

A Guide to the Virginia Citizens Consumer Council Records, 1969-1993

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1969-1993

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Biographical Information

The Virginia Citizens Consumer Council (VCCC) is a non-profit volunteer association founded in 1966 by three women from Northern Virginia who were concerned about rising food and utilities costs. The organization promotes and represents the rights and interests of the consumer in Virginia by advocating pro-consumer positions in regulatory and legislative issues. They also participate in hearings and proceedings at the local, state and federal levels, and educate the community about consumer issues.

Scope and Content

The records are arranged alphabetically in 17 boxes and include annual reports, brochures, by-laws, correspondence, legislation, memoranda, minutes, newspaper clippings, newsletters, press releases, publications, reports, speeches, and surveys, documenting the history of VCCC's contribution to Virginia's consumer rights. Includes information on legislation to promote child car safety, passage of Virginia's new car "lemon-laws," successful challenges to allow prescription drug price advertising, lawsuits brought to restrict the availability of junk food in schools, efforts to stop Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO) rate increases, support of plain language laws, regulation of health spas, and reform of ground beef labeling.

The Board of director's minute files are a good resource for annual reports, finances, meeting agendas, membership lists, memoranda, minutes, notes, organizational charts, press releases, resolutions, and treasurer's reports detailing VCCC's yearly activities. Several committees were established by VCCC to confront diverse issues, including the Complaint Committee, Legislative Committee, Supermarket Committee, and Toy Safety Committee. These committee files include correspondence, memoranda, minutes, notes, and press releases. The Legislative Committee, 1973-1991, includes correspondence, copies of legislative bills, information on lobbying efforts in the Virginia General Assembly, voting records of legislative members, and VCCC legislative agendas. The Complaint Committee, 1970-1975, gathered information on consumer complaints against various companies. The committee published the Consumer Complaint Action Guide, which provided consumers information about where and who to write for complaints about products (such as appliance repair, home construction, magazine subscriptions, and the postal service).

Information is included about the Dial-A-Consumer service, a 24 hour a day answering service which contained weekly messages concerning consumer safety alerts, general information on consumer topics, and notices of meetings or seminars, 1976-1977. Included is a notebook from 1977 listing the weekly messages. Also included are agendas, brochures, correspondence, memoranda, and programs for the annual VCCC Consumer Conference, 1988-1989; memoranda regarding grants from the Consumer Federation of America, 1987-1990; and correspondence, newsletters, and press releases from VCCC chapters (Northern Virginia, Richmond, Roanoke, and Williamsburg). The VCCC also initiated a number of lawsuits in their efforts to protect the Virginia consumer and the collection contains clippings, correspondence, legal judgments and statements relating to the suits. The organization was involved with lawsuits against VEPCO, the Virginia State Board of Pharmacy, Department of Agriculture, the American Bar Association, the Virginia State Bar, and Virginia Supreme Court.

Included are copies of newspaper clippings, 1970-1991, regarding initiatives by the VCCC to inform and protect consumers. Included are articles written by members of the VCCC entitled, "Consumer's Voice" and "Buy-Lines" in various Northern Virginia newspapers, 1975-1976. These article inform readers about pool safety, shopping in supermarkets, banking practices, new legislation, red food dye #2, surveys on cold medicine prices at local drug stores, UPC codes, donations to charity, tenant rights, how to proceed with complaints, new rules for mail order firms, salesman insurance laws, medical malpractice laws, and safety with zip-top cans.

Also included is an almost complete run of the VCCC newsletter entitled, "Voice of the Virginia Consumer," 1970-1993. The publication, Handbook (1976), includes a directory of members, board meeting schedules, general resolutions, board pledge, and VCCC bylaws and constitution. Numerous publications are also included such as, Citizen Inflation Action Handbook, Forming Consumer Organizations, Getting your Day in General District Court, and Training Consumer Leaders.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Contents List

Action/Inaction: A Guide to the Virginia Legislature, Notes, misc., 1973

Box 1

Folder 1

Action program committee, 1970

Box 1

Folder 2

Action for child transportation safety (ACTS) chapters, 1974-1980

Box 1

Folder 3

Automobile insurance, 1990

Box 1

Folder 4

Automobile lemon law, 1988

Box 1

Folder 5

Awards, 1974

Box 1

Folder 6

Board of dentistry, 1984-1986

Box 1

Folder 7

Board of directors minute files, 1970

Box 1

Folder 8

Board of directors minute files, 1971

Box 1

Folder 9

Board of directors minute files, 1972 January-September

Box 1

Folder 10

Board of directors minute files, 1972 October-December

Box 1

Folder 11

Board of directors minute files, 1973

Box 1

Folder 12

Board of directors minute files, 1974 January-June

Box 1

Folder 13

Board of directors minute files, 1974 July-December

Box 2

Folder 1

Board of directors minute files, 1975

Box 2

Folder 2

Board of directors minute files, 1976 January-June

Box 2

Folder 3

Board of directors minute files, 1976 July-December

Box 2

Folder 4

Board of directors minute files, 1977

Box 2

Folder 5

Board of directors minute files, 1978

Box 2

Folder 6

Board of directors minute files, 1979-1980

Box 2

Folder 7

Board of directors minute files, 1981

Box 2

Folder 8

Board of directors minute files, 1982

Box 3

Folder 1

Board of directors minute files, 1983

Box 3

Folder 2

Board of directors minute files, 1984

Box 3

Folder 3

Board of directors minute files, 1985

Box 3

Folder 4

Board of directors minute files, 1986

Box 3

Folder 5

Board of directors minute files, 1987 January-June

Box 3

Folder 6

Board of directors minute files, 1987 July-December

Box 3

Folder 7

Board of directors minute files, 1988

Box 3

Folder 8

Board of directors minute files, 1989

Box 3

Folder 9

Board of directors minute files, 1990

Box 4

Folder 1

Board of directors minute files, 1991

Box 4

Folder 2

Board of directors minute files, 1992

Box 4

Folder 3

Board of directors minute files, 1993

Box 4

Folder 4

Board of directors, list, undated

Box 4

Folder 5

Boycotts, 1973

Box 4

Folder 6

Brochures and flyers, 1973-1986

Box 4

Folder 7

Brochures, Drafts, 1972-1975

Box 4

Folder 8

Bylaws and constitution, 1975-1976

Box 4

Folder 9

Bylaws, Drafts, notes, and miscellaneous, 1972-1978

Box 4

Folder 10

Chain Store Public Relations Conference, 1973

Box 4

Folder 11

Chapter charter certificates, undated

Box 4

Folder 12

Chapters (VCCC), Misc., 1971-1975

Box 4

Folder 13

Chapters (VCCC), Newport News Chapter, 1972-1975

Box 4

Folder 14

Chapters (VCCC), Northern Virginia Chapter, 1974-1978

Box 4

Folder 15

Chapters (VCCC), Northern Virginia Chapter, Clippings, 1974-1978

Box 4

Folder 16

Chapters (VCCC), Northern Virginia Chapter, Newsletters, 1974-1977

Box 5

Folder 1

Chapters (VCCC), Northern Virginia Chapter, undated

Box 5

Folder 2

Chapters (VCCC), Price William Chapter, 1977

Box 5

Folder 3

Chapters (VCCC), Richmond Chapter, 1971-1975

Box 5

Folder 4

Chapters (VCCC), Roanoke Chapter, 1974-1977

Box 5

Folder 5

Chapters (VCCC), Tidewater Chapter, 1972-1975

Box 5

Folder 6

Chapters (VCCC), Tidewater Chapter, 1977

Box 5

Folder 7

Chapters (VCCC), Williamsburg Chapter, 1970-1975

Box 5

Folder 8

Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co., 1974

Box 5

Folder 9

Clippings, 1971

Box 5

Folder 10

Clippings, 1972

Box 5

Folder 11

Clippings, 1973

Box 5

Folder 12

Clippings, 1974

Box 5

Folder 13

Clippings, 1975

Box 5

Folder 14

Clippings, 1976

Box 5

Folder 15

Clippings, 1977

Box 5

Folder 16

Clippings, 1978

Box 5

Folder 17

Clippings, 1980-1989

Box 5

Folder 18

Clippings, 1991

Box 5

Folder 19

Clippings, undated

Box 5

Folder 20

Community Nutrition Institute, Lawsuit, 1979-1980

Box 6

Folder 1-2

Consulting, 1979

Box 6

Folder 3

Community Awareness Day, 1986

Box 6

Folder 4

Consumer Activity Banking and Insurance (CABIN), 1977-1978

Box 6

Folder 5

Consumer Complaint Committee, Activities, minutes, etc., 1970-1973

Box 7

Folder 1

Consumer Complaint Committee, Consumer Complaint Action Guide, 1972-1975

Box 7

Folder 2

Consumer Conference, 1988

Box 7

Folder 3

Consumer Conference, 1989

Box 7

Folder 4

Consumer Congress of Virginia, 1976-1977

Box 7

Folder 5

Consumer Education and Awareness Committee, 1975

Box 7

Folder 6

Consumer Federation of America grants, 1987-1990

Box 7

Folder 7

Consumer Leadership Conference Booklet and Planning Committee, 1974-1976

Box 7

Folder 8

Consumers Union, 1970-1978

Box 7

Folder 9

Contracts, 1978

Box 7

Folder 10

Correspondence, 1971-1975

Box 7

Folder 11

Correspondence, 1976-1977

Box 8

Folder 1

Correspondence, 1978

Box 8

Folder 2

Correspondence, 1979-1983

Box 8

Folder 3

Correspondence, 1986-1989

Box 8

Folder 4

Correspondence, 1990

Box 8

Folder 5

Correspondence, 1991

Box 8

Folder 6

Correspondence, 1992

Box 8

Folder 7

Dial-A-Consumer, 1972-1977

Box 8

Folder 8

Drug prices, 1972-1976

Box 8

Folder 9

Energy conscious Christmas, 1973-1975

Box 8

Folder 10

Energy policy, 1974

Box 8

Folder 11

False advertising issues, 1971-1974

Box 9

Folder 1=

Flea market, 1975

Box 9

Folder 2

Food Day, 1975

Box 9

Folder 3

Fundraising events, 1982

Box 9

Folder 4

Funeral directors, 1984-1985

Box 9

Folder 5

Golden Coathanger Awards, 1988

Box 9

Folder 6

Ground beef blast, 1975

Box 9

Folder 7

Handbook, 1976-1977

Box 9

Folder 8

Health Planning Council of Northern Virginia, Doctors director, 1975

Box 9

Folder 9

Health Planning Council of Northern Virginia, Doctors director, 1976

Box 9

Folder 10

Health Planning Council of Northern Virginia, Doctors director, 1978

Box 9

Folder 11

Health regulatory reform, 1984-1985

Box 9

Folder 12

Health spa legislation, 1984

Box 9

Folder 13

Iowa beef industry council, 1973

Box 9

Folder 14

Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Correspondence with, 1974-1976

Box 9

Folder 15

Lawyers committee and directory, 1972-1975

Box 9

Folder 16

Legislative issues, General, 1973-1975

Box 10

Folder 1

Legislative issues, General, 1976

Box 10

Folder 2

Legislative issues, General, 1982-1983

Box 10

Folder 3

Legislative issues, General, 1984

Box 10

Folder 4

Legislative issues, General, 1985-1987

Box 10

Folder 5

Legislative issues, General, 1988

Box 10

Folder 6

Legislative issues, General, 1989-1991

Box 10

Folder 7

Liability insurance, 1986-1988

Box 10

Folder 8

Liability insurance, Miscellaneous, 1988

Box 11

Folder 1

Lobbyists, 1988-1992

Box 11

Folder 2

Membership, 1976-1983

Box 11

Folder 3

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1970-1972

Box 11

Folder 4

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1973-1974

Box 11

Folder 5

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1975

Box 11

Folder 6

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1976

Box 11

Folder 7

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1977

Box 11

Folder 8

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1978

Box 11

Folder 9

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1979

Box 12

Folder 1

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1980

Box 12

Folder 2

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1981-1982

Box 12

Folder 3

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1983-1984

Box 12

Folder 4

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1985-1986

Box 12

Folder 5

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1987

Box 12

Folder 6

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1988

Box 12

Folder 7

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1989

Box 12

Folder 8

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1990

Box 12

Folder 9

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, 1991-1993

Box 12

Folder 10

Newsletters, Voice of the Virginia Consumer, Distribution list, 1983

Box 12

Folder 11

Plain language laws, Articles, pamphlets, etc., 1986

Box 13

Folder 1

Plain language laws, "How Plain English Works for Business: 12 Case Studies," 1984

Box 13

Folder 2

Plain language laws, Simply Stated newsletters, 1980-1983

Box 13

Folder 3

Power companies, 1986-1987

Box 13

Folder 4

Press releases, 1970-1971

Box 13

Folder 5

Press releases, Copies, 1972

Box 13

Folder 6

Press releases, Drafts, 1972

Box 13

Folder 7

Press releases, Copies, 1973

Box 13

Folder 8

Press releases, Drafts, 1973

Box 13

Folder 9

Press releases, 1974

Box 13

Folder 10

Press releases, 1975

Box 13

Folder 11

Press releases, 1976-1978

Box 14

Folder 1

Press releases, 1983-1990

Box 14

Folder 2

Press releases, undated

Box 14

Folder 3

Prescription drug pricing, 1975

Box 14

Folder 4

Publications, Action/Inaction: A Guide to the Virginia Legislature, prepared by the Legislative Committee of the VCCC, 1973

Box 14

Folder 5

Publications, Attorney's Directory for Arlington County, published by Consumers Union and VCCC, 1982

Box 14

Folder 6

Publications, Citizen Inflation Action Handbook, prepared by Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities (The COIN Campaign), ca. 1978

Box 14

Folder 7

Publications, Conducting the Consumer Survey: A Primer for Volunteers with Special Sections on Interviewing and on Telephone Surveying, by Glen H. Mitchell with Mark L. Mitchell, 1979

Box 14

Folder 8

Publications, Getting your day in General District Court, published by the Fairfax County Dept. of Consumer Affairs, undated

Box 14

Folder 9

Publications, Forming Consumer Organizations, prepared by the President's Committee on Consumer Interests, 1969

Box 14

Folder 10

Publications, Hearings before the Subcommittee for Consumers of the Committee on Commerce United States Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976

Box 14

Folder 11

Publications, An Invitation to Consumers, prepared by VCCC, undated

Box 14

Folder 12

Publications, The National Seminar on EFT Consumer/Industry/Government, held by the Virginia Citizens Consumer Foundation and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1971

Box 14

Folder 13

Publications, Report: COCO National Conference on Professional, Occupational, and Institutional Licensing & the Consumer, sponsored by Conference of Consumer Organizations (COCO) and VCCC, 1978

Box 14

Folder 14

Publications, Training Consumer Leaders: Planning and implementing a consumer leadership conference, by Ruth D. Harris, Laura Horowitz, and Lynn Jordan, 1974

Box 14

Folder 15

Publications, Virginia State Board of Pharmacy vs. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council, in the Supreme Court of the United States, October term 1974: Motion to Dismiss, 1974

Box 14

Folder 16

Public members on boards, 1984-1985

Box 15

Folder 1

Real estate, 1989-1990

Box 15

Folder 2

Springfield Mall Committee, 1973-1976

Box 15

Folder 3

Stamps, 1969-1972

Box 15

Folder 4

State Corporation Commission, Constitution of Virginia, undated

Box 15

Folder 5

Status of Women, 1972

Box 15

Folder 6

Student action, 1971

Box 15

Folder 7

Studies, Consumer Study of Electronic Funds transfer, 1977

Box 15

Folder 8

Studies, Proposed trade regulation rule on over-the-counter antacids, 1978

Box 15

Folder 9

Studies, Report on bypass and drop off in the state of Washington: Findings and Recommendation, 1985

Box 15

Folder 10

Studies, White paper on credit insurance, 1991

Box 15

Folder 11

Supermarket Committee, 1971-1976

Box 15

Folder 12

Surveys, Automobiles, 1971-1972

Box 15

Folder 13

Surveys, Legislative members, 1973-1977

Box 15

Folder 14

Surveys, VCCC membership, 1973-1992

Box 16

Folder 1

Surveys, Miscellaneous, 1973-1977

Box 16

Folder 2

Tax exempt application, 1975-1985

Box 16

Folder 3

Tax reform, 1987

Box 16

Folder 4

Telecommunications Conference, 1988

Box 16

Folder 5

Telephone Solicitation Ethics Council, Code of Ethics, 1978

Box 16

Folder 6

Telephone Solicitation Ethics Council, Correspondence, etc., 1973-1978

Box 16

Folder 7

Testimony of Judy Kory, 1985

Box 16

Folder 8

Testimony of the VCCC on the Board of Nursing, 1984

Box 16

Folder 9

Tort reform, 1986-1987

Box 16

Folder 10

Tort reform, 1992

Box 16

Folder 11

Tort reform, undated

Box 16

Folder 12

Toy Safety Committee, 1972-1975

Box 17

Folder 1

Truth squads, 1971-1972

Box 17

Folder 2

UPC Code, 1975-1976

Box 17

Folder 3

U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1976

Box 17

Folder 4

U.S. Postal Service bulk mail permits, 1974-1976

Box 17

Folder 5

VEPCO Stock certificate and dividends, 1975-1983

Box 17

Folder 6

Volunteer meeting, 1974-1976

Box 17

Folder 7

WNVT Television (Channel 53), 1972

Box 17

Folder 8

Women with a purpose, 1975

Box 17

Folder 9

Library of Virginia