

The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania
Committee Reports
From Board of Directors Meeting
Wyndham Garden State College Hotel in Boalsburg, PA.
June 8-9, 2026

REPORTS OF BOARD COMMITTEES in alphabetical order followed the listing in the 2025-2027 Directory Issue. Some reports were given on Monday afternoon and more were given when the meeting resumed at 9 AM on Tuesday.

501 C-3 Exempt/990 Reporter, Lisa Wagerer, was absent and had no report.

Awards Chair, Marilyn Small, and **Awards Co-Chair, Sheri Lowry,** reported that she and Sheri very much enjoyed presenting the awards at the convention in Erie. We hope your recent honors and achievements will encourage you to submit applications again this year. We also hope our presentation inspired additional clubs to apply. Results of all awards forwarded to NGC will be announced in the July issue of *The Keystone Gardener Online*. Results of all awards forwarded to CAR-SGC will be announced in the November issue of *The Keystone Gardener* following the fall CAR-SGC Conference. She and Sheri have worked to reformat and streamline the Awards Manual for greater clarity and ease of use. Most changes to the GCFP Awards Manual involve formatting rather than revisions to awards or submission requirements. The updated manual will be posted on the website by mid-July. Please review the revised manual and accompanying documents under the "Awards" section of the website. New this year is an updated GCFP Cover Sheet form. Please be sure to use the new form when submitting applications. In addition, separate application forms will now be required for NGC and CAR-SGC awards. Please notify your club presidents of this change. All application forms will be available on the website under "Awards." The next upcoming awards are the District Awards, which are due by August 1. Applications for the District Exceptional Horticulturists Award should be sent to Joanne Celaschi. Applications for the Forget-Me-Not and Laurels awards should be sent to your District Director or District Awards Chair. Descriptions of these awards are available in the GCFP Manual on the GCFP website. District Directors, please remind your club presidents of these deadlines. This list will also be in the July KG. "Gold Seal" recipient, Chris Leskowsky, was not present at the GCFP Convention so she was presented with her "Gold Seal Award as well as a Presidential citation from GCFP President Pat Wolanski.

Bee Gap Chair, Bonita Herman, reported the Houdini Fly, native to Europe, entered the United States about 2011 and in PA around the in 2019. This is a Kleptoparasite, meaning it steals resources from its host, rather than hunting their own prey. It is a fruit-fly sized insect that does not attack the Mason Bee but lies in wait. This fly emerges in the spring before the Mason Bee, and it pushes itself through the mud walls to escape. Hence the name Houdini. They live just 2-3 weeks; females can lay 300-500 eggs in a lifetime. Masons only lay fifteen or so in their lifetime. You will see them hanging around the Mason's nesting areas, waiting for the female to leave. The fly sneaks in and lays her eggs on the pollen ball, that the bee left for the bee larvae to eat, and the fly leaves. The female bee will seal the cell with mud, not knowing she just trapped the fly eggs inside. The eggs hatch and the fly larvae eat the food left for the bee larvae. It will change into a pupae and will winter-over, then in the spring the process starts all over again. As the Mason Bee egg hatches into a larva, it will starve to death because the fly larvae ate the pollen meant for them. Harvesting the Mason Bee cocoons in the fall is important because it will stop the next generation of flies. There is nothing we can do about our bees this year if they are infested with this Houdini Fly, but there is a trap that you can buy or make, see the video at Crown Bees. com. All you need is a small jar, drill one/eighth holes in the lid, fill the jar with red wine, add a spacer, and screw it to the bottom of the Mason Hotel. The Masons cannot be bothered

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with the wine, but the flies are attracted and crawl into the little hole in the lid and drown. TOO BAD-SO SAD!

Birds & Butterflies & Conservation Chair, Marcy Cunkleman, reported this past spring was the most mixed up in temperatures that I have ever seen. Cold and wet, then 20+ degrees above normal bringing out plants and insects and birds earlier than normal. She saw more butterflies in this early spring than she did last year. Then the bottom dropped and we had a hard freeze (19 here) with night temps staying in the lower 30 for weeks. The freeze froze many of the fruit bearing trees and shrubs, berries and plants, including the blossoms for the pollinators. I found frozen common milkweed that turned black. But Nature bounced back and finally started to get on track. Birds were mixed up for migration, some weeks early and others weeks late. The insect eating birds had a hard time finding bugs to eat. But once things got on track, courtship and nesting began. She saw fledglings of Downy and Red-bellied WP, Chickadees (nest with 8 babies), Tufted Titmice and now hearing the begging calls of the Cardinals. Sadly, the cowbirds were successful laying eggs in other birds' nests and now the large cowbird fledgling is begging for food from the non-parents. In the past, she watched this happen and tried to figure out how the cowbird babies knew to go to cowbirds since they were raised by different parents. Observing a Cardinal feeding a cowbird fledgling until it learned to eat on its own. Takes a few days to learn how to eat on your own and not beg. She couldn't believe my eyes, but it seemed as soon as the cowbird fledgling learned to eat, a pair of adult brown-headed Cowbirds called and that baby took right off and stayed with them like they raised it. Hard to see the smaller warblers, sparrows and cardinals - all open nesters flying and feeding a demanding baby. These parasite babies will take most of the food from the original nesters. They will also outgrow the nestlings and push them out or will starve them. So sad and still haven't found the reason they are considered migratory birds that can't be harmed. In Michigan where the Kirkland's Warbler breeds in a special habitat in Jack Pines. The BH Cowbirds are trapped and don't come back to try to lay eggs in the Kirkland's nest with special regulations followed. So, if you see a large grayish bird being fed by another different looking parent, watch it and see if you see the switch from host to real parent. She assumed it is the parents since they call and the baby flies right up to them. Monarchs were about 3-6 weeks early in their migration. Places in Central US had eggs and caterpillars in APRIL. Only 2 other years had they been this early. In 2010, she had a female at my house in late April, dumping eggs on barely 1-3 inch high on common milkweed. She was very old and tattered, and in the journey north did a progression of eggs to milkweed using my observations. It was below freezing after eggs were laid and took up to 3 weeks to hatch. Many eggs were shipped out to friends and some were able to start the next generation. But some fell off the milkweed plant, but it sure was a surprise to see a monarch that early, especially in Western PA. she had six generations of monarchs in my yard that year. Thursday, June 4th, she found my first monarch caterpillars and an egg. Early but not unusual since she has seen around Memorial Day. She did collect them and will share with you. She has not raised monarch kids for years. And in case you never have, they are like babies needing cleaned and fed, all times of the day. The more they grow, the more they eat and leave messes that need cleaned up. Two weeks of this cycle, then resting in a chrysalis for about 2 weeks until it's ready to turn into an adult and start the next generation. The whole life cycle takes about 28-30 days to complete. Plant some common or swamp milkweed or orange butterfly weed. The easiest way is to pick an appropriate place to plant, prepared the soil and in the fall when the dark brown seeds are ripe, sprinkle them on the soil and lightly cover for your future monarch host plant. Hummingbirds like the monarchs, were early in certain parts of the state in early April, several weeks early. They are almost ready to have fledglings here in PA, and if it's a good year, they

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could have another brood. If using feeders, make sure you use the 4 water to 1 white sugar only ratio to make your food. She learned to just put in a bottle and shake and you don't have to boil. It works just fine. Don't add red dye or the store-bought liquid they offer near the hummer feeders. Keep them clean (no Bleach or harsh cleaners) and change every few days to keep fresh and no mold. Get outside or like we do at our house, plant outside with native host and fruit and nectar bearing plants to bring in the critters closer to the window so you can enjoy and observe all the little things Nature has to share.

Blue Star Memorial Chair, Karen Faust, reported she had the privilege of participating in the dedication of a Gold Star Marker at the Cambria County War Memorial on June 3rd. The Johnstown Garden Club chose to place a Gold Star By-Way Marker at this site. It was a lovely day, and the members were thrilled to have this Patriotic remembrance at the War Memorial. On June 23, the Franklin Gardeners Association in conjunction with the Oil City Garden Club will place a Gold Star Marker at the VA Healthcare Facility in Mercer. This Marker will go alongside the Blue Star Marker they placed just a couple years ago. In August, Biglerville Garden Club will erect a Marker at their Library. What a lovely place for visitors to see each time they go to read or exchange a book. She is often asked how many markers have been placed in Pennsylvania. Every time she looks at the roster she sits in amazement at how the numbers have come about. The first marker was erected in 1948, shortly after the Program began after World War II. From that time through 1999, only ten markers were placed. During that time, one decade didn't place one – anyone have an idea which era that would be? If you guessed the 1960's, you would be correct. Why? VIETNAM. So much ill-will toward soldiers serving at that time. She saw it first-hand. When Soldiers returned from World War II, they were greeted with parades and fanfare. Sadly, that was not the norm with the Vietnam era service men and women. Since 2000 through August of this year, 110 Blue and Gold Star Markers have been erected. Currently the "trend" is favoring Gold Star Markers. She owes the "surge" since 2000 to the wider publicity available because of the Internet. Garden Clubs have prioritized placing a marker and Veterans are treated with far more respect. She looks forward to receiving more orders in the next few months and assure you she will help in any way she can.

Blue Star Memorial Central Assistant, Jane Howe, had no report.

Book of Recognition Donations Chair, Joyce Hoek, was absent, but reported she was happy to receive a donation in December 2025 in memory of a garden club member. The name of the person will be published in the Keystone Gardener. There have been no other donations since December. You can donate in memory of, in honor of, or in appreciation for someone. **The donation form can be found on the GCFP website under "Forms.** The form is helpful to me. Please consider a donation to the Book of Recognition. Donations are always appreciated and will be used, as needed, for the expenses of the GCFP.

Civic Development Chair, Suzanne Smith-Oscilowski, was absent and had no report.

Club Newsletter Awards Chair, Joyce Peterson, reported there were no problems this past year with clubs emailing their best newsletter along with one application and pertinent information about their newsletter. Unfortunately, with over 100 clubs in the state, it is hard to believe that more clubs do not have newsletters or just don't bother to send them. In 2024 she received 19 and in 2025 only 15 newsletters were emailed. Those that are sent are wonderful and the winners

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were spectacular. She is hoping that the District Directors will encourage their clubs to send in their newsletters for an award. We, who judge, would like to be inundated. The due date is December 1 for a club's best newsletter for the year 2026.

Club Yearbook Awards Chair, Iris Cisarik, reported the 2025 GCFP Club Yearbooks have been judged and awarded at the GCFP Convention on April 26, 2026. There were four entries from 20 and Under Garden Clubs; four from Clubs with 21-19 members; eleven from Clubs with 30-44 members; four from Clubs with 45-69 members; six from Clubs with 70-99 members; and three from Clubs with 100 and over members. There were first-place winners in all categories. The winning yearbooks have been sent on to the Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs for possible additional awards. We are always surprised that more clubs do not enter their beautiful yearbooks.

Convention Coordinator, Judith Schaffer, reported twelve members of the Convention Planning Committees of 2026, 27, 28 and 29 met with me via zoom on Tuesday, June 2. We always learn how to improve future conventions by discussing recent issues presented by the members. FOOD was a priority discussion, especially BREAKFAST. Why was breakfast not included in the room charge? The answer is that some hotel chains no longer offer breakfast in their room rates. Since conventions deal with major hotel chains located within the cities, we have to follow their package deals. Individuals now must be flexible and prepared to purchase a breakfast at the hotel restaurant. In the future registration forms will be more specific about this meal. Did you try Erie's famous sponge candy? It was definitely a food to purchase at their local candy stores. Erie (2026) gave us their swan song report, Lancaster (2027) presented exciting new changes and updates, while State College (2028) and Cranberry (2029) are just beginning their planning. They say that the third time is always the CHARM! 2027 will see us back in Lancaster, April 18-20, to "Celebrate PA- Ready, Set, Bloom!" What surprises will this group have in store for us – plan to register early the NEW way and then participate in their different activities.

2026 Convention Chair, Joyce C. Milberg, reported that she and Bonita are grateful for the many positive comments we have received from those that attended "MystERIE by the Bay" in Erie last April 26th - 28th. And are especially grateful for all the District VIII volunteers who helped to make this convention a success. Especially our Registrar, Dot Yard, and Treasurer, Julie Willow. 268 garden club members and guests attended including a new member of the Shaler Garden Club, Brenda Moore, former NGC President. 15 joined the tour to Drake Well Museum and Park and returned with glowingly positive reports. An average of 200 attended each of the four meals with programs all fitting within the MystERIE theme. A trench coat, collar up, clad Butler couple brought the Dark Side of Fireflies to light. Mystery writer, Neal Sanders, complained about the murderous role of undergardener at his Boston home. Florist, Tim Farrel, took the mystery out of Floral Design and members of the Meadville Community Theater performed an original play by Dr. Joshua Searle-White – "The Invasive Species Living Next Door" to surprised laughs throughout the house. Ten presentations by Master Gardeners and other horticultural specialists educated over 225 attendees. Eighteen Vendors successfully sold their wares as every participant passed by enjoying the view and shopping at their tables. Honor floral designs were spectacular. Exhibits were professional and interesting. Ways and Means successful. We

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sent net profit of \$1,691.80 to the Judges Council and \$9,596.98 to GCFP. If you were not there – you missed a good one.

2027 Convention Chair, Joanne Baylis, said to mark your calendars! The dates for the 2027 GCFP Convention are Monday, 19 April – Wednesday, 21 April 2027. The theme will be “Celebrating Pennsylvania, Ready, Set, Bloom” and will include presentations, speakers and workshops that capture President Pat’s initiatives – garden party, themed gardens and healing art. And once again with District IV hosting, there will be a Flower Show. There are fantastic workshops, speakers and more that we have planned. So, why come to our convention? Because it is more than just an event – it’s an experience you won’t get anywhere else. You will have the chance to connect with garden club members who share the same interests and passions. Whether you are looking to learn something new, hear inspiring speakers or just want to have a goof time, there’s something at the 2027 GCFP Convention for you. Most importantly, you will leave with new ideas, new connections and a renewed sense of motivation, so come join us.

Environmental – Keep PA Beautiful (KPB) Chair, Judith Swanson reminded that Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has a long-standing program called “Pick Up Pennsylvania” which focuses on trash and refuse pick-up and prevention, recycling, and waste reduction, and greening and beautification. At certain times of the year, your club’s pick-up, recycling, and greening efforts qualify for free supplies, such as gloves, trash bags, signage, and safety vests: PennDOT usually has a designated Adopt a Highway Coordinator in each county who can help with this. Register your event EARLY with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful at info@keeppebeautiful.org. March 1st through May 31st is “The Great American CleanUp” and September 31st through November 30th is “The International Coastal CleanUp”. Greening and beautification efforts, such as plantings installed by public buildings, weeding public gardens, putting in trees in public places, creating a simple outdoor classroom with seats formed by sawn tree trunks in a semicircle (engage a local boy scour crew to help), all qualify for free supplies and promotional support by the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful organization. They have printed materials, tool kits, and advice which is explained on the website. If your club is interested in working with young people, the Penn DOT and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful work together to involve environmentally conscious 10-12th grade students in leadership and problem-solving. Read the section on this program – maybe your club can volunteer to help with such youngsters.

Environmental - Trash to Treasure Chair, Carol McConnell, reported the Trash to Treasure theme announced in the Fall Keystone Newsletter (with Marilyn Small’s help!), “Boating on Lake MystErie”, evoked reading a mystery set in a gardening book. The reminder went out in March via email, sent from Tonya Young to our District Directors. Thank you, Tonya and Marilyn. We had ten entries, one from each District. Every one of them was wonderfully creative, the Trash actually did become the Treasure, and each a Treasure to be proud of! Each entrant received a small commemorative gift. A Hershey’s candy bar; floral cocktail napkins; a writing pen; and sticky notes. Three ribbons awarded went to First Place Entry Garden Club of York (District IV); Second Place Entry Presque Isle Garden Club (District VIII); and Third Place Entry Moon Township Garden Club (District IX). Thanks to our volunteer judges: Pam Baxter, Wilma Light, and Margie Sears (and to Dot Yard for help recruiting the judges!). She will soon announce the 2027 theme, and am looking forward to our 2027 Convention in Lancaster. District Directors, please encourage your members to take part as either creators or judges (She will email members soon to sign up some judges!).

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Floral Design/Horticulture Webinar Chair, Chris Leskosky, reported the fourth Design, Botanical Arts and Horticulture Webinar was held on May 11th and featured a diverse range of NGC floral designs, along with horticulture guidance on how to properly enter fruits and vegetables in a flower show. We also highlighted Botanical Arts with a creative presentation on making beautiful necklaces using fresh and dried plant materials. In addition, the webinar included several special features: videos showcasing the lifecycle of a butterfly, a stunning dahlia presentation, and a collection of beautiful photographs featuring a variety of bird species. The webinar is available for everyone to view on YouTube. Since it is posted through her personal link, you must have the link in order to watch it. President Pat sent the link to all GCFP members through Constant Contact, so if you were unable to join us live, be sure to check it out. This is the first time the entire webinar has been posted there. Our next webinar is scheduled for August 5th. She is currently seeking volunteers for Design, Botanical Arts and Horticulture presentations. She has copies outlining presenter responsibilities available, so please see her after the meeting if you are interested. More than one person may collaborate on a presentation, so gather some of your fellow designers and horticulture friends and join the fun!

Flower Show Awards and Ribbons Chair, Rosemary Gish Ebersole, was absent and had no report.

Flower Show Evaluation Chair, Mary Jane Martucci, reported on how to have your flower show evaluated. Go to **GCFP website**, click on **MORE**, slide the bar down on **Flower Show Judges Info**, get the form "**FS Evaluation Request form 11-8-21 (PDF)**". Fill out the form requesting one of three types of flower shows: **30s = Standard or Small Standard; 30d = Design Specialty; 30h = Horticulture Specialty**. Be sure to make a list of all judges, their addresses, and phone numbers and indicate if there are any students. Send the form and a hard copy of your BEST schedule to Mary Jane Martucci, 911 McClelland Road, Finleyville, Pa. 15332. It will be evaluated by a panel. This is not a request for an award but to see if your flower show is good enough to apply for an award. Since the evaluating judges will tell you if your show is good enough, you must be prepared to make a book of evidence. This has new rules that now require digital sending.

Flower Show Book of Evidence (BOE) Evaluation Chair, Deb Stumpf, reported the Flower Show Book of Evidence Chairman must report that there were several problems encountered in last year's competition. Due to a change of leadership in the area by NGC, she was asked to submit all books through our GCFP Awards Chairman. This led to problems with labeling of documents and other issues, so she and Marilyn Small worked very hard together to revise the document she wrote in 2024 on how to prepare a book of evidence. Copies of this document were made available to the membership through the state judges council at the 2026 GCFP Convention. It has also been posted to the GCFP website in the Judges section. She also has a few printed copies available at the back if you need one. She also had problems with the judges' evaluations which are **REQUIRED** to be submitted both on paper and digitally to her. Because of this issue she prepared a second document on how to properly send a digital evaluation. It, too, was published on the GCFP website and passed out at the State Judges Council Meeting at the convention. It is her hope that all judges will receive a copy. She encourages all of the clubs having flower shows this summer to submit books for judging and hopes that we can all work

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together to make this competition as smooth and easy as possible. The deadline for submitting a book of evidence is December 1, 2026.

Flower Show Judges Council (JC) Chair, Karen Wychock, reported that this is a combined report of the six area Judges Councils from across the state. These include the Central Area headed by Roseann Varner, the Erie Area headed by Linda Morrison, The Laurel Highlands Area headed by Sheila Croushore, The Northeast Area headed by Christine Leskosky, the Philadelphia Area headed by Louise Heilig and the Pittsburgh Area headed by Marilyn Backus. Our Council Chairs have been working tirelessly in educating their members on Design and Horticulture. Presentations recently included leaf manipulation, design mechanics, contrived plant material, and Botanical Arts. Specific studies were conducted on Armature Design, Assemblage and Duo Design. To help promote flower shows across the state, a few of our councils are continuing to offer garden clubs, who do not have a judge within their membership, help with planning and implementing a flower show. Garden clubs are often overwhelmed by the rules governing an NGC flower show. These councils walk the garden clubs through the process step by step, thus ensuring their success. With such support, they will hopefully continue to have additional flower shows. The Philadelphia Area Council held a flower show in late October entitled, "Broadway Here We Come!" Erie Council July 2026 - "America In Bloom". Central Area Judges Council - July 30, "Birth of a Nation - America at 250". Our Councils were very active in the Philadelphia Flower Show, "Rooted," this year. Two panels from the Pittsburgh Area Judges Council (Marie Mueller, Deb Stumpf, Martha Alexander and Sheila Croushore, Margie Wolff, Marilyn Backus) judged floor displays and awarded GCFP ribbons to the most outstanding Environmental, Creative, Horticulture and Educational Displays. Another group of judges were charged with judging Pressed Plants, Botanical Arts, Floral Design and Youth. We would like to congratulate our newly accredited judges since the last convention. They include: Joanne Baylis, Nancy Cuttic, Rachel Collins, Denise Klein, Susan Glassmoyer, Wendy Fox, Sharon Richardson, and Leeanne Ryba. Pennsylvania has 83 Accredited Flower Show Judges: 20 Accredited Judges; 9 Life Judges; 52 Master Judges; 23 Emeritus Judges. Due to health issues, we have had both Nancy Cartwright, Judges Credentials Chair, and Susan Glassmoyer, Judges Council Secretary, resign from their positions. We would like to thank Nancy and Susan for her time, effort and dedication to the GCFP and the Judges Council. Anita Lehman from District XI, Norristown Garden Club, will be taking over for Nancy Cartwright. Nancy Cuttic, District I, Uwchlan Garden Club, will take over for Susan Glassmoyer.

Flower Show Judges – Laurel Highlands Council, Sheila Croushore, reported LHJC has 15 Active Judges and 1 Judge Emeritus. We helped with designs for Flower Show School Course 1&2 in Gettysburg. She received a few things that belonged to Nancy Bittner and they were donated as a fundraiser to FSS. In April our new officers were installed by Charlotte Chrissey our outgoing Chair. We discussed the judge coordinator duties, and the District and State FS Advisor responsibilities. Designs and Horticulture were discussed. A memory donation was made to the GCFP FS Schools & Symposium fund in Nancy Bittner's name. We had our Joint FS With PAJC on July 8th titled Girl's Trip. What a great show!! We are offering Flower Show help to clubs that do not have a Judge within their membership. We presented our first program in June. We have partnered with National Capitol Area, & Pittsburgh Area JC in hosting ZOOM Sessions on different judging topics. Our presentations so far Botanical Arts, leaf manipulation and using the leaf manipulation techniques in designs, members from all three councils were encouraged to send in pictures and we discussed them. In September, our discussions were Judges etiquette, when and why to leave after judging, the different types of fall crocus, and after you leave the judging floor can you return to fix ribbon mistakes. Our district held 4 Flower Shows this summer and our

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Judges were invited to judge several other shows not in our district. In December our Council was invited to Lois Shuster's home and we enjoyed lunch, laughs, and a gift exchange. Comment tablets were handed out as well as green staples. Lois had a silent auction of her favorite dried pieces, artwork and containers. What a great day! In March we held a zoom meeting and Deb Stumpf explained the process of evaluating Books of evidence and the form. We also discussed: how to find an application example on the NGC website, initialing the back of each card, and if Hort Specialty shows can have Artistic crafts. Suggestion is working with schedule advisors to update them on the latest criteria, we believe a few schedules were not judged correctly.

Flower Show Judges Credentials Chair, Anita Lehman, was absent but reported Pennsylvania has 83 Accredited Flower Show Judges; 20 Accredited Judges; 9 Life Judges 54; Master Judges 23; Emeritus Judges 9. Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2026. 39 Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2027. 33 Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2028. Deceased Judges: Caryl O'Gara and Lee Gittens Judges are reminded to fill out Form 13, 15L or 15M with your exhibiting and judging credits to prepare for your next Symposium. New Judges Credentials Chair: Anita Lehman Cell: 215-870-9568 Address: 516 Dawes Lane, Ambler, PA. 19002.

Flower Show (FS) Schedule Chair, Margie Bucci, was absent and had no report.

Flower Show Schools Chair, Joanne Baylis, reported that since our last board meeting, there have been two Flower Show Schools. Course II took place 20-22 October 2025 in Gettysburg. There were 12 students in attendance. Course III took place 13-15 April 2026 in Gettysburg. There were 14 students in attendance. Nine (9) students pursuing Flower Show judge status and five (5) accredited judges taking Course III as a refresher. Our Flower Show School has attracted a diverse group of participants from across the region. Students have attended from Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio and of course, Pennsylvania. A notable outcome from Course III is that five (5) students from Pennsylvania advanced to the level of student judge. Congratulations to: Patricia Crincoli – Parkland GC and Emmaus GC; Nancy Ferraro Anderson – Norristown GC; Carla Kelly – Town & Country GC of Lancaster; Caroline Hall – The Heritage GC; Andrea Falchek – Somerset GC. The next Flower Show School, Course IV will be held 26-28 October 2026 in Gettysburg and the brochure can be found on both the GCFP and NGC websites: GCFP - <https://pagardenclubs.org/flower-show-judges-info> and NGC - <https://gardenclub.org/school/flower-show-school-courses>.

Flower Show Student Judges Credentials Chair, Claire Lechlitter, was absent but reported there are currently 11 student judges. She expects to receive more student judges when the results of Course III held in April are approved. She will then update the list on the website. Please offer judging and exhibiting opportunities to the student judges that are trying to gain Accredited Judge status.

Flower Show Symposium Chair, Tonya Young, reported GCFP will host a Flower Show Symposium on August 24–25, 2026, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. We are pleased to welcome Lynn Fronk and Pam Braun as our instructors. The Design program, taught by Lynn, will include Low-Profile Designs and Abstract Designs, with an allied topic on Design Mechanics and Techniques. The Horticulture program, taught by Pam, will focus on judging Fruits, Nuts, and Vegetables, as well as Broad-Leaf Evergreens. Her Allied topic will cover Grooming Mechanics. The symposium schedule will be Design instruction on the first day, followed by Horticulture

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instruction on the second day. The change in our typical schedule is necessary to accommodate our instructors' busy schedules. Classes will be held at the Gettysburg Fire Department on North Stratton Street in Gettysburg. This venue has successfully hosted Flower Show School and provides an excellent learning environment. Hotel accommodations are available at the Hampton Inn Gettysburg, where a complimentary breakfast is included. The room rate is \$134.00 per night, and the hotel is just a short drive from the Gettysburg Fire Department. Lunch will be provided on both days. Dinner will be on your own, with many nearby restaurants available. We encourage attendees to extend their stay and enjoy the many historical and cultural attractions that Gettysburg has to offer. More information on the Registration Fee, with prices, will be updated. We look forward to an informative and enjoyable symposium and hope you will join us in Gettysburg! Look for the trifold on the GCFP website or from your Judges Council Chair next week.

GCFP History & Historian, Judy Jackson, reported she, as Historian, was asked by President Pat to research GCFP members who served as CAR directors. The GCFP joined the Central Atlantic Region of the National Council of State Garden Clubs (NGC) in 1931. Here are the directors from Pennsylvania she found: Mrs. William A Lowrie, Titusville, PA - 1953-1955; Mrs. Joseph W Kennedy, Allentown, PA -1979 (could be 1977-79 or 1979-81); Mrs. Myrtle Overdorff, Jr. (Mrs. Elvin Overdorff), Johnstown, PA - 1993-1995; Marilyn Whitmore (Mrs. John Whitmore), Bedford, PA -.2007-2009; Gail S. Corle Manna, Altoona, PA. - 2019-2021. There has to be more in our ranks and ask that if you know of any in your clubs that served in this capacity to let her know.

GCFP Reads Coordinator, Sharon Richardson, expressed congratulations to everyone who has supported the GCFP Reads Initiative in any way! At the recent NGC Convention, the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania received the **Award of Excellence**—an honor awarded to only **one state federation** whose innovative initiative captures national attention. She is delighted to report that GCFP READS was selected for this distinction, and the award included a **\$500 grant**. This recognition belongs to all of you. A sincere thank-you to every club, district, and member who helped advance the goals of GCFP READS. Activities supporting the initiative have included: Starting book clubs focused on gardening, nature, or environmental topics; Inviting authors to speak at club, district meetings, and the State Convention; Hosting book exchanges; Participating in book fairs, including our Barnes & Noble partnership; Offering youth programs that incorporate books and related activities; Conducting horticultural therapy programs connected to books and follow-up projects; Publishing GCFP READS articles in newsletters; And many other creative efforts. (Her Garden Club publicized their plant sale, the PA Garden Tour, and earned \$2,600.) This month, one district newsletter connected GCFP READS with our GCFP trip to Costa Rica by featuring the book *Monkeys Are Made of Chocolate*, helping travelers learn more about Costa Rica's remarkable flora and fauna. One of our book clubs will be discussing that book at its June meeting. For those who have not yet participated in GCFP READS, I encourage you to consider incorporating GCFP READS into your club's programs and activities next year. Together, we can continue to promote reading, learning, and a deeper appreciation of the natural world. If you have implemented any activity that supported the GCFP READS Initiative, please stand. She wants to express my gratitude and thank you for helping GCFP earn this prestigious Award of Excellence. Please join me in giving yourselves a well-deserved round of applause."

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GCFP Seed Money Committee Chair, Marjorie Sears, was absent but reported that only 39 applications this year but with very high expectations for outstanding projects! GCFP President Pat Wolanski was able to sit down and look at the applications and see for herself. Seed Money is to get a project started. We have 100 garden clubs. Usually, 50 apply and that means \$50.00 for each club. Do you buy a few plants or a bunch of seeds? Marge is trying to obtain FREE seeds. So far, has only been able to work with Burpee on FREE. Perhaps you know of a better deal somewhere else. 2025 started the year with an abundance. Burpee filled her car with huge boxes of seeds. But since then, we've had to beg. My contact's "Mum" died but my contact was able to spend time with her, before and then "send her off in a grand way". Next the Burpee Catalog and now knee surgery. Her substitute was not very co-operative. One thing for sure is Our CODE: PAGC 25. Use it for Free Shipping & 20% off both seeds and plants. My Contact said that it is OK to use on your own garden too. HINT: End of January, Beginning of February, if you are on their mailing list: Burpee offers a Buy One, get One FREE. It's when she buys her seeds. This year it was only one weekend.

GCFP Schools and Credentials/Schools and Council Coordinator, Susan Glassmoyer, thanked everyone who sent get well wishes and prayers since my accident. You all helped me through some very dark days. She also wanted to state my apologies to anyone who she may not have responded to in a timely fashion, including this report. She is still dealing with cognitive processing and the computer screen is not my friend. She tried hard to keep up with signing Forms for those attending the NGC Schools, and hope that I didn't miss any. She was in the process of culling and verifying the records for Environmental, Gardening, and Landscape Design Schools when she had my accident in mid-December. She has just recently been able to start working on this project again, and hope to have a better handle on where we stand with Accredited Consultants. Based on the spreadsheets that have been obtained from National and against which our state records are being compared and verified, to the best of my ability, the following numbers are to be considered accurate: 15 Accredited Environmental Consultants; 9 Master Environmental Consultants; 35 Accredited Gardening Consultants, 12 Master Gardening Consultants; 24 Accredited Landscape Design Consultants, 15 Master Landscape Design Consultants. She will keep working on the accuracy of these records and continue to verify with NGC. She has heard no updates regarding a Student Portal on the NGC Website for individuals to verify their own records.

Habitat for Humanity Donations Chair, Maryan Daniels, reported the Habitat for Humanity program has funds to assist clubs with their individual projects that are NOT for monetary donations but rather for a more "hands on" – visible to the community – projects. Projects that center around one or more areas such as education, design, provision of plants/mulch/soil amendments, volunteer assistance in actual planting, or even some new equipment for a homeowner like a wheelbarrow or a hose. The application form for GCFP funds, up to \$200, to support your project is available in the Forms Library under the Club Forms section of the GCFP web site. All of this information and the application form was sent to all District Directors via "Pat's Pop Up's" on February 17th. Unfortunately, not a single club requested funds for a Habitat for Humanity project. She asks you to PLEASE announce again to all your club presidents that there are funds available for the clubs of Pennsylvania to work with their community by assisting Habitat for Humanity owners. It does not need to be onerous as stated it can be as simple as providing a gardening book, a wheelbarrow, a hose - just something to get them started as their yards are totally bare except for front yard grass. You can find information about how to locate your local

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H for H committee chair, suggestions for types of assistance a club could provide and the application for requesting funding on the GCFP web site. Again, please encourage your clubs to participate in this program. It is FREE money!

Horticulture Coordinator, JoAnn Celaschi, reported It will soon be time to submit nominations for the Exceptional Horticulturist Award. This award will be given at each district's annual meeting. This a noncompetitive award. The nominee is not competing against others in their district but rather the award is for those not previously recognized for doing exceptional work in promoting horticulture excellence in their club, home and community. There is no formal application but rather the nomination should be a description of why the nominee is deserving of the award. The nomination should include any educational training in the field of horticulture that the nominee received. including NGC courses, any advanced degrees in the field or any Master Gardener programs completed. There should be a short summary of the types of plants, trees and/or shrubs grown and cared for by the nominee. Most importantly, there should be a description of how the nominee has educated others in the field of horticulture such as classes or programs that they have led at their club, district or community. The nominations for this award must be e-mailed to her by August 1, 2026 at celaschi@hotmail.com. The nomination must include the nominee's garden club and district as well as the nominee's name as it should appear on the award. Also include the club and district of the person submitting the nomination for the award.

Horticulture Hints Chair, Grace Mitchell, reported Wakey! Wakey! Now that you have had your coffee, I'm going to tell you more than you ever wanted to know about what to do with the grounds. Dried grounds can suck bad scents out of the air, so make a sachet for your fridge or your car. Mix grounds with coconut oil and rub on your face and body to remove dead skin cells. But that's not why I called. Get your pencils ready and I'll tell you what houseplants love the above. Spider, jade and snake plants, Christmas cactus, miniature roses and philodendron. Outside, sprinkle them around plants to fertilize and attract worms while repelling snails, slugs and cats. So, keep on drinking! Hope it works with decaf!

Horticulture/Trees/Liaison to PA Forestry Council, Charlotte Crissey, reported the primary liaison for urban forestry, tree care, and horticulture in the state is the Pennsylvania Urban & Community Forestry Council (operating as TreePennsylvania), which works alongside state foresters to advise the Commonwealth and manage community tree canopy programs. For local assistance, tree care advocacy, or grant information, you can connect directly with the state's forestry and horticulture leaders through the following avenues: **State Councils & Non-Profits:**
TreePennsylvania: The state's official urban and community forestry council. You can contact them by phone at (717) 599-8650 or email via the TreePennsylvania Contact Page. **PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR):** The Bureau of Forestry manages urban canopy and community tree programs. Contact their community forestry experts at (717) 787-2703 or by emailing RA-NRCommunityForest@pa.gov. **PA Forestry Association:** If you have questions regarding private woodlands and tree farming, you can reach out to them at 1-800-835-8065 or visit the Pennsylvania Forestry Association website. **Local & Regional Support: Service Foresters:** The DCNR has a dedicated Service Forester assigned to every PA county to provide free advice on sustainable forestry and tree management. Find your local representative using the DCNR Managing Your Woods guide. **Regional Horticulturalists:** If you are based in the southeastern region, connect with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for urban tree planting and community "Tree Tender" programs. For western PA, resources are

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available through the [Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy](#). (This information is taken directly from their website.) The Pennsylvania Invasive Replace-ive Plan was held Saturday, May 10, in various locations across the state. By registering on-line and including a pre and post picture of the invasive plant being removed, Pennsylvanians could receive several native plants with which to replace it/them. If you didn't participate this year, it may possibly be continued next year. A speaker at our the GCFP Convention in April gave a very enlightening talk on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, which is wrecking havoc on Hemlocks not only in PA but across 20 states and two provinces in Canada. If left untreated it can kill a tree in four years. For help, contact the Service Foresters listed above.

Horticulture Therapy Chair, Maryann DeSanto, reported many clubs have shown interest in the Horticulture Therapy program this year. She has been asked to give my presentation, "Initiating A Horticulture Therapy Program in your club" at Club and Board meetings by Zoom and in person. In November she will be speaking at a District meeting, where I will be able to reach members from eleven clubs during one presentation. The purpose of this program is to encourage every club, no matter their size or budget, to share their love of Horticulture and Design with Children, Adults and those with Special needs. Each club can choose the facility they wish to visit, the type of program they would like to share, and how much their budget will allow. It is the one-on-one personal visits the residents enjoy the most. Research has shown that the smell and touch of fresh floral and greens can uplift any mood and invoke pleasant memories. These visits can wake up all the senses of the beauty of nature that we enjoy and sometimes take for granted. We need to be reminded that not everyone has the privilege of being outside or walking through parks or gardens to enjoy nature, but we can bring the outside inside to them. Creative Ideas flow from clubs participating in this program. Theme based crafts and designs help the residents enjoy the different Seasons throughout the year. Clubs then their photos on the **GCFP Horticulture Therapy Facebook page** sharing these ideas with other clubs throughout the State. Please contact me if you would like a presentation to encourage your club's participation in this rewarding outreach program.

Insurance Chair, Lorraine Dupre, reported this chairman is carrying on the position of Insurance Chair. The job is to act as a liaison between the clubs in the Federation and the Insurance provider: Reed, Wertz & Rodman, Inc. which renews in July. Requesting certificates of insurance for club events and answering Insurance related questions are the main duties. A new certificate of insurance will be posted in July after the renewal on our website.

Investment Chairman, Gail Corle Manna, was absent but reported she was happy to say the Federation Investments have been doing quite well even with the world volatility and political environment. As of April 30, 2026, Investments totaled \$751,443.97 and the total in the cash reserve is \$24,901.02 for ready access. As you see, we have funds in ready assets and available for the Scholarships if needed. These will be paid out in August to the Schools.

Keystone Gardener (KG) Editor/Advertising, Nancy Hannum, was absent but reported the **Keystone Gardener 2026 Convention Issue** was completed and sent to Citizen Publishing by December 13, 2025. Joyce Milberg and Bonita Herman, convention chairs, worked closely with her for accuracy. Barbara Stoebenau and Jane Comroe worked diligently on proofreading while Karen Wychock was available for consultation. All chairs of Pat's Programs submitted articles. On January 9, the US Postmaster was paid, and **books were mailed to 4,642 members**. On

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January 23, 2026, the KG Convention Issue was received in the mail, and a payment was made to Citizens Publishing. The next print issue of the Keystone Gardener will be the KG 2027 Convention Issue. If you have information to include in this issue, please send it to kq.gcfp@gmail.com. **The deadline for this issue is November 1, 2026.**

Keystone Gardener (KG) Online Editor, Marilyn Small, reported the KG Online issues have been sent out via the new GCFP Connects system, hopefully reaching all members. The most recent KG Online can always be found on the GCFP website under "News." The July issue is approaching quickly, with a deadline of June 15 for submitting your information and reports. If you think your committee report or club news is statewide newsworthy and would like it published, please email it to her by June 15 in a MS Word document. Original articles are also welcome! Speaking of deadlines, by the actual deadline, she already has most of the format and anticipated content set up. That gives her time to finish shortly after the deadline date, allowing the proofreaders enough time to edit before distribution. So, getting your information to her early helps to get premium spots. Look for some interesting articles in July on Colonial Kitchen Gardens, Hazleton Garden Club's Blue Star Memorial Program, and President Wolanski's "Pat's Points." And "Find the Hidden Quote" will continue in the July and November issues. May's Hidden Quote winner is Martha Alexander of Great Meadows Garden Club, District X. She will receive an Amazon gift card. With upcoming spring and fall flower shows and plant sales, remember to send information for the section named "Keystone Events" to share your event. The next issue after July isn't until November. Thank you to Marilyn Backus, Jane Dodson, Angela McDonnell, Karen Wychock, and Dorthy Yard for their proofreading.

Landscape Design Central, Barbara Campbell, reported the Central Landscape Design Council has a seasonal newsletter which keeps our members updated on current happenings that are pertinent topics related to landscape design. In our past newsletter articles, we had information about America's Gardening Passport which is free to 30 participating gardens in the Philadelphia area. Kirk Brown wrote a very informative article about Chanticleer. Sharon Richardson wrote about the Italy trip. Other articles were about the state garden party and the Penn-Cumberland Garden Club Design Project in conjunction with a Girl Scout troop, a Fire Department, and their Civic Beautification Committee. Susan Glassmoyer wrote an article about Landscape Design School and Credentials News. If you would like books related to Nature, a suggested list was compiled by Sharon Richardson. We took a field trip to the Hagley Museum on Dec. 8 in Wilmington, DE. It was a cold day but we had a good guided tour of the historic site preserving the original gun powder mills of the DuPont Company founded in 1802. We saw a demonstration of the nineteenth century machine shop and witnessed a black power demonstration. On the second half of the tour, we visited the Du Pont family home, their first office, and their first garden, and we learned how they lived, worked, and played. We enjoyed a lovely lunch at Buckley's Traven after the tour. Sheri Goff is our editor. Please send her or me any information about what landscape project your club is doing. District Directors please send us any information that would be of interest in our landscape newsletter. We are gathering articles for our Spring/Summer newsletter. Please send us the information by May 20.

Landscape Design Laurel Highlands Council (LDLHC) Co-Chairs, Sheila Croushore and Sue Konvolinka, reported the Laurel Highlands Landscape Design Council met in May to Weed, plant a few flowers donated by members and evaluated the garden. In June, the Laurel Highlands Landscape Design Council announced that we have changed our name! We are now the Laurel

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Highlands Tri Council. On July 15, 2025, the LDC Members voted to include LDC, EC, and GC. We also drafted new working procedures that are approved. In looking over our State Consultants list, we invited primarily the SW Pennsylvania Consultants to join us. We mentioned these fun facts: We do not collect dues, We can do Zoom tours, We can meet in person, We can learn from each other and discover a lot of great things about our area. Our starting membership was 7, we are up to 15. We participated in a wildflower walk at Ohiopyle State Park. Two Educators walked us through a meadow and then talked about how they inventory their tree species and the process of how they are preparing a controlled burn. On September 9th we met at the GCFP Flight 93 Children's Peace Garden. We cleaned up the area and walkways and planted mums for the upcoming memorial events. We have let our members know of a few other opportunities in the area for tours. We had a ZOOM meeting in October just to organize and focus on upcoming events. We have been invited to attend a mushroom workshop with a District VI club and are starting talks to plan a Tri-Refresher

Landscape Design Western PA. Council Chair, Angie Raitano, had no report.

Leadership Workshops Chair, Kay John, had no report.

Liaison to PA Horticulture Society (PHS), Flossie Narducci, reported the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has received a grant to establish a gardening competition in the city of Philadelphia. This is to be a joint effort with The Athenaeum; an historic library located on 6th Street in Philadelphia. PHS will solicit and recruit judges to visit and evaluate gardens in Philadelphia. The Athenaeum will create an exhibit featuring the winning/deserving gardens as well as constructing a garden on the property of the Athenaeum. This garden will serve as an exhibit incorporating many of the elements found in Philadelphia's gardens. The Athenaeum's first floor gallery will also host an exhibit featuring the winning gardens. A preliminary judging will take place virtually. You can do this from your home, on your computer. Final judging will require visiting each garden that qualifies within a particular category: flower, vegetable, container gardens, etc. If you are interested in participating, she circulated a sheet so you can receive more information regarding this Gardening Challenge. Please list your name, phone number and email address. You will then be sent further information regarding how to sign up for the preliminary virtual judging and/or the final round of in-person judging or both. PHS looks forward to your participation.

Life Memberships, State/Regional/NGC Donations Chair, Jan Olsen, reported there have been no new life members since the April convention. There are 506 state life members which is 11% of the GCFP membership. There are 287 CAR-SGC life members which is 6.2% of the GCFP membership. There are 76 National Garden Club life members which is 1.6% of the GCFP membership. It would be great to see an increase in these numbers over the next year. Don't forget these life memberships make a great gift for outgoing officers, District Directors or for someone in your club that has done outstanding work for your club. She brought life membership applications for GCFP, CAR-SGC and National Garden Club.

Membership Chair, JoAnne Fogelman, reported that as she was about to write this report, she realized she had not received any inquiries lately from NGC. The last one was in mid-February. It was the only one in 2026! A message was sent to Robin Polorski, NGC Membership Inquiries Chairman to see what was happening, or not happening. Robin said that NGC changed their

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website regarding inquiries. She was getting 50 per week for all states prior to the change and now she has gotten 2 in the last 4 months. NGC's new "Find A Club" on their web site has a map with the clubs marked in each state. PA has about 16 clubs listed. Since last October's Board Meeting there were received 8 inquiries. 7 were in 2025. The total from a year ago (October to June) was 45 inquiries: District I – 1; District II/III – 1; District VI – 1; District VIII – 1; District IX – 1; District X – 2; District XI – 1.

Memory Book Chair, Rose Romboski, had no report.

National/Regional Projects Chair, Eileen Hoover, was absent but reported Plant America continues to support projects that beautify communities, honor Blue and Gold Star Memorials and promote environmental stewardship nationwide. Members, you have a once in a lifetime opportunity to get a grant from Plant America. She knows you all like free money, so what are you waiting for? Once you are awarded a grant, you may not apply again. She encourages you to seize this opportunity. You have two years to complete your project. If your club has a few extra dollars at the end of your year, Plant America is accepting donations and will be matched for a limited time. They would appreciate any support.

Natural Disaster USA Donations Chair, Kathy Crossman, reported Donations from Garden Clubs and Districts in Pennsylvania from 13 October 2025- 8 June, 2026: Natural Disasters/ USA: \$ 1,082. These contributions were received from: GCFP District V, GCFP District X, Shaler Garden Club, Parkland Garden Club, Biglerville Garden Club, Garden Club of Johnstown, Bethlehem Garden Club, Hazelton Area Garden Club, and Harrisburg Civic Garden Club. All checks have been forwarded to Vivian Hall, GCFP Treasurer. Natural disasters continue to affect all parts of our country and so there is a constant need for our assistance in restoring gardens and parks. Last year, the National Garden Club (NGC) was able to provide grants in total of \$22,784 and continues to receive new applications for aid following hurricanes, tornados, and floods. We can take pride in knowing our continued generosity is helping to restore hope to our fellow gardeners! She has emailed requests to all directors to encourage their clubs to consider a contribution to NATURAL DISASTERS,USA during the upcoming club year. The need for aid from this fund is ongoing!! District chairmen and Club Presidents need to remind their treasurers that contributions to these funds must be made **payable to GCFP** with the notation "*Natural Disasters USA*" on the lower left memo line. She also encouraged all Club Treasurers to include their email address with their contributions so that a receipt may be sent electronically.

Organizational Studies Co-Chairs, Barbara Brand and Dorthy Yard, presented proposed bylaw amendments that need to be approved by the Executive Committee before being presented to the membership. **ARTICLE II** - New Title for SECTION 1. Renumbering of Objectives as SECTION 2. **ARTICLE II Mission and Objectives.** Section. 1 - Mission Statement: The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania exists to promote gardening, civic beautification, floral and landscape design, and education for its members, while endeavoring to inspire, support and foster community involvement and stewardship of our natural resources. Section. 2 Objectives: The objectives and purposes of this nonprofit organization are as follows: (The remainder of this section is unchanged.)

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Pennsylvania Garden Tour Chair, Nancy Cuttic, reported that it's party time! President Pat Wolanski's initiative is about to become reality. Fifteen host clubs have diligently worked to secure ninety beautiful private and unique public gardens for the first-ever statewide tour. Garden owners, some of whom are GCFP members, are tirelessly preparing for the biggest garden party ever in the Keystone State. It's showtime on Saturdays, June 20 and 27, rain or shine from 9:30 -4:00. Twenty-eight of our GCFP sister garden clubs have shown their dedication to this project and the federation by soliciting 193 ads and sponsors. Award money for the highest ad revenue was presented to the host clubs at the GCFP convention in Erie. The results were as follows: **Small Club - 50 or fewer members:** \$1,000 - Old York Road Garden Club, District XI; \$ 750 - Great Meadows Garden Club, District X; \$ 500 - Spade & Trowel Club, District I. **Large Club - Greater than 50 members:** \$1,000 - Uwchlan Garden Club, District I; \$ 750 - Norristown Garden Club, District XI; \$ 500 - Penn-Cumberland Garden Club, District IV. The 156-page, full color tour book, which serves as the garden entrance pass, was created by Marilyn Small of District I. Ticket sales have been managed by Kathy Costello and Connie Burnley, both from District XI and finances have been handled by Sheri Lowry, District VI. Ticket sales by credit card accounted for 60% of sales, while sales by cash or check came in at 40%. Pre-order ticket sales of \$25 per ticket ended this past weekend. The totals are not completed as of this report, but sales have exceeded 1,000 tickets. On the day of the tours, tickets will be available to purchase for \$30 at designated gardens listed on the GCFP website and in the tour book. Gather your friends and join the party from Pittsburgh to Valley Forge.

Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) Chair, Mary Lou Colussy, reported that over the years she has talked about recycling, anti-littering, hard to recycle items, environmental protection, climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. One item to spotlight is backyard composting. Are you unsure of what to do with your kitchen, garden, and yard scraps? Would you like natural, homemade compost for your lawn and garden? Expand your waste reduction efforts by signing up for a Backyard Composting class and turning your organic waste into a valuable resource for your garden offered by PA Resource Council. prc.org. Attendees will learn the benefits and process of composting, plus everything you need to know about setting up and maintaining a compost bin to turn kitchen scraps, yard waste, and more into natural, home-made compost. **Western Workshops** - Register online below or call the western office at 412-488-7490 x1 to register by phone. **Eastern Workshops** - Register online below or call the eastern office at 610-353-1555 x3 to register by phone. An In-person workshop was available May 29th on Zoom. Unfortunately for this group, it was last week. Check website for more workshops. For a complete schedule of PRC conservation workshops, visit prc.org/programs/conservation-workshops.

Plant-A-Tree/Penny Pines Donations Chair, Nancy Lambert Fulk, reported that as the NGC website, NationalGardenClub.org, opens up, you'll see a heading, it says projects, membership, schools, store, donate and find a club. Projects of course this is the one you should open. From Penny Pines to Plant A Tree: For many years National Garden Club, Inc. and the USDA Forest Service have maintained a partnership sustaining our national forest service through Plant A Tree program, formerly known as Penny Pines. One of a few things that are very explicit in the directions, donations have to be at least as much as \$50.00 and up to \$10,000. Through your donation, you may wish to have your tree planted in a certain forest, but that doesn't say it's going to go there because it's goes where it is mostly needed, which is very understandable. For those who would like to donate by check, there is a "how to participate" with instructions on how to donate by mail and how to donate online. There is a

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form for each choice to fill out and send with your check, and on that check, no club name, treasurer, GCFP, or any name except, "NGC Plant A Tree and should be at least \$50 and no less. The address is on forms & website, The National Garden Club Inc., 4401 Magnolia Ave. St. Louis, MO. 63110. As of May 31, 2025, certificates will no longer be provided. If you want a digital certificate, you may request it when you send a check.

Personnel Chair, Betsy Smith, had no report.

Pollinator Restoration Program Chair, Barbara White, reported celebrating our nation's 250th birthday brings to mind the pollinating revolution. According to David George Haskell's book, "How Flowers Make Our World", DNA fossils of flowers are the newcomers evolving 250 million years ago to pass up the green and brown world. we are a species almost entirely dependent on flowers. Flower power bees evolved from wasps. Butterflies evolved from moths. Beetles, wasps, flies, existed on sap and pollen before flowers. Without flowers nectar drinking hummingbirds, sunbirds, honeyeaters would be nonexistent. Has anyone noticed we are missing billions and billions of flowers on god's good earth funneling down to our pollinators. Has anyone thought of attending town hall meetings to make their communities no spray zones????

President's Project – Pennsylvania Celebrates Nature and Embraces the Future Awards – Healing Arts Chair, Barbara Campbell, asked **Why do the Healing Arts Project? It has been proven: That nature in art will: Reduces stress and anxiety.** Looking at art can significantly reduce stress hormones like cortisol in your body and lower your heart rate. **Boost Mood:** Looking at art triggers the release of dopamine and endorphins, fostering happiness and feelings of well-being. **Enhance cognitive function:** Experiencing art sharpens memory and strengthens memory pathways. It also enhances creative thinking, problem-solving skills, and focus. **Promote social connection:** Providing opportunities to connect with others with shared experiences and discussions. When you contact a facility, please let them know how art in nature will benefit their facility. Please fill out the form that is on the GCFP website and send it to me, so she can keep a record of what clubs have donated artwork and how many pieces were donated. Please take pictures if you can. Marilyn Small will make a label for the art work. Please fill free to contact me with any questions. She is trying to keep the data for this project. Thank you to all the clubs who have participated.

President's Project – Pennsylvania Celebrates Nature and Embraces the Future Awards – Community Gardens Co-Chairs, Arlene Reagan-Harris and Marge Eberz reported that in fall 2025 a presentation on Children's Pizza Garden and a Red, White and Blue Garden was presented to the District XI Garden clubs. Articles on these two types of theme gardens were sent to the online editor of the Keystone Gardener for the fall edition. In February 2026, copies of Red White and Blue Gardens were distributed to members of Norristown Garden Club. In March 2026 an article on Colonial Kitchen Gardens with Medicinal Plants was submitted to the online editor of Keystone Gardener for the May issue of Keystone Gardener. A power point program on colonial gardens with medicinal plants and their uses was given at the March meeting of District XI garden club. Plan on helping to establish a sensory garden at a school this summer. Plan on collecting pictures of theme gardens for display at Convention 2027.

Program Resources Chair, Diane Quinn, was absent had no report.

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Protocol Chair, Haddie Weber, reported that as new District Directors will be installed a few reminders: Remember it is God is first. Then the Pledge of Allegiance. The GCFP President is to be recognized FIRST by asking the members to stand and give a warm welcome. In addressing the Board, it is Madam President. In completing Convention registration form, make sure that you fill in your board positions. If you are serving in two positions or in two districts, etc. please indicate that on the form. This is very important so that the Registrar, and GCFP President will be able to recognize those serving these positions. At convention you will have special recognition from our GCFP President for your service to the GCFP Board. Also, a special thank you to my Co-Chairman Lee Ann Ishman.

Publicity Press Book Awards Chair, Linda Freedman, reported that she finally saw her first Publicity Press Books in January and she was quite impressed with the scope of articles inside. They came from newspapers, Facebook, local publications, event flyers and so on. A year's worth of club accomplishments in one folder. That's something worth saving and sharing with future members. Surely, we want to let others know of our garden club activities and accomplishments. We do many things within our communities and our environments. Our clubs work with nursing home residents, at senior centers, and with youth groups. We plant and tend historic gardens. There are many flower shows, plant sales and house tours that are annual fundraisers. Here is your opportunity to showcase your club and win an award. Simply collect clippings from any publication mentioning your club from January through December 2026 and arrange them chronologically. Underline where your club is mentioned. Use a heavyweight folder such as the Oxford press guard report cover or similar with brads - no notebooks or 3 ring binders. Clear plastic covers may be used to protect your numbered pages. The criteria will be in the Keystone Gardener and on the GCFP website. She invites all clubs to prepare a Publicity Press Book and apply for this award. You will have even more information this year if you are involved with the PENNSYLVANIA GARDEN PARTY! There will be four categories according to club size. Mail booklets along with a self-addressed stamped envelope large enough to hold your booklets so they can be returned to you. Judging will take place in January. Awards are announced at Convention. Thank you and have fun with this year-long project. Why not give it a try?

Sage and Roses Donations Chair, Vivian Abel, reported February 18, 1948, was an important date for GCFP members. It was on that date that Pennsylvania's first Blue Star Highway marker was dedicated. Now, 78 years later, GCFP members donate to the Sage and Roses Fund to support the placement of new Blue Star markers and to maintain and repair markers already in existence. With our donations to the Sage and Roses Fund, we continue to honor all those who have served, those who are presently serving, and those who in the future will serve in the armed forces of the United States. The Blue Star Memorial Project was started after World War II by the National Council of State Garden Clubs, now known as National Garden Clubs, Inc. The project's purpose was to pay tribute to our nation's armed forces by beautifying highways with plantings of native trees and shrubs. The program expanded to include the placing of highway markers. Later, By-way markers were added to the program. By-way markers are smaller markers usually placed at veterans' facilities, national cemeteries, gardens, and parks. You probably know that the Sage and Roses Fund was started by our own Lois Shuster while she was serving as President of National Garden Clubs, Inc. Many thanks for the last donation received. It came from the garden clubs of District VII and was given in memory of Judy Vehse. Donations can be made at any time, for any reason. Contributions to the fund may be sent to Vivian Abel, Sage and Roses Fund Chairman. She will see that they are placed in the Sage and Roses Fund.

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Scholarship Committee Chair, Sandra Hendricks, reported the winning scholarships were presented to the winning district club representatives at the April convention in Erie. She thanked all of these scholarship representatives for their efforts in getting the students to apply. The winning districts are as follows: District II/III - 2 students; District VI - 3 students; District IV - 4 students; District VII - 1 student; District V 5 - 2 students; District IX - 1 student. District IX was the big winner of our national award. Also, thank so much for making our \$1,000.00 dollar increase to \$1,500.00 dollar scholarship for our students. Hopefully that will help the applications flow in more quickly. With the price of everything that will be a big help for everyone. Changes will be made on the applications as the dates will be changed. Please make sure the new forms are used. GCFP Webmaster, Vina McLeod Rudolph, will be making changes soon.

Scholarship Donations Chair, Linda Southerling, was absent but thanked the clubs, districts, club members and friends who contribute to the GCFP Scholarship Fund through donations, remembrance of friends, honoring and in appreciation of club members. Just want to remind everyone to use the form on the GCFP website for every donation. Wherever possible, supply e-mail addresses for all acknowledgements and thank you notes in lieu of USPS addresses. All donations are listed in the Keystone Gardener, both versions.

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Chair, Betty Grossheim, reported that the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl contest is a very worthwhile and entertaining event that the local garden club members who have participated in can attest to. This year there were four clubs participating with a total of over 1,100 entrants. Next year it would be great to increase the number of clubs actively seeking schools, scout groups and relatives to help reach more students learn about caring for our natural resources. District Directors are encouraged to create a Smoke Bear/Woodsy Owl Ambassador to reach out to individual clubs to find ways to increase participation. She has posters for participating garden clubs to return to the students so contact her. Please look in the summer edition of Keystone Gardener for an update about this year's contest. Late summer is the time to start planning so that you can arrange with your student group to schedule a program and creative time to complete the posters. She can be reached via email at sophiesmom1991@yahoo.com and she looks forward to helping you in any way possible.

Sprouts and Seedlings Chair, Cheryl Brumbaugh, was absent but reported that currently there are 16 clubs that have joined Sprouts and Seedlings. Just think of all of the children we are educating on gardening, design, and agriculture. There are various age groups from pre-school to high school. The projects range from growing, planting, and designing gardens, to transplanting small trees. Several groups grew plants from seeds in their schools and planted the germinated plants or took them home to care for over the summer. Planting America/USA 250 gardens with red/white/blue flowers and educating children about the history of our country is another initiative. Supporting established gardens with flowers and herbs. One group made birdhouses. Since it is the 250th birthday of our country we have a unique opportunity to teach our youth gardeners about "Kitchen gardens. The kitchen garden provided vegetables, herbs, and often fruit for a family's table. It was an essential part of a household's subsistence base, particularly given the difficulty of transporting fresh produce long distances in the absence of refrigeration and a developed road system. Unlike agricultural fields which we are most familiar for growing food, the kitchen garden was smaller in scale, contained a variety of crops, and was generally enclosed and located near the dwelling house. They were essential for people without

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access to markets. Why not start these types of smaller scale gardens beginning with 1 or 2 herbs for a child to take home and care for. Re: Seeds. Please check in with your local box stores, hardware stores and such and ask for seeds they may be disposing of due to out of dates. There is still a good percentage of germination after expiration dates. Include info about the Sprouts and Seedlings program and GCFP's initiatives. Making others aware will help develop your programs.

Tours Chair, Sharon Richardson, reported if you are looking for a way to combine travel with horticulture, nature, and international friendships, she has two exciting opportunities to share. First, there are still spaces available on our winter trip to Costa Rica. If you are ready to escape snow and cold weather, consider joining us in this remarkable country. Costa Rica's national motto, "**Pura Vida,**" means "**Pure Life,**" reflecting the warm and welcoming spirit of its people. Costa Rica is home to more than 500,000 species of plants and animals, making it one of the most biodiverse countries on earth. A few fun facts: nearly 25% of the country is protected as parks and reserves, it has coastlines on both the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, and it generates most of its electricity from renewable energy sources. Whether you enjoy tropical gardens, wildlife, waterfalls, or simply warm sunshine, Costa Rica offers an unforgettable experience. The registration deadline is the last week of July, so please don't wait too long if you are interested. Looking ahead to 2027, she also wanted to highlight a unique international opportunity. Every three years, the World Association of Floral Art (WAFA) hosts the World Flower Show in a different country. In March 2027, the event will be held in Sydney, Australia. National Garden Clubs is offering a wonderful Princess cruise to New Zealand and Australia that includes a three-night hotel stay in Sydney and a two-day ticket to attend the World Flower Show. For those who are not interested in attending WAFA, those same days can be spent exploring beautiful Sydney and its many attractions. The trip price was scheduled to increase on June 1, but she was able to negotiate an extension for GCFP and NGC members. Flyers are available in the back of the room. If you decide to register, be sure to identify yourself as a GCFP member so you can receive the promotional rate, which has been extended through the end of July. She is especially excited about this trip because she had previously researched land tours to Australia and New Zealand and found them cost-prohibitive. The cruise option makes this once-in-a-lifetime journey far more affordable. Additional information about both trips can be found in fliers in the back of the room and on the GCFP website. She would be happy to answer any questions following the meeting. I hope many of you will join me for one of these wonderful adventures!

Tri-Refresher Chair, Sharon Richardson, reported that you are invited to the Brandywine Valley Tri-Refresher, submitted by Sharon Richardson. On September 13 and 14, you are invited to enjoy a truly special garden experience in the beautiful Brandywine Valley. While this program was designed to qualify as a Tri-Refresher, it is open to all GCFP members—whether you need a refresher or simply want to enjoy two days of exceptional gardens, education, and fellowship. The program begins on Sunday afternoon at Longwood Gardens, where participants will experience the stunning "Longwood Reimagined" project. Highlights include the new West Conservatory, Bonsai Pavilion, Cascade Garden, and The Grove, Longwood's innovative center for learning and design. Those who wish may stay for dinner and enjoy the illuminated fountain display that evening. On Monday, the program continues with an environmental study session at Stroud Water Research Center, followed by a horticultural program at Mt. Cuba Center, one of the nation's premier native plant gardens. An added benefit of this year's program is the opportunity to use the Brandywine Treasure Trail Passport to help offset admission costs.

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Available now through October 31, the Passport provides one-time admission to twelve outstanding Brandywine Valley destinations, including both Longwood Gardens and Mt. Cuba Center—the two sites requiring admission during the Tri-Refresher. Because Passport admission may be used for this program, many participants will find it an economical way to enjoy the Tri-Refresher while also planning additional visits throughout the season. If you intend to attend the September program, simply save your Longwood and Mt. Cuba admissions for September. Information and Passport purchases are available at the Brandywine Treasure Trail website. As an added bonus, the Greater Philadelphia Dahlia Society will be holding its annual show at Longwood Gardens that same weekend. Attendees may visit the show before or after the Tri-Refresher activities on Sunday. Whether you join us for the Tri-Refresher, explore the Treasure Trail, or enjoy both opportunities, she hopes you will take advantage of this wonderful season of gardening inspiration in the Brandywine Valley.

GCFP Webmaster, Vina McLeod Rudolph, asked District Directors to send their “Call to their Annual District Meeting” on plain white paper in Adobe so that as GCFP Webmaster she can post on the GCFP Website.

Youth Activities Co-Chairs, Chris Hawthorne and Barbara Oswald, reported that attached is the contest information for **Poetry** grades K through 12, and Youth Sculpture: Grades 4 through 8. Some ideas to obtain contest entries are to ask to go into summer community camps, YMCA summer camps and after school programs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, meeting with the English Honors teacher for Poetry and the Art teacher and/ or gifted teacher for Youth Sculpture. The poetry theme for 2026-2027 is “Celebrating America’s 250 years with Red, White, and Blue”. Please remember that no dark or inappropriate poetry entries will be considered for judging! **Youth Sculpture**: Entries need to fit on an 8 x 10 piece of paper width-wise. The entry has no height limit. ALL materials need to be recycled. Please fill out the attached form and send it with two to four pictures. It will be converted to an email and sent for further judging. **Please Note: All entries need to be sent in hard copy format.** No email entries will be accepted! Deadline for all entries is Wednesday, December 1, 2026. Please mail to: Chris Hawthorne, 2418 Degenhardt Road, Gibsonia, PA. 15044. Please keep in mind that mail is slower around the holidays. Please plan accordingly and mail the entries in plenty of time to meet the deadline. Please contact her if you want to check to see if the entry was received. [Cell=724-494-2596](tel:724-494-2596)/christhenurse@yahoo.com

Wildflowers Chair, Diane Hughes, was absent and had no report.

Zoom Educator, Sandra Benedict, was absent, but reported that if you want training for your members, please contact her at sbenedict16@hotmail.com or call 717-854-6785. All training is via Zoom so people can use their own devices. Possible trainings are Zoom, PowerPoint, Word, Excel, SignUpGenius, Google drive or photos, or Doodle. If you want information about these trainings or have other areas you would like training, please contact her with your wants.