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## ***Minutes Board Meeting***

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Thursday, January 24, 2008 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
State Fair Conference Room

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. with the following people present: Lin Diacont, Lorene Blackwood, Jeff Miller, Cary Gouldin, Joel Koci, Sylvia Wright, Carey White, Gwynn Hubbard, Joyce Latimer, Annette Pelliccio, Cheri Haggerty, Mary Williams, Rick Baker and Dawn Alleman.

**Presidents Comments** –Lin thanked everyone for their work on the Agribusiness Council Appreciation Banquet decoration setup. A list of donors is attached.

A synopsis of VGIC accomplishments for 2007 was discussed.

A slate of officers for 2008 was presented by Jeff Miller. Nominations were: Lin Diacont, President, Cary Gouldin, Vice President, and Gwynn Hubbard, Secretary. Mary Williams moved to accept the nominations, Dawn Alleman seconded, and nominations were approved as presented.

**Secretary Report** – No question regarding the last Minutes, it was moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded and passed.

**Executive Director's Report**—the VGIC web site has an average of 5,500 visits per month. The website is in the process of moving to a new host, and will be revamped in the process.

**Financial Report** - Jeff Miller - See attachment

A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Cary Gouldin, seconded by Rick Baker. Motion was passed.

The VGIC donated \$700.00 of the plant sale proceeds from the Garden Festival in September to the Virginia Tech Hahn Horticulture Garden's Jocelyne Couture-Nowak Memorial Garden.

### **Committee Reports**

**Communications, PR Report** – Sylvia Wright, See attachment

Go Green column needs a face to represent the industry. The Executive Director, Jeff Miller will be the face for the VGIC.

News releases for the VGIC by Jim May, Sylvia Wright and Jeff Miller resulted in 3,933,591 potential contacts in 2007 through 51 articles that were picked up by the news media.

**Budget 2008** – Cary Gouldin

Committees are to look at costs and submit new budget request to Cary.

**Membership** – Mary Williams

Mary requested committee members to help with membership issues. Joining Mary on the Membership committee will be Joel Koci, Lin Diacont, and Cary Gouldin. The membership committee will discuss a number of issues and report back to the board with their suggestions.

**Programs and Education** –Rick Baker

**Virginia Garden Festival** - Goal is for the festival to encourage existing gardeners to continue gardening and also to entice new gardeners.

The Garden Festival will be at the Science Museum of Virginia (new location) September 20, 2008 from 9-4.

David Close is allowing extra hours credit for the Master Gardeners who work the Garden Festival.

Many thanks go to Rick Baker for all of the work he is doing on the Festival.

**Legislative** – Jeff Miller reviewed the current legislative issues in the General Assembly concerning invasive plant labeling, tree conservation bills, and bills affecting arborist, landscape contractors, and soil testing requirements and fertilizer applicator training. He stressed the need for members to respond when requested on how these issues will affect their business, so the Virginia Agribusiness Council can effectively represent the VGIC on issues affecting the green industry. There is also a non-legislative issue which is really a regulatory issue that will be coming up after the General Assembly affecting how landscape contractors are classified relating to sales tax collection and reporting.

**Activities**

VGIC will not have a booth at the Maymont show this year. VGIC information will be given out at the CVNLA booth by the Master Gardeners.

The 2008 State Fair dates are September 25 – October 5, the fair will again be at the Richmond Raceway complex. The theme for the student gardens this year will be “Junkers Garden Jaunt”.

The VNLA Field Days will be August 14, at Tankard Nurseries on the Eastern Shore.

Virginia Arbor Day 2008 is on Friday, April 25.

**Strategic Plan** –Some of the wording was deleted from the Environmental Statement to make it more usable. None of the meaning in the statement was lost.

**“Environmental Statement of Ethics:** Virginia’s Green Industry, the organization and all of its representatives, are encouraged to adhere to the highest environmental and professional standards.”

**New/Old Business** –Lin suggested that VGIC contact Tim Reese to speak with us on water issues at our next meeting.

*Respectfully submitted, Gwynn Hubbard*

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**SHIPP AND WILSON  
5483 TURKEY HILL  
TRAIL  
MECH VA 23111**

**PENNY SEAY  
HELP SET APPROX  
5 HOURS**

**ED'S LANDSCAPING  
5172 COLD HARBOR  
ROAD  
MECH. VA. 23111**

**LIN DIACONT 1-804-  
746-3737**

**AT LEAST 60 MAN HRS**

**DOVER NURSERY  
111 DEER KEEP  
RICH 23233-6124**

**MARY WILLIAMS**

**THE GREENHOUSE  
P.O. BOX 1066  
GLEN ALLEN VA.  
23060**

**GEORGE MILES 1-  
804- 262-7318**

**40 AZALEA TREES**

**WEBER'S NURSERY  
937 MARTINSBURG  
PIKE  
WINCHESTER VA**

**MIKE WEBER 1-  
540-662-4311**

**22601**

<p>CAROL SMALLWOOD 14202 CHULA ROAD  AMELIA VA. 23002</p>	<p>CAROL SMALLWOOD 1- 804-561-5307</p>	<p>PUT SPEED COVERS ON PLANTS AT STRANGE'S  5 HRS DAY BEFORE AND 5 HRS THE DAY OF</p>
<p>STATE FAIR OF VA. P.O. BOX 26805  RICH. VA. 23261</p>	<p>GWEN HUBBARD 1- 804- 539-6106</p>	<p>PUT SPEED COVERS ON PLANTS AT STRANGE'S  5 HRS DAY BEFORE AND 5 HRS THE DAY OF</p>
<p>SWIFT CREEK BERRY FARM AND GREENHOUSE 17210 GENITO ROAD MOSELEY, VA. 23120</p>	<p>CLYDE GOODE 1- 804-739-2037</p>	<p>PLACED PLANTS AT ARTHUR ASHE CENTER  2X 4HRS. THURSDAY MORNING</p>
<p>STRANGE'S GREENHOUSE 4201 CREIGHTON RD  RICH. VA. 23223</p>	<p>CARY 1-804-782- 1904</p>	<p>RECEIVED PLANTS FROM ABOVE DONORS  FOUR INCH PRIMULA FOUR INCH DIAMOND FROST FOUR EXACUM 4 INCH COMBO FOLIAGE FERN BASKETS  6INCH MUMS COURSAGES, BOUT. AND FLOWER ARRANGEMENT ALL ABOVE PUT ON CARTS AND DELIVERED TO CENTER IN OUR TRUCK</p>

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### *Accomplishments in 2007*

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**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 in the rain. With representatives from the VNLA and VDACS as well as Tony Griffin who accepted the tree for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**The 2nd Virginia Garden Festival<sup>sm</sup>** was successfully completed on Saturday, September 22 at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia. 35 exhibitors for the Virginia Garden Festival<sup>sm</sup> participated in the stand-alone event. The program featured Andre Viette's live radio show "IN THE GARDEN". There were keynote presentations by Edmund Snodgrass on Greening the Roofs of our

Communities; Brent Heath discussing Bayscaping with Bulbs, and Mike Goatley - Environmental Turf Management; and others

We estimate that there were approximately 2,000 people in attendance. The VGIC had sales of \$2,750 from donated plant material from Virginia growers.

**Donated \$700**, from the Virginia Garden Festival Plant Sale, to the Virginia Tech Hahn Horticulture Garden's Jocelyne Couture-Nowak Memorial Garden.

**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 (\$2,810) for the Council.

**Quarterly email Newsletters and monthly Bulletins** on current events and updates were continued this year by Sylvia Wright.

**Gardening News Releases:** The VGIC released 38 seasonal news releases that were used, reaching over 3,933,591 contacts in daily and non-daily newspapers, websites and magazines.

**Monthly gardening articles** were written by Jim May, Virginia Certified Horticulturist, and submitted to newspapers statewide and by the VGIC office.

**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.

Listed by Richmond.com as 1 of the top 20 regional non-profits.

**Strategic Plan** – held an all-day strategic planning session to establish direction and priorities for the next several years

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## VGIC PR report as of January 2008

**VGIC publications** -

Fall **2007 newsletter** created and distributed - theme VA State Fair gardens.

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

Pending – winter newsletter that features – topic 'green Industry sustainability'

GoGreen column – Jeff write and distribute as syndicated?

**One Visible Face/Spokesperson** – worked with Lin/Jeff and decided to **promote Jeff** as the visible VGIC face/spokesperson.

**Media Relationships** – VA Gardener, DC Gardener, NC Gardener, also VA Home Grown, Viette, McGrath, etc.

Create relationship with **VA Extension Agents** – created info for Jeff, forwarded?

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

**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 – who? Viette, Nunnally, etc?

**Speakers** – confirmed – Mike Lockett: encore iris; pending – Nancy Hugo: Remarkable Trees, Buddy Lee: Encore Azaleas, Viette ? ; exhibitor '**special events**' – Richmond Indigenous Gourd Orchestra ?,

Festival **Media/Web** –

Contacted VA Tourism to place 2008 date on web site & notified Jeff to update VA Gardening.com

Festival **poster** –

Festival **bookmarks** –

Festival **sponsors** – work with Rick to obtain sponsors

**Other** –

**Awards** –

Nominate VGIC for the AHS 2008 communications award.

Nominate VGIC for an agri council award – result pending.

Investigate additional awards.

**VGIC marketing plan** – obtained a copy from Jeff, reviewed and interacting with Jeff to develop changes – definitely it and the strategic plan needed updating – met with **3 non-Green Industry marketing professionals**. They **advise** –

most people view outdoor/garden work as pain, not pleasure

need to convenience me as to why I benefit

present goods/service from Good Foods, not Food Lion perspective

seek out 'green' media opportunities

control the format of advertisements (presently pro-bono)

offer coupon through advertisement

more visual than words to entice consumer

attract first and then 'good for environment'

phrase - keep VA green and growing - word 'growing' interpreted as construction development

specific to VA Garden Festival - I'm not a gardener; so, why would I come?

offer consulting/answer as an expert

project 'heart to head' commitment - not head to heart

evaluate product/service, would you purchase it yourself?

develop 'email market' and solicit colleagues to distribute through their email market

when possible, collaborate and/or partner

network, network, network

keep advertisement/correspondence direct & simple, one-page

**additional** suggestions from other sources were –

large canvas shopping bags GoGreen logo and sell at the festival and make a few dollars.

What about starting a membership card "GO GREEN" and offer a discount with specific stores (like Great Big Greenhouse) to honor the discount on any GREEN product they sell. It would be like a co-op.

Add more native plant and wild food info, authors and speakers (like Vickie Shufer) 757-421-3929

Invite organic farmers to the festival.

**Publication** -

**Va Business** is publishing a 'green' issue in April – in contact.

**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. Also, writing a 'green' column for **Richmond.com** that ties back to my web site which contains VGIC, etc.

Obtained a copy of the 2007 writers' market and continue to investigate additional publications, make initial contact and solicit publication/advertisement opportunities. **Solicited topic suggestions** for 2008 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'.

**Participating in Maymont Flower show** – as a ‘green Industry’ speaker provides opportunity to highlight CVNLA and VGIC.

*Sylvia Wright*  
*The Wright - consultant, lecturer, & wordsmith*

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## **Membership Committee Strategy Plan For 2008**

### **Membership Committee**

- . Committee made up of a Chairman and committee persons representing varied industries
  - . Spread the duties among committee persons.
  - . Develop innovative approaches to increase membership.
  - . Stay aware of new ‘Green Industry’ markets, tracking, and reporting them to VGIC.

### **Review Membership Application**

- . Review and analyze membership categories and dues.
- . Develop new levels of membership and dues -
- . Repackage membership to accommodate reduced budgets and ones who are affiliated with VGIC but never shown interest in being a member - affiliates.
  - . Honorary Membership

### **Analyze Membership**

- . Review and analyze present membership.
- . Review and analyze membership of those who have not renewed.
- . Identify new markets.
- . Review perspective member lists. (Mary has and any other)
- . Identify key industry partnerships (ANLA, ALCA, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, State Arboretum, Norfolk Botanical Garden) and how best to utilize them.
- . Identify key industry partners for sponsorships.
- . What can VGIC do to get more turf grass and golf course associations involved?

### **Direct Marketing**

- . Review marketing strategies
  - . Power Point presentation
  - . Visiting Association Meetings
  - . Booths at Industry and Consumer Trade Shows
  - . Membership articles in journals and newsletters.

- . Identify and review marketing benefits
- . What is and is not working to generate membership?
- . What should be done differently?
- . List membership on website.
- . Coordinate a volunteer-driven sales process to convince boards of directors of non-members to join.
- . Identify and market the benefits of belonging to VGIC.

### **Awareness**

Do prospective members know who we are? Is awareness the challenge facing our membership?

How successful has our branding efforts been to gain 'share of mind' in our target audience?

### **Recruitment**

- A process of getting a member to 'try' our association

Membership is something we need to sell.

When we feel that the industry is aware of VGIC, a pro-active plan needs to be put into place.

Modify the membership product and renewal system.

Marketing message – determine which value proposition is most attractive to prospective members.

Determine which price points, benefit packages, and special incentives will attract members.

Determine which market segments or lists of prospective members are most responsive to the message and offer.

### **Engagement**

With good awareness and successful recruitment program in place, focus on engaging new members.

Initiate a second transaction or interaction (engaging) with member, this is a positive predictor of renewal.

Analyze the relationship of database records of renewing members and compare them to those of lapsed members.

### **Interdependence**

Interdependence is a relationship whereby a member has his **identity livelihood, or safety** tied to the association.

One feels that alignment through a common vision, reward and recognition.

**Common vision** is a powerful force that ties many to an organization. Because we believe in the cause so much, we're glad to donate money with no expectation of reward or recognition.

Members need to want to strive together to accomplish their common vision.

Members need to be sold on the vision to be interdependent with association.

They need to believe that when they pay their dues, it is because they believe that through their membership they are contributing to the better vision.

**Reward**, we all want. A benefit is something that we would all like to have for our association. (example certification).

The most common reward that members look for from an association is valuable information resources and effective advocacy.

**Recognition** means that you know me, and I want to be known as one of you. You are encouraged to deepen your commitment and independence to the organization if you feel your association knows you.

### **Renewal**

Renewal is the quantitative evaluation of how successful you've been with the membership campaign.

Lapsed members don't renew because they **forget**. The brand of the association needs to stand out in the renewal notice. Have frequent reminders by multiple mediums.

Without new members an association can't grow, because some members will always leave an association.

*- Mary Williams, Membership Chair*

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