

The Garden Club of Virginia The History of GCV Conservation Activities

The Garden Club of Virginia was founded on May 13, 1920. At the first meeting, the stated purposes and business of the new organization were to be: For good roads, against the billboard "nuisance," for preservation of plants, roadsides, historic homes and gardens, conservation of native beauty, and warfare against pests. A statewide federation of clubs was the idea of Mrs. Malvern Patterson of the James River Garden Club, and neither she nor those first members "could have foreseen not only the success of the venture, but its vital influence in the life of the community and the state." It quickly became apparent to these dynamic women that they would be called upon to do more than just share the love of gardening and horticulture. They would whole-heartedly take on the role of "focusing public attention on intolerable conditions, disseminating information, and working for improvements." Their dedication endures today, some 90 years later, and the work they started is just as necessary, pertinent and important as it was then, if not more so.

The first formal committee of the GCV was the Conservation Committee. It was formed in 1922 and was chaired by Mrs. Malvern Patterson, herself, from 1922-1930. It was a large umbrella committee for many issues including conserving natural resources, dealing with pesticides and pests, and planting trees. The first matter tackled by the committee was the quest to educate the public about preserving the state's wildflowers, native trees and shrubs. Of particular concern was the damage being done to the hollies and laurels during the holidays. In November 1926, Mrs. Patterson printed a poster for all clubs to distribute in their towns asking for the use of pine instead of hollies and laurel for decorations, and she requested that the GCV ask every member to pledge not to use holly or laurel for decorations. In addition, Mrs. S.V.R. Crosby, the Conservation Chairman of the Garden Club of America, called for action against "the wholesale slaughter of our trees, shrubs and flowers, many of which will soon be extinct if something is not done quickly." She urged all state conservation chairmen to promote the use of artificial greens at Christmas and to discourage the "ruthless waste of holly, kalmia (laurel), running cedar and rhododendron." This became a mission of the GCV Conservation Committee for a number of years. The GCV worked to stop the ruthless cutting and shipping of Virginia's holly branches to New York City for dissemination. The GCV urged member clubs to sponsor contests with prizes for school children to write essays about why it's important to protect native plants, so that future generations would be more educated about conservation issues.

Also in 1926, the President of the GCV, Mrs. Joseph Walker, at the urging of the Conservation Committee, distributed around the state 500 copies of a new bill called the *Ball Bill*, enacted by the state legislature on March 23, 1926, which prohibited the "picking, pulling up, tearing up, digging up, cutting, breaking, injuring, burning or destruction of any tree, shrub, vine or turf growing or being upon the land of another, or upon any land reserved, set aside, or maintained by this State as a public park, or as a refuge or sanctuary for wild animals, birds or fish, without having previously obtained the permission in writing of such other, his agent, tenant or lessee, or of the

superintendent or custodian of such park, refuge, or sanctuary, so to do.” The GCV Conservation Committee was instrumental in the wording and passage of this important legislation.

Other problems quickly came to the attention of the Conservation Committee. With the growth of the US highway system and the rapid dissemination of the automobile, the treatment and appearance of state roads suddenly became a major problem. Highway workers were in the habit of clearing or topping all trees beside the roads to make way for traffic and telephone lines. The Conservation Committee urged the state highway commission to be more selective and careful in their clearing and to only remove trees which were truly in the way of the phone lines. Mrs. S.H. Marshall, the editor of *Garden Gossip*, the first GCV newsletter, wrote in March, 1926: “Every woman who drives over newly cleared roads groans in spirit and in flesh at the male idea of spring cleaning. The man with an ax is a swift worker and in most cases there is little intelligence behind his weapon.” The Conservation Committee began work to address this problem by contacting the highway department directly. More on their work in this area appears below.

The next major issue to come to the forefront in the 1920s was the blight of the billboard. It was such a huge problem across the state that the GCV quickly established a new committee, separate from the Conservation Committee, called “Billboards.” The first chairman, from 1926-1927, was Mrs. J. Watters Martin of Norfolk. The committee followed the actions of the state of Massachusetts and their 1918 vote to amend their state constitution permitting legal control of billboard advertising on private land, and a later law that allowed cities and towns to regulate billboards locally. The laws limited billboard size, distance from the highway, and required advertising to take place without great offense to public taste. Advertising companies quickly challenged the legality of these laws at the US Supreme Court level. The GCV Billboard Committee began monitoring and writing about this matter and talking about it at state meetings. It was becoming obvious that the GCV would need to take a lead on the matter in the state of Virginia.

In the mid 1920s, the GCV, only in its first several years of existence, was becoming a recognized power in the state. It pushed through effective support for the *Ball Bill* banning the cutting of native plants, it supported the creation of the Shenandoah National Park, which was authorized in 1926 (opened in 1935), purchased and planted trees from Williamsburg to Jamestown and at William and Mary and worked on Kenmore Restoration plans. They worked to rescue and restore the trees at Monticello, planted by Jefferson himself, by holding an ambitious statewide Monticello Flower Show. They began working on the study of the gardens at Stratford Hall, the home of the Lee family, so that a faithful restoration could be undertaken. Garden Week was established as a fundraiser, and flower shows were started to promote horticultural pursuits.

Yet, the work on non-gardening related issues, including the conservation and billboard issues, were bothersome to some members across the state. Members began to complain that they didn’t want to worry about these issues—that they only joined the GCV and

their local garden clubs to share the joy of flowers and gardens. Why did they have to be concerned about these political issues? At the same time, there was a clamoring of many groups to become member clubs of the GCV.

There must have been quite a few complaints as evidenced by the following entries appearing in issues of *Garden Gossip*:

From Mrs. Thornhill of Lynchburg in 1925 and published in *Garden Gossip*, December, 1925:

The *chief virtue* of a Garden Club lies in the opportunity its meetings give to a comparatively small group of flower lovers and growers for an interchange of ideas and methods on successful cultivation; --of learning ways and means of overcoming failures; and for seeing and knowing more and better varieties of flowers.

The *function* of a Garden Club is to inspire:

- 1) The individual member into making her garden more of a “lovesome spot” through better planning and planting;
- 2) The Club into undertaking on its own responsibility or co-operating with other organizations some phases of civic planting—turning “eyesores” into beauty spots;
- 3) The Community—“provoking to emulation” through public exhibitions and addresses other members thereof.

Also in the December 1925 issue of *Garden Gossip*, the editor, Mrs. S.H. Marshall, stated in an editorial:

One hears many diverse opinions these days of what the work of a Garden Club should be. The energetic members are keen for wide activities, especially civic. The woman, deeply interested in making her own garden bloom beautifully, groans in spirit and in flesh when asked to do outside things... The French have a charming way of making happy phrases and “esprit de corps” is one. If one joins an organized body, is it not absolutely up to that person to follow with “esprit” the policies and activities of the club as evinced by the majority? ... The policy of this federation is as yet not fully established, but the member clubs, acting as units, will do well to interest and express themselves, as to that policy and when it is established follow it loyally with “esprit de corps.”

Outgoing President Mrs. Joseph Walker gave some firm words at her last Annual Meeting in Lynchburg in 1926. Following are some excerpts of her remarks, which were published in *Garden Gossip* in November 1926:

Since we were the first state to federate, our aims were utterly chaotic, and opinion was evenly divided as to whether or not we should have any definite aims beyond those of a purely social nature. No condition of any sort was attached to membership. In short, it was just a pleasant gathering of kindred souls, all

speaking the same language horticulturally and socially, and I doubt if any more charming association ever existed. But before long it became apparent that unless we did have some reason for existence other than just pleasurable, our organization would die a natural death...It is to us that all eyes are turning for not only support, but leadership, in that step forward which is so great a part of our national life today, namely the changing point of view of the great mass of the American people turning their desires toward greater beauty of environment, in their homes, their towns, and, most neglected of all, their rural communities...If projects are started and not finished, it discredits the G.C. of Va before the public and makes us only a laughing stock. Therefore, in the admission of new clubs, their willingness to fall in with the decision of the majority should be an important factor in eligibility. While we do not wish to dictate to member clubs, we are quite within our rights when we demand of them loyalty to our policies as one of the conditions of membership...So, summing up, the two chief qualifications for membership in the Garden Clubs of Virginia, to my mind, should be: To be a good gardener and to be a cooperative club member.

So, work continued in the political areas. What seemed to guarantee success was a shared passion, if only by a few individuals, for a certain issue or goal. Mrs. Malvern Patterson, chairman of the Conservation Committee, was dedicated to saving state wildflowers, trees and shrubs. She orchestrated the erection of thousands of posters across the state stating, "Save the Holly," "Save the Laurel," and "Save the Dogwood." The GCV encouraged each member club to establish its own conservation committee to help facilitate the work of the state committee.

In 1928, Mrs. Patterson sent letters to each member club asking them to take on a project to plant dogwood trees in their community. She said the garden club could get the trees in quantity at wholesale prices and offer them to the public at reasonable rates. She asked local clubs to encourage schools to plant a dogwood or holly on school grounds. She launched an effort to plant dogwoods along state roadways and gained the support of the state highway department on the matter. Each local club was encouraged to plant dogwood trees on a mile or more of their nearest highway. The trees were to be planted 30' apart. Mr. Shirley, the state highway commissioner in 1928, wrote to Mrs. Patterson saying that he would honor her request to be more judicious in pruning trees, to plant trees and to stop planting trees that were unattractive. [In 1949, the GCV still had a voice, as the state had planted several hundred Chinese Elms along state highways, and at the urging of the GCV, they removed the unsightly trees.] In May, 1928, the GCV Conservation Committee launched an "Education Campaign" by offering statewide prizes of \$5 to school children for the best essay on "Conservation of Our Native Trees, Shrubs and Flowers." The successful essays were published in newspapers across the state. Mrs. Patterson stressed that an excellent way to educate people about the conservation of trees is to plant them. She also noted that more and more department stores were using artificial greens in their holiday decorations. She never tired of her work in these areas.

In 1932, the GCV Conservation Committee endorsed the planting of dogwood trees across the state. Their slogan was: “Cover the State with Dogwood, Virginia’s State Flower—One Million Dogwoods by 1935.” This was pushed with all state garden clubs, the Colonial Dames, the Daughters of the Confederacy, the DAR, Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, and women’s farm extension work. It was hoped that Virginia could restore much of the beauty that, “has been destroyed by ruthless destruction; and especially to conserve one of the choicest natives.”

In 1929, another urgent matter popped up for the GCV Conservation Committee. On January 29, 1929, the Virginia Public Service Company filed an application with the State Corporation Commission to make an electric power development in the Goshen Pass. It called for a dam of 53’ high to be erected at one end of the pass. The GCV Conservation Committee sprang into action, stating that the dam would mar, if not destroy the beauty of the Goshen Pass. The GCV secured legal assistance to present its position. It was declared that the Garden Club had no right to intervene, but the Committee continued to push the matter with the public and gained support for the defeat of the proposal. It turns out that the Goshen Pass would need to be rescued by the GCV many times over the years.

In 1929, Governor Harry F. Byrd called for a conference of garden club members to talk over the matter of roadside planting. From the meeting came the suggestion of a landscape architect as a member of the State Highway Commission. This was passed as legislation, Bill #273 in 1930, and Governor Byrd appointed 6 members of the GCV to serve with representatives of the State Highway Commission to beautify the highways of the state. The language in the legislation read, to “study the preservation of the natural beauty of the state highways and devise methods by which the right of ways of the highways may be beautified and improved.”

In the October, 1932 issue of *Garden Gossip* is a letter from Mr. H. J. Neale, of the Virginia Department of Highways, giving the GCV the following list of issues that the state would seek GCV input and assistance on before proceeding:

Suggested Outline of Roadside Beautification Program:

- 1) Intensive study of existing conditions along roadsides: a. on permanent highways; b. on temporary highways.
- 2) Dividing results of study into factors that can be controlled by:
 - A. Elimination of billboards (especially those interfering with natural beauty); signs on trees, fences, buildings, etc.; dumps and trash; automobile graveyards; tumbled down buildings and fences; raw and unsightly bank slopes; brambles and weeds interfering with normal growth of trees and flowering shrubs.
 - B. Readjustment and repairing of private entrances, sidewalks, mail and paper box posts, buildings and fences, etc.
 - C. Prevention of unnecessary mutilation of trees, flowering shrubs, wild flowers, bird sanctuaries, etc.

- D. Conservation of natural beauty spots, trees, flowering shrubs, ground covers, moss-covered rocks, shoreline streams and rivers
- E. Planting of trees, shrubs, ground covers, wild flowers, grass, annuals, perennials, and landscaping of areas adjoining the right of way, which may be obtained by—
- F. Acquiring a wider right of way to serve as turn-arounds, parking places, control grounds between the highway and shorelines of streams, lakes, etc., vista sights in the mountains, etc., stimulate interest in better landscaped filling stations, tea rooms, wayside stands, schoolhouses, or public institution frontages as well as private estates.

Mr. Neale and the GCV Conservation Committee and Billboards Committee had a most efficient working relationship and were able to accomplish wonderful progress across the state on these highway issues. Mr. Neale, 25 years later, received a GCV award for his dedicated work on highway beautification.

The billboard issue, though not managed by the Conservation Committee, was a serious conservation cause for the GCV. It was a burning passion for a few members of the garden club, and they willingly devoted their time, energy and resources to the matter. They doggedly pushed for legislation to block billboard dissemination, but found that many legislators were stronger proponents of business dollars and were supporting advertising agencies. Not deterred, the GCV Billboards Committee stayed on task by joining forces with Judge A. C. Carson of Riverton, Virginia, a former U.S. Supreme Court Judge in the Philippines. His legal ability was so highly esteemed that he was asked to write two important Shenandoah National Park bills, which successfully passed in 1928. Judge Carson formed the *Society for the Restriction of Outdoor Advertising*, and the GCV became a charter member. Judge Carson asked that each member of the GCV write three letters; one to her state Senator, one to her assemblyman, and one to her local newspaper, bringing the blight of billboards and their need for removal to the forefront of public attention. The effort stressed the urgency of maintaining Virginia's greatest attraction for visitors, its scenic and natural beauty, which was being marred by outdoor advertising.

Yet, during the 1920s, no legislation was passed—the power of the advertising lobbyists was too fierce. The legislation that was supported by the GCV did not attempt to block billboards, but was more about restricting and regulating them. It only addressed restrictions for state highways—it did not apply to cities or towns, as those areas were controlled by local zoning ordinances. Yet, not much progress was made. The GCV Billboards Committee worked to sway legislators, it contacted local and national businesses asking them to limit their outdoor advertising, and finally, the members resorted to all-out warfare. In 1928, they gathered their chauffeurs and yard men and used axes to remove 4,000 signs from roadsides, prompting the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* headline: *Women Declare War on Billboards*. The GCV members continued this sort of vandalism for the next four years, and due to this “surprising feminine insurrection” the Virginia General Assembly reluctantly passed the first billboard control law in 1932. That bill brought down 100,000 signs in violation across the state. This was

a major coup for the GCV Billboards Committee. In 1929, the GCV purchased a movie from the National Billboard Committee entitled, *What is Happening to our Landscapes in America*, and made it available to member clubs.

Over the years, the GCV Billboards Committee remained intact, as the fight was never done. In the 1930s, they distributed stickers for windshields that said, "Billboards Offend Tourists who Spend." The committee changed names several times: From 1926-1928 it was just called "Billboards"; from 1928-1932, "Restriction for Outdoor Advertising"; from 1932-1936, "Protection of Roadside Beauty"; from 1936-1939, "Restriction of Billboards"; from 1939-1940, "Regulations of Billboards and Landscape Development"; from 1940-1942, "Billboards and Roadside Beautification"; from 1942-1948, "Highway Zoning and Beautification"; from 1948-1970, "Highway Planning and Zoning."

The Committee also fought a related blight to landscapes—the dumps of abandoned automobiles building up across the state. These dumps were becoming a huge eyesore, so the committee fought their existence and creation. In 1940, a new billboard bill was passed, giving Virginia the most effective billboard bill in the country. In 1951, the committee approached Governor John S. Battle with ideas to restrict billboards, as well as dumps and other eyesores.

Roadside beautification and the blocking of billboards remained important issues for the GCV, but other conservation concerns constantly arose. The GCV was called to action to seek legislative support to control and quarantine plant material harboring the dreaded pest—the Japanese beetle.

The alarm was sounded constantly to save the Goshen Pass. In the 1920s, it was the electric dam that was stopped; in the 1930s, the building of a straight, modern road was blocked; in the 1940s, another dam; in the 1950s, the cutting of timber and the exercising of mineral rights were protested; and in the 1960s, another plan for a modern road was blocked. And, in the 2000s, the GCV opposed the area becoming a national retreat ground for the Boys Scouts of America.

In 1947, Conservation Committee Chairman Miss Mary Belle Glennan of Norfolk, suggested that an open conservation meeting be held in Richmond once a year, and that each GCV club be represented by its conservation chairman. It was approved and that began the annual Conservation Forum.

The GCV Conservation Committee was still pushing for the planting of dogwoods as late as 1951, when it offered the member club planting the most dogwoods a prize of \$100.00. In 1951, the committee also opposed the use of DDT. Also in 1951, the Conservation Committee was active in fighting the deplorable condition of the Dismal Swamp Canal along Rt. 17, at the Virginia/North Carolina state line. As a result, the area of pines, cypress and native undergrowth, long ago surveyed by George Washington, was cleaned up and erosion was corrected.

In 1956, Mr. Harold J. Neale, Landscape Engineer for the Virginia Department of Highways, was elected to honorary membership in the GCV for “appreciation of his tireless efforts in conservation and beautification over the past 25 years.”

In 1962, Mrs. Francis T. Greene of the Warrenton Garden Club, as the GCV Highway Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman, said the Virginia Highway Department would use the GCVs proposed legislation for repeal of an offending amendment to the state billboard laws, which would bring billboard prohibition to the entire length of the interstate highway. Members were asked to contact legislators endorsing the legislation. She also proposed that GCV members write to companies that erect billboards, asking them to stop using that form of advertising. She also asked members to support the new Automobile Graveyard Bill before the legislature.

Mrs. Greene was able to trumpet a huge success for the GCV when the Virginia Legislature passed its anti-billboard bill. She stated:

This is a success that began a long time ago and involves many GCV members. At its first meeting in 1920, the GCV accepted its billboard and conservation responsibilities. Through the years it has worked for legislation to restrict billboards, and its gentle ladies have become expert at organized persuasion. In 1937, it became parent to the Associated Clubs for Roadside Development. . . Victories there were, but defeats came too, but still the struggle continued. In 1960, Mrs. Power was our leader in a well-organized and spirited campaign to get a proper bill for control of billboards on the Interstate Highways in Virginia. Our bill was emasculated by a crippling amendment, and we had to begin again. So, in 1962 with the help of the Highway Department, our old friends Tom Frost and Hank Mann, the new Governor, and all those wonderful member club Highway Chairmen while I know only by their handwriting, we found ourselves in the glorious position of seeing our bill pass without a contest. For the GCV, this is a moment of triumph.

The Highway Planning and Zoning Committee did not rest after this victory. They quickly got to work organizing a forum on the subject of automobile graveyards. The Chairman was Mrs. Benjamin Parrott of the Mill Mountain Garden Club, and the title of the forum was: “Automobile Graveyards Need our Perpetual Care.” She asked each member club to give a report on automobile graveyards in her community. Maps and photographs were presented. It was a very compelling forum.

In 1962, the Conservation Chairman urged members to take an excursion in grass-roots conservation, to build a really good compost heap in every garden, to use chemicals with judgment and care, and to plant at least one tree. In 1963, it was reported by Mrs. Edwin Harper, Conservation Committee Chairman, that 700 compost piles had been established and that, excluding the report of “hundreds of thousands of pine seedlings,” about 374,000 trees had been planted on public and private property. The Conservation Forum has furthered the educational process in this area.

In 1964, Mrs. Harper presented exciting news—she asked for Board approval of a new award, the deLacy Gray Memorial Medal, named in honor of its member and GCV President from 1930-1932, Mrs. Leslie H. Gray, to be awarded to the individual or club, as may be determined by the GCV Conservation Committee, as having rendered outstanding service in conservation.

Starting in 1956, the GCV supported the Virginia Resource-Use Education Council Conservation Short Courses for Teachers, a specialized course extended to 830 Virginia teachers and reaching 500,000 young people.

In 1966, the US Congress passed the Highway Beautification Act and Virginia passed two bills in this area. The first Virginia bill dealt with junkyards of all kinds, applying to all highways and roads, mandating that no new junkyards were allowed within 1,000 feet of an interstate or primary highway or within 500 feet of any other roads unless screened or located in zoned industrial areas. The second Virginia law concerned billboards, making restrictions applicable to interstate highways and Federal-Aid highways, and allowing any existing billboards not conforming to be torn down. Also, billboards would have new restrictions for spacing and size.

In 1967, the GCV Highway Planning and Zoning Committee supported the planting of kudzu to grow over unsightly automobile graveyards and junkyards. They also urged the planting of more dogwoods. It was made a united project of the GCV members clubs to plant dogwood trees across the state. The GCV Highway Planning and Zoning Committee and the GCV Horticulture Committee joined forces on the dogwood planting initiative.

Also in 1967, the Conservation Committee Chairman urged members to protest the spending of \$80,000,000 to build the Salem Church dam, which would be 240 feet high, flooding 40,000 acres of good farmland for 29 miles on the Rappahannock River above Fredericksburg. It would be the highest dam on the east coast and would destroy wildlife, waterways used for canoeing and fishing, picnicking and hiking areas, and ruin the only unpolluted river in Virginia.

In 1967, Mrs. Parrott, a former GCV Highway Planning and Zoning Chairman, reviewed several themes of GCV Board of Governors meetings over the years:

Zoning ordinances, billboards, auto graveyards, civic beautification, and conservation. What next? I remembered hearing rumblings from new garden club members, some young, some not so young, that they had expected to learn about gardening when they joined a garden club. Silly thought! Didn't they know the demands of Historic Garden Week, Restoration, Flower Shows, and working quietly through the Associated Clubs for legislation to beautify and conserve Virginia's natural resources? But this voice of disappointment gave me inspiration for this year's theme—horticulture.

So, horticulture was the theme for the meeting in 1967. During the late 1960s, the Conservation Committee was asking each member club to send a child to Nature Camp in Vesuvius, VA. Also, the chairman, Mrs. William Reed, Jr. and Frances Greene of the Warrenton Garden Club, went to Washington, DC to sit in on Senate subcommittee hearings on the proposed Salem Church Dam, sponsored by Senator William B. Spong, Jr. Both women opposed the plan and afterwards, contacted Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia to express their opposition. They sought ways to promote the conservation of natural resources and were specifically concerned with pollution. They reviewed amendments to the Virginia Constitution on matters concerning pollution. They opposed Virginia Electric Power Company's relocation of power lines at Goshen. They also opposed the transfer of 15,000 acres of California Redwood Forest to Disneyland for commercial development. And, they worked on the annual Conservation Forum.

The Highway Planning and Zoning Committee had three issues to address: An anti-litter campaign, automobile junkyard elimination and highway beautification. The committee was also in touch with US Senator William B. Spong, Jr. as he voted to reduce appropriations for highway beautification to instead funnel money to Vietnam. Mrs. George M. Cochran requested that Senator Spong ensure that Virginia get its fair share of the monies available for beautification. That year, *Parade Magazine* voted Virginia as having one of the nation's top 5 most scenic highways, Interstate 64 west of Covington.

The GCV still felt most effective when working with and under the Associated Clubs for Roadside Development, Keep Virginia Beautiful, and the Virginia Outdoor Commission, rather than being a single voice. This was because the GCV was concerned about its tax status and was not able to do any lobbying. So, they relied on the Associated Clubs and others for that. At that time, the issue commanding the most attention was automobile junkyards across the state. Each GCV member club was asked to monitor their community to see that no new automobile graveyards were created and that existing ones be removed. They also worked to educate children about not littering as a way of raising an informed society.

On a state level, the Highway Planning and Zoning Committee received assurances from Mr. E.W. Turner, landscape engineer for the Department of Highways, that because of the interest of the Garden Club and other civic groups, planting along Virginia's highways would remain a normal phase of developing a highway. There was a shortage of personnel to do the planning so the state was behind, but they were working on it. Also, the committee was still researching ways to screen junkyards, including promoting a new type of metal and plastic fence. The committee reported that it would monitor legislative issues in Richmond. And, as part of their anti-littering campaign, the committee wrote to the DMV asking that flyers go in each license tag about the importance of not littering.

The GCV's State Dogwood Planting Initiative was sending out questionnaires to members clubs to determine their work in planting dogwoods along state roads. In 1967, members clubs were responsible for the sale and planting of 3,620 dogwoods. The questionnaire also asked how many member clubs were active on Arbor Day and

suggested that each club be sure to plant on every Arbor Day. [The first celebration of Arbor Day was in Nebraska in 1872. Virginia established an Arbor Day in April, 1902. In 1970, President Richard Nixon proclaimed the last Friday in April as National Arbor Day.] Some clubs reported that they had gotten large companies and individuals to donate trees. S. H. Heironimus Co. donated 400 balled and burlaped dogwoods to Roanoke clubs for planting, and Mrs. S.W. Rawls of Franklin, VA gave 500 trees from her property for state planting.

At the 1970 GCV Annual Meeting, the Conservation Committee and the Highway Planning and Zoning Committee proposed that they merge and call themselves the Conservation and Beautification Committee. They stated that the focus would be the following: Conservation of natural resources, pollution, beautification, education, the Conservation Forum, the DeLacy Gray Memorial Medal, liaison with Nature Camp, and any other pertinent areas of concern. The GCV Bylaws were amended and the merger was approved. The amendments were to Article XI on Duties of Standing Committees, stating: "It shall be the duty of the Conservation and Beautification Committee to promote the conservation of natural resources; to encourage the control of pollution; to foster the beautification of the environment; to act as liaison with others interested groups; and to promote education in all fields of conservation and beautification."

Also in 1970, the GCV was honored with an award from Keep Virginia Beautiful for its long, faithful and most fruitful work to fight litter.

Mrs. George Flowers, Jr. was the GCV President from 1970-1972 and she highlighted conservation at the GCV 50th anniversary meeting of the Board of Governors. There was a film program on conservation, rather than a speaker. The club went from being a 501 (c)(4), which is a social welfare organization, to a 501(c)(3), a charitable/educational organization. This meant the GCV could carry on as before, but could not support any one candidate for an election or do any official lobbying. The club could still be in favor of and encourage roadside beautification, encourage conservation and encourage civic planting. This change made it much easier for the GCV to accept gifts, such as the Kent Valentine House, and monies for its restoration.

The Conservation and Beautification Committee held four meetings each year and pushed for member clubs to send a child to Nature Camp. They started a quarterly conservation newsletter called, *Conservation Headlines*. The first one was given out at the BOG meeting in 1970. It contained information for member club conservation chairmen to use. Each GCV club was encouraged to have at least one conservation program per year.

The committee opposed the building of a Virginia Beach school on the dunes at Seashore State Park. The July/Aug. 1971 issue of the *Journal* was dedicated to conservation issues.

In 1972, Mrs. James B. Montgomery became the Conservation and Beautification Committee Chairman. She was extremely energetic and productive. She was invited to

join Governor A. Linwood Holton, Jr.'s "Environmental Goals Task Force," part of the Virginia Council on the Environment. The Task Force included representatives from state agencies and private groups and was to identify areas of consensus and contradiction on environmental policy and find ways to resolve inconsistencies. The GCV submitted its goals as follows:

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

The Garden Club of Virginia, since its beginning in 1920, has had as one of its objectives the conservation of Virginia's beauty and natural resources. While we realize fully that the needs of people must be met and that progress must continue, we do deplore a heedless exploitation of the environment; and we feel that some solution could be found whereby the "goals of human wellbeing as well as the goals of material conservation" would be realized. We feel that the guiding principal in our use of land and natural resources should be that which is one of the primary rules of fiscal responsibility: 'Live on your dividends, don't invade the principal'; live on the bounty of the land, do not destroy that which creates the bounty, both physical and aesthetic; use, but do not abuse.

We therefore oppose the continued use of billboards on interstate and primary roads, and favor a law, minus loopholes, which would outlaw them.

We oppose most of the Goshen Pass Recreation Plan. This area, abounding as it does in natural beauty, should be left undisturbed, with only minimum man-made facilities for the comfort and safety of those enjoying the scenery.

We oppose the present plan for the development of Assateague Island, for the above reasons. Recreation facilities, while most important, should be placed in a spot that has not so much to lose to an invasion of the bulldozer.

We oppose the plan for Salem Church Dam, feeling that here again, the scenic and recreational advantages of the river in its natural state outweigh the benefit to be derived from the dam.

We oppose strip-mining.

We oppose the proposed erection of a power line across the face of the Peaks of Otter; and in that connection, we strongly favor some sort of mechanism whereby the public would be informed about and given a chance to question such proposals while they are in the planning stage.

We favor the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

We favor a stronger law controlling the use of coastal wetlands. We favor laws governing the granting of privilege to special interests and pressure groups when the proposals of such groups, while beneficial to them, would distinctly be harmful to the environmental that belongs to all Virginians.

The Garden Club of Virginia feels that while laws are needed governing the use of the environment, especially now in the early days of the struggle, for the long pull indoctrination would prove a more effective tool than legislation. For this reason, and above all else, we would like to see an end to procrastination and inertia in the area of public education, and as soon as one can be developed, a comprehensive, continuing, and compulsory program of environmental appreciation/ protection instituted in the state's primary and secondary schools. The goals of this program would be to bring about "a change in the behavior of individuals in terms of their sense of environmental responsibility."

Because we feel that fragmentation is the enemy of effectiveness, we hope that the Garden Club of Virginia as a body will fall in behind this effort with single-minded concentration. Environmental education in the schools is a reachable star. State officials and the private sector alike acknowledge the need. "It is our only hope," says one. "Without it we are nowhere", says another. Why then has it not been done? Because the magic ingredient is missing—Impetus. We hope that the Garden Club of Virginia will supply the slap on the bottom that will start it breathing.

Vigorous pursuit of this goal does not mean, of course, that we will diminish our efforts in other directions—billboard legislation, for instance—on the contrary, we will push harder than ever. But, this is the most encompassing single thing we can do, and if our voice on education is heeded, so that we will soon see the beginning of youth training, then while we do battle, in the present, to hold the line against continued assault, we will know that the schools are at work in the background, building for the future a vital public pressure, without which we cannot hope for lasting success.

In 1972, the Federal Highway Beautification Program gave 16 states, including Virginia, \$7.6 million for sign removal. The GCV fought the placement of a prison in the historic Green Springs area of Louisa County. Billboard legislation was before congress in Washington, DC and local club members were urged to attend hearings.

In 1973, the GCV took on the fight to stop the state from changing the Capitol, which was designed by Thomas Jefferson. The state wanted to eliminate the park around the capitol building in favor of a huge, 6-tiered modern structure. The GCV went on record in the General Assembly as opposing the legislation. All club members were urged to write their politicians opposing it, stating, "NO More Building on Capitol Square!"

In 1973-74, the Committee pushed for statewide education on environmental issues. Governor Holton's Environmental Goals Task Force called for standards in education and 2 of the 8 issues were related to the environment. But, the standards became a state resolution and not a law, so the GCV met with the State Superintendent of Public Schools to see how the GCV could help. The committee also began work to form an association of interested clubs to fight billboards.

In the mid-1970s, Mrs. William Miller, Jr. took over as committee chairman. She worked to fight a Navy development at Ft. Story in Virginia Beach. She believed that the GCV must not jeopardize its tax-exempt status, but must work to monitor legislation. "Our best weapon is to use each individual GCV member to fight bills we don't like." She worked on the conservation forum and surveyed GCV clubs on conservation issues, including getting a tally of billboards. A committee member served as a liaison on the Governor's Advisory Committee on Outdoor Advertising in Sight of Public Highways. Other areas of interest: Publications, nature camp, legislation, speakers, wildflowers, and endangered species. They held a meeting for all GCV club conservation chairmen to update them on issues. They supported Virginia Citizens for Better Reclamation, to strengthen strip-mining regulations. Mrs. Miller attended meetings of the Piedmont Environmental Council and the Conservation Council of Virginia. She became concerned with the Refundable Bottle Bill and the GCV supported its passage. She also sought support for wildflower protection bills.

Priorities were set for 1978 as follows: Regulations of strip mining, St. Mary's and Nottoway Scenic River Bills, and bottle and billboard legislation. Each member club was urged to join the Conservation Council of Virginia.

Mrs. Miller said that as GCV members, we must be willing to serve as watch dogs and speak out on conservation and beautification concerns. Each club member is asked to help and clubs are encouraged to have at least one conservation program per year.

The results of the sign inventory survey, given to member clubs, indicated that there were 8,000 signs and billboards. About half of them were classified as necessary and unobjectionable. On-premise signs were usually acceptable. Member clubs were urged to press for better sign control on the local level. About this time, a new horror entered the scene—the electronic billboard. Offshore drilling surfaced as a new issue of concern. Also, the committee supported the creation of a state Secretary of Natural Resources instead of the existing Secretary of Commerce and Resources. The committee rang in on Coastal Resources Management and uncontrolled growth. They watched bills on litter, billboards and bottle deposits. Congress voted to approve electronic billboards, so there was a long road ahead on that matter.

In 1979, the committee requested that it be restructured. They wanted to go from 10 to 15 members and allow for three-year terms for continuity. Also, they requested that the Conservation Chairman be put back on the GCV Board of Directors. This would help increase effectiveness. All requests were approved by the GCV.

Education on conservation issues comes to the forefront again. All conservation committee members attend Adult Nature Camp. They decide to focus on educating all GCV members and the public. They hold a 1-day workshop for the public on Virginia Rivers and Coastline. They are concerned that there is still no unified plan for environmental education in the public schools, so they look into how to make improvements.

The 1980s usher in Mrs. James C. Godwin as Conservation Chairman. She started with a blue ribbon committee of 2 GCV board members, 2 deLacy medalists, one past GCV president and 10 experts. The committee divided into four areas: Education, legislation, beautification and projects. One member was appointed as liaison to each of the following groups: the Nature Conservancy, the Council on the Environment, and the Conservation Council of Virginia. They monitored hearings on strip mining, responded to a call of support from the Alaska Coalition in opposition to the Alaska Land Bill. They attended the work sessions of the Agricultural Land Preservation Subcommittee. Virginia was losing its farmland at a rate of 100,000 acres per year. Population density and urban sprawl become hot topics.

The committee passed a resolution to endorse the National Coalition to Preserve Scenic Beauty on our Highways, and an association was being formed to promote billboard control. Mrs. Godwin recommended that all clubs get a copy of the National Wildlife's

Annual Environmental Quality Index, which is an analysis of the nation's natural resources. It confronts one with the decline of our way of life.

The GCV presented an award for Meritorious Service in Conservation to the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation for timely and constructive action in promoting roadside beautification and 40 years of foresighted billboard control and cooperation during Historic Garden Week.

Bills being monitored are on land preservation and a new one—the study of uranium mining in Virginia. Environmental education is still a concern and the GCV becomes a member of the National Coalition to Preserve Scenic Beauty, just as the National Advisory Committee on Outdoor Advertising ceases to exist.

In 1982, the GCV sponsored its first Nature Camp on the Eastern Shore. They had a speaker on the dangers of uranium mining and they watched a bill in congress to get rid of Federal oversight of highways and leave it up to the states. GCV Conservation & Beautification Committee members attended the Virginia Association for the Environment Education Conference. They learned about hazardous waste and uranium mining. The Piedmont Environmental Council is active on these matters at this time.

Mrs. Godwin presented a resolution on clean air at the 1982 Annual Meeting as follows:

Whereas, The Garden Club of Virginia has the health of Virginians and the protection of Virginia's environment as major areas of concern and

Whereas, The cornerstone of the National Clean Air Coalition's positions on the Clean Air Act is the protection of public health and the environment

Whereas, The reauthorization of the Clean Air Act progressing in Congress is presently being heavily lobbied by well-financed special interest groups who would weaken the Act

Be It Therefore Resolved, that the Garden Club of Virginia supports the reauthorization of a strong Clean Air Act as outlined by the National Clean Air Coalition and its Virginia Chapter.

The resolution was passed by the GCV and was adopted.

From 1982-1984, Mr. Ed Dashiell took over the committee. The Committee held the conservation workshop for GCV conservation chairmen, worked on the Conservation Forum, and put some conservation articles in the *Journal*. They received a request from US Senator Robert T. Stafford asking for GCV support of a new bill on billboards and protecting highway beautification. Member clubs held three ecology camps. The 1983 Conservation Forum was on uranium mining. Clubs were reminded to plant memorial trees. A symposium on the Chesapeake Bay was held in January of 1984.

In 1983, the Conservation and Beautification Committee was awarded a Commonwealth Award of \$5,000 for the plantings at the Welcome to Virginia signs. The committee planted at 12 state entrances in total over the next two years. The Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation entered an agreement with the GCV to maintain the sites.

In 1984, Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson came to the GCV Beautification Forum to talk about native American wildflowers and highway beautification.

Mrs. John Clarkson took over and focused on the pollution of the Chesapeake Bay, uranium mining and agricultural land-use problems. She divided the committee into three subcommittees: Education, Beautification and Legislation. They met with the Commissioner of Highways to discuss the infamous chopping of trees in front of billboards. She urged members to work for a moratorium on billboards in their local communities.

Uranium mining and milling were viewed as the greatest threats to Virginia at that time. In 1985, Mrs. Clarkson made the following motion, which carried:

Because of GCV's interest and concern for present and future health of the Bay, the GCV, recognizing that the Chesapeake Bay, one of the nation's most important natural, recreational, and economic resources is severely polluted, resolved to educate its members to save the bay and support upcoming conservation legislation dealing with Chesapeake Bay problems.

In 1986, the GCV Board of Directors identified three bills to support: The bottle bill, a phosphate ban on detergents to aid the Chesapeake Bay, and a moratorium on uranium mining in Virginia. The Conservation and Beautification Committee urged all GCV members to write to the Council on the Environment and state that, "you are in favor of the bottle bill, that you hate billboards, and anything else you want to add." The May/June, 1986 *Journal* contains information on a Federal billboard ban.

Mrs. Theodore Scott, Jr. took over the committee in 1986. She received a letter from the Coalition for Scenic Beauty, saying the GCV played one of the most active rolls in the passage of the Senate bill restricting billboards. But, unfortunately, the bill was problematic in the House of Representatives, so the committee must keep working. She felt her role was that of keeping member clubs aware of issues in Virginia and in Congress. She said,

It is hard to confine ourselves to a few issues when there are so many. We should take a stand on billboards, waste and recycling, and protection of Virginia's unique habitats and locales from development. 3,000 GCV members CAN make a difference. Ten years ago, Tysons Corner was farmland. We need to be involved and we need planning so awful things don't happen. We do a lot to preserve "people" history with our restorations, but not enough to preserve "natural" history through parks and preserves. Signs can be attractive.

Unattractive signs are bad business. Two other matters that need attention:
Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and the Endangered Species Act.

Each club was encouraged to plant a Constitution Oak to commemorate our Country's bicentennial. Clubs were to record their location for the oak in the GCV archives.

Club members were told to resist the urge to purchase bulbs and wildflowers from catalogues unless they were propagated by a trusted nursery. Some vendors get their material from foreign countries and may be a different species. A new organization was formed about this time: The Southern Environmental Law Center in Charlottesville was created to provide free technical expertise to local communities on environmental problems.

In 1987, Mrs. James C. Godwin, as the GCV President, made the following remarks at the GCV Annual meeting:

This has been a year of scandals. Scandals in the White House, scandals in the church, scandals on Wall Street and even in the Marines. You don't know who to trust. The world's turned upside down. It has even affected our weather. Everything is changing, even the Rotary Club. But I am proud to tell you today that The Garden Club of Virginia is as strong and as straight as the green arrow that is our hallmark. We are steadfast in our purpose and deliberate in our effort, maintaining at all times our virtuous demeanor as we pursue our objectives, which were listed as follows in the 1954 Register:

-The objects of the Corporation are educational, and, among others things, shall be to coordinate the interest of the clubs belonging to The Garden Club of Virginia and to bring them into closer relations of mutual helpfulness by Association, conference and correspondence; to promote gardening among amateurs; to protect our native trees, wildflowers and birds; to encourage civic planting; to discourage the erection of continuous unsightly or dangerous signs along our roadsides; to aid in the restoration and preservation of historic gardens in Virginia; and to do all things necessary in connection with any of the above objects.

What is necessary? That which we do here today is only the bud of the rose. I will not preempt the reports of the able standing committee chairmen who will report to you today, but will resume my role of cheerleader. A cheerleader must practice very hard on her splits and jumps, and you have really kept me jumping from one end of this Commonwealth to the other. As I traveled, I have discovered that the face of Virginia is changing, and I am afraid not for the better. When I go to other states that have bottle deposit legislation, and billboard bans and comprehensive recycling programs, I wish, I wish, I wish, but like Pollyanna, I am glad we don't have a uranium mine.

The Garden Club of Virginia is a very viable organization. Through the years we have made a tremendous difference in our state, but we need to be constantly on the alert for changes in our communities that are not acceptable. Quantity of money seems to be taking the place of quality of life in many of our areas. We need to preserve the beauty of our roadsides. We need to control the density of our population. We need to save our prime farmland. Tourism is the third largest industry in our state and tourism depends on beauty. From an economic viewpoint, we have an investment here. The Garden Club of Virginia has invested over four million dollars in the preservation and restoration of Virginia's historic gardens. This investment must be protected.

I am unwilling and I hope you are, too, to compromise on the future.

In your Presidents' Report this year, we asked you to describe the legislative involvement of your club in your community. Over half the clubs reported affirmatively. I congratulate you on your successes and urge you to persevere through your defeats. Let your members read these reports to see what other clubs are doing. It will be an inspiration to them as it was to me. You CAN make a difference.

In the 1932 April issue of GARDEN GOSSIP, accounting the failure of the billboard control laws, the reporter wrote, "It is discouraging to find that a man fighting for his own financial gain has more influence over legislation than the women who are working for the welfare of the state." Fifty-five years later the battle goes on. But this is where we must be. The noble private life is one lit by the torch of public interest.

In our Charter, we are charged with the protection of the beauty of our Commonwealth. If our voices are to be heard, they must be moderate, fair and well informed. This Annual Meeting will bring you the opportunity to learn, to share and to appreciate all that we are and all that we do.

But we dare not rest on our laurels or our rhododendrons. The rest is up to you. Go to it!

In 1988, Mrs. Robert Carter, Jr. took over. She had a proposal from the Division of Waste Management from the State of Virginia that the GCV could help with-- environmental education in public schools. It would require training in Richmond and club members were asked to sign on for the job. Not enough clubs were interested, so the GCV had to turn down the offer. But, the GCV supported the establishment of a "Commission on Population and Development." Also, a good bill on waste management was supported and passed. We finished planting at the Virginia Welcome signs. She informed members about ALAR, a chemical on apples that raised health concerns. In 1989, the Clean Air Act in Congress was supported. Recycling education was promoted.

In 1990, we were introduced to the idea of using cloth grocery bags. Club members were asked to promote recycling in schools and to plant trees. The GCV sponsored a college

student at a conference on the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The biggest issue on the forefront: unprecedented growth and sprawl.

In 1991, Mrs. Frank Ellet, as committee chair, wanted to beef up conservation activities in local clubs. She stressed recycling and composting. She supported a new bill on Curbside Container Recycling. She asked members to write to the state Highway Department thanking them for their work to maintain our highway plantings. Protecting our wetlands is a big issue at this time. We supported the creation of a new Coalition for Virginia's Wilderness, a group of organizations to support national forests in Virginia. There are 89,700 acres of forest in Virginia, yet Virginia ranks 50th in expenditures for parkland. We need to fix this. The Commission on Population Growth and Development suggested the establishment of a Conservation Trust Fund, which would allow the state to purchase open space for parkland. Earth Day was held for the first time in 1990.

A new bill was introduced in Congress that needed our support: The Visual Pollution Control Act, which put a moratorium on new billboards. "Think Globally—Act Locally" is a new motto.

Next to chair the Committee is Mrs. James Murray. In 1993, the GCV was commended by the General Assembly for 60 years of Restorations and Historic Garden Week. The Virginia Environmental Network became a valuable source of information. A phone tree was established to track legislation and make our representatives in Richmond aware of our positions. The committee took a rafting float down the James River in wet suits. They participated in the Virginia Environmental Assembly in Richmond. Member clubs were urged to take on a conservation project.

Mrs. Clarke T. Cooper, Jr., as Conservation chair, watched two big bills in the Senate: the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. She urged members to call their senators. In 1995, the House of Representatives proposed to open parts of our scenic highways to billboards and members were urged to make calls about this. Also, the Department of Environmental Quality attempted to lift a ban on Tributyltin (TBT) and GCV members were told to flood the EPA with calls to oppose the lifting of the ban.

In 1996, Mrs. J.P. McGuire Boyd, as Committee Chairman, followed bills on water and toxic waste. She also watched the Chesapeake Bay and tributaries issues. She reported that the committee had been following the bottle bill for ten years and finally good legislation was coming along on recycling. The Conservation and Beautification Committee discovered a billboard bill before legislative committees that would permit the cutting down of trees on the state right-of-way to benefit private billboard companies. As this is our most important issue, the GCV quickly jumped on the matter and mobilized support to defeat the bill in 1997. "The Outdoor Advertising Lobby simply will not give up, but neither will the GCV." With the help of Delegate Tayloe Murphy, we initiated a bill the following session that would: 1) Eliminate new construction of all billboards in Virginia; 2) Raise the permit fee to 100% of cost to the state of monitoring billboards; 3) Eliminate all tree cutting on public property in front of billboards. But, in the spring of 1998, the GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee was disheartened to lose the

battle on billboards. The outdoor advertising industry had 10 paid lobbyists. We were indebted to our sponsor, Del. W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr. We had untiring support from Mrs. H. Hudnall Ware III, and several of our members had to appear on TV with only a moment's notice. Our biggest foe was Lamar Advertising of Baton Rouge, LA. The committee felt that it could never fight another battle like this again. It was too much. The GCV was asked to lead in the formation of a new entity to take on these fights. Scenic Virginia was born. It is completely independent of the GCV, but we have a core of supporters and maintain a close working relationship with the new organization.

We supported the Open Space Land Preservation Trust Fund, which authorized the expenditure of \$234,000 to help landowners convey conservation easements.

The Committee took a canoe trip on the Pamunkey River near an Indian reservation in King William County to view the wetlands that would be destroyed with a new reservoir being proposed by the City of Newport News to store water piped across the county from the Mattaponi River. The water would be piped further to the city to supplement its existing water supply. The Committee decided to help preserve this area, oppose the new reservoir, and oppose the water transfer.

A position statement on land use was written by the committee, approved by the GCV Board and published in the *Journal* in the fall of 1997, which read:

Land Use in Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia offers a rich diversity of geographic character, scenic beauty, native wildlife and cultural heritage. These factors make our state a desirable place to live.

The Garden Club of Virginia strives for preservation and beautification of open spaces, historic areas, and environmentally sensitive habitats by promoting responsible, effective land use planning. The Club considers these activities essential to the Commonwealth's long-term economic health.

The Club's position is to encourage its members to be informed advocates for proper land management practices, particularly those involving long-term protection of air, water and soil qualities and to encourage local organizations and governing bodies to support responsible residential and commercial development.

The next conservation chairman, Mrs. J. Martin Scott, started a new project called Treasure Chest. It was a box for each town to be used in public schools to teach environmental issues to students. It included lesson plans and supported the SOLs. The two hot topics of the day are to oppose the draining of the wetlands and to push for the inclusion in the budget of \$40 million for dedicated funding for open spaces. The wetlands bill passed and the open spaces bill went to committee for further study. The GCV continued to support Scenic Virginia.

In 2000, a call to action came from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on opposing poultry waste. Purple Loosestrife was designated as a noxious weed. Garbage issues were surfacing.

From 2000-2002, Mrs. John H. Cecil was Committee Chairman. She was the GCV representative on the Virginia Conservation Network Board. The learning boxes were well received. She sent out a questionnaire to clubs to determine their top environmental concerns. They were listed in order as: pollution (air and water), out-of-state trash, billboards, and wetlands and the Bay.

In 2001, the GCV began putting conservation issues on its website so members could follow them more easily.

Mrs. Tayloe Murphy worked as the GCV representative on the negotiating team to set guidelines for nutrient trading on the Chesapeake Bay. She watched a waste bill to prohibit waste imports unless the government and the receiving community agreed to the shipments. Also, the bill would allow the state to deny permits to landfills that don't primarily serve local needs. She also followed a bill that gave the state legislature power to cap the amount of landfill space that can be filled with garbage from other states.

Mrs. John Cecil quoted the well-known phrase, "We have met the enemy and the enemy is us." We are all guilty of not recycling. She recognized her role to educate each GCV member and to remind us to be better conservationists. The Committee rafted down the James River. There were many legislative issues to track, including one on rotating billboards, which we tried to ban, but that failed. The GCV has been fighting billboards for 78 years at this point.

Virginia State Senator Emily Couric's bill regulating air emissions from new power plants was defeated, but it did bring about a broader study on Virginia's environmental issues. The General Assembly rebuffed all efforts to weaken non-tidal wetlands protection, but isolated wetlands were not included in the regulations.

The next issues coming for GCV attention were listed as: Supporting a permanent conservation fund, fighting the proliferation of new power plants on the heels of deregulation, non-source point pollution problems and brownfield issues. In 2002, the GCV made a difference in brownfields legislation, which passed at state and Federal levels.

From 2002-2004, Mrs. Philip B. Glaize, Jr. served as chairman. She served on the Commission for the Future of Virginia's Environment. She monitored Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance legislation. We lobbied in favor of that legislation and it did not pass, but it may come up again. She urged the use of the learning boxes, the planting of trees and sending a child to Nature Camp. Members worked on billboard issues, adequate public facilities, natural resources funding and King William Reservoir issues.

This ends the history GCV conservation history. I did not have access to the latest activities of the Conservation and Beautification Committee so I had to stop at 2004. But, on September 16-17, 2011, the Virginia Environmental Assembly, sponsored by the Virginia Conservation Network, met and heard a laundry list of concerns such as the

watershed pollution of the Chesapeake Bay, the potential pitfalls of uranium mining in Southside and Northern Virginia, and the vigilance needed for clean water. Also, there is a backlog of annual maintenance at our National parks. Funding is absent. Participants saw a video on preserving roadless areas in Virginia's national forests. The video detailed how logging and road building disrupts the ecosystem in the forests, threatening countless flowers and wildlife. The GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee was well represented. The annual GCV Conservation Forum topic in November, 2011 was: "Uranium: What Should Virginia Do?" And so the work continues.

Respectfully submitted:

Heidi F. James, GCV Historian (and Lynchburg Garden Club)