

Power Point Narrative for May 21, 2024

1 Welcome to the 2024 VFGC Awards Ceremony. We are recognizing the achievements of 2023.

I wish to begin by thanking the six District Awards Chairmen, who fielded your questions and helped with the application process. They held the district level judging and are responsible for district award certificates.

The District awards chairman, please stand:

Patty Smith for the Blue Ridge District

Joann Wallace for Piedmont

Becky Yates for Shenandoah

Kathie Kingery for South Central

Jane Sorenson for Southwest

Jessica O'Connor for Tidewater

And my vice-chairman, Jeanne Bruton who created the Power point presentation we are about to enjoy. Please give them your applause.

I also want to thank the nine dedicated judges who evaluated the state awards – almost 100 of them this year, well over last year's number.

2 I have received questions about the **judging criteria and scoring**.

The state awards process is similar to, but not identical to the flower show judging process. State awards offer a **blue with 90 points** and above. Only one application per club size earns a blue. **Red is 80** and above, but all applications scoring 80 + receive a red. **Similarly yellow is 75** and above allowing more than one yellow and **honorable mention is 70** and above also allowing more than one.

3 Members are still getting used to the point scoring rubrics. There are 11 special rubrics plus the one general rubric. They can be found on the

state web site awards page, or among the forty – one pages of the national awards on the NGC website.

Point score rubrics assist the clubs in writing up their award applications as well as guide the judges in evaluating the awards .

Only the yearbook point score is the same one Virginia has used for years, no national influence there.

All the awards but the club publicity press books, go first to the district awards chairman, by Dec. 1st. Then blue ribbon winners are sent on to me for judging at the state level.

At the state level now, newsletters, flower show schedules and web sites are judged electronically, rather than in person.

I send the qualifying award applications on to South Atlantic Region or National electronically. Scanning makes this possible regardless of how the application is submitted.

Today we will be giving out the award certificates with ribbons, rosettes, checks,, where earned, cash for youth and the point score rubrics for feedback – all in the envelopes for your club. District presidents will accept these envelopes and either give them to the clubs present, or mail them to Club Presidents.

Please note the fiscal year is the end of May, so deposit your check immediately upon receipt. Checks held too long may not be honored. Lost checks will not be replaced.

This power point recognizes many but not all of the wonderful and generous programs benefitting our communities and especially the young people. The power point does not show every award earned, rather includes highlights of some of the 2023 award applications. Perhaps you will see something that inspires or enlightens you.

4 First are the **District level awards** which showcase the efforts of the district as a whole. Would the district presidents please come forward and accept your award bundles. It's Ok to sit back down if you wish, just don't peak until we're done!.

5 **Club Membership by Districts** is the first category – as you can see the Southwest District placed first with 6.2% membership increase and Tidewater second with 3.8%. These numbers are most impressive when considering the state as a whole dropped 1.8%.

6 This next slide shows the membership award but at the club level:

- Among small clubs, Chilhowe of Southwest has a 26.7% increase
- Among Medium clubs – a TIE between two Piedmont District clubs -
 - Chancellor with 45.45% increase
 - Rappahannock of White Stone with 45.45% increase
- Among Large clubs – Colonial Heights, in Tidewater won with 21.5% increase

7 Back to district level awards – The **Shenandoah Sharings Newsletter** earned first place again this year for a newsletter from a district of 900 or fewer members. The Editor, Val Story is to be congratulated. The article shown here on Native plants is by Donna Courtney and includes colorful photos of purple cone flowers, Blue false Indigo and Cardinal Flowers.

8 By now I suspect most of you have heard this year is Smokey Bear's 80th birthday. Fun to see how his image has evolved. Also his message – as a child I learned “Only you can prevent forest fires” now it is “Only you can prevent wild fires”

9 BLUE goes to the Tidewater district with a total of 966 posters, which is 1.9 posters per member. Tidewater has ranked first for many years now, a legacy from Barbara Ohmsen who held the poster chairmanship for many years at many levels.

10 RED goes to the Shenandoah District with a total of 509 posters or .65 per member. The entire state received 1,638 posters, over last year's 1315, a nice increase! Smokey would be pleased.

11 Penny Pines is long a standing partnership between NGC and the US Forest Service. Members pass around mason jars collecting coins and bills at club and district meetings to purchase plantations of trees planted nationwide. Tidewater placed first with 45 plantations, with only 519 members. Each plantation costs \$68 – and at one time a penny purchased a seedling pine.

12 Second place is the Shenandoah District – did you notice – only one plantation behind Tidewater! Some individuals and clubs are purchasing plantations in memory of club or family members. Certificates can be ordered on the NGC web site.

13 Taking the Penny Pines down to the club level:

14 The small Green Meadow Point Club in Tidewater had 10 plantations;

15 Medium Madison in Shenandoah district had 9

16 Large Colonial Heights in Tidewater had 7. These three clubs also earned the top awards at the South Atlantic Region for their Penny Pines contributions.

17 Now moving to the **clubs by District** -you won't see every award given, rather some highlights from the club projects and accomplishments. The complete list of all the awards both state and regional is in the program in the envelopes, will be on the VFGC web site and also in the next Old Dominion Gardener. And copies will be distributed at the end of this presentation.

(still # 17) Starting with Blue Ridge District

18 The twenty member **Westchester Garden club presented a small standard flower show** in Roanoke on September 27. Members suggested the types of plant material they would have in September. An abbreviated version of this flower show schedule was given to those attending the show. This schedule scored 99 points, earning Westchester a Blue.

19 **Westchester's club newsletter** is titled "Windows on Westchester" and earned the blue again this year for a small club with a 3- 12 page newsletter. The photo on the left shows outgoing club president Patty Smith with previous state President, Mary Owen at their blue star memorial dedication. The club honored Patty with a membership in the VFGC book of Honor, which supports state scholarships.

20 Now for the Piedmont District, the largest district in our state with 1534 dues paying members.

21 **First is the Rock Spring Garden Club yearbook**, which earned a blue in the size category of 45 – 69 members. Yearbooks are judged on the same point score sheets Virginia has used for years. Rock spring scored 97 points with their book. In addition to black and white sketches they had very informative fillers - one on "Northern Virginia Growing Facts" – listing their hardiness zone as 7b, average rainfall – 40 inches/year and frost dates.

22 The medium **Midlothian Garden club earned first place with their horticulture therapy** award application. In addition to the usual project of helping residents create flower arrangements for their rooms, in May the club members host a Pie Party and bake pies to share with the residents. The photo on the right is of valentines they made for residents and on the left, a picture of small arrangements being delivered.

23 The medium **Thomas Jefferson club earned the blue in Community landscape Design** for their ongoing work at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA hospital. In 2023 they replaced four overgrown holly bushes with new ones, seen in the photo on the right, and also added a

trumpet vine to climb over an existing pergola. Top left is a Smoke tree in a planter box with native plants. All this on a rooftop garden! Their application includes a clear landscape plan and detailed financials –all required by the point score rubric.

24 The medium Rappahannock Garden Club of White Stone scored 100 points and blue with their annual membership brochure. It includes a detailed list of their programs with clear colorful photos on high quality card stock, as you see here. At a cost of \$1.50 per brochure it is distributed as a recruiting tool. They credit this brochure and their varied programs for a 45% increase in membership!

25 Violet Bank with only 19 members has been recycling plastic film since Sept. of 2016, earning a total of 13 benches including a new one just last summer. There it is at the pickle ball court. In 2023 they collected 1,180 pounds. The photo on the left shows just 134 pounds. They partner with the Colonial Heights Community Center and Wesley United Methodist Church. Violet bank earned the blue in the small size club category.

26 Sleepy Hollow with 24 members earned the blue for their Arbor Day award application. This club has been celebrating Arbor Day with programs and plantings since 1983. Starting in 2010 they have been honoring club members for their service to the club by planting a tree in their honor. In 2023 they honored Cynthia Butler with a Princess Dogwood tree planted at the church where they hold their meetings.

27 Sleepy Hollow again with a blue, here in Floral design – a very popular award category last year with six clubs entering across all sizes. Sleepy Hollow put on a program in September for their own members to prepare them for exhibits the following month. They went into details for each category, had prepared examples and used the NGC handbook to explain the requirements including creating exhibit entry cards. Here you see just four of the 8 classes they included.

28 The small Hilliard Park club earned a blue for their Horticulture Therapy with a Habitat Garden application. They have been landscaping Habitat for Humanity Houses since 2011 – working on their 20th house in

2023. In addition to instructing the new home owners in how to water their new plants, they presented the homeowner with a journal showing the landscape plan with descriptions of the plants and how to care for each of them. Judges love before and after pictures, and work in progress, too!

29 The large **Salisbury garden club earned a blue with their Community Landscape Design** application. This application details two separate projects – one a memorial garden at the Lifelong Learning Center in Midlothian where their member, Reta Good was active. The second project was for the new Midlothian Fire Station. As you can see landscape plans do not have to be professionally drawn. These photos are of Reta's Memorial garden.

30 Again, **Salisbury. Here you see their website**, which earned first place in the state for a large club and also earned the top award in the South Atlantic region! Our judges found the home page most attractive, information well organized and helpful with easily navigated drop down menus. They scored 97 of 100 points possible on the point score rubric specifically for web sites.

31 Moving on to the Shenandoah District

32 We begin with **Greenvale** with 17 members who scored 98 points but earned second placed in the highly competitive **National Garden Week** category. Judges were most impressed with 88% of the Greenvale club members participating. They had flower arrangements at the visitor center in Harrisonburg, but even more impressive was the work they did for a local family shelter. They collected and donated items for the children to encourage outdoor play or gardening, collecting appropriate items from Lowe's.

33 The medium **Madison Garden Club scored 98 and earned a red in the highly competitive Floral Design Category**. Their David Pippin program attracted 125 people to a newly renovated facility in Madison for an afternoon of floral design demonstrations. David Pippin created designs

without the use of oasis or floral foam, which has negative effects on the environment. 100% of the members participated in some way, donating greens and fillers, items to sell or baked goods.

34 Hill and Valley garden club with 22 members scored 95 points and earned a red with their Plant together Community Garden Project.

Members worked with individuals from Luray Caverns, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project, a local minister and the mayor of Luray to create the remembrance garden. It surrounds an interpretive marker honoring Bethany Venerly, a freed slave woman whose history is tied to the roots of the Shenandoah National Park.

35 The medium Rapid Ann garden club scored 95 points, earning a red for their Youth Environmental Education application. This project engaged 50 students plus 6 teachers and volunteers as they explored the life of Edna Lewis, chef, lover of nature and cookbook author. It involved the owner of Grelen nursery, the Orange County African American Historical Society, a local orange county artist, local beekeepers, Culpeper Soil & Water, and the chef from Spoon and Spindle who prepared and shared Ednas' apple crisp recipe. I wish I could have been there! Note how cleverly the children's faces are masked.

36 Green Hills with 20 members earned the blue for their Youth Environmental Education application. This project continues from 2022 in partnering with the Boxerwood Nature Center in Lexington to Grow Native tree seedlings. 4th graders start by planting them in pots, labeling and measuring them. The seedlings are tended at Boxerwood until autumn of 2025. The young tree stewards follow the growth of their labeled trees over the years. The 250 trees (so far) will eventually be planted as riparian buffer or wildlife habitat at a site not yet determined. Continuing projects are wonderful, but current year activities must be the focus of the application.

37 Doesn't the cover of this **Calfee Club yearbook** just sing! This club in the 20 – 29 member yearbook category scored 93 points and a red for their yearbook . The full page photos inside are black and white, and equally

striking. The information is clear and includes delightful quotes about gardening.

38 I have this **cook book, and love it! Lake of the Woods** first published their blue ribbon winning cook book in 2015. Last year they added a supplement with 89 new recipes, including a vegetarian section, healthier dessert recipes, and more information on herbs and spices. The cookbook promotes the garden club's presence in their community and raises awareness of the club while attracting new members. Check the Lake of the Woods web site to purchase yours.

39 The small **Monticello club scored 93 points and a red with their newsletter of 3 – 12 pages, entitled "Monticello News"**. The newsletter category is second only to yearbooks in popularity. The judges found this newsletter very informative and enjoyed the photos. There is a special point score rubric for newsletters. Only one edition is submitted for judging, which occurs on line, no printing required.

40 Madison earned the blue for their website with 98 points. The **website** was established in 2023 and is maintained by the club member Fay Utz who is also the newsletter editor. There are links to NGC, SAR, VFGC and the Shenandoah District, even the *Handbook for Flower show Judging*. The judges found it attractive, informative, and easily navigated.

41 Next is South Central District

42 We begin with the **Keysville Garden Club Yearbook**, there are only 14 members, but very active judging by interesting programs and calendar of events. This cover is lovely and there are more colorful photos inside. Exhibiting horticulture and designs at monthly meetings is clearly a priority and the book includes a page to record one's own exhibits each month. Judges awarded Keysville 99 points and SAR loved it as well, giving it top honors for a small club.

43 The medium **Buckingham/Dillwyn** club earned the blue for Decoration of a Historic Building. This ongoing project goes back 20 years. Members decorate the Buckingham Arts Center Building indoors and out.

This building is prominently located on a main street near the County Administration Complex, giving it excellent visibility and benefitting the community. Members cut evergreens from their own gardens, and donate bows, candles, and other accessories, so there is no cost to the club.

44 Buckingham/Dillwyn scored a perfect 100 points for a blue with their Plant Together Community Garden Project application. The club has partnered with the Buckingham library and Master Gardeners for this ongoing project developing and promoting a seed exchange at the library. This colorful library flyer promotes one day of activities focusing on collecting seeds and growing native plants. The photo top right shows self planted wildflowers.

45 In April **Keysville** presented their Small Standard Flower Show entitled “Melodies of Life”. This is the cover of their schedule that earned a red with 96 points. Their horticulture Division titled “Let it Grow’ offered 21 classes. The design Division titled “Life is Beautiful” had 4 classes: Memories, Climb every Mountain, We’ve only just begun, and September Song .

46 The **South Boston Garden Club** scored 98 points and a red with their outstanding recycling efforts. They began in February of 2022 and have earned three benches for their community so far, with 600 pounds more as of last December towards their fourth bench –Trex is now requiring 1000 pounds per bench. This garden club has wide community support – from churches, civic and business groups like furniture dealers, Lowes, and a ladies golf association. Club President Carolyn Nichols is our state chairman of Litter Prevention/Recycling and TREX.

47 Southwest District is next

48 Town and Country Garden Club with 25 members earned the blue for their **Roadside Beautification** application. This is an excellent example of how one page of text and two large photos can clearly explain a project and score highly. The Napoleon Hill Foundation requested the club beautify the marker to draw attention to it and to an individual. The annuals at the Napoleon Hill marker are changed seasonally, funded by a donation

from the foundation. This marker near Wise provides a backdrop to a widely attended annual conference. SAR awarded Town & Country top honors.

49 The medium **Abingdon Garden Club** earned a blue with their **National Garden Week** activities. Club members managed to conduct 7 different events that sounded like a full year of activities in just one week. They included a cancer center, the public library, Town Council meeting, Monarch Way Station and Shakespearean gardens at a local park plus a Trex bench installation and reading to children and planting seeds at a preschool as well as more weeding and mulching. They have clear photos nicely captioned to explain their activities.

50 The small **Seasons IV Garden** club has a well developed ongoing program with Master Gardeners and local libraries to introduce children and their parents to growing vegetables and flowers, respect the environment and use plant material in decorations. This year they had to find a new site for their garden, but continued to offer the programs about planning, planting, pollinators, pests, harvesting and preserving produce. They involved the youth in weeding an overgrown herb garden then replanted it. This Youth Horticulture award application went on to receive top honors at the SAR level.

51 The **Dogwood Garden Club of Big Stone Gap** scored 99 points with their Litter/Recycling and Reclamation award application. This one page application was most impressive – Their ongoing project involves students who collect the plastic film to win a pizza party. And this year the club added a new event by participating in the Mountain Empire Home Craft Days Festival – reaching a much larger audience with their recycling message. They involve the town, the primary school, a church and local community college in their outreach and are working towards their fourth TREX bench.

52 **Seasons IV Garden Club** upset the reigning champions for this award category for selling Visions of Beauty Calendars. They outsold

Westchester for the first time by selling 36 calendars or 2.6 per member – actually two award categories, earning two blue ribbons.

53 On to the Tidewater District

54 The Medium **May Farm Garden Club** scored a red with 99 points in the very popular Horticulture Therapy award category. A most impressive 100% of the members participate in this activity. They work with two different facilities, planning seasonal themes for donating bud vases, ever green floral arrangements, even gift boxes decorated with live greenery, flowers and accessories. Here you see bud vases, centerpieces, and happy residents.

55 Colonial Heritage, with 140 members earned the blue with their Floral Design program. Two founding members held a class to explain judging different types of floral designs using the NGC guidelines. 29 participants attended a morning class in August covering the basics and presenting 4 different design types plus Horticulture. A second design program was offered to the whole Colonial Heritage community demonstrating three different floral designs.

56 The most impressive and colorful **Lynnhaven Heritage Garden Club** yearbook earned the blue for clubs with 20 – 29 members. They include photos of their officers, and colorful pictures, sketches, and clip art on each page. Here you see my personal favorite – the March program “For the Love of Chocolate”. Each month includes design and horticulture divisions as well as members’ birthdays.

57 Lakesmith Terrace, a medium club earned red with their newsletter of 3 – 12 pages. This November newsletter is the one edition chosen to compete with it’s colorful graphics and clear fonts. The 3 – 12 page newsletter is the most popular newsletter category.

58 And now back to a district award - Tidewater District presented their **District Standard Flower Show, titled "Fall Reflections"** earning the Green Rosette for flower shows. The show was scheduled for Sept. 23, but a forecasted storm moved it from the popular outdoors VA Beach Master Garden "Fall Garden Festival" to an indoor location with reduced attendance 50 + visitors.

This first slide shows the cover of their schedule, and the focal point of their show – a 6 ft tall "Autumn Queen" with parasol . Lower Left you see the winner of the Petite Award and to the right is another entry from the Petite Design Division, "Turkey Trot" allowing fresh or dried material.

59 The second slide shows one of their educational exhibits "the Science Behind Colorful Autumn Leaves", and entries from the table artistry section plus horticulture entries. Lower left is theme staging from their entry hall. They had 56 horticulture entries, 24 design exhibits, 3 educational exhibits plus three classes in Botanical Arts.

60 And moving onto the Youth Awards

61 Starting with the Smokey Bear Posters – only Smokey this year honoring his birthday; no Woodsy Owl.

First place goes to **Green Meadow Point** in the Tidewater District with 860 posters or 66 posters per member. Second place goes to **Madison** in the Shenandoah District with 361 posters or 12 per member.

62 Now for Youth Poetry – Three winners are from the Shenandoah District; there were no first or second grade entries.

Third Grade winner Jackson Atkins was sponsored by Cedar Run

Fourth Grade winner Wyatt Stone by Madison

Fifth grade winner Adelaide Moeller by Madison.

All three received top awards from South Atlantic Region! The theme this year was "I Spy with My Little Eye, Something Green Outside - Celebrating our Green World".

63 Thought you would enjoy seeing one of the poems – this by fifth grade poet, Adelaide Moeller who went on to win top honors at south Atlantic Region

64 Next are the names of the young artists who won with their Smokey Bear Posters

1st grader Bianca Delgado sponsored by Sleepy Hollow also won top honors at SAR

2nd grader Afton Eanes by Madison

3rd grader Adrianna Rosario by Green Meadow Point

4th grade – Bea Lawrence by Southside Garden Club who won top honors at SAR

5th Grade – Asha Kuchibhatla by Merrifields Garden Club, if the name is familiar, she won last year as a fourth grade student. And this year won top honors at SAR as well.

65 And now I want to share the winning posters with you - first by Bianca Delgado, who also won at the South Atlantic Region level

66 Second grade Afton Eanes

67 Third grade Adrianna Rosario

68 Fourth grade – Bea Lawrence, who also won South Atlantic Region

69 Fifth grade – Asha Kuchibhatla, who also won at South Atlantic Region.

70 The last slide is of **Hill & Valley who won \$50 for the annual VFGC Presidents Special Achievement** award by entering their application for SP-3, TREX Film Recycling Challenge. It is not automatically given to a club with the most pounds of recycled film, one must apply.

71 Logo

Congratulations to all of the winners of the VFGC Awards and to the clubs participating by submitting award applications. On the final pages of the award ceremony handout, you will find the South Atlantic Winners listed and also the names of the individuals, clubs, and districts who donated funds to support the awards program. Your generosity is appreciated. Remember if you receive a check, cash it immediately.

This concludes the Presentation of the awards earned in 2023. I hope you have new ideas for club projects and that even more clubs will participate in the awards process this year.

Congratulations and thank you all.

Heidi Sage and Jeanne Bruton,

VFGC Awards Chairman and Vice Chairman