

## FROM THE GROUND UP

# From the Ground Up: Garden club brings home the silver

Last month, nine members of the Uwchlan Garden Club made the 260-mile trek to Monroeville, PA, outside Pittsburgh, to attend the annual Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania (GCFP) State Convention.



**Pam Baxter**  
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The group were eager to gather and mingle with members of other clubs within the GCFP, learn from the various speakers and seminars on tap, and browse vendors' booths. They had no idea that they would be returning home with the prestigious GCFP Governor's Trophy, honoring the club's achievement as the Most Outstanding Large Garden Club in the GCFP in 2022.

The actual, physical trophy came in two forms: an engraved silver punch bowl with tray, and an engraved crystal vase. The punch bowl is a "perpetual" trophy, meaning that it is passed on from one winner to the next each year. The crystal vase will stay with the club.

Uwchlan Garden Club (UGC) President Pam



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Nine members of the Uwchlan Garden Club attended the recent annual convention of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania (GCFP), where their club was awarded the Governor's Trophy for the Most Outstanding Large Garden Club in the GCFP in 2022.

Walsh shared with me a little background on the Governor's Trophy. She told me that the silver bowl was first awarded to The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania in March 1954 by then Pennsylvania Governor John S. Fine for "The Most Meritorious Amateur Exhibit" in the Philadelphia Flower Show. In 1955 the GCFP began awarding the trophy to "The Most Outstanding Garden Club" in the GCFP.

Within the Federation there are approximately 4,700 Pennsylvania garden

club members, ten Districts and over 100 garden clubs. In an understatement, Walsh said, "We are so proud to have been recognized for our work throughout the year."

To enter, the UGC members provided a Book of Evidence, consisting of 25 two-sided pages that included documentation and pictures about Club Meetings, Civic Activities, Conservation Activities, Club Organizational Activities, and Club Supported State Projects. Walsh observed that, "It certainly was a to-

tal club effort. And—this is the first time UGC has won this award!!"

Walsh said that to level the playing field for clubs of different sizes, each year a different size club is eligible for the Governor's Trophy: Small clubs (1-20 members), Medium clubs (21-50 members), and Large clubs (51+ members). The rotation repeats every three years. Currently, UGC has 74 members, putting it in the large category.

I love this story. First, because I have friends who are members of this gar-

den club and I'm so happy for them at their achievement. And second, because it demonstrates something it took me years to discover, which is that most garden clubs have little to do with the stereotypical perception of a garden club.

These are not groups of "ladies who lunch" and who putter about their gardens dressed in dainty summer frocks, wielding tiny pruning scissors to manicure their flower beds. The garden club members I've met engage in constant learning and sharing of information, growing tips, plants, cuttings, and seeds. They build and tend community gardens. They host annual plant sales, usually of native specimens that will attract pollinator species of birds and insects. Sometimes they delve into the history of local gardens. The Uwchlan Garden Club has the unique project of helping to maintain and preserve the 1756 Uwchlan Friends Meeting House in Lionville, where they hold their monthly meetings.

Yes, garden club members tend to be primarily women, and they do enjoy lunch together, but these

are garden-clogs-on-the-ground people who are devoted to learning, sharing, and building community, who literally dig in to accomplish their goals. Our communities are richer for them.

Note: At the convention, UGC member Sharon Richardson received The Elizabeth Potts Amidon Horticulture Award, honoring the most outstanding horticulturist of the GCFP and 2022 GCFP SR-4 Member of Honor Award, recognizing five or more years of outstanding contributions and all-around excellence to club and community. Member Terry Miller received the GCFP Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs Outstanding Educational Exhibit Award.

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