



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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Our November 15 meeting: Professor Lytton Musselman on “The Strangest Plant in the World”

Dr. Lytton Musselman, Professor of Botany at Old Dominion University, will speak to us about “**The Strangest Plant in the World**” at our November 2018 Chapter meeting. Dr. Musselman’s research over the past five decades has centered on parasitic flowering plants, especially those that cause extensive crop damage in semi-arid regions of the world. This work has resulted in many publications. Among the publications his more local research interests have produced are *The Quick Guide to Wild Edible Plants* and the field guide *Plants of the Chesapeake Bay*, each coauthored with one of his students. In his talk, Dr. Musselman will use a bizarre “mystery plant” (he hasn’t yet divulged its name to us!) to lead us into the wonders of the lifestyle strategies of cannibalistic plants! He will also highlight some of the parasitic flowering plant species that occur right here in Virginia.

NOTE NEW MEETING PLACE: The meeting will be held at **7:00 p.m.** in the fellowship hall of **King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road** (between the entrances to Williamsburg West/Ford’s Colony and Wellspring United Methodist Church and a short distance east of the 7-Eleven at the Longhill/Olde Towne Rd. intersection). **See you there!**

From the President



Our annual meeting was a tremendous success thanks to our wonderful planner and organizer, Cortney Will. It was a tumultuous September, as we had to cancel the original date of the meeting due to Hurricane Florence. We were able to re-schedule it for October 5–7, 2018.

It was an inspiring and engaging meeting. The speakers encouraged our Society members to promote our goals and mission to recruit new members. They challenged us to find ways to appeal to a broader local community. The field trips were very popular, and the attendees expressed great enthusiasm for the walks and excursions that we offered. Many of them have shared the photos and articles of the excursions on social media. The workshops were useful as well. I at-

tended two of them: *How to Use the Flora App* and *Invasives and How to Control Them*, and found them very instructive.

The location of our annual meeting, School of Education of William and Mary, was perfect. It was the first time that the new Neon software of VNPS was used to register for a conference, so we scored a technical first! The 2019 meeting will be held the last weekend in September 2019 at a Holiday Inn near Blandy Farm and will be hosted by the Piedmont Chapter.

I thank Cortney for her fabulous organization and service to our John Clayton Chapter. If you see her, please thank her for all the work she did (twice!) to make this meeting happen.

As we look to the future, we will hold elections for members of the Board at our Thursday, November 15 meeting. Libbey Oliver will present the candidates. The slate is: President, Lucile Kossodo; Vice-President, Caitlyn Cyrus; Secretary, Cortney Will. The post of Treasurer is still open. Cathy Flanagan will be acting Treasurer but we need a permanent one. I encourage all Society members to consider becoming active helpers.

Here is the news from the VNPS Board meeting. First, the Flora App will be completely revised and called Flora App 2. It will be available for download to those who have the Flora App now. In order to be able to work on this, the Flora App 2 will be the subject of the VNPS financial drive in 2018. Second, the annual VNPS workshops in March have been so popular that they will be looking for a new site for next March. Once the venue is found, it will be announced. Third, the annual VNPS trip to Texas was so successful that it sold out in one hour. Many interested members were unable to sign up. VNPS is hoping to repeat this field trip for those still on a waiting list and others.

Our Plant Sale next year has a new date: Saturday, April 20, 2019. The city of Williamsburg is having a special event on Saturday, April 27, 2019 and they need the building for the entire day, not just for the afternoon as had been originally thought. The good news is that we will use the building gratis, a wonderful help for our budget. On Saturday, October 13 we had the last fall potting party at Joan and Jim Etchberger's house in preparation for the 2019 sale. Many members contributed plants from their yards. It is promising to see such enthusiastic support for our 2019 Sale.

Lucile Kossodo

New Members

We welcome back **Bryan Barmore** and **Sharon Burton** of Hampton and new members **Linda Manning** of Newport News and **Kurt Kunas** of Williamsburg to the John Clayton Chapter.

In Review: Annual Meeting & Conference

After months of planning, it was discouraging as Hurricane Florence threatened to put Williamsburg in its path and forced us to cancel the conference. It made me understand the effort it took—particularly by Courtney Will—to make an opportunity like this possible. In the end, at least worry and disappointment were the most we had to face, unlike those in the Carolinas. Three weeks later, the conference was a go. For those who were unable to attend, this review focuses on my experiences. Visit our chapter website and facebook page or VNPS.org for other posts.

Friday Evening: Dinner at the Corner Pocket and opening speaker

Owned by long-time chapter member Lynn Allison, the atmosphere was casual and friendly. The tasty food and easy conversation were a great lead-in to the evening's program. After reconvening at the W&M School of Education, we were introduced to Jessica Hawthorne of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The theme of this year's conference "Sustaining nature, sustaining ourselves" was chosen to get us talking about how to strengthen our organization—and its effectiveness—by reaching out to a larger and more diverse population. Examining our own organization and ourselves is not a simple conversation, but Jessica was an effective facilitator. Many of us were snapping phone shots of her power point bullets. The four bullet points I snapped were under the category "What Can I do?," which read: 1. Affirm mission. 2. Examine my lens. 3. Ask and encourage tough questions. 4. Acknowledge institutional bias. It was a productive evening. We felt we had begun an important conversation.

Saturday morning: Native plants in downtown Williamsburg

This walk was led by Phillip Merritt, landscape architect and former President of the John Clayton Chapter. Downtown Williamsburg was bustling. It was the weekend for the annual Occasion for the Arts, as well as a home football game. Having been bypassed by Hurricane Florence, Williamsburg's historic trees were in fine form. Williamsburg is, as Phillip says, basically a 300-acre botanical garden. In fact, Colonial Williamsburg was recently ranked a Level 1 arboretum—featuring 25 species of oak, 14 Virginia state champion trees, and one national champion, the Jujube (*Ziziphus jujuba*). The amazing Compton Oak (a natural hybrid between the Overcup and Live oak) is 70 feet tall and 97 feet wide, with a 14-foot circumference! One unique feature of the downtown landscape is the allée of Catalpa trees (*Catalpa speciosa*) on either side of the Palace Green. From the available records, it is believed the trees were originally planted in 1734 by Governor Gooch. By the 1930s, none was left standing. They were replanted in the same spot for the opening of the reconstructed Governor's Palace in 1934. Colonial Williamsburg continues to grow replacements in the nursery and replants them as needed. Visit our chapter website to see photos and to view the complete list of trees.

Saturday afternoon: Shoreline paddle on Lake Matoaka

This special “field trip” was led by Dakota Hunter, who is pursuing a master’s degree in biology at W&M. His research is focused on the relationship between invasive wetland plants and environmental variables such as soil chemistry and light availability.

I had never even been in a canoe before, but I was paired with an experienced paddler—the Director of the Keck Laboratory, Randy Chambers! I had little to do except enjoy the scenery and the casual discussion. As a master naturalist, I had my eyes and ears out for fauna as well as flora. It was exciting to see the movement under the water—and make out the form of large turtles—red bellied cooters, I believe. A large family of mallards gathered in a cove and common whitetail skimmer dragonflies darted about. Wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) was prolific along the shoreline. Other species I could discern from the canoe were Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), smooth alder (*Alnus serrulata*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*).

We paddled by the W&M weather station, which I understand has been collecting data on air temperature, humidity, wind speed, and rainfall for over 15 years. The data are used for research to help understand climate change-related transitions in the ecosystem. Randy demonstrated that putting an oar in the sediment and moving it around will produce bubbles. The bubbles are methane, and when they rise to the surface they are releasing a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming. We didn’t see it demonstrated, but we learned that methane is highly flammable and putting a match to the bubbles will cause them to ignite. Our paddle took us past the amphitheater, where music was ringing out and many more canoes were in the water. It was indeed a beautiful day to be out and the perspective from the water was very appealing to me. What a great way to explore nature. It was an experience I may not have had without attending the conference. I hope to return with my camera!

Saturday evening: Raffles, dinner, keynote speaker

Before dinner, we had a chance to participate in two different raffles and a silent auction. One of the raffles, organized for the benefit of our chapter, was conducted by Joey Thomson, a William & Mary graduate and environmental scientist for VHB. Prizes in this raffle were a signed *Flora of Virginia*, a one-year membership to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, and a one-year pass to Shenandoah National Park! In the native plant raffle, organized by President Lucile Kossodo, you could distribute your chances to win among one or all the native plants displayed on the tables that were hand chosen by Lucile. Plants included a New Jersey tea (the upcoming 2019 Wildflower of the Year), dwarf azalea, button bush, blue vervain, swamp milkweed, New England aster, possum-haw viburnum, and American wisteria. The bidding in the silent auction was for a variety of fine botanical

prints donated by Donna Ware and organized by Joey Thomson. The cash bar and buffet dinner were nicely handled, with plenty of options and good-tasting food. Prizes were awarded after dinner. There were some very lucky winners, some who won multiple times. Lucile and I counted the money in the cash box—a successful night for our chapter!

Keynote speaker: Kevin T. Bryan is a senior policy director at the Keystone Policy Center in Washington DC and strategic advisor to The Next 100 Coalition. Kevin is an outstanding speaker with an easy, enthusiastic, yet grounded personality. What I found most valuable about his presentation was that he had knowledge of many organizations composed of under-represented groups that share similar interests with VNPS with respect to public lands and conservation, “Outdoor afro” and “Green-latinos,” for example. As pointed out in the opening speaker’s presentation, sustaining our organization requires more effort to recruit and retain a greater diversity of perspectives. Kevin Bryan advocates reaching out to local churches and schools to create partnerships. I believe that somewhere in our strategic plan, we need to include a goal and strategy for outreach effort. Kevin Bryan may be someone who can help. However small we start, it is important that we do.

Sunday afternoon: New Quarter Park

Doug DeBerry is a research assistant professor of Environmental Science and Policy at William & Mary, a senior environmental scientist at VHB, and is on the Board of Directors for the Flora of Virginia Project. He contributed the species descriptions for the genus *Carex* in the Flora of Virginia,

This walk was an outstanding learning experience, great fun, and very productive. For several hours we were asked to look closely and try to identify most every fern, forb, grass, shrub, or tree we saw to create a list of species—ours totaled over 100! Doug was a terrific teacher; he kept the conversation focused yet had an easy and open manner that allowed for plenty of interaction and questions. We all felt proud of what we contributed in terms of citizen science. Doug sent us the final document of all 103 species. Visit our chapter website to see photos and view the document.

Cathy Flanagan

Ferns and mosses walk in Freedom Park on Oct. 6, led by Helen Hamilton

Writing up our Saturday morning hike through the mosses, liverworts and ferns in Freedom Park for the John Clayton chapter is like Coals to Newcastle!

From my home base in Norfolk, how often I envied you your close proximity to Helen and her hike, which she has done for your chapter several Saturdays while I watched enviously from a schedule that didn’t allow me to get there in time to participate! So I was thrilled that this was a field trip offered during the annual meeting, and both Helen and the plants did not disappoint!

Only a few fern species: New York (“burning the candle at both ends”), Broad Beech, Grape, and Christmas ferns.

Several more mosses: Cushion, Fern, Worm, Tree Skirt, Hook, Starburst, Cat Hair, and Brocade, each with its special trademark.

A few liverworts: Rust Wort, Snakeskin Liverwort, Woolly Wort, *Pallavicinia* liverwort, which caused Helen to mention to us the book *Wild Sex...*

And our favorite, the tennis ball coated in moss!

(*from Helen*—someone noticed a green, round object in the stream bed, looking like a tennis ball; I picked it up and it *was* a tennis ball covered with moss, which I tentatively identified as *Platydictya subtile*.)

Beech Drops were all new to me, in their cinnamon-colored parasitic tones. We found a Hepatica, which is calcium loving. In other walks, I learned that’s not as surprising as one might think, since areas around Williamsburg were old shoals when the sea stopped at Richmond (might it again someday soon?) and ridges made of fossil sea-shells provide the alkaline soils akin to mountain terrain, thus allowing “mountain disjuncts” to flourish in protected ravines between Williamsburg and Richmond. What fun!

So yes, I was thrilled to finally take the moss and fern tour with Helen Hamilton as our guide. It was my main goal in attending the annual meeting. Our thanks to the whole chapter for hosting us, and for your grace under adversity with the rescheduling. We’ll find out how Hurricane Michael treats us in a day or two, as I write this!

Peggy Troyer

Helen’s Oct. 7th fern & mosses walk

I became fascinated by bryophytes (liverworts, mosses and hornworts) several years ago, so when the VNPS conference offered a field trip on Ferns and Mosses at Freedom Park, I jumped at the chance. I had already met two of the attendees online (as members of the Facebook group “VNPS Ferns Mosses and Lichens”), so I knew I was in good company. The trip was led by Helen Hamilton (also a member of the Facebook group) and included nine eager participants.

As we stepped out of our cars, Helen immediately pointed out Goblet Moss (*Physcomitrium pyriforme*) growing under our feet between the paving stones and curbs. She shared that goblet moss is mostly a spring ephemeral (and occasionally fall). Unfortunately, right next to the parking area was a patch of invasive Beefsteak Plant (*Perilla frutescens*), a member of the mint family Lamiaceae.

We walked past the GoApe Treetop Adventure Course, looking at various lichens, mosses, and ferns along the way. We spotted Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), which has fertile tips of the fronds much smaller than the non-fertile parts. The Fern Moss (genus *Thuidium*) we saw has a leaf structure similar to ferns, hence the common name.

Descending to a small streambed, we found Worm Moss (*Bryoandersonia illecebra*) with its many ascending parts that look like small green worms stretching up above the surface. Tree Skirt Moss (*Anomodon attenuatus*) seemed to be growing up around nearly every available tree trunk. There was some confusion over a vine growing up a tree that had suspicious poison ivy-like aerial rootlets, but looking up we quickly determined that it was something else, later identified as Climbing Hydrangea (*Decumaria barbara*), a.k.a. Woodvamp, a native to this coastal part of Virginia.

Passing by patches of Broad Beech Fern (*Phegopteris hexagonoptera*), we made our way to a rotting log on the forest floor that was covered with a light green coating of Rustwort, the tiny liverwort *Nowellia curvifolia*. Helen explained that on downed trees, those logs with retained bark would likely have moss growing on them, but this liverwort is commonly found on trees that have lost their bark. We then spotted a Chain fern (*Woodwardia areolata*) near the stream and Hook Moss (*Forsstroemia trichomitria*) and *Frullania* spp. liverworts growing on the sides of trees. Healthy patches of Woollywort (*Trichocolea tomentella*) are along the sides of the stream and elsewhere throughout the ravine. This plant looks like moss, but no, it's a liverwort, as examination under a lens reveals its hair-like, liverwort-leaved structure.

Working our way up the hill to another small ravine, Helen brought us to a site with yet another liverwort, *Pallavicinia lyellii* (no common name). With lenses, we could clearly see the male (antheridia) and female (archegonia) structures growing from the green thallus gametophyte parts of the liverwort.

On the return path, we discovered a nice group of Lily-leaved Twayblade (*Liparis liliifolia*) in fruit, growing near several Nuttall's Lobelia (*Lobelia nuttallii*). We finished up with some Brocade Moss (*Hypnum imponens*) before making our way back to our cars.

I know I missed some of the many IDs that Helen pointed out on the trip, but I was struck by how many of the liverworts (and ferns) she pointed out were the same ones I had discovered in Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve in Prince William and Fauquier counties. It's nice to know that when you start to pay attention to the small things in nature, you can rediscover old "friends" no matter where you go!

Janis Stone, Prince William Wildflower Society

Here are some photos taken during Annual Meeting walks...

Phillip Merritt shows the group a black gum during his walk in Colonial Williamsburg.



Cathy Flanagan



Some of the catalpas in the allée on Palace Green

Cathy Flanagan

Doug DeBerry, the New Quarter Park walk's leader



Cathy Flanagan

Joey Thompson, who led the Sunday morning Wahrani Trail walk for the annual meeting, points out a tiny hybrid spleenwort fern. Also pictured on the calcareous boulder are ebony spleenwort and walking fern, the two species which contributed to the hybrid.



Susie Yager



Helen Hamilton

October 6th's walk participants pose for a photo in Freedom Park.



Peggy Troyer

Helen holds the moss-covered tennis ball discovered during the Oct. 6 walk in Freedom Park.



Helen Hamilton

...and the folks on the October 7 walk, also in Freedom Park.



Janis Stone took these photos during the Oct. 7 Freedom Park walk:
At left, a liverwort, *Pallavicinia lyellii*; at right, Nuttall's Lobelia

See what's new!

On Facebook: Type “John Clayton” in the search bar and click on our chapter.

On the web: Type vnps.org/johnclayton/ in the address bar.

Upcoming events

🌸 **Saturday, Nov. 10, 10:00 am: Fall Colors Walk at White Oak Trail, Newport News Park**

Susie Yager will lead a level, easy walk through a lakeside woodland, with a portion of the trail on boardwalk over a beaver-dammed swamp. The walk will take us through several habitats, home to a variety of hardwoods, moisture-loving shrubs, herbs, and forbs. The trail is a 2.6 mile loop, level and easy, but may have some wet or muddy spots. Meet at Newport News Park's Discovery Center, Constitution Way. Use the NNPark entrance at Constitution Way. From Jefferson Ave, turn onto Constitution Way; drive 0.9 mile; the Discovery Center will be on the right (GPS coordinates 37.181682, -76.537173). The Discovery Center has restrooms.

Contact Susie to register at soozigus@cox.net.

🌸 **Saturday, Nov. 10, 9–11:30 am: Stonehouse Habitat Garden Workday**

Contact **Sue Voigt** (804-815-6085) for more information.

Plant Profile

***Physostegia virginiana* (Obedient Plant)**

Several years ago I asked native plant landscaper Denise Greene to design a plan for my small gardening plots that would feed wildlife and be easy care for me. So now I have a lot of shrubs that feed insects in the spring with copious blooms and produce large clusters of fruits for birds in the fall.

And there are a few herbaceous species. The fall-blooming wildflowers are few but plentiful—non-aggressive goldenrods like *Solidago caesia*, and several aster species; one, *Symphyotrichum grandiflorum*, blooms through November.

An unexpected addition is Obedient Plant, *Physostegia virginiana*, with 4-foot stems growing in clumps with indeterminate florescence, meaning the youngest flowers are at the top as the terminal bud continues to produce new blooms. The stems are stiff, at various heights, so the plant appears covered with pinkish blooms in spike-like clusters about halfway up.

The tubular flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds. Each flower has five triangular lobes, two forming an upper lip and three as the lower lip. The flowers have open mouths that show guide lines of dots and fine lines for bees and butterflies to follow as they seek food. Bumblebees are the major pollinators and can often be seen attached to the underlip when the weather is cold, or in the evening. Painted Lady butterflies have been seen on the flowers in late October. Obedient Plant flowers are long-bloomers, from August through November.

This plant can be aggressive—it spreads by long stems, either above ground (stolons) or below (rhizomes), and self-seeds—but the young seedlings can be pulled easily if they grow where unwanted. The leaves are distinctive—opposite, sessile on the stem, and lance-shaped with widely-spaced teeth that have sharp points—few plants have this appearance.

This native wildflower is easy to grow in sun, shade, or part shade and soils that are somewhat moist. The stems can be pruned in late summer to control a tendency to droop. (Note: Denise does not like staking and recommends cutting the plants by $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ early in the season.) The plant can tolerate both poor drainage and drought but grows best in full sun with humus-rich soils. Obedient Plant grows naturally in many counties across Virginia, and ranges over eastern U.S. and Canada.

Obedient plant has square stems and like most members of the Mint Family, deer are usually not interested in browsing on the leaves. Individual flowers are “obedient”—if they are moved to new positions, they stay there. There are cultivars in the nursery trade with white flowers and others with more vivid pink-purple blooms.

Helen Hamilton



A bumblebee visits an Obedient Plant.

Nature Camp

Nature Camp is a coeducational, academic camp that emphasizes education in natural history and environmental studies for students currently in 5th–12th grades. It is intended for those with a genuine interest in the out-of-doors and the natural world. Campers attend class daily, keep a written notebook for each class, and are expected to complete a written project for each class. Nature Camp is located at Vesuvius, VA in the George Washington National Forest.

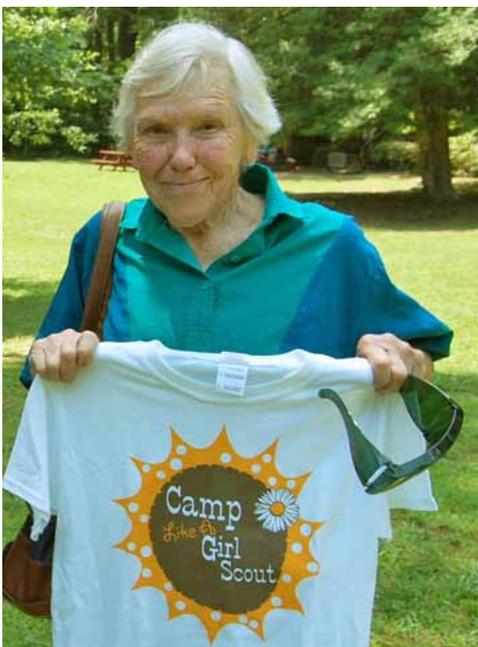
Learn about Nature Camp at www.naturecamp.net.

Two Nature Camp Scholarships are provided by the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and by the generous donation of Ralph Will in honor and memory of Carolyn Will and her hard work rescuing native plants with the Wildflower Rescue Team.

We are one of five organizations in Williamsburg offering scholarships that will award a total of twelve students this opportunity.

You can find an application form at vnps.org/johnclayton/home/nature-camp/.

Libbey Oliver



A 2015 photo of Lorna taken at the dedication of Burkes Mill Pond Pool in Gloucester

A Loss

Lorna Wass, a founding member of the John Clayton Chapter, passed away unexpectedly on October 3, 2018 in Gloucester, VA. In the 1960s, she and her husband built their home “Arbor Knob” and turned it into a haven for native plants and wildlife. She was also one of the founders of Friends of Dragon Run. For over 20 years, third graders at Botetourt Elementary Student in Gloucester walked to her home for field trips in nature study. If the weather was inclement, she would read to the students. She inspired them to love nature and become readers. In her later years, Lorna involved herself with archeology at Windsor and Ware House Landing Farm, travel, and native plants. She will be missed by many.

John Clayton Chapter Calendar

**Saturday,
November 10**

10 am: Fall Colors Walk at White Oak Trail, Newport News Park

Susie Yager will lead this level, easy walk through a lakeside woodland, with a portion of the trail on boardwalk over a beaver-dammed swamp. The walk will take us through several habitats, home to a variety of hardwoods, moisture-loving shrubs, herbs and forbs.

Contact **Susie Yager** to register at soozigus@cox.net.

(See Page 6 for details and directions.)

**Saturday,
November 10**

9–11:30 am: Stonehouse Habitat Garden Workday. Contact **Sue Voigt** (804-815-6085) for more information.

**Thursday,
November 15**

7:00 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting in the fellowship hall of **King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road** (between the entrances to Williamsburg West/Ford's Colony and Wellspring United Methodist Church and a short distance east of the 7-Eleven at the Longhill/Olde Towne Rd. intersection).

Our speaker will be **Dr. Lytton Musselman**, Professor of Botany at Old Dominion University, whose topic will be **"The Strangest Plant in the World."** (See Page 1 for details.)

Keep a lookout for announcements about additional walks and other events in the local newspapers and on our website at www.vnps.org/john-clayton.

Below is a membership renewal form. Please contact Membership Chair **Cathy Flanagan** at 757-879-1997 or at **flanagan.catherine@gmail.com** with questions about your membership.

Membership Form for John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

(Place checks in the boxes below next to your selections.)

I am a **new member** of the John Clayton Chapter **renewing member** of the John Clayton Chapter

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email*	Phone*	

I would like to receive my newsletters electronically at the email address above.

Membership dues

Individual (\$30) Family (\$40) Patron (\$50) Sustaining (\$100) Life (\$500)

Student (\$15) Associate (\$40) —for groups who designate one person as delegate

I wish to make an additional contribution in the amount of \$ to John Clayton Chapter to VNPS

This is a gift membership; please include a card with my name as donor.

I have time a little time no time to help with activities.

I do not wish to be listed in a chapter directory.

**Please Note:* John Clayton Chapter does not distribute any of our membership information to other organizations. It is used only by the officers and chairpersons of our chapter.

Make your check payable to **VNPS** and mail to: VNPS Membership Chair
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2
Boyce, VA 22610