VGPG Winter Meeting 2014

9am : Set up and informal networking.

10am: Meeting officially starts.

Greeting from President Wilbur Horton and short introductions from members. (Name, where from, how many years growing, what do you grow. Personal bests (optional))

26 members in attendance from Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Several first time members attending.

10:30am:

First Club Business Discussion

Report from Ann Squires (treasurer and membership)

TREASURERS REPORT:

February 21, 2014	Checkbook balance	$11,129.75 ($729.75 more than last year)

EXPENSES

WINTER MEETING EXPENSES (2013)	$581
WEB EXPENSES	$108
GPC	$300
SEED PACKETS MAILING	$76.00
BUBBLES	$32.50
NEWS LETTER	$13
GROWER AWARDS	$40
AUCTION ADVERTISEMENT	$100.00
SUMMER MEETING (2013)	$67.00
WEIGH OFF PRIZES and SCALE	$2118.00
JACKETS AWARDED 1000LBS	$100.00

INCOME

46 PAID MEMBERSHIPS	$690
WEIGH OFF (Mazza)	$400
AUCTION - $3235 gross	$2781
-$354 for shipping	
-$100 BigPumpkins Ad	

Report from Steve and Terry (Auction)

Auction was once again a successful one, we raised over $3000. Auction bidding was covered from 6:00AM until 11:00PM throughout the week of the auction. Covered by Steve Minor, John Young, Ann Squires, Randy Stromback and Brent Towne. Dick and Ann Squires did a great job getting all the lots mailed out, we received all the monies and seeds were sent out in only two weeks! Once again many lots went overseas, everyone received their seeds, though we did have a couple issues. One seed pack happened to be empty but we found a duplicate seed and got it to the winning bidder. Another bidder commented about some of his seeds being "chipped" but this is really out of our control. We get the seeds from the growers and pass them along in good faith that they are in good shape, if sealed, we do not open up their packets. We had an issue with our mail handler not delivering bids in a timely manner, a dozen bids show up at 5:00AM the following day, all of these bids were time/date stamped prior to our 4:00PM cut off. Next year we will have to do something different. We only missed out on $85 but the real issue is that the bidders didn't get what they wanted. The

question was asked why we don't do a live auction? The main reason is that we have a strong European contingent that supports our auction because they don't have to be at their computer during the wee hours of the morning. It was suggested that Brent Towne check out the Maine auction page to see if their software may be something we want to invest in.

Club Officer Elections

The two year term of Treasurer was completed by Ann Squires. A nominating motion was made and seconded to re-elect Ann to a second two year term. Ann was willing and she was unanimously re-elected. Next year the office of President and Secretary will be open for election.

Club Recognition

Steve Minor awarded Terry Keim recognition for his efforts of setting up the on-line auction and keeping Steve on the "straight and narrow". BTW, Steve did a great job acquiring some awesome seeds for the auction.

Regatta

Terry Keim had two proposals for the club to consider. Lindsey from Linking Learning to Life said that they were approached by Basin Harbor in Vengennes indicating that they would like to host this event. This would be a smaller event (maybe only 6-8 pumpkins) then previous years. Basin Harbor is willing to take on more responsibility and make this part of their annual fall festival. The second proposal was to take a few pumpkins to Camp TaKumTa in South Hero for their annual Halloween event. Camp TaKumTa is a "summer camp" for kids who have/had cancer (www.**takumta**.org)

Both proposals generated significant discussion, how much work involved? What is in it for the club? Insurance? How many pumpkins and people? Before any one was willing to commit to either event they wanted to get more details. Terry will contact Lindsey and request more details regarding the Basin Harbor proposal and then will forward this to the members for their review and vote. Terry will also contact Camp TaKumTa to see if they would even be interested in such an event, this will also be communicated to the members via email.

GPC

After a brief discussion as to whether we join the GPC once again (this is $300 per year) it was voted unanimously to rejoin. It was stated that we couldn't get plaques and ribbons much cheaper ourselves anyway. Only concern was that New England currently does not have a GPC representative. Matt Debacco was our last rep but resigned, he explained that the time commitment is quite significant, a minimum of two hours every Sunday.

11am:

Matt Debacco Presentation.

Matt gave a great presentation regarding fungicides, how and why to use them as well as what's available. You can find the presentation under the Team Pumpkin website; www.Team-Pumpkin.org. On the left tab

"Presentations" look for **22 Feb. 2014** presentation at the **Vermont Giant Pumpkin Growers** Meeting. There is a lot of other useful information there. Check it out.

12pm:

Lunch and networking.

Free lunch consisting of cold cut buffet, tons of member provided desserts!

12:45:

Club Business and Discussion II

Weigh-off dates for 2014

Several changes to the schedules this year. Champlain Valley Fair weigh-off will be Thursday (8/22/14) instead of the typical Friday, the Fair has moved their opening date up to Friday. The VGPGA weigh-off has been moved up a couple weeks and will take place at Mazza's on Saturday September 27th. This was done for a couple reasons, the first is that it is hard to keep a pumpkin growing into October (most areas already have frost in September) and also because of the conflicting date with the Rhode Island weigh-off. With the change in date it would allow our Vermont members to attend Frerichs Farm and would allow the southern New England members to attend the VGPGA weigh-off. In years past Cooperstown had a weigh-off on this weekend in September but that is not happening this year. Topsfield Fair remains on Friday October 3rd.

Club volunteers

The Youngs took over the Newsletter this year and did a great job, but they would willing pass it over to any takers. If interested please contact John Young or the VGPGA email (vermontgpg@hotmail.com). Brent Towne has volunteered to take over the website from Terry Keim who has been doing it for five years, so he will also be setting up the page for next year's on-line seed auction with assistance from Terry.

How to become active in the club

There are many opportunities, it doesn't have to be a "big" role, "many hands make light work". Volunteer activities can be as small as helping out at weigh-offs/fairs to as large as hosting the Summer BBQ or taking on a Club officer role. Next year's winter meeting will have two vacant offices, the two year term of President and Secretary both will need to be filled. So think about whether you would like to fill either of those roles.

Where will the club BBQ and tour be hosted?

It is the Northern growers turn to host the Summer BBQ and patch tour. Ann and Dick Squires offered their place if no one else wanted to host. They have an excellent place and fairly well located to other growers' patches. Date is TBD but sometime in August (either a Saturday or Sunday). An email will but sent out.

1pm:

Vermont's own Watermelon State Record grower John Young

John and Kerry grew watermelon for the first time last year and ended up growing a 127 lbs new state record. John put together a presentation on "how to" and encouraged other grower to give melons a try. We will post this someone on our website.

1:30pm-2:00pm Awards and Fleece Presentation

Youth: For the second year in a row **Zoey Cole** (she grew a 358 lb giant)

Hard luck grower: **Dick Squires** had to backfill is patch twice when flash floods washed away his soil, and he still grew a personal best 831 lbs! Not that's dedication.

Most improved: Easy pick, **Brent Towne**, he won the VGPGA weigh-off with 1290 lbs improving his rookie season by 665.5 pounds.

Rookie of the year: **Jim Morgan** first year grower from Barre, VT , grew a 643 lb giant)

Comeback grower of the year: **Dan and Holly Boyce** (grew *nothing* in 2012, last year grew 1188 lbs)

Grower of the year: **Mark Breznick**, second member of the Vt 1500 club, grew 1530.5 lb to take third at Topsfield, also grew 1356 and 1313 lbs! Not too shabby.

Vermont Giant Pumpkin Growers Fleece jackets are awarded to those members who live in Vermont and have grown a 1000+ pumpkin (or non-Vermont members who weighed their 1000+ pumpkin at our VGPGA weigh-off). This year we had two new recipients, **Brent Towne** of Milton, VT who grew 1290 lb and **Dan Kruszyna** of Cheshire, MA who brought a 1136 pounder to the VGPGA weigh-off. Congrats guys!

2:00pm

Matt Debacco Presentation on "continuous growing"

Matt has been growing for 1,176 consecutive days, in a grow house (obviously) at the University of Connecticut. He had a nice powerpoint presentation about the challenges and rewards. His "indoor" pumpkin of 2013 was only 220 lbs but it was gone by several growers in the fall, two of which grew over 1700 lbs!

Meeting adjourned. Kevin was interested in getting stickers made up, he will investigate further. Terry was going to put together a "care package" for Mike and Gail Strange since Mike has been in the hospital for awhile and they couldn't make the meeting. Several members donated items for Terry to send along with a club signed card. Get well soon Mike!

Good luck everyone growing in 2014. ☺