest distance to the meeting (Mary Stickley-Godinez, in a surprise appearance)
- The person wearing the most green (Elke Thomas)

They received pottery planters from the 1950’s, with an added new green plant to bring them up to date.

We also presented three more new Master Gardeners from the Class of 2013 with their certificates: Sally Hale, Kathy Clevenger, and Tricia Boyd, bringing to 13 the number of new MG’s we have already received from this class. Five more members are very close to earning their 50 hours.

At this meeting we also learned what happens when we invite the County Coordinators to “brag”, including hearing Carolyn Wilson sing a rap song (about vegetables). And we learned that Shenandoah County school children’s favorite vegetable is corn, although this vegetable might have had a little advantage since it was presented in the form of popcorn.

I guess what I want to say is it’s fun being an MG! And it’s great to know that we like to be together. Our 2013 meetings have been very well attended. We can look back on a very good year. As we begin the holidays and the gardens (but not gardeners!) go to sleep for the winter, I give thanks for all the members of the NSVMGA and the wonderful work they have done over the past year.

VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT by Ginny Smith

Thank you for all the responses I received from the email I sent: lots of good ideas and two of our own Master Gardeners will be hosting a meeting and presenting a program. Our meeting in January will be at Fort Valley Nursery with owner Terry Fogle presenting a program. This is my first meeting at the nursery. I understand it has been held here for quite a few years. I am looking forward to it. Please email or call me if you would like to present a program or have any ideas about topics or places to meet. See you in January.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

We have a new asset in our area, Shenandoah University's Shenandoah River Campus at Cool Spring Battlefield. The 195 acres of the former Virginia National Golf Course was acquired by the Civil War Trust in 2012 and turned over to Shenandoah University in April 2013. The University, as stewards of the land, will transform it into an outdoor classroom. Future stewardship projects will involve planting native warm-season grasses, conducting biological inventories, and managing invasive exotic plant species.

The Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society sponsored a walk around the property in November led by Shenandoah University Environmental Sciences Professor Woodrow Bousquet. Serendipitously veterinarian Belinda Burwell of the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center released a male Bald Eagle on the Shenandoah River at the start of the walk. The Center had rehabilitated the eagle after it had sustained significant wounds during a fight with another bald eagle on the Potomac.

The walk followed the paved paths of the former golf course. A highlight along the river was several rare Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) trees. They are notable for the corky ridged bark of the twigs and, especially, the huge acorns, about the size of golf balls. We did not see whole acorns, only the shaggy-fringed caps that give the species its common name. We also saw some very large specimens of American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) along river and, at one spot, the multiple nests of a great blue heron rookery in a tree across the river. We followed the path up a hill and enjoyed a panoramic view to the northwest of the valley and eastern mountains of West Virginia.