

President's Report 2014-2016

Two years of working closely with our dedicated and accomplished membership has been such an honor and an experience which has enabled me to understand how dynamic our Club truly is among this vast GCA, GCV community. It is with great and humble appreciation that I thank all who accepted, without reservation, positions on the Board, Committees and Special Projects throughout these two years...and not a soul said "No" when called upon to be involved. Having had the opportunity to attend various GCA and GCV meetings, I am keenly aware of the respect with which our Virginia Beach Garden Club is held and have been so proud to share our gems which they might find beneficial to their Clubs. Folks are astounded when advised of our many varied and beneficial components such as the only fundraiser, the Fall Flower Festival, or our 26-year-old VBGC Fund.

In 2015, our Community Projects Committee presented important projects involving the contribution of money as well as manpower to local projects. Buff's Garden, Brock Center-Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Adam Keeling Meadow, Lynnhaven River Now Oyster Reef, Hope House Garden and Tidewater Community College Greenhouse Fund were on our list that year. In 2016 our Club voted to continue support for Adam Keeling Meadow and to work on the garden at Beach House along with allocating \$30,375 for the Healing Garden at Camp Grom. We also continue weeding and providing financial support to the Wildflower Garden at the Virginia Aquarium. Money generated from our Fall Flower Festival in October of each year has enabled our Club to provide support for these endeavors and many others of significance over the years. We received a challenge to match a \$1000 pledge for a GCA Summer Studies Scholarship from one of our members and we voted in 2015 to match that pledge.

The moving and shaking Horticulture Committee saw no moss growing under their feet, just pollinators. They were involved in seed exchanges and propagation workshops, summer trough and leaf casting workshops to provide items to sell at the FFF Roots and Shoots Booth and introducing the construction of the Forsythe Pot to members in preparation for the GCA Zone VII flower show.

Conservation and the environment have been focal points for our Club for many years and the Virginia Beach Garden Club was honored to receive The Zone VII GCA Conservation Award at the Going Coastal banquet in 2015. The award is "In appreciation and gratitude for more than seventy-five years of outstanding leadership, education, and commitment to protect and preserve our natural resources." We still collect batteries and encourage Pearl Homes and at times put on

our boots and clean Lynnhaven Bay tributaries. In September of 2015 VBGC voted to oppose offshore drilling off of our coast and were joined by many local organizations. The Conservation Committee also has the pleasure of sending a middle school student to Nature Camp each summer for one week. Members also attend the GCV Conservation Forum and GCV Legislative Field Day in January and the GCA National Affairs and Legislative Forum in Washington, D.C. in February.

Historic Garden Week continues to be a highlight of the April social calendar which can be attributed to the excellent partnership we have with the Princess Anne Garden Club and the involvement of the energetic Jr. Virginia Beach Garden Club. Money raised from this one-day event provides for historic preservation and restoration in Virginia, but the camaraderie and community relations are also significant. Every two years an art show is held at Beach Gallery showcasing art which complements the Garden Tour. The 2016 "Painted Garden" grossed over \$15,000 and 25% of the proceeds were directed to our Club.

A highlight of the year 2015 was the culmination of countless months of hard work by ALL involved in the GCA Annual Zone VII meeting, Going Coastal. Teamwork and planning produced an event of elegant, but epic scope. Accolades were showered upon every aspect of the event from the magnificent Flower Show, Banquet, Meeting Arrangements and Schedule, Hospitality, Programs and Tours. Awards presented to the VBGC at the meeting were The Corliss Knapp Engle Award for Horticulture for most points in a flower show and the Zone VII Conservation Award. Individual VBGC members received awards for Zone Horticulture, the Faulconer Minor Award, and the Ann Lyon Crammond Award.

I feel that the strength of the Virginia Beach Garden Club grows stronger with every year. We have Club members serving on GCV Conservation, GCA Nominating and various State Boards. Eleven new souls have joined in the past two years and they bring such a vast wealth of knowledge and energy. Technology is pushing us ahead and I predict needed and exciting changes in the year ahead. I encourage you to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities our Club has to offer...accept a role of involvement when it is offered...you will not regret the strength and awareness that it will provide. Thank you all so much for your kindness, understanding and friendship.

Lynda Strickler

