

Danville City Quarterly Newsletter

October 2021



Master Gardener Achieves Emeritus Status

Recently, Linda McConahey was awarded with Master Gardener Emeritus status, which is no easy feat.

Linda's commitment, dedication and hard work for the organization has shown her to be a shining example of what it means to be a Master Gardener.

Read more about this distinguished honor on p. 2



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Master Gardener Achieves Emeritus Status

After 7,500 volunteer hours and many years of service, Linda McConahey was recently awarded Emeritus Status by the Danville Master Gardeners Association. To become an Emeritus Master Gardener, a person must be a dedicated volunteer "retiring" due to health or other reasons after 1,000 hours of service as determined by the coordinator or extension agent. It is a rare and high honor to be rewarded with the status.

We would like to share a speech given by Danville's Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, Corey Riedel, about Linda's work with the Master Gardeners:

"Linda started out in the Halifax EMG program around May of 2001. She was responsible for helping with the "Hort Desk" as it was called then. This was somewhat similar to our EMG help desk. About 1 year later Linda and her husband Bill moved from South Boston to the Northern Neck. Linda was one of the founding members and a very active member of the NN EMG group. Linda was active in every office of the association. This was a time when the organization was growing and they had instituted the system of having a President and Vice-President, with the Vice-President taking over leadership after two years of on-the-job training. Linda became Vice-President in 2002, but due to the untimely death of our president, she assumed the top office after a few months and ran the organization for nearly four years – service over and beyond normal expectations!

Under her leadership, the NNMGs continued their efforts to build the annual 'Gardening in the Northern Neck' seminar to become a major event. As registrations grew, so did the association's ability (and confidence) to attract – and pay for – some of the top horticultural speakers in the nation. Being able to guarantee a faithful audience of 350 people – the maximum number any local facility could accommodate – made us a popular locale with horticultural stars on the speaker's circuit and Linda also brought creative leadership and organization to other aspects of the day – break-out sessions, vendors and informational activities. Danville MGs may recognize many aspects of the event – 'Spring to Green' is similar in many respects!

Linda was also an enthusiastic participant in Master Gardener College and served on the Advisory Board for several years. She vigorously encouraged members to attend, and was chief whip and cheerleader for the competition in the brag board competition. She decided the NNMGs would focus each year on one of the five judged categories and win each of the awards. They did.

However, Linda is mainly remembered and honored as founder of the NNMG's Shoreline Evaluation Program. Up until 2008 Northern Neck homeowners with shoreline management issues could contact VIMS (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) and have one of their shoreline scientists come and visit their property and advise them on appropriate strategies. When the funding for this program died, there was no other entity offering a similar service. Linda decided the NNMGs should step into the gap. It was a brilliant idea, with only one drawback. No one knew anything about shoreline management. So, they started a lengthy process of training team members and developing the organizational structure of the new program. Team members took the Advanced MG Water Stewards program at Master Gardener College, and went to VIMS for training. By 2011, the group was ready to launch a pilot program. Linda persuaded a number of NNMGs to offer their properties as guinea-pig sites, and the team honed their skills. By 2012 they were ready to go public, and that year's Gardening in the NN had a shoreline theme and the program was launched.

The effort and commitment to get this going cannot be overstated. If you are telling people what to do to manage erosion and runoff on their properties you need to get it right. There also needs to be a structure for the program to grow and evolve. Thus, Linda led the group in developing an annual operational plan and a 5-year strategic plan. The program also required a formal structure of monthly meetings, minutes, budget, recruitment, ongoing training and more, in addition to publicity, organizing site visits, issuing comprehensive reports (all of which required legal review before they were sent to homeowners.) Add to that, part of the mission of the group was public education: At that time, Linda was the principal speaker who led educational outreach, talking to various groups and giving public presentations to reach a wider audience than the individual site evaluations ever did.

Today the group has doubled in size, and performs about 30 evaluations each season (April – October). It has become a recognized authority in shoreline management: Linda left a lasting legacy in the Northern Neck. The northern neck group wants Linda and everyone to know that it was a sad day when she and Bill decided to leave the NN. They hope that now she is moving into Emeritus status, she will have more time to come back and visit them!

Upon Linda and Bill moving back to the southside area, Linda has continued the trend of being a leader. She has served as the President and Vice President of the Danville EMG. Linda also was a big part of the training program for many years. She helped design the course and come up with material for the new EMG training classes."

Linda has always done exceptional work for the Master Gardeners Association. She is a shining example of dedication and commitment to a volunteer organization. We are thankful and grateful for her hard work through many years as a part of the Danville Master Gardener Association.



Teens Get Double Benefits with Danville 4-H and Boys and Girls Clubs of the Danville Area

Danville 4-H and Boys and Girls Clubs of the Danville Area have partnered to give teens in their organizations more opportunities. Some of these new benefits include:

- Mutual Memberships – All 4-H Members will be enrolled as a Boys & Girls Club Member, and all Boys & Girls Club Members will be enrolled as 4-H Members so teens in either organization will have access to the events and resources of both organizations
- B&GCDA will provide free college trips and tours
- Regular teambuilding activities
- 4-H will provide weekend retreats at the 4-H Center

In addition to these benefits, the cooperative partnership between the two organizations will allow for larger community projects. The pairing will also allow more voices and representation to be "at the table."

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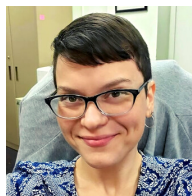
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