



GARDEN CLUB  
O F V I R G I N I A

*2010 Board of Governors*

*Hosted by The Albemarle Garden Club in Charlottesville*



*Round Table Discussions*

*October 14, 2010*

# *District 1 Liaison Missy Buckingham*

## *How do we encourage more of our members to participate in GCV events?*

- 1. Offer to register on-line for members who are not computer savvy*
- 2. Establish a leader and make it a group trip. Ashland has a new position this year, a Special Events Coordinator. This person could market and generate excitement, plan carpools etc. for GCV as well as club events*
- 3. Combine club meetings with GCV events- i.e.- the Conservation Forum*
- 4. Enlist Directors-at-Large and other GCV leaders to come to club events to increase exposure and interest in GCV events*
- 5. Tuckahoe has set aside excess funds to help defray registration costs for events that are approved by the board*
- 6. Timely and targeted communication from GCV. It was also recommended that events that have limited space should have a certain # of slots held for each club for a specified period to allow for equal access. GCV should put on website the date registration will open at least one week in advance.*
- 7. Tie popular events like the Flower Arranging Workshop to less well attended events like Flower Shows to increase participation and get the programs out of Richmond and closer to other member clubs.*
- 8. Add to events that are well received like the Flower Arranging Schools*
- 9. Get a master calendar of the coming year out by April/May to allow clubs to incorporate this information into their schedule, Handbooks for the upcoming year*
- 10. Encourage members to attend other Garden Week tours- again a group makes it more fun and strengthens camaraderie.*

## *How are you an effective club President?*

- 1. COMMUNICATIONS!!!! Most all are communicating with members monthly. Tuckahoe has a very attractive newsletter that they paid someone \$300 to develop a template for and is then populated each month by the club President and the Horticulture and Conservation chairs. We were also told that Albemarle has an excellent newsletter. Software called WORDPRESS was recommended*
- 2. Could GCV assist other clubs in getting a template for their monthly newsletters? The GVC website could also hold these in archive.*
- 3. Make sure that the monthly communication is pertinent but also has humor.*
- 4. Nothing beats a phone call for personal contact, except maybe one-on-one*
- 5. Recommendation for GCV- An Orientation each spring (Apr/May) for incoming club presidents complete with a cheat sheet of requirements, Annual meeting, BOG, programs, fundraising, etc.*
- 6. Recommendation for GCV- exit interviews with outgoing club Presidents- could be a survey.*
- 7. Recommendation for HGW- Creation of a searchable database using historic data on all houses open for HGW in the past.*

## *How to attract new members?*

- 1. Rural clubs should have a meeting to share ideas*
- 2. All clubs would benefit from a stronger marketing message from GCV on the statewide projects it has funded over the years- if it could be sub-divided geographically it would help recruitment in the areas that are struggling. The economic message needs to be emphasized.*
- 3. GCV should reach out to offer assistance to the clubs that are shrinking first.*
- 4. Clubs and GCV could lighten requirements of the members. Many clubs feel pinched for time, talent and funds right now.*
- 5. Club programs need to make sure that there is some fun offered to our members. Times of meetings can reflect to current mix of your members.*
- 6. Need to make sure that all that we do remains relevant!*
- 7. Territory issues- each club needs to look at their by-laws and then if necessary talk to neighboring clubs.*
- 8. Nominating process? Some clubs actually ask the prospective candidate to complete their membership form without promising admission. This way the prospective members will come on board knowing what is required of them. Some still keep the nomination secret.*
- 9. Diversity- GCV might want to discuss the idea of male members. This group encouraged ethnic diversity.*

# District 2 Liaison Julie Grover

## Being an Effective Club President

1. *Be a good communicator: E-mail, newsletters, meetings, e-mail blasts about upcoming events, etc.*
2. *Make sure all leaders/committee chairs have good computer skills.*
3. *Listen to feedback, establish goals and communicate them, allowing for an interplay—do not be dictatorial.*
4. *Build strong relationships with all members, and they will work harder for you. Build a sense of community.*
5. *Do research on committee work and know the history of the committee and the committee requirements before recruiting chairmen for the job. If you are better informed and describe jobs fully, you will be sure members know exactly what is expected, and you will be more effective.*
6. *Encourage members to use the GCV website -- put links to the GCV web page in your e-mails or newsletters to facilitate this. (Note: It was suggested that a search engine on the GCV website would be helpful.)*
7. *Roundtables, an exchange of information between clubs, are very helpful.*
8. *The “human touch,” such as a phone call, is often better than an e-mail.*
9. *Presidents need courage! All members are just volunteers and are not required to do anything, really, so you must make the duties fun and balance them with incentives, such as good programs.*
10. *Consider a board retreat—a day of fun to build enthusiasm and teamwork.*
11. *Be enthusiastic, smile and KISS—“Keep it Simple, Stupid.” Do not let negativity creep into your tone.*
12. *Consider scheduling business meetings twice a year and only have short business at the rest of the meetings—try to use newsletters for business, when possible, to keep meetings shorter, more educational, and more fun.*
13. *Ease up on “requirements” and be flexible about job assignments. Don’t force requirements on members who hate a particular job—find another job for that member to be effective. Member surveys can be effective to determine member strengths.*
14. *Consider setting up a website or a blog for your club or community.*
15. *Put your yearbook online to save paper. This can be accessible on your blog or web page for members only.*
16. *Share club newsletters. Have newsletter editors get together for a meeting to share ideas. Consider putting club newsletter on the GCV website for easy access.*

## How to Attract New Members:

1. *Club membership goes in cycles—sometimes no openings, sometimes several openings. The main thing to remember is that a “NEW” member need not be a “YOUNG” member.*
2. *Make clubs fun—sell them as a positive experience—be a cheerleader.*
3. *Stress the education that comes from being in a club.*
4. *Mentor new members so they can become future leaders. Orientation for new members is important.*
5. *An obstacle to some clubs is that they do not allow members to belong to other local garden clubs.*
6. *Let new members take on responsibility to get them involved and feel included.*
7. *Consider having co-chairs for committees to split the workload—and stagger their terms to build continuity.*

8. *Make a point of being friendly to new members. Offer new members rides to the meetings, and sit with them.*
9. *Use the club historian to highlight past projects—way back in history—to build a sense of pride and esprit de corps.*
10. *Build term limits for committee chairmen into bylaws to make sure the same person doesn't keep a job for too long.*
11. *Don't surprise people with an invitation to a club—make sure they want to join before asking them—that's how to know they will work.*
12. *Be flexible. Allow members to resign if their lives are too busy and then return when they have more time. Consider varying meeting times to accommodate working members and young mothers.*
13. *Allow compassionate leave (inactive status) for people with family/health issues.*

### ***Encouraging Participation on a State Level***

1. *Put members in a van and drive them to events as a group.*
2. *GCV should make more spaces available at events—they sell out too quickly.*
3. *GCV should “take the show on the road” and visit districts or clubs more often. For example, horticulture and conservation workshops could be held in each district.*
4. *Charlottesville seems like a good central meeting location for District II.*
5. *Have district workshops—like this roundtable—to build a strong network.*
6. *Look at GCA meeting schedule before booking GCV event—too much overlap.*
7. *Have joint meetings with other clubs in your area to share speaker expenses and to network.*
8. *District chairmen should rotate alphabetically by club.*
9. *GCV should consider having two back-to-back horticulture field days and two flower arranging workshops so more members can attend.*
10. *Try doing a GCV DVD to introduce new chairmen/goals to local clubs. It could be distributed as a marketing tool at the beginning of each two-year term. It could also be available on the GCV website.*
11. *GCV could “skype” events (ie: Flower Arranging School) so all members could sign in online to view.*
12. *Will Rieley's talk on Poplar Forest and Janet Hickman's talk on the Anne Spencer Garden would be examples of things to tape and put online for members around the state to see.*
13. *GCA has a horticulture feature called “The Real Dirt,” and GCV could come up with something similar.*
14. *Nominate people from our district to serve on GCV committees—to increase “new blood” in these groups. Consider including a bio/credentials on your nominee.*
15. *New member orientation is useful—GCV should keep doing that—but could improve it and take it to local clubs so new members don't have to travel.*

# *District 3 Liaison Dianne Spence*

## ***How to attract new members***

1. *Offer lunchtime or evening meetings to attract working members.*
2. *Modify attendance requirements to suit your club's particular membership situation.*
3. *Offer "financial payoff" option for those members who do not wish to fulfill exhibition requirements.*
4. *Use social connections to scout for new members.*
5. *Educate potential members to eliminate the "I don't do flowers" mentality. i.e. Conservation.*
6. *Generate interest in local restoration projects.*
7. *Generate publicity in local media outlets.*
8. *If the amount of work scares off new members, consider modifying requirements to more closely resemble those of Associates or Sustainers.*
9. *Offer a variety of activities to generate interest: informal study groups, workshops, group projects.*
10. *Provide mentors for new members.*

## ***Encouraging members to become involved with GCV at the state level***

1. *Encourage participation in GCV events by offering to set up carpools.*
2. *Be a cheerleader.*
3. *Learn the interests of individual members and encourage them in those areas.*
4. *Publish a newsletter.*
5. *Provide links in newsletter to GCV website.*
6. *Educate members about the opportunities for GCV involvement.*
7. *Use nomination forms at Board of Governors to recommend others or to express personal interest. Change form to reflect this.*
8. *Write a Journal article about the possibilities for GCV committee involvement.*

## ***How to be an effective club president***

1. *Determine what YOU think makes an "effective" president and how you can judge or measure your effectiveness along the way.*
2. *Provide effective means of communication such as newsletters, websites or blogs.*
3. *Be a cheerleader, ALWAYS. Generate enthusiasm.*
4. *Learn the interests of individual members and encourage them in those areas.*
5. *Encourage participation in GCV events by offering to set up carpools.*
6. *Consider ways to ask the question "Are you a good member?"*
7. *Work with liaison to facilitate communication within your district.*

8. *Establish “Sign Up for Two” policy. For each event, sign up for yourself and a guest and invite a member who might be interested.*
9. *Host joint meetings in your District.*
10. *Ask a former president to be your mentor.*

# *District 4 Liaison Donna Lawhon*

## ***Encouraging club members to be more involved at the state level***

- 1. A mentoring program from established members that have had state level experience*
- 2. Coordinate club field trips to state events, i.e. flower shows; make the field trip the planned club meeting*
- 3. Educate members on conservation initiatives via emails, websites, encouraging members to become more involved in conservation issues*
- 4. Use the KV House and gardens as part of the annual club meeting calendar*
- 5. Develop individual club meeting notes and programs using the GCV Website, blogs, and photos*
- 6. Increase exposure to state level by having more hosted regional events and regional schools*
- 7. Meet once a year as a region*

## ***How to be an effective club president***

- 1. Nurture members individually*
- 2. Use the GCC Journal as a tool*
- 3. Prompt reply to member's email*
- 4. Stay on a schedule*
- 5. Have workshops and hands on programs*
- 6. Go greener*
- 7. Develop idea sharing within and between clubs*
- 8. Require attendance at workshop, forum, and other meetings*
- 9. Develop a newsletter from the President to keep members abreast on state and local information*

## ***How to attract new members***

- 1. Recently retired and empty nesters make good club active club members*
- 2. Develop a junior member program with reduced responsibilities*
- 3. Mentoring new members and teaching them all areas of club membership*
- 4. A new member's luncheon and orientation meeting*
- 5. A regular regional orientation*
- 6. Give a gift of bulbs to new members*
- 7. Inform new members of their financial responsibilities; perhaps spread out payments if necessary*



# District 5 Liaison Charlotte Benjamin

## How to be an effective club president

1. *Succession format can help prepare new presidents. In many clubs the First Vice President will automatically become President. In other clubs, the Historic Garden Week Chairman becomes President with that wide experience.*
2. *Set an example. Participate in all areas on the club level and state wide. Stretch out of your comfort zone.*
3. *An Executive Board is instrumental in advising the President.*
4. *Summertime is a good time for the new President to organize and structure her two year term.*
5. *Computers can be a valuable tool and make communication so much easier.*
6. *New member orientation is helpful.*
7. *Two Barriers: The time commitment required for the office of President and outside professions/employment keeps many capable members from serving.*

## How to attract new members

1. *Vary meeting times (length as well as time of day) in order to make attending easier for members with time constraints. Format of meetings can be made appealing to new members with business meeting and tea or lunch provided. Be creative...in one club members were asked to wear blue jeans to a meeting and everyone loved the idea!*
2. *Some clubs have Provisional Membership in which perspective candidates attend meetings and club activities for a period of time, pay a onetime fee, and then can decide if they want to become full active members. Junior Memberships (for those under 35) are offered by some clubs.*
3. *Assign mentors to new members.*
4. *President and small group meet with new members before they attend their first meeting.*
5. *Ways to encourage the support and interest of men in garden club...Many clubs have a business meeting followed by cocktails to which men are invited. Some have picnics and plant sales which the men enjoy. Warrenton Garden Club has its business meeting the day before they host a flower arranging challenge class for spouses and significant others. The arrangements are judged and comments written. Cocktails are served throughout, and a good time is had by all.*

## How to involve members on the state level

1. *Make every effort to attend the Conservation Forum, Horticulture Field Day and other GCV educational state-wide events. Encourage members to attend and enter the GCV Flower Shows.*
2. *Have Civic Projects with state-wide appeal.*
3. *“Earthsavers” is an ongoing project for Winchester-Clarke Garden Club. Each month, the members are given an assignment. One month they stopped using plastic bags. Another month, it was not using plastic bottles, etc. The model for this project is from a book/pamphlet “Does it Come in Green”.*

4. *Fauquier Loudoun Garden Club owns and maintains historic Goose Creek Bridge and the surrounding area which offers a huge potential for educating the public in horticulture, conservation, restoration, ecology and history.*
5. *The Garden Club of Alexandria adopted a garden in the visitors center in historic Old Town. The club partnered with the City to redesign and beautify the landscape and maintain it as an ongoing club project.*
6. *Biggest Challenge: getting members to use the GCV Website to access all the invaluable information available...to become more involved with the interesting and educational GCV activities.*

# District 6 Liaison Louise Tayloe

## How to attract new members

1. Encourage the formation of a Junior Club.
2. Make meeting dates and times more attractive to young members (midweek and earlier in the day, i.e. 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. starting times).
3. Give a leave of absence to young mothers with infants.
4. Make meetings more meaningful and more civic minded.
5. Take away the fear of arranging by having arranging workshops in-Club.
6. Use of a Mentor Program or Buddy System with one young/new member and one older member for learning arranging skills.
7. Establish a search committee to find new members.
8. Lighten attendance rules for all.
9. Establish an Outreach Program Event such as mother/daughter arranging; mother/son Christmas ornament and wreath making; men/husband arranging program; trips with other GCV members; taking non-GCV members to the Symposium as introduction.
10. Think outside the box when dreaming up fun Special Events to include prospective members.
11. Field Trips once or twice a year.

## Encouraging Members to Participate at the State Level

1. Make available in depth job descriptions from State Committees to Presidents for individual members; perhaps have Committee Chairmen come to meetings to talk about their committee's work. All to be done on personal, one-on-one level.
2. Take members (bully, if necessary) to Symposium, Flower Shows and Flower Arranging School, Conservation Forum, Horticulture Field Day.
3. New member orientation on State Level: Presidents need to know dates well in advance and take their new members, not just new members finding their own way.
4. Website Information needs to be more in depth for all events including BOG and Annual Meeting and other GCV Events, including times and agendas for member planning purposes.
5. Trips to see Restoration Projects and other GCV events with members. A club member might be assigned to work on GCV trips and events with other members.
6. The more involvement, the more satisfaction with GCV events will occur. Promote a feeling of camaraderie within the member clubs for GCV events.

## How to be an effective club president

1. Use newsletters and other means of providing information by email and/or snail mail.
2. Establish a website for individual clubs.

3. *Have a positive and fun attitude.*
4. *Involve older members (Associate and Sustaining Members) and keep in touch with them on a regular basis.*
5. *Presidents need to explain to their members how to communicate with the press, explaining what their own club and the GCV actually do.*
6. *Presidents need to make sure that mentors do an effective job with new members.*
7. *Always be prepared with a paper agenda for meetings to run smoothly.*
8. *Use parliamentary procedure and Parliamentarian to make sure motions and changes are clear and keep fussing at a minimum. This includes a time limit to discussions under stressful conditions.*