

**Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners Association
Board of Directors Meeting
December 9, 2010
Warren County Government Center**

Attendees: John Dickhute, President; Cy Haley, Vice President; Scott Hinkle, Treasurer; Randy Langford, Volunteer Coordinator; Bob Carlton, Immediate Past President; Paula Brownlee, Frederick Co. Coordinator; Marsha Burd, Warren Co. Coordinator, Carolyn Wilson, Shen. Co. Co-Coordinator and Mary Craig, Membership Chair.

President John Dickhute called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

GardenFest: The first order of business was a discussion about GardenFest. We need to find a chair and co-chair for the committee as soon as possible. John has the GardenFest book that was passed to him by Martha M., last year's chair. One of the first things that need to be done involves putting up the signage in Middletown. This requires the city and VDOT and paperwork needs to be sent in soon to get approval.

John said we also need to get in touch with Belle Grove to find out what they would like to see done this year. He wondered if there was an alternative to the Second Hand Rose booth. He also wanted to know if and what the vendors were charged and if we can get more vendors and charge them more this year. Mary explained that this was only the second year we had invited vendors to the event. Carolyn pointed out that it's not necessarily about making more money. She said we have money in a CD now that should be spent on programs to educate the public.

We also need someone to head up the GardenFest youth program this year. The Girl Scout involvement was tremendous last year, thanks to Marianne P. and John would like to see us involve the Boy Scouts, the Brownies, Daisies or other youth groups. He would like to see the Jr. Master Gardeners participate in other ways throughout the year. Paula pointed out that this is the first year that the Jr. MG program has been resurrected and it was coordinated by Lynn H for Tammy Epperson, the Frederick Co. Extension agent. They took care of a community garden this year with all the produce going to the food bank. John would like to see them advance to the next level and also see them get involved with GardenFest and the county fairs. Cy suggested we see how much interest there is by the children in advancing.

Mary said the Jr. MG program ran for several years at Blandy in the past, but the interest level did not support continuation of the program at the time. Marsha was involved with the program. She said it was for home schooled children and there was another group of older children.

Bob pointed out that we are connected to the 4-H program by the Extension and there are 4-H programs in each county, though we are not involved with them in each county.. The group had suggestions for involving youth including a group in Strasburg, Sherando, Triplett Tech, Roots and Shoots. John would like to see FFA involved and Bob suggested getting teachers involved.

John would like to see us move GardenFest to another location for 2012, perhaps the Shenandoah Nat'l Park. Mary stated that we had worked hard on getting the public to recognize this as an annual event by making it consistent in date and place. She felt it might be harder for people to make the connection that this is our annual MG event if it is moved each year.

Randy will send out an e-mail about the first GardenFest meeting, which should be in early January. Elizabeth McClung is the director at Belle Grove. Bob will get her e-mail address for Randy.

County Coordinators: The next topic on the agenda was the fact that we need to find people to fill the vacant County Coordinator positions. John suggested that we should think about having at least 2 coordinators per county. He would like to see the Page Co. MGs be more involved. There are only 9 members in Page. Carolyn said that she and Johan are taking turns being the lead coordinator in Shenandoah Co. Perhaps that's a possibility for other counties. Randy said the LuAnn L. is interested in possibly be Co- coordinator in Shenandoah. Mary said she is in discussion with Marilyn about taking over as Clarke Coordinator. Suzanne had suggested Susan Garrett Co-coordinate, but Susan felt in a county as small as Clarke, with only 14 members, it would be harder for two people to coordinate things.

Paula is stepping down as Frederick Co. coordinator. She has a County Coordinator book put together now, which will make the next person's job much easier. She said there are now good, strong project leaders for the active projects in Frederick Co. She would like to see two Coordinators in Frederick Co.; one in Winchester and perhaps one in Stephens City.

Communications/Publicity: John wants to see us get the word out about the MG program and the upcoming class. The advance registration session went very well, with 21 people paid and registered. He feels we need to do a better job of getting the word out in the other counties, though. We need to have something in the Northern.Virginia.Daily and the Shenandoah Valley Herald. Mary pointed out that we have a Publicity Chair. Mary Stickley was co-chair but stepped down. There is only one person on the Publicity Committee currently, who is not able to attend meetings regularly. Mary feels that if someone holds a Chair position they should be present at meetings. Paula said that since the Co. Coordinators are non-voting members of the board, she did not always feel comfortable coming to board meetings. Bob pointed out that the board meetings are open to the whole membership. Marsha suggested advertising in the Warren Report, which does a column for the Tree Stewards each month. Cy mentioned the radio station 93.3. Mary said that we had not done the best job of getting the word out to the local radio stations in the past.

Extension Agents/Outreach: John said he would like to see each county's extension agents more involved. Bob explained that most of the counties don't have a Horticulture agent. With budget cuts there are not enough Agricultural agents for all the counties. John would like to see us reach out to them and extend them invitations to our events. He and Randy are getting together with Bobby Clark on Friday.

John would also like to see us more in touch with Va. Tech, Va. State and the neighboring counties MG programs. Carolyn said Rockingham County has recently started their MG program up again. It had been stopped several years ago when they lost their ext. agent.

County Fairs: John would like to see Master Gardeners at all 5 county fairs. Bob said Shenandoah and Page are involved with theirs. Mary said that the Clarke MGs were involved with the fair for many years but it was not very productive. Marsha said Warren charges for a booth and it is not the best venue, either. Paula said the Frederick Co. fair is somewhat out of the way it is felt it would not be productive, either. Paula suggested Randy send an e-mail to the County Coordinators to find out what level of interest there is in having a presence at the fairs. John and Randy will get together with them to discuss the possibilities further.

2011 Class: John said the facility is excellent and in a very good location, easy to get to. He met the woman who owns the place and she was very supportive of our program. 21 people registered at the pre-registration event; quite a few of them are couples. John would like to see us hold two classes a year. The consensus of the group was that this is logistically hard and getting speakers is difficult.

Other Events: John said we have been asked to attend Bryce Fest and he would like us be there. It is a very well attended, one day event held on the 4th of July. He said it runs until 5:00 but we would not have to be there until the end. We would set up our usual information booth. We should be receiving an invitation in February.

He would like us to stay aware of other programs out there. For example, he attended a Master Well program for people who have moved out from the city and do not know about wells and how to care for them.

There was a short discussion about putting together some sort of short, set presentation about MGs to give to garden clubs and other groups when we do a talk. Carolyn mentioned that we need to get some more notepads, magnets, bookmarks or other types of small handout. John Stevens had the notepads printed last time. Randy will work on a template for small MG business cards to hand out to the public at events.

Education: Mary C. asked if we were going to try to plan any symposiums like the two great ones we had last year. Carolyn would like to put together a half day event at the Woodstock library about Water Quality and tie it in to the rain garden. Maybe John could talk about well water and share what he has learned. We could cover water-wise landscaping and many other water related topics.

Carolyn said the Rutgers rain garden project was a 3 year program, however Paula said she believes it has been extended a year. The 3 rain gardens are; Hedgebrook in Kernstown, which Theresa Krause has taken on as project lead; Frederick Douglas Community Center in Winchester, which Teri Merrill is heading up and the latest in Hay Market which the class of 2010 installed.

Other Business: Randy mentioned that he travels quite a bit, but will always be accessible. Scott has spoken to John Vance who has a greenhouse on Ft. Totten Rd. that we may be able to negotiate the use of. The group thought this presents all kinds of possibilities; starting and raising our own plants for GardenFest; a holding place for GardenFest plants; growing more exotic plants to sell at GF, a training place for Jr. Master Gardeners, etc... It is close to Belle Grove, but would involve some careful analysis to see just how we could manage it.

Bob asked about the Board meeting schedule. John would like to have them on Thursday evenings. Bob suggested having them the week prior to the regular meeting seemed to work best in the past. It helped to get important items ready to bring to the membership. John will let the board know when the next meeting will be.

Cy said the January meeting will be at Fort Valley and Terry Fogle will be speaking, possibly on spring clean up and garden chores you can do in the winter. The February meeting will be at the Warren County Government Center and Sandy Wilson, President Elect of the FRWC Tree Stewards will be the speaker.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Craig, for
Suzanne Boag,
Secretary, NSVMGA