

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GARDEN CLUB
FEDERATION OF PENNSYLVANIA, DISTRICT X
Member, National Garden Clubs, Inc.



the TENdril

Volume 26; Issue 3 • September 2026

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The Director's Corner (Outgoing Director Version)

Martha Alexander, District X Director 2024-2026

Dear Friends,

These past two years of being the District X Director have flown by. I want to thank all members of the DX board who have worked hard to make our district such a good one. Their hard work and dedication to the district is what makes such a difference. Our Presidents and Chairs take their job seriously, and for that I am grateful. I am also grateful for the support and assistance I have received from almost everyone. A new director relies on the institutional

knowledge of past directors and longtime members. They make a big difference in a district.

My big goal as a director was to inject more joy into our big meetings and fundraisers and increase the attendance of our members. I believe that has been successfully accomplished by having themed events such as our Spring Mad Hatter's Tea, and Spring Tea in Paris. Including games such as Plant Bingo and Paris Trivia also brought joy to our members. Overall, it has been my pleasure to serve as the District X Director for the past 2 years.

As I look to the future of District X, I am optimistic. We have good new leaders coming in, with fresh ideas. That is welcome. I am confident this new leadership will continue the fine traditions we have established and continue to improve on how we do business in District X.



Martha



A Note from the Editor



Thank you, Martha Alexander, for the initiative and good humor you brought to District X as our Director. In addition to your excellent leadership, I appreciate the support you have given me as editor of *The TENDril*.

I would also like to thank those of you who have extended congratulations and such kind comments about how much they have enjoyed reading *The TENDril*. While recognition is not my goal, it is gratifying to know that my efforts have been appreciated. It is, therefore, with mixed feelings that I announce that this issue will be my last as editor of *The TENDril*.

As I assume a greater leadership role in the Martha Washington Garden Club for the next four years — as First Vice President and then President — I feel that it is time to concentrate my efforts on the success of my club. Among other projects, I expect to continue to act as co-chair for our flower shows, and I hope to spend more time working on our club newsletter.

Thank you to all the club presidents and committee chairs who provided content for *The TENDril*, and to Deb Davis, past District Director, for her support when I began this venture three years ago.

If you are looking for an outlet for your creative talents, I encourage you to volunteer to be the next editor of *The TENDril*! If you have any questions about the role, please feel free to contact me.



I hope you will continue to support the next editor, whomever she or he may be!

Best wishes to you all.

Marce Zaragoza



The TENDril is published four times a year on the GCFP website in March, June, September, and December.



The Director's Corner (Incoming Director Version)

Karen Humphreys, District X Director 2026-2028

Dear Friends,

I am deeply humbled and honored to assume the responsibility of Director of District X.

Thank you to the board for putting your trust in me. I'm really a novice in this organization and am willing and ready to hear what you have to say.

To Martha Alexander, thank you for your exceptional leadership and for passing along such a mature and ready team.

If you told my grandfather that I would one day be a leader for this prestigious group, he would have laughed, called my parents, and suggested I try dog walking instead. Grandfather owned a landscape business and mistakenly assumed that gardening talent is genetic.... BUT! I'm not afraid to ask for help! I have no doubt that you've recognized how reserved I can be, but you may not be aware of my hidden talents—mostly my uncanny ability to place anything green into soil and it will grow.... frequently in the wrong location or will take over what used to be my yard.

To Giant Oaks Garden Club, don't worry, I won't let the new title change me. I will still speak too loudly into the mic and take conversations off track exactly as before. Seriously though, I couldn't have done this without such an amazing group of people making me look good all the time. Thank you!

I promise to lead this team with the same dedication, passion, and excessive curiosity that got me here in the first place. My focus moving forward is simple: to support the incredible gardeners and this organization's initiatives. Your reputation for hard work precedes you, and I feel privileged to join your ranks.

Thank you all so much. I am deeply honored to accept this position as Director for District X.

Karen



DISTRICT X GARDEN CLUBS

GARDEN CLUB OF MUNHALL

Meets 4th Tuesday at 7 PM

Kathy Petruska, President

kpetruska@aol.com

<http://www.facebook.com/GardenClubofMunhall>

Web site: <http://www.gardenclubofmunhall.com>

MON VALLEY GARDEN CLUB

Meets 1st Monday at 6:30 PM

Alice Harris, President

aliceharris141@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/monvalleygardenclub/>

GIANT OAKS GARDEN CLUB

Meets 1st Thursday at 11:30 AM

Pat Stanfill, President

patstanfill@icloud.com

Facebook: [Giant Oaks Garden Club](#)

PLEASANT HILLS GARDEN CLUB

Meets 2nd Monday at 12:30 PM

Tam Ziccardi, President

yogasoul36@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pleasanthillsgc>

GREAT MEADOWS GARDEN CLUB

Meets 4th Wednesday at 10:30 AM

Elaine Swaney, President

eswaney6@hotmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/gmgc1957>

TOWN & COUNTRY GARDEN CLUB

Meets 3rd Thursday at 6 PM

Tami Burnworth, President

tjfoxtrotter@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/tcgcrp>

GREEN GARDENERS OF UNIONTOWN

Meets 1st Friday (for lunch)

Lynda Waggoner, President

lwaggoner@paconserve.org

UNIONTOWN FLOWER CLUB

Meets 2nd Friday at 1 PM

Nanci Myers, President

crowsworks@yahoo.com

MARTHA WASHINGTON GARDEN CLUB

Meets 3rd Tuesday at 12:00 PM

Susan DeLost, President

sdelost@hotmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/mwgcwashpa>

VALLEY GARDEN CLUB

Meet 2nd Thursday at 10 AM

Roxanne Huss and Peggy Brown, Co-Presidents

crhuss@gmail.com



"Happy 250th Birthday America" Martha Washington Garden Club

by Marce Zaragoza

(photos by M. Zaragoza, except where noted)

The Martha Washington Garden Club held our Standard Patriotic Flower Show, Happy 250th Birthday, America!, July 24-25, 2026, at the AmVets National Headquarters in Washington, PA. As is our tradition, we held a rummage sale concurrently with our two-day flower show.



We overcame many obstacles this year, the first of which being finding a venue. For over 20 years, the club has held yearly flower shows at the Washington Crown Center Mall, with whom we had a great relationship and access to tables with tablecloths and maintenance staff to assist with setup. This year, the mall fell under new management and was transformed to a strip mall configuration, eliminating the indoor common space we used for our shows. Finding a venue with all the right "ingredients" was a challenge; sufficient space, flat entry, ample parking, and access to water and tables were top-level requirements. Cost, of course, is always an issue, and that eliminated many appropriate locations from consideration.

We were pleased to find the new location of the AmVets National Headquarters, which just opened in Washington this spring. Our mutual hope was that our flower show and rummage sale would bring more locals into the building to raise awareness of the facility. The building is a former Jewish temple, the first floor of which has been beautifully renovated. However, the venue for our flower show was the basement gymnasium, which has yet to be updated. Our biggest hurdle to overcome was

the lack of sufficient lighting: while the stage was well lit, there were only 2 or 3 operating lights over the entire gymnasium floor. Fortunately, because AmVets donated use of the space to us, it freed up funds to pay for rental lighting, which was provided by a kind soul at a greatly reduced cost.

Another huge hurdle was limited hours for access to the building: 10am-5pm. This left us with only 7 hours to entirely set up the space as well as check in horticulture, design, botanical arts, and photography entries.

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Before...



(photo by K. Wells)

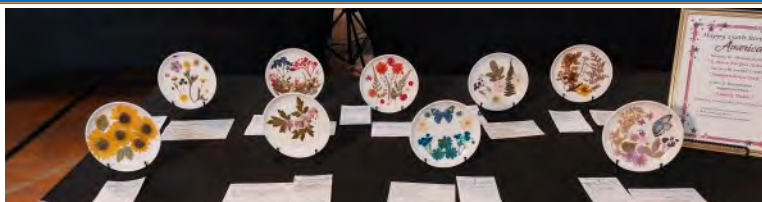
After!



(photo by H. Pane)

"Happy 250th Birthday America": Martha Washington Flower Show (cont.)

It was only through the creativity and tremendous effort of our members that we were able to transform the space in such a short time. We are extremely proud that over 2/3 of our members either submitted entries, assisted with set-up and tear-down, or both – and enlisted husbands to assist! Teamwork did, indeed, make the dream work!



first-time participants displaying their talents in the show. In the Horticulture Division,

we had over 170 entries. We were excited to see so many entries considering the less-than-ideal growing conditions this year.

Our Education Division featured displays on the Blue Star program and the DAR. Visitors were particularly touched and impressed by the inclusion of a "POW/MIA Missing Man" table, which we felt was appropriate considering the theme of our show and the mission of our venue. (More on the POW/MIA display on the next page.)



Tray tables.



Vina McLeod Rudolph's instructional workshops were vital to the show's success!

Our Design Division included 3 Petite Classes, Exhibition Tables, Tray Tables, and *Al Fresco* designs. We had one Botanical Horticulture class – Fairy Gardens. Our Botanical Arts classes included photography, decorated dessert plates, bookmarks, and mini mannequins dressed in plant material.

Participation was encouraged through several well-attended instructional workshops led by Vina McLeod Rudolph, and we had many



First place Mug design by Nancy Zipko.

(cont. next page)



Amazing mini-mannequins dressed in plant material. Notice the necklace on Jean Davis' entry on the left, overall ribbon winner in Botanical Arts.



First place Fairy Garden by Marce Zaragoza.

"Happy 250th Birthday America": Martha Washington Flower Show (cont.)

We are gratified by the abundance of positive feedback on our show from visitors and judges! One member of the District X Board of Directors said that this was the best flower show she had ever attended. Others were impressed by the staging and the quality and variety of our exhibits. We received a number of kind notes from judges and our District Director. Additionally, our Rummage Sale was our most successful yet, despite the reduced hours.

Despite the physical and mental exhaustion felt by many of us, we have recovered and are proud of the way our club came together to make our flower show vision a reality.



Winning Exhibition Table by Suzanne Weimer.



Overall Petite winning design by Carrie Weaver.



Susan DeLost's winning *Alfresco* entry.



A photo cannot do justice to Robin West's Growers' Choice winning Combination Planting!

The POW/MIA Missing Man Table

The POW/MIA Missing Man table is traditionally a small table, set for one, which honors fallen, missing, or imprisoned service members. Usual, but not required, elements include:

- A **white tablecloth**, symbolizing the pure intentions of the service members to respond to their country's call to arms.
- A **single rose**, signifying the blood shed to ensure America's freedom.
- A **yellow ribbon**, representing the demand for proper accounting for those unable to be present.



This solemn tribute was beautifully executed by Barbara Wertz. (photo B. Wertz)

- A **slice of lemon** on the plate, representing the bitter fate of the missing.
- **Grains of salt** sprinkled on the plate, symbolizing the countless tears shed by waiting families.
- An **inverted glass**, to represent a toast in which the missing and fallen cannot partake.
- A **white, lit candle**, for the hope that the missing will return one day.
- An **empty chair**, representing the absence of the missing and fallen.



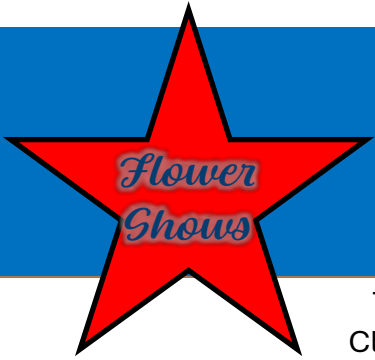
"It's Bloomin' America"

Pittsburgh Area & Laurel Highlands Judges Councils Patriotic Flower Show

text and photos by Marce Zaragoza

The Pittsburgh Area Judges Council and Laurel Highlands Judges Council collaborated to present a lovely Patriotic Flower Show, "It's Bloomin' America" on July 17 at the Lamplighter Restaurant in Dormont. Attendees had the option of attending an authentic Colonial era lunch buffet and a Frontier Court Reenactment. It was hard to choose among them, but these are a few of my favorite exhibits.





Flower Shows

"Creative Freedom" Valley Garden Club

Roxanne Huss and Peggy Brown, Co-Presidents

The Valley Garden Club staged a small standard flower show on June 25, 2026, at the Mon Valley YMCA. The theme was "Creative Freedom."

Sixteen floral designs interpreted the theme with an emphasis of Red, White, Blue or Green. There were eighty-seven horticulture specimens submitted by the members.

The two Educational displays showcased Growing Sources and the History of the Poppy. Picture highlights of the show appear below courtesy of Heidi Pane.



PA Garden Party Tour

Fayette County and Evelyne's Farm

by Heidi Pane

Many people enjoyed the PA Garden Party Tour in Fayette and Washington Counties in Western Pennsylvania in June. I spoke to hostesses, club members, and guests about various locations, and greatly enjoyed hearing so many positive comments. A friend and I visited many gardens, and appreciated so many people hosting the tour.



Elaine Swaney and Joette Harris at Friend residence. Photo by Heidi Pane

ered wagon in the National Pike Historical Celebration in May.

Charlene Friend, GMGC, said, "Knowing that Great Meadows Garden Club was founded by my great-grandmother, Nell Sherry, made the day especially meaningful! I felt honored to showcase my house, which was once hers and a legacy she once created still continuing today.

Joette Harris, GMGC, visited many locations in Fayette County, and said, "It's a demonstration of the good side of humanity, what we learn from the earth and how best to use this knowledge. I'm reminded that we are temporary stewards of this fragile planet and with proper care of our plants and flowers that sustain birds, bees and animals we will flourish. What a tour!"

Martha Alexander, District X President, said, "It was fun hosting the tour at my home. I thoroughly enjoyed talking with all of our guests as they strolled about our yard and viewed the ponds."

Wanda Sherry, GMGC, said, "As a hostess, I enjoyed meeting new people and sharing what Garden Club is all about. As we grow our gardens, we also grow friendships."

At Wanda's home, visitors could get close to chickens, as well as the pair of mules that pull the cov-

Elaine Swaney, GMGC President, explained, "At East End United Community Center Gardens,



East End United Community Center gardens in Uniontown. Photo by Elaine Swaney

Dave Meredith shared the history of plants in various gardens, where plants originated." East End United Community Center has vegetable, flower, and herb gardens, where the Junior Gardeners learn and help. Some members of Great Meadows Garden Club volunteer in the youth program during the school year and part of the summer.



Joette Harris with Wanda and Doc Sherry's mule. Photo by Heidi Pane

Cindy Komarinski, hostess of a family cattle farm, said, "It was truly a pleasure to welcome visitors to our farm during the tour. We were honored to share what it means to be part of the Farmland Preservation Program and to be a Certified Grassfed Farm." Here visitors saw the farmhouse, barns, and beef cattle on vast acreage, as far as the eye could see.

PA Garden Party Tour: Fayette County and Evelyn's Farm (cont.)

Katie Jaros, GMGC, began each tour with this information. "My parents built this home on our 40-acre property in 1965. We enjoy the quiet country setting, the clean fresh air, and wildlife watching." Katie concludes with "Back toward the tree line stands the ruins of the 1790 Maryann Iron Furnace. The giant stones and outline are still quite visible."



Christina Brodland of Evelyn's Farm, with Barbara Funk and Barbara Wertz of the Martha Washington Garden Club. Photo by Heidi Pane.

As part of the Martha Washington Garden Club portion of the PA Garden Tour, Christina Brodland gave tours at Evelyn's Farm, a family-owned and operated 128-acre farm in Washington County. I saw flower crops, goat yoga, chickens, and dogs. Christina had a positive outlook and humorous

stories about managing the land and plants. When asked about being a hostess, Christina exclaimed, "I loved every minute of it! It's always an honor to welcome people to the farm and share the gardens we've been creating. One of my favorite parts is that every visitor brings their own knowledge and experiences, so I always learn something new from each person."



Martha Alexander, Joette Harris, Elaine Swaney, Heidi Pane at Alexander residence. Photo by Laura Bracker

Some of the hostesses recognized visitors from other counties and clubs.

This PA Garden Party Tour provided a great opportunity for people to learn from each other, see gardens and farms up close, share ideas, and be inspired!



A visitor to Martha Alexander's garden. Photo by Martha Alexander.



Elaine Swaney, Joette Harris, and Heidi Pane on Komarinski Cattle Farm with owners Cindy and Dan Komarinski. Photo by Laura Bracker



Laura Bracker, Katie Jaros, Elaine Swaney, and Joette Harris near the bridge at Katie Jaros residence. Photo by Heidi Pane

PA Garden Party Tour

Visit the Historic Gardens of Washington, PA

story and photos by Marce Zaragoza

With so many gardens to visit during the PA Garden Tour — and less than ideal weather — many people missed out on the opportunity to visit the gardens on the Martha Washington Garden Club part of the tour. Fortunately, all of these locations are open to the public, including the Arboretum at Washington and Jefferson College, the Trolley Museum, and Evelyne's Farm (by appointment).

The remaining three of the gardens on our tour are maintained by members of the Martha Washington Garden Club (MWGC) and are located at historic locations in the heart of Washington, PA. These gardens are within walking distance of one another and make for an interesting and educational short tour. We encourage everyone to take a road trip to Washington to not only observe the hard work put in by our members to prepare for the tour, but also to take in the history of these and other sites in Washington.



The LeMoyne House gardens



Red, white & blue themed garden at The LeMoyne House

First on this short walking tour is the historic LeMoyne House, located at 49 East Maiden Street, Pennsylvania's first National Historic Landmark and home to the Washington Historical Society. The MWGC has been planting



The Bradford House

and maintaining this garden for many years, putting in a lot of extra work to get the gardens ready for the tour. The gardens are open at all times, but if you would also like a tour of the house, call 724-225-6740 to schedule a time, or visit during one of the many special events in the area.

A short walk away at 175 S. Main Street is the Historic Bradford House.

MWGC member Kathy Wells is a docent at the Bradford House and is on the team that maintains this beautiful garden. While the garden is always open to walk through, you can also walk in for a docent-led tour, available Wednesday through Saturday from April through November, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. (except holidays). *(cont. next page)*



Docent and MWGC member Kathy Wells answers questions for visitors to the Bradford House at during the PA Garden Party.

PA Garden Party Tour

Visit the Historic Gardens of Washington, PA (cont.)

Those who visited during the PA Garden Tour were treated to docents dressed in period attire who provided insights into life at the time of the Whiskey Rebellion, including a demonstration of cooking on the hearth in the outdoor cookhouse cabin. More information is available at <https://www.bradfordhouse.org/visit-the-bradford-house-and-the-whiskey-rebellion-center/the-bradford-house>.

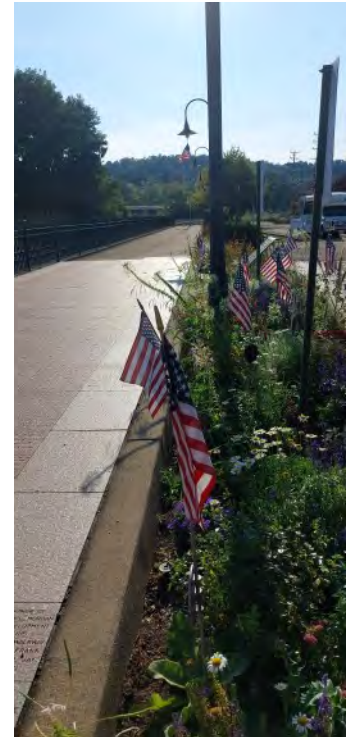


The working outdoor kitchen at The Bradford House

Turn right out of the Bradford House and walk or drive down to the historic Railway Station at 273 South Main Street, where the MWGC plants and maintains the Veterans' Memorial Garden. The train station is the site where service members departed from and returned to during WWI and WWII. A long line of commemorative bricks stretches from the

train station along the Veterans' Walkway toward the flag seen in the distance in the photo on the right. Through the efforts of dedicated garden club members, an untended section of the garden was cleared and planted, enhancing the experience of those visiting the walkway. MWGC is planning a dedication ceremony for a new Blue Star Marker in the Veterans' Garden in spring 2027.

By this time, sustenance will be required, so end your tour with a stop at any of the many restaurants in the area. Any Martha Washington Garden Club member would be happy to make a suggestion!



Veterans Garden at the train station





District X Annual Meeting Awards

District X was honored to welcome GCFP President Pat Wolanski to its Annual Meeting, where she presented National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) awards along with Director Martha Alexander.

NGC Club Standard Flower Show Blue Ribbon: Great Meadows Garden Club.

Accepted by Martha Alexander



NGC Publications over 24 Pages—Newsletter: District X — The TENDril.

Accepted by editor Marce Zaragoza



2025-26 District X Butterfly Award: Karen Humphreys, Giant Oaks Garden Club. This district award is given for outstanding works and efforts of the nominee for their club during the last year.



2025-26 District X Forget-Me-Not Award: Kathy Wells, Martha Washington Garden Club.

This district award recognizes long-standing members who make our organization special because of their dedication to their club and its community service.

**Kudos!**

Awards (continued)

**2025-26 District X
Exceptional Horticulturist Awards (3 recipients):**

Kathleen Petruska, GC of Munhall (pictured)

Absent:

Teresa Lodico, Pleasant Hills GC

Carole Malmgren, Martha Washington GC



The monarchs passing through
in September are no ordinary
butterflies. They are the super
generation, built for an
incredible journey south.
Leave the goldenrod, let
the asters bloom, and save the
garden cleanup for later.

Their fuel matters.

@littlepinelearners



Why Join Designers' Guild!

Iris Cisarik

**Calling All Gardeners, Garden Club Members
or Anyone who wishes to learn about Floral Design**



Designers' Guild is the organization where you can learn all the phases of floral design. We meet 4 times a year at the Greensburg Garden Council, formerly known as the Greensburg Garden Center.

The next meeting is on Friday, October 7 at 10:30 a.m. The topic will be "Luminary Design" led by Wanda Sherry.

Everyone is welcome. We like observers to pay \$5.00 a meeting, but if you decide to become a member, it is \$25.00 a year. If you would like to attend just send your name and email to Diane Hughes and she will send you a reminder.

If you want more information on the Designers' Guild, email jackdianehughes@gmail.com.

Heidi Pane provided photos from our last meeting on Mono-botanic Designs, led by Leeanna Ryba.





Garden Club of Munhall

Kathy Petruska, President

In June, the Club had the Officers Installation at the South Hills Country Club. We were honored to have Vina McLeod Rudolph as our Installation Officer.

Club Officers for 2026-2028 are:

Kathy Petruska, President
Cheryl Kocsis, Vice President
Cindy Lavara, Secretary
Haddie Weber, Treasurer

Also in June, the Club had a display at The Borough of Munhall's 150th Anniversary Celebration at Steel Valley High School. The table display included info about club membership, and plants were given to those interested.



Members gave a tour of the Duquesne Community Victory Garden to a local children's summer camp program. The children also enjoyed planting pepper plants and investigating the vermicompost bin.

Members participated in the 2026 PA Garden Party. The Great Meadows Garden Club in Fayette County was our destination to learn more about community gardening, beautiful backyard ponds and even a farmette with mules and chickens. We did get to meet Kat, the mule, and bring home fresh eggs, liquid compost fertilizer and vegetables. It was a fantastic tour! Thank you Great Meadows.



Members attended "It's Bloomin' America" the patriotic flower show held at the Lamplighter in Delmont. We enjoyed the George and Martha Washington lunch, the frontier court reenactment and of course, the patriotic flower show.

Our July 28 Twilight Garden Tour will feature members' gardens and conclude with a Gathering at the home of members Diane and Randy Marburger.

Members continued gardening at the Duquesne Community Victory Garden. Garlic was harvested, zinnias and lupine are in full bloom, and tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans and zucchini are being offered to the community.





Giant Oaks Garden Club

Karen Humphreys for Pat Stanfill, President

The Giant Oaks Garden Club meets the first Thursday of each month from February through October at St. David's Episcopal Church in Venetia. We are happy to welcome two new members this quarter bringing our 2026 membership to 64 members.

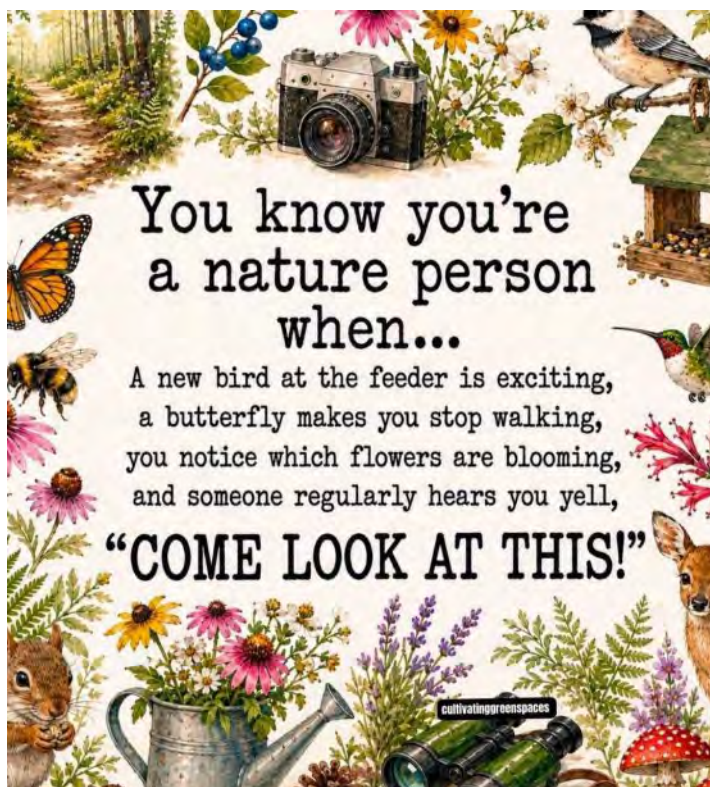
Giant Oaks Garden Club stayed busy this summer with seasonal themed luncheons. Trax Farm hosted us to a delicious deli luncheon with fresh fruits and produce, followed by instructing our group on how to assemble a terrarium... most of us have been able to sustain our miniature ecosystems! Our luncheon hostesses treated us to a beautiful "May Flowers" themed luncheon surrounded by a bounty of early summer blooms, a festive red-white & blue 250th patriotic picnic in July and a summer splash with a nautical themed luncheon in August. All members have enjoyed and learned from our program speakers: from Allegheny County Sheriff's office who shared common sense awareness about online, phone, text and in person scams and Martha Swiss, Master Gardener who encouraged us to "Plant Some Joy" by sharing the ideal perennials for our gardens.

Eleven members attended the June District X Fundraiser and enjoyed the fun and collegiality. Members are equally excited about attending the 2026 District X/GCFP Annual Meeting.

Our community vegetable and flower gardens are bountiful and flourishing under the care and attention of our members, especially during those weeks of extreme heat. The native/pollinator garden at the Peters Township Public Library has exploded with shapes and colors that are attracting all forms of crawling, jumping and flying creatures. Club members continue to collect bottle-caps for processing into Hydroblox®. Members enjoy quarterly visits with the seniors at

McMurray Hills Manor for activities such as our annual "plant the patio" and summer blooms celebration and our core group of crafters assemble garden themed tray favors monthly for 150 Meals-on-Wheels Trays.

Plans are in high-gear for our Tinsel Luncheon fundraiser to be held Friday, October 30 at Southpointe Hilton Garden Inn. This year's theme is "Glitter and Glow." Guests can look forward to a sparkling ballroom luncheon, shopping fresh baked goods in our pantry, a variety of vendors, chances for door prizes, and drawings for our over-the-top themed gift baskets. Luncheon tickets are \$50 each. Please contact Karen Humphreys for information and to submit ticket reservations. luncheon is limited, so please get requests in as soon as possible.





Great Meadows Garden Club

Elaine Swaney, President

Here it is August and summer will soon be over.

We were busy with our Flea Market in May where we sold mostly plants and sold out within two hours.

Great Meadows recognizes National Garden Week by placing plants and/or designs at the following Post Offices: Chalk Hill, Farmington, Ohiopyle, Gibbon Glade, Hopwood and Markleysburg. This generates public interest and awareness in our local garden club and shows appreciation for our government workers.

Moved on to the Mountain Area Fair on June 23rd, where once again we sold plants and had a basket auction with 20 baskets and added jewelry sale. This event is successful. Takes work however, very worthwhile for the Club. It is always an opportunity to share with the community what impact we have with our Blue Star Memorial and gardens, and with the plants that we take care of at the municipal building and Wharton Park.

Our Blue Star committee chair has been working with Nemacolin for them to cut the grass around

the memorial (Point Lookout on Route 40, going East near The Summit Inn). Penn Dot is only required to cut the grass three times a year, so Nemacolin had agreed to cut, however we received notice that effective 2027, they will no longer be able to assist with the cutting. Our chairperson continues to find alternative options.

Our Host gardeners were very excited to share their plants, fields, farms, and ideas with everyone who came for the tours. Each garden on the tour was different and provided exciting and beautiful flowers, garden concepts while showing different approaches. I was able to see some of the gardens with Heidi Pane on Friday. It was hard to spend time in all the gardens in one day.

At our July meeting, our club presented a \$500 scholarship to Erastus Clement, a sophomore studying Forestry.

Several of our members participated in the Judges Council Flower Show on July 17th. Diane Hughes awarded first place ribbon for her design; Martha Alexander the blue ribbon for her miniature design and overall ribbon for the show; and Heidi Pane 2nd and 3rd place ribbons for horticulture.

Valley Garden Club

Roxanne Huss and Peggy Brown, Co-Presidents

The Valley Garden Club staged a small standard flower show on June 25, 2026, at the Mon Valley YMCA. The theme was "Creative Freedom." *(A story and photos from Valley's lovely show appear in the "Flower Shows" section of the newsletter, on page 10. — ed.)*

The club announced the winner of this year's scholarship is Ava Dixon. She is a graduate of the Belle Vernon School District.

The members continue to maintain the YMCA gardens by mulching, weeding and planting pollinator plants.

One of our members died this past month. Alexia Jones was an active member for many years. In her gentle, quiet way she supported other members, and all the club's projects. We will miss her.



Green Gardeners of Uniontown

Lynda Waggoner, President

Community Impact:

Downtown Uniontown Planters

Spring kicked off with a burst of energy as club members rolled up their sleeves to clean, prep, and plant the downtown Uniontown planters for a fresh season of blooms.

May Meeting: Luncheon & Native Plant Tour

Laura Tebbitt graciously hosted the May meeting with a delicious luncheon and fascinating tour of her personal native plant garden. Members left inspired—and with full hands—thanks to Laura’s generosity in sharing divisions of her plants to help enrich everyone’s gardens at home.

June Field Trip: Pittsburgh Botanic Garden

For our June meeting, the club hit the road for an exciting field trip to the Pittsburgh

Botanic Garden. Dr. Mark Miller, the Education and Exhibits Director, led an entertaining and deeply informative tour of the expansive 65-acre property, sharing the remarkable history of how this thriving landscape was successfully reclaimed from former mining and farming land.

Following the tour, members met in a classroom at the garden’s welcome center where they enjoyed a lovely lunch. This was followed by a business meeting that featured the election of club officers.

Elected for a two-year term:

- **President:** Lynda Waggoner
- **Vice President:** Nathalie Cantalamessa
- **Treasurer:** Bunny Gwynn
- **Secretary:** Mary Jayne Jancusco

Town & Country Garden Club of Rices Landing

Tami Burnsworth, President

The Program for our May meeting was “Advice from a Landscaper” presented by Fred Clark, a local owner of Fred Clark Nursery & Garden Center. He gave tips on caring for various plants and shrubs and advised on some good plants for our area. We also welcomed our Scholarship recipient and her family.

We did not have meetings in June or July but Club members participated in a Fundraiser on June 20, 2026 held by one of our members to help fund her animal rescue. We set up a booth

handing out literature with information about the Town & Country Garden Club, gave away free starter perennials, and raffled off a free shrub.

Some members also visited the Flower Shows held in June and July.

The August Program will be “Blooming in Greene County” presented by owner of Oak Tree Acres.



Martha Washington Garden Club

Susan DeLost, President

The Martha Washington Garden Club has 60 members, an increase of 3 since May.

Our 4th Annual Plant Sale was held on May 16 during the National Road Pike Days Festival at the LeMoyne House garden. For the first time, downtown Washington businesses got involved in the festival, with many vendors and food trucks along “our” section of Route 40, which helped to bring customers in to our sale.



Our application to purchase a Blue Star memorial marker for the Veterans’ Garden at the Washington Historic Train Station was submitted and approved in June. We were hoping to dedicate the memorial on November 11, Veterans’ Day, but we were informed that it would take 7 months to receive the plaque. We are now considering a dedication date of Armed Forces Day, May 15, 2027. We are continuing to collect donations for the marker as we need additional funds for the installation and dedication.



July Library Window by Sue Luisi.



During our June 16 meeting, we welcomed our two scholarship winners and their parents. Maya Kilgore from Washington High School and Mae Coburn from McGuffey High School were our scholarship recipients. Each student received a check for \$1,000 for their post-secondary education.

We continue monthly window displays at Citizen’s Library in Washington. Our members do a wonderful job in conveying our emphasis areas and their applications to the local community.

On June 27, we participated in the PA Garden Party, showcasing six public gardens in Washington County, two of which we maintain. Much work went into getting these gardens ready for the tour. We only had 6-12 visitors on this rainy day, and while we would have liked to have seen more visitors, this experience helped us establish several new relationships within our community.



Member and Bradford House docent Kathy Wells answers visitor questions during the Pennsylvania Garden Party.

“Happy 250th Birthday America” was the theme of our Standard Patriotic Flower Show, which was held on July 24 & 25 at the National AmVets Headquarters in Washington, PA. We also had a very successful “name your price” rummage sale, the proceeds of which will help to defray added costs associated with the new location.

Photos by Susan DeLost and Marce Zaragoza



Pleasant Hills Garden Club

Tamara Ziccardi, President

MAY

May was our annual plant sale. Our members donated many beautiful plants from their yards. Several members went above and beyond and set up grow lights and started a variety of plants from seeds. We also had several local vendors donate baskets to our raffles as well. It was our most profitable plant sale yet.

JUNE

June's meeting was a lunch at local nursery called Flora Park. We had 32 members attend this meeting. The nursery provided a

lovely lunch from a popular local restaurant called PASTA TOO. We all brought plant pots and the nursery provided potting soil and annuals so we could create our own arrangements.

JULY

July's meeting was our annual picnic at Mowry park. This was a lovely potluck event. We enjoyed each other's company, and good food and drinks — one of our members surprised us and brought a slushie machine and made pina colodas. We played a few games of corn hole and got our brains working with some fun trivia games.

Uniontown Flower Club

Nanci Myers, President

The Uniontown Flower Club meets every second Friday except January. Most of our meetings are held at Mount Saint Macrina unless unavailable. We have 29 members.

In June, members worked at the Uniontown Library weeding, pruning, and replanting flowers as needed. Work also took place at the Courthouse Fountain. Members cleaned out the five planters and weeded around the fountain. They put in new flowers as needed along with decorations celebrating our Nation's 250th anniversary. The planters at the Courthouse were also cleaned out and new flowers put in the planters.

The club also participated in the Uniontown Flower Show at the Penn State campus at the end of June. Members brought plants, crafts, lavender cookies, and information about the club.

In July, the club met at the home of former president Toni L'Hommedieu. Member Sharlene Lehman presented a program on Pennsylvania bees. This interactive program focused on 15 of the over 45 bee families in our state.



Committee Reports

Awards

Karen Humphreys, Chair

Folks need thanks and recognition for the time, effort and resources

expended on behalf of our clubs. Awards provide inspiration to others (and there's nothing wrong with a little healthy competition). According to NGC, awards create pride through recognition. They encourage members to do more. Awards bring awareness of a club as an asset to the community and inspire others to pursue worthwhile projects. ***An active, award-winning club attracts new members.***

For those experienced members, sorry if this is old news, but for the less experienced, keep in mind that guidance for awards and grants can be located on the GCFP website and national awards and grants on the NGC website.

<https://gardenclub.org/ngc-awards> National Garden Clubs -> Awards & Grants Overview -> Awards Application Details

<https://pagardenclubs.org/awards> Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania ->More->Awards

Awards are usually something which you can touch, feel, and experience such as certificates, tokens or prizes. Recognition, on the other hand, involves publicly commending individuals or teams for their hard work, dedication or positive impact. It has no material value but is priceless in terms of worth. So, remember, an individual can be recognized without receiving an award BUT **neither is a substitute for the other.** It's important to give both awards and recognition where due.

We have received 169 individual 2025-2026 awards and recognition nominations from our clubs.

We have 57 "Tulips" for 33 new members [26 in 2025]; 82 "Laurels" for outstanding achievements [62 in 2025] and 21 "Daffodils" for new/special projects [11 in 2025]. We have 4 nominees for the "Butterfly" award, 2 nominees for the "Forget-me-not," 3 nominees for honorary "Exceptional Horticulturist" award.

Award recipients' names are listed in the GCFP District X annual meeting program and all have been **recognized** and **awarded** at the 2026 Annual Meeting and hopefully a special thank you at your clubs.





Birds, Butterflies and Conservation

Kathy Petruska, Chair

Every year, U.S. landfills and trash incinerators receive 167 million tons of garbage. Landfills and incinerators are dangerous. Every bag thrown out contributes to:

- Pollution of surrounding soil, air and water
- Climate Change
- Health hazards to humans and animals

50% of typical municipal garbage set out at the curb is compostable....50%

- 21 % is food scraps alone
- 15% paper/cardboard
- 8% yard trimmings
- 8% wood waste

Composting Protects the Climate

- Compost improves biological, chemical and physical characteristics of soil
- Compost helps reduce stormwater runoff because it can hold ~5X its weight
- Reduces need for chemicals
- Adds humus, keeping soil particles stuck together
- Improves ability to store nutrients (such as cation exchange capacity)

Food scraps in landfills generate methane, a greenhouse gas with global warming potential 84% more potent than CO₂ in the short term.

Hort Hints

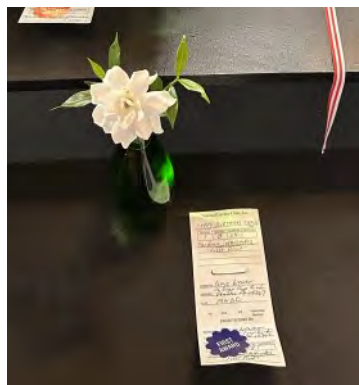
Grace Mitchell, Horticulture Chair

What a year! I'm still recovering from our fabulous flower show held last week. It was a Standard Patriotic Show with many red, white and blue entries.

We had 172 hort entries - very good considering the weather we've had. It was inspiring to smell the fragrance of the gardenia, see the gigantic elephant ear, touch the tasty herb leaves and hear all the positive comments.

My hint to you is to stage a flower show. Sure it's a lot of work, but so rewarding, and one of the main goals of garden club.

I don't have a big finish. Guess I'm too pooped to pun.





Photography Report

Heidi Pane, Chair

I continue to enjoy responsibility as District X Photography Chairperson. May, June, and July were especially busy. I took photos at events in Western PA and shared photos and information with members of District X and GCFP.

Events I have photographed include:

Remember Me Rose Garden near Flight 93 National Memorial, April 18, June 12, July 15 (looking forward to August 6).

June 20 Westmoreland Garden Council Flower Show at Redstone Highlands Senior Center, Greensburg

Historical National Road celebration May 16

Great Meadows Garden Club at Braddock's flea market May 23 and the Mountain Area Fair June 23

Designers Guild in Greensburg, May 29 (looking forward to July 31 and October 9)

Great Meadows Garden Club Members and Master Gardeners, East End United Community Center, June 16

GCFP Garden Party Tours (Many photos I have taken of PA Garden Party Tours appear on PAgardenclubs.org website.)

District X Fayette County:
East End United Community Center
Church Community Gardens in New Meadow Run
Komarinski Cattle farm
Sherry Gardens (mules and chickens)
Alexander Gardens
Friend Gardens
Jaros Gardens

District X Washington County:
Evelyn's Farm in Eighty Four, PA
Historic Bradford House Gardens
Veterans Garden at the historic train depot

District VII
Allegheny County
Burrellton Garden Club
Sue Vertosick - English Garden, Natrona Heights
Hy and Irma Rabkin - Japanese Gardens, Tarentum
Victoria and Donovan Fiaretti - Make It Slow Cutting Garden, Lower Burrell

Valley Garden Club Flower Show, June 25, Monongahela YMCA

Pittsburgh Area and Laurel Highlands Judges Councils Flower Show, at The Lamplighter Restaurant in Delmont, July 17

Martha Washington Garden Club Flower Show, AmVets National Headquarters, Washington, PA, July 24-25

Patricia Wolanski included some of my photos in her research of Remember Me Rose Garden in Stoystown, PA.

I look forward to District X luncheon at South Hills Country Club in August, Giant Oaks Garden Club Tinsel Tea luncheon fundraiser in October as well as Designers Guild July 31 and October 9.

If anyone would like to request the photo albums through email, please contact me at heidi@pane.net

Scholarships Report

Vina McLeod-Rudolph, Chair

This report covers the timeframe from May 2026 to July 2026.

Linda Lutes received \$55 to attend NGC Gardening School Course 3, via Zoom.

Martha Alexander received \$125 to attend GCFP 2026 Symposium in Gettysburg, PA.

Marie Mueller received \$115 to attend GCFP 2026 Symposium in Gettysburg, PA.

This chairman sincerely hopes the scholarship recipients will share the knowledge gained with their garden club.

PA Garden Party Tour: The Church Community

New Meadow Run, Fayette County

Heidi Pane

I learned so much at The Church Community in New Meadow Run, Farmington, Fayette County. This community has a huge, fenced vegetable garden, many greenhouses, chickens, honeybees, and a composting-and-earthworm-castings-fertilizing Hiwassee system I had not seen before.

Dan Kaiser and Obadiah Nichols greeted us in the upper parking lot and answered questions about the farm. The community tries to be self-sufficient, growing crops, collecting eggs, and harvesting honey.

They raise Hyline-Brown chickens. This breed is chosen for its high egg production. They looked happy in a large building protected from the weather and predators. They are free range with a fenced outdoor space.

The beehives were not part of the tour, but Dan Kaiser explained that the beehives are mainly stationary, not moved about the farm. The bees are at the farm mainly for increased pollination and vegetable production. Honey is a tasty by-product of having bees on the land.

The tour began at the seed greenhouse where many vegetable seeds are planted, not just in the spring, but also in late winter, extending the growing season. This greenhouse has a concrete floor, electricity, and water, unlike the greenhouse domes that are over the fields.

Dan Kaiser explained that inside the seed greenhouse now are broccoli, lettuce, and cauliflower.



Heidi Pane and Obadiah Nichols at tomato greenhouse, photo by Laura Bracker

Earlier this year, the seed greenhouse had cabbage, tomatoes, and peppers. The community also plants flower and herb seeds for community use. Basil, oregano, and parsley are grown here and used in the community kitchen.

Dan Kaiser showed us greenhouse domes on railroad tracks over the fields surrounded by a deer

fence. He explained that the deer blind built long ago is rarely needed to protect the crops from deer, since the fence was built.

Seedlings are moved from the seed greenhouse to the field under the dome and planted in the ground between the two railroad tracks. When this group of plants grows to be well established between the tracks and no longer needs the greenhouse dome, the dome can be moved down



Greenhouse on railroad tracks

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PA Garden Party Tour: The Church Community (continued)

the tracks to another part of the land to plant more seedlings from the seed greenhouse. They also have greenhouses built right on the soil. The tomato plants in the greenhouse were five foot tall. The tomato plants in the field were smaller.

Dan Kaiser explained that the irrigation system was a good investment in the farm and is well maintained. The water pipes and tubes are seen at the beginning of each row in the vegetable fields. Community members lay down rolls of garden plastic before planting. They “drill” holes in the plastic where they plan to plant the seedlings for that crop, in rows. The plastic prevents the water from the irrigation system from evaporating. The water is distributed to the soil and roots, not to the air or leaves as a sprinkler system would. The plastic lasts for just one season.



Zucchini in greenhouse

They plant corn, onions, beans, watermelon, cantaloupe, carrots, parsnips, beets, and peppers. Fall and winter crops include lettuce and spinach, grown under the cover of the greenhouse domes, extending the growing season. Under the greenhouse domes now are tomatoes, zucchini, sweet peppers, and cucumbers. In the fields are banana peppers, cabbage, zucchini, tomatoes, and other vegetables. At another location, they plant pumpkins and squash.

Dan Kaiser explained that they do not till the soil. When the soil is in good condition, it is best not to disturb it. They add no chemicals to the soil.

Near the end of the tour, Dan Kaiser led us to a large building with composting-and-earthworm-castings-fertilizing Hiwassee system equipment. I had heard about the benefits of worms digesting compost in compost bins, but this Hiwassee system was at another level. Dan explained that earthworms are nature’s way of tilling the soil.



Dan Kaiser at compost bin with collection trays

In one large raised white plastic bin is compost with earthworms. Throughout the day, vegetable scraps can be added to the top layer in the bin. Earthworms work their magic.



Dan Kaiser demonstrating bio-extractor equipment

variety of organic materials. The worms’ gut microbiome inoculates Vermicompost with a host of beneficial microbes.” (Page 19 of Hiwassee catalog)

“The Vermiflow Continuous Flow Through vermicomposting system can produce up to 2000 pounds of worm castings a year.” (Page 19 of Hiwassee catalog) “Earthworms can rapidly digest a huge

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PA Garden Party Tour: The Church Community (continued)

When Dan turns on the drill, a mechanical part at the bottom of the plastic bin vibrates and sifts, allowing the finest compost extract to fall through to plastic collection pans. That fine soil (vermi-compost) is then poured into another machine—the bio-extractor. There it is mixed with water, and the living part of the compost is extracted from the compost. These earthworm castings are added to water and mixed vigorously, converting from a solid form to a liquid form. This compost extract is used in the greenhouse and in the fields.

Dan Kaiser shared the Hiwassee Product Catalog, and offered a one gallon jug of natural fertilizer for me to take home. They encourage natural enrichment of the soil. “One pound of compost can produce 4 to 10 gallons of liquid compost extract, making it far more efficient than solid application of compost.” (Page 7 of Hiwassee Product Catalog)

The community also offered fresh vegetables to visitors on the tour. Later, my friend Laura Bracker and I agreed that the cucumbers grown there were the most delicious we ever had!



Dan Kaiser offering gallon jug of extract to visitors

This tour at Church Community Gardens in New Meadow Run, Farmington, was worthwhile.

At home, I considered how to use the one gallon of worm-castings extract fertilizer. I used some for four begonias in pots on the front porch. One begonia had broken earlier in the month, but seemed to recover quickly with this fertilizer. I used some extract for my only rose bush, which had been struggling for a decade. Within

days, the rose bush had two blossoms, compared to all the past years when it would have only one blossom at a time, and not many blossoms in a year. With that success, I decided to save the last remaining half gallon of extract until before the July 17 flower show. A few days before the show, I gave the last of the extract to the rose bush, hoping for a blue ribbon. The morning of the flower show, I saw only a green bud, no blossom for the flower show. Days later, I rinsed the jug with rainwater and poured the very, very last of the extract for the rose bush. Within a few days, there were three buds on the bush—a record breaker for my little rose bush!

