



It's still spring

Absent visitors, garden tour properties are in full bloom

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

On the front of the Dolley Madison Garden Club's Historic Garden Week booklet, there's a line that says, "Saluting 100 years of the Garden Club of Virginia."

Inside, another line reads, "A lot has changed in the past 100 years, but the work of the Garden Club of Virginia has not."

What the booklet doesn't say (since it was printed long before last Saturday's annual garden week tour was canceled), is "a lot has changed in the past 30 days."

Last month, the Garden Club of Virginia announced Historic Garden Week (April 18-25) would be canceled for the first time since World War II.

Citing the safety of its members, participating homeowners and the visiting public, the organization announced in mid-March that it was canceling the 32 events scheduled across the state, including the Dolley Madison Garden Club's "Gordonsville: Lovers Lane to Main Street" tour April 18.

"It is clear that we must act responsibly and proactively to protect the well-being of our members, staff, volunteers, and homeowners as well as the 26,000 visitors who travel from all over the world to enjoy the gardens and hospitality of Virginia during this unique springtime event," said Jean Gilpin, Garden Club of Virginia President.

In 87 years, Historic Garden Week has been cancelled only once before. "At that time, we were in the middle of World War II. Now, we face challenges here at home," Gilpin continued. "It is important that we follow the advice of experts, adhere to guidelines established by the CDC, and take special care to keep our families and communities safe and healthy."

Still, nature didn't know the tour would be canceled—even after the property owners did—and each of the locations to be featured was in full bloom in advance of the scheduled tour.

To that end, with bulbs and blossoms



PHOTOS BY JEFF POOLE AND CONTRIBUTED

Pictured, clockwise from top left: Alexa Adams jumps Bravo in front of the Tewksbury cross country course Saturday, April 18, on the day when the Dolley Madison Garden Club would have featured the Gordonsville home on its Historic Garden Week Tour. The club donated 100 daffodil bulbs to each property, including the Gordonsville Exchange Hotel, in honor of the centennial of the Garden Club of Virginia. Part of the charm of Chance Cottage is its external porch. Horses graze in the lush pastures of nearby Chance Farm. Bursting tulips are a highlight of the duPont garden at James Madison's Montpelier. For more from the "virtual" garden tour, see www.orangenews.com.

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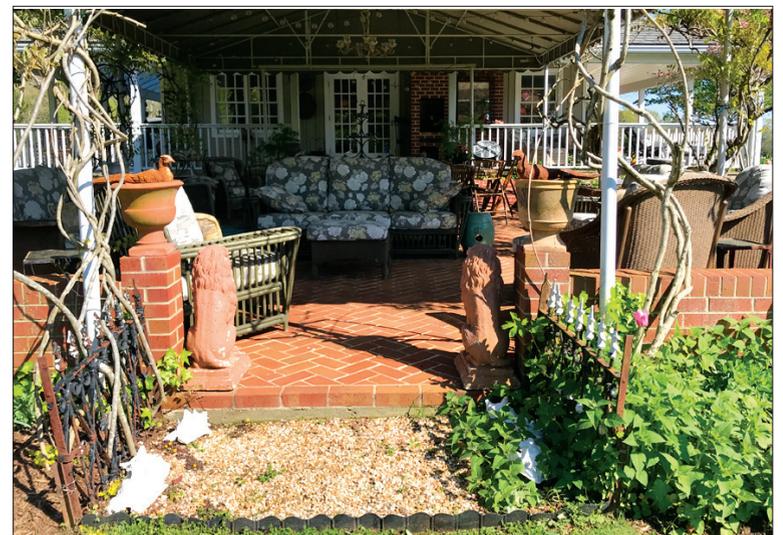
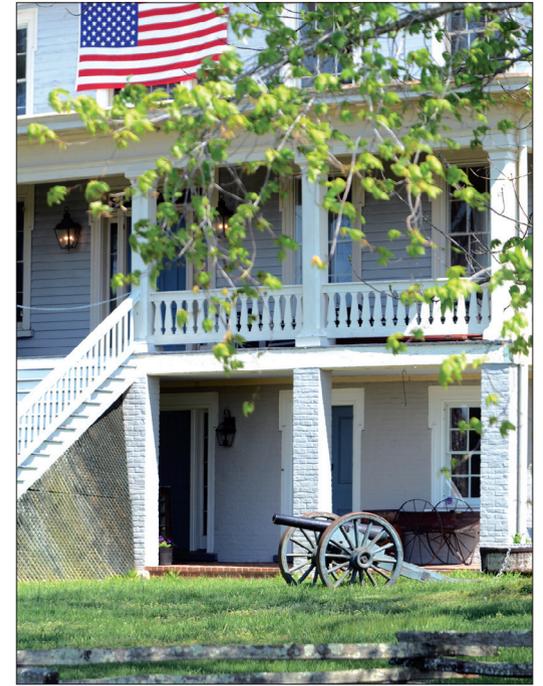
bursting with color, organizers at the Dolley Madison Garden Club—in conjunction with Orange County Tourism and the Orange County Review—provide a “virtual” garden tour of the properties that would have been featured last weekend.

“With a nod to conservation and preserving the rural flavor of the land, this year’s tour takes visitors from the countryside of Lovers Lane to Main Street Gordonsville,” the DMGC booklet notes. The tour would have featured two horse farms, a charming cottage surrounded by abundant flower and vegetable gardens, the historic Exchange Hotel in Gordonsville and the Annie DuPont Formal Garden at James Madison’s Montpelier.

To commemorate the centennial of the Garden Club of Virginia and the 2020 tour, the DMGC presented each of the venues on the Orange County tour with 100 daffodil bulbs. They were planted in the fall of 2019 to bloom this spring.

The “100 for 100” gift was a “thank you” from the club to those participating in this year’s tour.

“While this was a heart-breaking decision for our board to make, we hope Historic Garden Week fans will use this occasion to pause and take a walk, enjoy digging in the dirt, listen to the birds, and relish all that nature presents to us,” Gilpin concluded.



Pictured, clockwise from top left: the Annie duPont Formal Garden at James Madison’s Montpelier, the Exchange Hotel Civil War Museum in Gordonsville, the covered outdoor patio at the Chance Cottage where Melinda and Gordon Bennett reside, a look across the pond at Tewksbury, the Lovers Lane home of Jacque and Richard Juntilla, and dogwoods frame Brooke Royster’s house at Chance Farm. For more photos, see www.orangenews.com.