

## **Opening Remarks by GCV President Ann Gordon Evans Board of Governors October 10, 2012**

I extend a very warm welcome to all of you for the Garden Club of Virginia's 93rd Board of Governors Meeting. We are delighted to be in Suffolk and to be hosted by the Nansemond River Garden Club. The club has been planning for company for many years, and the company has finally arrived. We thank Sharon Flintoff and Pat House, co-chairman of the meeting, and Sandy Hart, president of the Nansemond River Garden Club, for their leadership in planning this exciting BOG meeting. Our appreciation goes to all members of the Nansemond River Garden Club whose tireless efforts are evident these three days.

"It's a good time to be in Suffolk" states the city's motto. I think we will all agree that it is a pleasure to visit you in your city, the largest city in VA by area. Founded by English colonists in 1742 as a port town on the Nansemond River, Suffolk continues to thrive in so many ways.

The Board of Directors expresses its appreciation to Linda Consolvo, GCV Director at Large, and members of her club for hosting the BOD luncheon Tuesday. We applaud the club members for arranging the Dutch Treat Dinner at Mosaic in the Suffolk Center for the Cultural Arts, the former Suffolk High School, and for planning such an exciting and interesting morning with the tour through Cedar Hill Cemetery, recipient of the 2006 Common Wealth Award, the 1880 Main Street Train Station, Riddick's Folly and the Historic Old Courthouse Tourism Building.

Thank you, all of you, for your hospitality.

I recognize guests, Anne Foster and Sue Lea, the Garden Club of Danville and Co-Chairmen of the 2013 Board of Governors Meeting in Danville. Julie Grover, Annual and BOG Meeting Chairman, and I visited Danville last week to be treated to a sneak preview of next year's BOG meeting. We are in for a treat. Welcome, Anne and Sue.

I have been paying close attention to Kim Nash, immediate past President, for 2 years. She doesn't know how closely I have been watching. But, Kim, I promise you...I had no idea how busy I would be following my trip home from the Annual Meeting in Williamsburg on May 17, 2012, with GCV gavel in hand. But I want all of you to know that I have enjoyed every single minute of my job serving as your President. It is educational; it is rewarding; it is challenging; yes, sometimes it is exhausting, but all the time it is fun. What could be better than to meet and work with energetic, talented, devoted women all over the commonwealth, learning about all regions of Virginia and furthering the mission of the Garden Club of Virginia?

Why are we here together for this Board of Governors Meeting? This gathering of the Garden Club of Virginia is primarily for discussion and exchange of ideas among attendees. So, I hope you will take full advantage of talking with club presidents, committee chairmen, and particularly former GCV Presidents. Seek those former GCV presidents out; pick their brains and ask them for advice. They are the stronghold of this organization with years of experience to share. I'm sure they would enjoy talking with you. During the meeting, you will hear from all GCV committee chairmen as we learn what's happening in the GCV today. Listen closely, as the reports are excellent and brief. You will certainly receive a wealth of knowledge about our organization. We are in this together, as we continue with the GCV's mission to restore historic gardens, to conserve VA's natural resources, to inspire a love of gardening and to provide education for our members and the general public.

Our future -- what's in store? In the words of the Long-Range Planning Chairman, Catherine Whitham, Three Chopt Garden Club, the Garden Club of Virginia is strong today because the leadership took the time in 2006 to focus on where it wanted the organization to go over the next five years. Today we have an opportunity to do the same thing, only this time we have a clear beacon ahead on which to focus, the GCV

Centennial in 2020. During the next two years, we will look forward, plan for the future and be certain that the Garden Club of Virginia is a strong organization. I am delighted that Anne Cross, the Ashland Garden Club, will chair the Centennial Celebration.

Join me in looking to 2020. Let's continue to focus on the Garden Club of Virginia's mission. With the help of our unbelievably talented staff, with your devotion and dedication, we will do great things. I am ready. Are you? I think so.

Thanks for being here. I am so very appreciative of your service.