

The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania
Committee Reports
From Board of Directors Meeting
Wyndham Garden State College Hotel in Boalsburg, PA.
October 13-14, 2025

REPORTS OF BOARD COMMITTEES continued from Monday afternoon in alphabetical order following the listing in the 2025-2027 Directory Issue. The meeting opened at 9:10 AM on Tuesday.

501 C-3 Exempt/990 Reporter, Lisa Wagerer, reported this was her first year assisting with the required 990 forms. She thanked everyone for their patience through the process. The forms were updated and sent via email to each treasurer on file. With the exception of a few outstanding issues that are in progress, the forms have been submitted to the accountant. There was an issue with my email, so she created a new email specifically for this process. She will update the forms for next year to reflect it, but in the meantime if you need to reach out, the address is lisagcfp2025@gmail.com. She does still have access to my old address should anything still get sent there.

Awards Chair, Marilyn Small, and Awards Co-Chair, Sheri Lowry, reported **awards season is approaching!** We Chairs are excited to begin receiving your award applications soon! Please note that three different organizations offer awards: GCFP, CAR-SGC, and NGC. Each has its own manual available on its respective website. NGC award applications are due December 1. GCFP and CAR-SGC deadlines vary throughout January. Be sure to consult each manual for specific due dates and requirements. The **updated GCFP Awards Manual** was posted on the GCFP website's Awards page as of August 1. The content has been streamlined and incorporated additional documents to make the application process more user-friendly. **New this year!** Two new GCFP awards have been introduced: **The GCFP Club Floral Design Achievement Award; The Special Recognition State Award for Youth Activities.** Be sure to review the manual for full details. This year's **Governor's Trophy** is open to Large Clubs (51+ members). This Chair has already heard from several clubs planning to apply! The **Book of Evidence** for this award is due by **January 15. Important Reminder:** Every club should have a signed photo release form on file for each member. Additionally, any photos featuring children or non-club members must be accompanied by a signed photo release. These forms can be found in the "Forms Library" on the website. Finally, please remember that all NGC and CAR-SGC applications must be submitted through your state chair. Do not send them directly to NGC or CAR-SGC. We're looking forward to seeing your outstanding submissions!

Bee Gap Chair, Bonita Herman, presented a poem by Sue Scholz: District VIII, BBB Chairman, member of Presque Isle Garden Club, as her Bee Gap report. Garden club members love bees, birds and butterflies, To see them thrive and soar through the skies. How can we help these wonders of wings? Well, I can tell you about several things: To help all wildlife, read Doug Tallamy's books. They're fantastically pro-native--I hope you'll take a look. He says to plant native trees like oaks, cherries and pines, skip the nonnative hostas and ginko trees and you'll do fine. Oaks are hosts for over 400 moths and butterflies, their plump soft caterpillars help chickadee babies survive. Plant native perennials, as they evolved with the birds, butterflies and bees, They need the seeds and nectar, so grow asters, not mums, if you please. Of course the monarchs need milkweed to live, Common and swamp milkweed and butterfly weed you need to give. Leave garden clean-up until spring--the wildlife will love it, They eat the seeds and hide in the leaves, so please don't clean it. Leave hollow-stemmed perennials up over the winter, So bees and other insects can survive their slumber. And one of the most important things to do, is teach the children

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to love nature, with YOU! The bees, birds and butterflies need the next generations to care, so get the kids outside, in nature, to look, smell and hear. Help them see the beauty of flowers, the smell of a garden bed and hear the hum of the hummingbirds as they zoom overhead.

Birds, Butterflies & Conservation Chair, Marcy Cunkelman, reported what a hot, dry and extreme weather pattern, we had this summer. Many weeks without any rain, with temps in the high 80s and 90s. Birds were quiet during most of the day. BUT it was great weather to see butterflies and bees. She saw more Monarchs this year with good numbers of eggs and caterpillars in about 5 years. And you may still see some Monarch migrating thru on their trip to Mexico. Hawkwatchers both in the US and Canada are still seeing Monarchs migrating. As of Friday, Oct 10th, Monarchs passed over all our PA Hawk Watches. Many comments that this is the latest they have seen migrating, especially up north and Canada. At Point Pelee Hawk Watch, Ontario Canada had 78 monarchs past through. That is late and a huge number to see in October. The majority of Monarchs should be in Mexico or close to arriving. Her "fall" native perennials are almost done blooming, filled with the local insects and hummers. Many plants have gone to seed like the coneflowers and black-eyed Susans which are left so the finches will have some natural food to eat. Plus there are insects to eat for the late nesting or 2nd or 3rd time around nesters like the Cardinals and Goldfinches. She still has fledglings begging for food. When fall leaves cover the ground, consider leaving them or some of them for the moths, salamanders and toads, bees and lightning bugs and small mammals. She usually collects with mower and leave in places for new gardens or use for mulch. The robins and other birds like to scratch and find bugs and worms, especially in the spring. While cleaning up, remember to try to leave flower stems at least 18 inches for the pollinators use until they emerge in May when the weather is warmer. If you do cut the stems back, maybe you can still save and make a stem pile out of the way, so they will still be able to winter over and emerge in the spring. Small dried hollow branches of Joe-pye-weed, pokeweed, Jewelweed, borage, are great for these native bees to hide in the colder temps. This is also a good time to start a winter brush pile for cover for the birds to feed in and offer protection. If you find some extra space, why not plant some simple host plants for the butterflies and moths. Violets for the fritillaries and makes a great ground cover, Asters for the crescents and nectar plants, Baptisia for the Wild Indigo Duskywing, Black-eye-Susans for Silvery Checkerspot and Goldfinches love to eat the seeds. Most of these will also offer nectar in different seasons. Check a butterfly guide and see what you can plant to bring a new butterfly or moth to your yard. The more you plant, the more you see. As a reminder, leave a hummer feeder up and keep clean with fresh, undyed food. Maybe you will be one of the lucky ones to host an off-course hummer-like a Rufous from the west. They have been here in PA during winter, with a gracious host keeping a light on the feeder to keep it thawed. That is dedication, but what a honor to host a special tiny bird. I'm still waiting. Check your winter feeders, clean and see if they are ready to fill with fresh, different kinds of seeds for a variety of birds. Black Sunflower seeds are the best to offer for a variety of birds. They can be in feeders, scattered on a tray or the ground. Mixed seed should not be put in a feeder but scattered around for the ground scratchers. Keep watching thru the winter for something new to show up. Keep feeders and feeding area clean. Let's hope the rains come to quench the thirst of the plants, trees, and pretty much everything to take us into winter and next spring. It's been an extreme year of weather. Remember back in the early 80s, having frost in the first few weeks of September by Labor Day? Times are changing. An update on our total care adult daughter, Dana Lee. She was in the hospital for about 2 months in very serious condition. We thought she was going to be a Christmas Angel when she went critical with ventilator put on for 2nd time. Transported to

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Presbyterian Hospital in Pittsburgh by Life Flight. Was in ICU both at Indiana and Presby with excellent care. Thankfully the Doctors worked with us and made a great team. Since then, she has had a feeding tube put in on New Years Day, gained 10 pounds since Jan 24, when she finally got home. New Routine here with me learning to take care of all her needs. Who knew I would be a full-time nurse, respiratory therapist, hygienist 24/7. Dan is a great help, so I can get a break and leave the house for errands. Marcy is finally getting back to Garden Club activities and outside work. Thank you all for the prayers and concerns. Miracles do happen and our Princess Warrior has proven the Drs wrong by beating the odds.

Blue Star Memorial Chair, Karen Faust, reported one of the highlights of my time as Chair occurred on July 16th. District VIII & District IX combined their resources, both financially and organizationally to erect the first Gold Star Marker at a Pennsylvania Welcome Center. This newly refurbished Welcome Center near the border of Ohio and Pennsylvania at Mercer, is now home to our Gold Star Memorial Marker. Ironically, if there was a dividing line between our two Districts, it would be I-80. However, there is no dividing the members of these two Districts in their passion to place Markers, Blue or Gold. Two Gold Star Wives shared their stories and told us what the Marker means to them. We received so much publicity on TV and in print. I'm confident this will help spread the word about the Marker program. Please check out the Mini Posterboard for pictures of the Dedication. We are fortunate when placing Markers at Welcome Centers in PA because PENN-DOT does all the heavy lifting, from start to finish and beyond. The team of employees is exceptional and great to work with. We still have three remaining Welcome Centers needing a Marker. Two are on the New Jersey/PA border at I-80 West at the Delaware Water Gap and I-78 West at Northampton. The third location is on I-70 Westbound at Warfordsburg as you enter Pennsylvania from Maryland. An employee there is more than anxious to help with project and only needs a Garden Club, District or the GCFP to sponsor her endeavor. If you know of any group that could help start the process at one of these sights, I will be more than willing to assist.

Blue Star Memorial Central Assistant, Jane Howe, reported several Blue Star/Gold Star memorials were dedicated this summer in western Pennsylvania and central Pennsylvania. She and her husband attended the ceremony at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Park in Mechanicsburg on August 2 to represent GCFP. We were happy to see President Pat Wolanski and her husband sharing the day with us. Sue Greenly, President of the Penn Cumberland Garden Club, presented the program along with the Mayor of Mechanicsburg, the honor guard and the chaplain. It was a wonderful memorable day. Remember you can find all the Blue Star/Gold Star information on the GCFP website. Make my day by having your club sponsor a memorial and experience that memorable day.

Book of Recognition Donations Chair, Joyce Hoek, reported that in July 2025, she received a donation of \$50. The donor club really wanted to honor their member. She wrote the name in the Book of Recognition and sent out the acknowledgements, but the club asked if they could give the member an award at the District meeting. She did not have an award certificate, but she modified a District Laurels award certificate so they could do this—then wondered if she could get in trouble for making up my own award. She checked and found out that districts are free to make up any certificate they wish. No approval is necessary. The District Director was pleased with the certificate and said it worked out well. They were happy that they could do something extra special for this member. She was also pleased that she could help to make this a more special

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honor. There have been no other donations since July. **As always, the names of those honored are published in the Keystone Gardener.** 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. Donations are always appreciated and will be used, as needed, for the expenses of the GCFP. Please consider a donation to the Book of Recognition.

Civic Development Chair, Suzanne Smith-Oscilowski, reported Flight 93 National Memorial-Red, White and Blue Garden Status. **Background Information:** The Flight 93 National Memorial is an appropriate place to install a Red, White and Blue Garden in commemoration of the nation’s 250th birthday on July 4, 2026. After discussion with Flight 93 National Park Service (NPS) employees, a “traditional”, perennial/annual based garden is not desirable at this location. The NPS does not want to maintain such a garden. Additionally, a traditional “Red, White and Blue” Garden does not support their stated mission of 40 Memorial Groves. Instead, the Flight 93 National Memorial would like to add to their existing Resiliency Project which consists of planting/revitalizing the trees within 40 Memorial Groves representing the 40 passengers and crew members killed that tragic day. To incorporate the “Red, White and Blue” aspect of the project, she proposed considering foliage, flowers and fruit to follow the patriotic color scheme and still provide a meaningful addition to the NPS vision for the land. **Current Status (9/30/2025):** The GCFP needs a budget to facilitate this project. Key points: Celebrates America’s 250th birthday. Flight 93 site is a sacred place for all Americans. Pennsylvania pride in that site for its importance in commemorating that tragic day. Memorial Groves are significant reforestation effort on what was an ecologically compromised site. NPS is willing to host an open house tour of the Memorial Groves specifically for Pennsylvania garden clubs. All will be invited to attend. The GCFP Board is requested to commit \$10,000 to this purpose. If the GCFP Board decides not to contribute to funding the Memorial Groves, we will have to find an alternate location where we could create a more traditional “Red, White and Blue” Garden. The Flight 93 National Memorial is not that site.

Club Newsletter Awards Chair, Joyce Peterson, reported that at this time, she has not received even one newsletter via email for awarding this year. She hopes to receive several during the month of November since the due date is December 1. Newsletters in the past few years have been so informative with excellent programs, events, and pictures which tell an interesting story. Not all of the clubs have a newsletter but for those who do please send, by email, the best one of the 2025 year to her. She checks her junk mail since she found some in that venue last year. District Directors – please encourage your clubs to send their newsletters.

Club Yearbook Awards Chair, Iris Cisarik, reported the Club Yearbooks are due to her by December 1, 2025. She wishes every garden club would enter their club yearbook for a GCFP Award. You are to send 2 application cover sheets with 1 copy of your yearbook. Please fold the application and place it inside the yearbook- not taping to the yearbook. The Award number is YB-1 and the Name of the award is the Club Yearbook Award. The number of members in the book needs to coincide with the application. No corrections or additions can be noted in the yearbook. The judging criteria is on pages 13 and 14 in the Awards Manual. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to call or email me. She says every year, it’s the easiest contest you will ever enter.

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Convention Coordinator, Judith Schaffer, reported, as an annual state convention attendee, the 2014 Convention Chairman (Monroeville site) and now your Pennsylvania Convention Coordinator, she hears complaints from many garden club members across the state about costs. "IT COSTS TOO MUCH!" This statement generally refers to the \$45.00 or \$65.00 plus costs associated with the meals. She understands and would support their statement, if the price listed was just for a meal at convention. She would not pay either amount just for a meal! The misunderstanding is partially due to the registration wording. The form should read – EVENT CHARGE with a food selection. Here is what is taken into consideration when setting the actual amount: base cost of the meal – includes three courses; tax/tip – 29% - each area could be different; printing fees – programs, etc. – member share; speaker fees – mileage, housing, meals, honorarium; audio-visual equipment needs – microphones, screens, video-taking – tech service; floral centerpieces – one per table; favors – one per member if applicable; NGC or CAR President costs – meals, housing, transportation from airport; Banquet rental fees if applicable; Piano moving fees if applicable; Riser fees if applicable; gifts for honored guests; complimentary meals for honored guests. YOU are the person we consider in planning a convention event. Cost is always a prime factor. We want to make the event affordable for everyone. Just remember – It's not a FOOD PRICE, It's an EVENT COST!!!! Plan to attend GCFP Conventions. They are always worth the price of admission

2026 Convention Chair, Joyce C. Milberg, reported **all of the programs, presentations and workshops have been arranged for and scheduled**. You should be receiving your KG Winter issue with all the registration details in the beginning of January. How could anyone resist ***MystERIE on the Bay*** with programs: **The Dark Side of Fireflies; A Story of Sex, Poison, Deceit and Murder; Gardening is Murder; The Invasive Species Living Next Door; It's Elementary My Dear, Taking the Mystery out of the Elements of Floral Design**. And, our own Tom Huston will be a presenter. The Sheraton Bayfront Erie Hotel is fixing up for us -rooms will be \$158.20 inclusive of tax, no charge for double occupancy and free parking. We have 147 Name Tag holders courtesy of Convention 25. Remember, you will receive \$1 to spend at the vendors if you bring your own. We are excited as the time draws closer. Do you need sleeves for your summer gardening see us in the back. They have been a very popular item we've re-ordered 4 times! Thank you for the support they make great stocking stuffers. And **please join us for "MystERIE on the Bay" April 26-28, 2026 in Erie PA.**

2027 Convention Chair, Joanne Baylis, reported that the 2027 GCFP Convention committee has been meeting on a regular basis. Mark your calendars as the dates 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 arts. We have started contacting potential speakers and vendors, we have our convention logo and we are considering a field trip to Stoneleigh Natural Gardens. The committee is very excited to rollout an online, fillable registration form for the 2027 convention. It is an easy-to-understand form whereas the attendee will fill-in their information, chose what workshops and presentations they want to attend and pay for the convention following the prompted instructions. The form is easy to use and we will have Zoom training sessions, a YouTube video and hand holding, if needed. We have a great convention planned and can't wait to tell you more about it at the 2026 convention and again at the June board meeting.

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Environmental – Keep PA Beautiful (KPB) Chair, Judith Swanson, reported that as Chair of Environmental Concerns/Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, she will attend the Annual KPB Conference on Oct 15, up here in the Happy Valley at the Nittany Lion Inn. She hopes to hobnob with environmentally inclined people who are also committed GARBOLGISTS!.. She hopes to develop ideas that will help us find a way to entwine the goals of this organization with the KPB people, not only for our mutual benefit, but also for the good of our communities. So as they say, “News As It Happens”. There are very few Garden Clubs aligned with the KPB folk. Let’s see what we can do about that. Meanwhile, the KPB programs of particular interest to Garden Clubs would be “Pick Up PA” (litter) and “Greening and Beautification” (Sprucing Up) Please go to Keepbeautiful.org for information on getting started with such programs. For Pick Up PA. if you have, for example, a streambed to clean up, there may be free supplies available, but you must register by Nov 1.

Environmental - Trash to Treasure Chair, Carol McConnell, reported our committee is currently focused on designing and developing the theme and rules of the 2026 Trash to Treasure Contest, which will be held at the State Convention in Erie, April 26, 2026. Complete rules will be published in the November KG Online and Winter KG. Lake Erie has a rich and ancient history, punctuated by the folklore, legends, and mysteries of haunted ships, ghost ships, and miraculous rescues. Sailors have enjoyed, and fishermen lived off, the waters of the lake; they also have been the victims of the lake’s high winds and turbulent waters. But let us focus on the peaceful beauty of Lake Erie. Let’s relax, and plan a peaceful day on the water, reading a mystery book, a book about a mystery taking place in a garden! Recognizing the attractions of Lake Erie, the GCFP 2026 Trash to Treasure contest will focus on the design and construction of a boat using recycled materials. The design theme will acknowledge the lake’s environment and its offerings of peace, mystery, and relaxation. Construction elements may include all types of recyclables -- plastic, dried flowers, glass, stones, wood, metal, and other recycled materials.

Financial Advisor, Cynthia Layton, provided information presented in the financial report.

Floral Design/Horticulture Webinar Chair, Chris Leskosky, reported the second Design and Horticulture webinar was held on August 5th and was once again very well received. This session featured: Master Judge, Cheri Nobil, who demonstrated a Petite Design; Master Judge, Barbara Campbell, presented Creative Abstract and Multi-Rhythmic Designs; Betsy Hassler, Judge Emeritus, showcased a Traditional Mass Design; and, Tracy Sabocheck, Vice President of the Reading Garden Club and this evening’s program presenter, exhibited a Spatial Thrust Design. The Horticulture portion, given by Mary Hetrick, Master Judge and GCFP Second Vice President, and Dot Yard, Master Judge and Horticulture Instructor Emeritus, provided excellent guidance on entering Collections and Displays in an NGC Flower Show. The next webinar is scheduled for 7PM on November 4th. Chris is currently seeking volunteers for the 2026 webinar series and have copies available outlining presenter responsibilities. 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.

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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**. 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. Indicate if there are any students. Send the form and a copy of your BEST schedule to Mary Jane Martucci, 911 McClelland Road, Finleyville, Pa. 15332. It will also be evaluated.

Flower Show Book of Evidence (BOE) Evaluation Chair, Deb Stumpf, reported the Flower Show Book of Evidence is happy to report that things are running smoothly. The digital formatting issues have been worked out and everyone seems to be operating on the same system. We still have a few things to work out with our judges, but for the most part everyone seems willing to cooperate with the changes we have had to make. **JUDGES: If you are evaluating a flower show, please remember that you must submit a paper copy of your evaluation to Mary Jane Martucci and a DIGITAL copy to myself, Deb Stumpf, Logansmimi56@yahoo.com.** She knows that we have had some wonderful flower shows in our state this past year and even though the process is daunting, and encourages your club to submit a digital book of evidence for a flower show award. She is always available by email or phone to answer any questions you may have. She looks forward to seeing your books by **December 1, 2025** to the above email address.

Flower Show Judges Council (JC) Chair, Karen Wychock, reported 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 Tom Houston, 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. The NGC Flower Show Handbook is updated in July of each year. Councils were asked to address the recent changes and updates in the handbook with their judges so that they are aware of these changes when judging shows and keeping their credentials up to date. Questions coming directly from the councils concerning flower show protocol were discussed and answered so that all councils were in accordance with one another. Questions pertained to the use of the American flag in upcoming Patriotic shows, misclassified horticulture within a show, and the requirements necessary for earning credits for exhibiting at a Judges Council, Arrangers Guild or Study Group (p. 117 of handbook) were discussed. Our Council Chairs spent a good deal of time and effort in educating their judges on a variety of topics. To improve everyone's design skills, presentations recently included leaf manipulation, design mechanics, contrived plant material, Petite Design, Botanical Arts and Still Life. Judging etiquette, before, during and after judging a flower show, was also discussed. To help promote flower shows across the state, a few of our councils are offering 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. To help their judges keep current with their judging and exhibiting credits, Council Chairs are also conducting Small Standard Flower Shows at their own council meetings. This offers new and seasoned judges an opportunity to write a schedule, chair a show, and gain design, horticulture and judging credits. Pittsburgh Area JC participated in a “Girls Trip” joint flower show hosted by Laurel Highlands JC on July 8. The Philadelphia Area JC will have a show on October

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25, entitled, "Broadway, Here We Come!" Pennsylvania currently has 94 Accredited Flower Show Judges: 20 Accredited Judges; 11 Life Judges; 63 Master Judges; 48 Emeritus Judges; 13 Student Judges. Due to declining health, Nancy Cartwright, Judges Credentials Chair, is resigning as of March 1, 2026. We would like to thank Nancy for her time, effort and dedication to the GCFP and the Judges Council.

Central Area Judges Council (CAJC) Co-Chair, Roseann Varner, reported CAJC total membership of 32 as of September 29, 2025. Membership includes 17 members whose primary Council is the CAJC; 11 members whose primary membership Council is other than the CAJC, and four Judges Emeritus. We had two Judges Emeritus not rejoining due to declining health. We will miss them and their many contributions to the Council over the years. The Council met on July 24, 2025 in Harrisburg, PA with 17 members in attendance and six members sending regrets due to scheduling conflicts. Topics and business items discussed at the July meeting were: A proposed budget for a two-year period beginning May 1, 2025 and ending April 30, 2027 was adopted. A proposed revision to the CAJC Working Procedures to change the CAJC membership cycle to coincide with the GCFP state dues payable cycle was approved. GCFP Flower Show School Coordinator and Treasurer of the CAJC, Joanne Baylis, reported on FS School Course I held in April in Gettysburg, PA and thanked CAJC members for their financial support through Ways & Means and classroom needs and point scoring master panels. Joanne encouraged us to promote Course II to be held October 20-22, 2025 and reminded us of the registration deadline on September 15. Members were encouraged to access the current issue of the Keystone Gardner and the link was provided. Judging Discussion topic was "Contrived Plant Material" (HB page 80, B-1, e) with definition and judging aspects reviewed. Judging Concerns topic was earning credits for exhibiting at a Judges Council, Arrangers Guild or Study Group with members discussing HB requirements (page 117). A training preview of "Flower Show in a Box" spearheaded by Chris Leskosky and Marjorie Faust for their District Clubs was prepared by Nancy Cartwright and a brochure was reviewed. Horticulture specimens of members were displayed for critique and discussion. Most programs scheduled for future meetings of the CAJC through March 2027 will focus on the Botanical Arts, specifically Horticulture and Design.

Erie Area Judges Council (EAJC) Chair, Tom Huston, reported the Erie Area Judges Council met on July 30 at the Bullfrog restaurant in Erie for our 3rd meeting of the year. Words of inspiration were shared and we had a wonderful turnout of members. Election of Officers was held at our April meeting and as a reminder, Linda Morrison will be our new Chairperson starting in January 2026. Joy Kempf will continue as Secretary as will Joyce Milberg as the Treasurer. Meeting dates for the coming year were discussed. We have been meeting on the 5th Wednesday of the months that have 5 Wednesdays. Our next and last meeting of the year will be October 29 at the Tionesta Library. For next year the following dates were discussed, December 31, 2025, April 29, July 29, September 30 and December 30, 2026. It was decided by the group to only meet 3 times in 2026, in April, July and September. Also discussed at the meeting were the upcoming fairs and flower show and review of who was assigned to Judge. In 2026 we are scheduled to do our Biannual Judges Council Flower Show and it was decided to stage that at the July meeting in Edinboro at the Municipal Building. To give ourselves a kickstart, we will write the schedule at our October meeting this year and assign chairpersons. We will also be discussing the upcoming Convention in Erie and assigning Honor Designs and centerpiece ideas for the Judges Council Luncheon at the convention. The first meeting of 2026 is scheduled for the day after our

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convention in Erie. We will use that meeting to discuss the Convention, chill out and prepare for our Flower Show!

Laurel Highlands Judges Council (LHJC) Chair, Sheila Croushore, reported LHJC has 15 Active Judges and 1 Judge Emeritus. The Laurel Highlands JC organized a Joint Flower Show with Pittsburgh Area JC on July 8th titled Girl's Trip. Lots of new ideas and a great day for everyone! We have partnered with National Capitols JC and Pittsburgh JC in hosting ZOOM Sessions on different judging topics to educate and make us better judges. Our first ZOOM was presented by PAJC on Botanical Arts, the second was the National Capitol Area on leaf manipulation. Our next one will be hosted by LHJC, topic to be announced. As previously decided by LHJC We are offering FS help to clubs that do not have a Judge within their membership. We will be presented our first program on June 17, four LH Judges covered their design classes and how to display horticulture in their educational show. Their show was a great success! At our last meeting on September 24th, our topics 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 four Flower Shows this summer and our Judges were invited to judge several other shows not in our district.

Northeast Area Judges Council (NEJC) Chair, Christine Leskosky, reported eighteen members currently belong to the Northeast Area Judges Council. Our first meeting of the year took place June 23rd. The program for the meeting was *"How Do Your Designs Stay in Place?"* Each member was asked to bring in one or more mechanic and show how it is used. The program was so informative that everyone, from students to emeritus judges left with at least one new idea. Information was given about the upcoming Flower Show School, the 2026 Philadelphia Flower Show, the October Board meeting Flower Show and the 2026 Garden Tours. Next meeting will be November 3rd and the topic will be A Challenge Class. Each member who entered was given 5 identical items and were asked to do a 12" NGC Petite Design. Not all items must be used but exhibitors were encouraged to do so. They may change the items in any way they wish. The entries will be critiqued at the meeting. Also planned asking members to choose a technique from the Flower Show Handbook (page 81-83) and to do a design using it. Discussion on techniques and designs will follow. Next meeting will be held November 3, 2025.

Philadelphia Area Judges Council Chair, Louise Heilig, reported the PAJC has not held any meetings since the June Board Meeting. Our next meeting on October 27, 2025 will be a Small Standard Flower Show titled "Broadway Here We Come!". It will be held at the Ludington Library in Bryn Mawr, PA. As to Membership: Since the last report of 6/9/25 five of our Student Judges have become Accredited Judges and many of our Judges whose accreditation would have expired in 2025 have taken symposiums and are accredited through 2028. Our membership at this time is 31 Accredited Judges and 13 Student Judges for a total of 44 members. Our Spring Meeting is expected to be March 23, 2026 and is planned to be a lecture/demonstration of an advanced creative design to include judging tips.

Pittsburgh Area Judges Council (PAJC) Chair, Marilyn Backus, reported that since June, Pittsburgh Area Judges Council participated in a "Girls Trip" joint flower show hosted by Laurel Highlands Judges Council at Greensburg Garden Center. Most of them also participated in or judged Great Meadows' "Road Trip" and District VII's Horticulture Specialty "Dog Daze" Flower Show. The PAJC met on August 20 to review and propose amendments to the PAJC Working

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Procedures, especially regarding the timing of membership and amount of dues, the nomination process and the updated responsibilities of the secretaries and treasurer. The proposals will be voted on electronically before the October 29 meeting. We are structuring the PAJC meetings to assure we address the stated objectives of the PAJC. Consequently, we discussed the recent changes in the Flower Show Handbook that impacts Schedule writing. We conducted advanced study of Botanical Arts by Zoom, participated in a Leaf Manipulation Zoom with Laurel Highlands, practiced Still Life design and Pot et Fleur at Designers Guild, and will focus on scale and proportion of five and eight inch petite designs at October's PAJC meeting. We highlighted flower show items in the summer edition of NGC National Gardener and the 2026 flower show courses available in our region. Especially interesting discussion arose from sharing learnings from hosting and judging the recent flower shows, as well as the judging issues encountered in Botanical Arts, use of the flag, misclassified horticulture and judging behaviors. Although not a stated objective of PAJC, several of the PAJC Judges have held design and horticulture programs for their district club members to promote hosting and participating in flower shows.

Flower Show Judges Credentials Chair, Nancy Cartwright, reported Pennsylvania has 94 Accredited Flower Show Judges: 20 Accredited Judges; 11 Life Judges; 63 Master Judges; 48 Emeritus Judges. 15 Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2025; 10 Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2026; 42. Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2027; 27 Judges are in Good Standing until 12/2028. New Judges: Leanna Ryba, Nancy Cuttic, Wendy Fox, Sharon Richardson. Judges are reminded to fill out Form 13, 15L or 15M with your exhibiting and judging credits to prepare for your next Symposium.

Flower Show (FS) Schedule Chair, Margie Bucci, reported receiving two schedules to evaluate thus far. If any club that had a flower show and wants their schedule to be evaluated. Please follow the guidelines in the Awards Manual on page 16. The deadline is December 1st.

Flower Show Schools Chair, Joanne Baylis, reported GCFP Flower Show School Course II is set to take place next week 20-22 October 2025 in Gettysburg. There are 15 students attending with seven (7) students returning from Course I. Jan Griffin is the Flower Show Procedure and Horticulture instructor. For Horticulture, Jan will be teaching Chrysanthemums and Conifers. Due to a medical issue, Judy Binns is not returning as our Design instructor. Working with the NGC Flower Show Committee Chair, Gina Jogan, a new Design instructor has been identified. Anna Burns from Griffin, Georgia comes highly recommended and she will be teaching Exhibition and Functional Tables, a Tray for One and Petite Designs. A big Thank You to the Gettysburg Garden Club who has generously donated \$500 towards Flower Show School Course II. Along with this donation, they have also provided \$150 to pay Gary (a fire department employee) to setup the social hall on Sunday, 19 October 2025. Looking ahead, Course III will be held 13-15 April 2026 in Gettysburg and the course brochure can be found on both the GCFP and NGC websites: GCFP at <https://pagardenclubs.org/flower-show-judges-info> and NGC at <https://gardenclub.org/school/flower-show-school-courses>. So, in the meantime, promote Flower Show School to your garden club members.

Flower Show Student Judges Credentials Chair, Claire Lechlitter, reported there are 13 student judges. Two are currently working on completing their schedule assignments. The list has been updated on the GCFP website.

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Flower Show Symposium Chair, Tonya Young, was absent and had no report.

GCFP History & Historian, Judy Jackson, was absent and had no report.

GCFP Reads Coordinator, Sharon Richardson, reported that **GCFP READS** is off to a great start! At each Annual Meeting, our District Directors received ten copies of "Listening to Nature's Voice: Reflections on the World Around Us" to share with their clubs. The 30 short essays are meant to inspire our membership to read more about gardening and nature. We hope that each club and district will find opportunities to promote reading about nature and gardening among garden club members and also with your Horticulture Therapy Outreach and Youth Outreach programs. Pam Baxter, author of the *Reflections* book and a resident of southeastern Pennsylvania, was invited to attend the District I and XI Annual Meetings. Pam has been the garden writer for the county newspapers in the Greater Philadelphia Area for over 25 years. Following the two District meetings, it was interesting to hear how impressed she was to learn more about our organization from the speeches of our President and two Vice-Presidents. For the first time, she said, she fully appreciated the depth, breadth, and community impact of our organization. She was so moved by what she learned that she requested a copy of the three presentations and used them to write an article about GCFP, particularly about involving youth in our garden clubs. As an author, she was naturally as excited about the GCFP Reads Initiative as President Pat Wolanski and I are. Sharon asks club presidents and district directors to send me information on how your club or district is participating in the GCFP Reads initiative so that she can compile your experiences either on our GCFP website or in future editions of the Keystone Gardener. Kindly email your submissions to sharonrichardson22@gmail.com with GCFP Reads in the subject line. She looks forward to hearing from you.

GCFP Seed Money Coordinator, Marjorie Sears, reported "Plant America: Pennsylvania Celebrates Nature and Embraces the Future". Our goal is to make GCFP a household name across Pennsylvania by bringing the work of our federation into the public eye. Seed Money is FREE for the asking! Just complete the application (one per club) for your project and send it by the February 16, 2026 deadline. Include photos and your project might be on an Educational Exhibit for our next meeting. Any seeds that she can get from Burpee are a bonus and she has no real control over it. Burpee CODE: PAGC25. It will give you a 20% discount & FREE shipping on bulbs, plants and everything else on the Burpee website other than supplies.

GCFP Schools and Credentials/Schools and Council Coordinator, Susan Glassmoyer, reported that as the Chairman of the GCFP Schools and Credentials, she has received the records of the Environmental, Gardening, and Landscape Design consultants. She is in the process of confirming the accuracy of the records, which has been both daunting and revealing, especially discovering that my own records have not been transferred from the state where they were originally recorded! Based on the spreadsheets that have been obtained from National and against which our state records are being compared and verified, the following numbers are to be considered accurate as of this report: **Environmental Consultants:** 18 Accredited Consultants, 9 Master Consultants; **Gardening Consultants:** 38 Accredited Consultants, 15 Master Consultants; **Landscape Design Consultants:** 34 Accredited Consultants, 22 Master Consultants.

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Habitat for Humanity Donations Chair, Maryan Daniels, reported that a questionnaire asking about current involvement or non-involvement with Habitat for Humanity was sent to all garden club presidents last month. The return of the questionnaire was low. Although the information is not statistically valid there is still action that can be taken. The overall statistics of the questionnaire is as follows: 35 of 101 clubs responded = 35.3% response rate. 2 Districts had no garden clubs respond (V and IX); 1 District had one garden club respond (VI); 3 Districts had 3-4 garden clubs respond (I, VIII, XI); 4 Districts had 5-6 garden clubs respond (II/III, IV, VII, X). Of the 35 responses only one club reported involvement with Habitat for Humanity. Of the 34 other clubs, the reason for no involvement included (remember this was an 'all that apply' question so responses will add up to more than 34): 13 responses for Club have too many other projects; 8 responses for lack of interest by club members; 7 responses for not aware of Habitat for Humanity; 3 responses for lack of funds; 3 responses for unable to contact Habitat for Humanity; 1 response that did not donate because they could not earmark the money; 1 response that the club is currently taking it under consideration. With the responses above along with the poor response rate, perhaps we can infer that there is a lack of knowledge about Habitat for Humanity in general. To that end, action take from the results of this survey is the completion of a H for H fact sheet that is available on the GCFP website.

Horticulture Coordinator, JoAnn Celaschi, reported eleven names were added to the GCFP website list of Exceptional Horticulturists for 2025. She thanked those who submitted their recommendations for this award.

Horticulture Hints Chair, Grace Mitchell, asked Got a headache? Add two drops of peppermint oil to an ounce of vegetable oil and apply to your forehead and temples. Relief in 15 minutes! Those who eat a half teaspoon of sunflower seeds daily may lower their fasting blood sugar by 14%! Now that you are healthy, how about forcing some spring bulbs? All you need are clay pots, potting mix, bulbs and patience. Place shallowly planted bulbs where it is 55 degrees for 4-6 weeks, watering to keep moist. Then place them in your fridge for 12 weeks. Is it Spring yet?? When you take them out, they should bloom in about 2 weeks. Good luck! You know the saying - teach a man to fish and he'll eat forever? My version is: Teach a man to garden, and the whole neighborhood gets zucchini!

Horticulture/Trees/Liaison to PA Forestry Council, Charlotte Crissey, reported in June, this report presented information on the "Invasive Replace-ive Plan" where landowners can remove one or more invasive species and receive up to five (5) free healthy, native and young replacement trees. The question was if this program was going to be continued in 2026. The good news is that it is. Dates, locations and other details have not been announced yet. Monitor "Pennsylvania Invasive Replace-ive Program Commonwealth of Pennsylvania" for up to date information. Another source for trees is the Bare Root Tree Program sponsored by The Pennsylvania Urban & Community Forestry Council for 2026. This program provides bare root trees to carry out the statewide urban forestry program, TreeVital. Trees are available for community projects. More information about this program, its grants, and community resources are on the DCNR website. Another resource for tree information is [Tree Vitalize Guide for Tree Selection, Planting, and Care](#). Through a partnership with the PA DCNR, USFS, and PSU Extension this resource is available for municipalities, shade tree commissions, and [other interested community members](#). For more information about TreePennsylvania, visit info@treepennsylvania.org.

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Horticulture Therapy Chair, Maryann DeSanto, reported fall has arrived and garden clubs throughout the State are actively planning their Horticulture Therapy visits. The Holiday season offers a perfect opportunity to share our love of horticulture through festive and fun activities. Residents enjoy celebrating the seasons and the scents associated with them. Something as simple as a sprig of fresh pine or evergreen will invoke many pleasant memories for them. Participation in a Horticulture Therapy activity improves mood and cognitive function, it also increases motor skills, while all who engage enjoy the social interaction it provides. Many clubs participate in the Meals on Wheels program providing small fresh arrangements which are delivered to recipients along with their meals. Garden clubs in the area provide floral arrangements for the reception area and dining rooms at the Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia. Members also work with children exposing them to the “garden to table” experience, while encouraging a love of horticulture they can carry with them throughout their lives. Sending Holiday cards to those we visit during the year is a thoughtful way to remind them we are thinking about them during this special time of year. Horticulture Therapy is a rewarding outreach program. If your club is interested in initiating such a program, she has a Power Point presentation I can present to your club either in person or on zoom. Please visit our Facebook page **GCFP Horticulture Therapy Sharing Ideas** to view the creative ideas and designs clubs have shared with one another.

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 agency: Reed, Wertz & Roadman, Inc. Cincinnati Insurance Company is the new carrier for our Certificate of Liability Insurance with a premium of \$12,827. Requesting Certificates of Insurance for club events and answering insurance-related questions are her main duties.

Investment Chairman, Gail Corle Manna, reported this Chairman is happy to say the Federation Investments have been doing quite well since our June Board Meeting, even with all the political ups and downs. The most current monthly reports that she has state, as of August, 2025, Investments totaled \$691,009.56 and the total in the cash reserve is \$25,256.22 for ready access. As you see, we are still in very good shape after using necessary funds to aid in the payment of August Scholarships and after making any changes to our accounts as discussed at the June Board Meeting. Mary and Karen Heltzel from Stifel, will be attending this Board Meeting and give current up-dates on all accounts. They will discuss how national and international events are affecting our investments and note any necessary changes that may need done to keep our accounts moving forward.

Keystone Gardener (KG) Editor/Advertising, Nancy Hannum, reported the Directory issue input was completed by mid-July, including all editing. The draft was sent to Citizens Publishing, and the proof was sent back to me. Several corrections were needed, so the proof was returned to the publisher. She drove to Hazleton on July 17th to pick up the final proof and make more final corrections. On August 4th, she received mailing information and a bill to be paid to the US Post Master. **All books were mailed to our 4,541 members on August 13th. On August 19th, the Keystone Gardener Directory Issue was received in the mail and is good for two years.** A payment was made to Citizens Publishing on August 21, 2025. The next print issue of the Keystone Gardener will be the Convention issue. Joyce Milberg and Bonita Herman were emailed

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the particulars needed to prepare for this Keystone Gardener. The cover has been designed, and work has begun on this issue.

Keystone Gardener (KG) Online Editor, Marilyn Small, reported the **next issue of KG Online will be published on November 1**—just a few weeks away! Watch for it in your email. There will be a secret ten-word quote hidden in this issue. The cover photo contest has been well-received, though there have been less submissions than expected. There are many talented photographers across the state who are encouraged to participate—and to invite members in your clubs and districts to enter as well. The full state membership would be very interested in your committee report. Club Presidents and District Directors are also invited to submit reports on special projects, events, or anything you feel is newsworthy and worth sharing with the full state membership. Don't forget about the *Keystone Events* section! It's a great opportunity to promote your upcoming flower shows, garden tours, or holiday fundraisers. Please consider submitting a short blurb to help spread the word. Submission deadline is October 20. Please send your reports as MS Word documents (not in the body of an email). A big thank you to proofreaders Marilyn Backus, Jane Dodson, Angela McDonnell, Karen Wychock, and Dorthy Yard.

Landscape Design Central Council Chair, Barbara Campbell, reported National Garden Club, Inc. offers three schools: Environmental Study, Garden Study, and Landscape Design. Each course is to provide education about the land, water, air, and earth. The content of the course is established by National Garden Club. Four sequenced courses (1 through 4) comprise a series for each of the three schools. Each course consists of ten hours of instruction which may include field trips and tours to related locations. An exam is given at the end of the course. After completing all four course you will receive a Consultant Certification Card. Your Design Consultant card is good for five years. You can attend a refresher course to renew. In the Landscape Design courses you will learn about the history and development of Landscape Design. Frederick Law Olmsted is known as the Father of American Architecture. He designed Central Park. You will learn how do design at your home and private garden: the basics of a site plan. You will learn what plants to plant and the use of elements of design: line, forms, textures, colors, and contrast. You will learn about urban development, public spaces, and the maintenance of landscape you are working with. After you complete two courses you become a Provisional Consultant and you can join a Landscape Design Group which does field trips. She is presently the chair that group. She would like to have quick meeting with those of you are interest in continuing the Central Landscape Design Council. Sharon Richardson was chairman before me. When she planned trips we didn't get a lot of response. They have made taking courses easier, because now they offer them on ZOOM. She encouraged you to think about taking courses through NGC.

Landscape Design Laurel Highlands Council (LDLHC) Co-Chairs, Sheila Croushore and Sue Konvolinka, reported the Laurel Highlands Landscape Design Council is excited to announce that we have changed our name! We are now the Laurel Highlands Tri Council. On July 15, 2025, the LDC Members voted to include LDC, EC, and GC. We also drafted new working procedures. 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 have added 4 more to our roster. We participated in a wildflower walk at Ohiopyle State Park. Two Educators walked us through a

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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 will have a ZOOM meeting in October just to organize and focus on upcoming events.

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

Leadership Workshops Chair, Kay John, reported that as Chairman of the GCFP Leadership Workshop 2025, she reminds all GCFP Members that **the Leadership Workshop 2025 will be held via Zoom on November 13, 2025—Thursday—at 1 PM. All GCFP members will receive the link to the workshop.** District Directors and Club Presidents, she asks that you encourage your members to “tune in” and receive much valuable information on many topics presented by very knowledgeable presenters. This information is valuable to present GCFP leaders as well as those considering a leadership position—and, as Pat said, we hope that is everyone! The link to the workshop will be sent out closer to the actual date so be watching for that. Also, an agenda has been prepared with times, topics and presenters which will also be emailed to the membership. If you have questions, you may see me later. Thank you and “see” you on November 13th at 1 PM.

Liaison to PA Horticulture Society (PHS), Flossie Narducci, had no report.

Life Memberships, State/Regional/NGC Donations Chair, Jan Olsen, reported there have been two new Life Members since the June 2025 board meeting: GCFP – Jan Olsen – The Garden Club of York, District IV and CAR-SGC – Pat Wolanski – Norristown Garden Club, District 11 XI. She has brought applications for GCFP life memberships along with the pins to the Board meeting. The cost of a GCFP life membership is \$100. 75% of the fee goes towards the State Scholarship fund and is tax deductible; 25% remains in the State Life Fund to be used for necessary expenses. So she hopes you can become a GCFP Life Member and support our State Scholarship fund.

Membership Chair, JoAnne Fogelman, reported that since our last GCFP Board Meeting in June 2025 she has received 9 inquiries from NGC regarding people interested in joining a garden club in PA. It's been a very slow summer. She sent these inquiries to the District Director to be passed on to the nearest garden club. The same inquiry was sent to District V and District II/III since she was in District V but closer to a club in District II/III. She gave both districts credit for the inquiry. District II/III had the most inquiries- 4. Inquiries: District I – 2; District II/III – 4; District IV – 2; District V – 1; District VI – 0; District VII – 0; District VIII – 0; District IX – 0; District X – 0; District XI – 1.

Memory Book Chair, Rose Romboski, had no report.

National/Regional Projects Chair, Eileen Hoover, was absent and had no report.

Natural Disaster USA Donations Chair, Kathy Crossman, was absent and had no report.

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GCFP Nominating Committee Chair, Joyce C. Milberg, reported the Nominating Committee reminds all Board Members to consider recommending nominations for GCFP officers for the 2027-2029 administration. Please read the By-Laws printed on the website for qualifications to serve. Do not be embarrassed to consider self-nomination if you believe you are qualified to serve. Simply write me a note telling me which position you are interested in and your credentials for the position. The nominating committee will be interviewing at their next meeting.

Organizational Studies Co-Chairs, Barbara Brand and Dorthy Yard, reported proposed bylaw changes as of October 1, 2025. Cover page - Revised and Adopted - (Insert date). ARTICLE II Heading and first line: Delete "Object" insert **Objectives**. Page 2 - ARTICLE IV Sec. 2. Delete: "A Headquarters Office". Sec. 3. A. 2. Delete the comma after "Inc.". Renumber Sec. 3 to read **Sec. 2**. ARTICLE V Sec. 1. Delete last line: "All members of voting organizations shall receive the *Keystone Gardener*." Page 3 - ARTICLE V Sec. 2. A. Delete: "The President of the organization shall receive the *Keystone Gardener*." ARTICLE V Sec. 2. B. Delete: "and a subscription to the *Keystone Gardener*." ARTICLE VI Sec. 1. B. 1. (Add emboldened phrases.). All Officers shall "Attend all Board Meetings and, unless otherwise requested, prepare one copy of **their reports** to be given to the Recording Secretary; retain a copy for **their files**. The report should be written in Arial 12 font. A copy of the reports must also be sent via e-mail to the Recording Secretary **prior to the meeting**." ARTICLE VI Sec. 1. C. No Officer may serve in two (2) **GCFP** elected positions during a term. Page 4 - ARTICLE VI Sec. 2 A.6 Re-phrase to read: "**Be an** ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee. D. 4 **Recording Secretary's** files. (Make this possessive). Page 5 - ARTICLE VI Sec. 2 H. 1 "...printed promptly in the *Keystone Gardener* on line." ARTICLE VII Sec. 3 A."Attend all Board Meetings **and**, unless otherwise requested, prepare and send an electronic copy of **their reports** to the Recording Secretary **prior to each meeting**." Page 6 - ARTICLE VII Sec. 5.A. "...*Keystone Gardener* **Editors**...." (plural). Page 7 - Sec. B. Insert: The Editor of the *Keystone Gardener* shall serve as Chairperson of this committee. The Advertising Manager of the *Keystone Gardener*, Associate Editors, the **GCFP President** and the First and Second GCFP Vice Presidents shall be members of this committee. ARTICLE IX E. Insert: "A copy of the reports must also be sent via e-mail to the Recording Secretary **prior to the meeting**." Page 8 - Article IX F. Insert: "No member shall serve in more than one (1) elected **GCFP** position at the same time." Page 9 - Article XI Sec. 3 E. Add to last sentence: **prior to the meeting**.

Pennsylvania Garden Tour Chair, Nancy Cuttic, reported Pennsylvania Knows How to Party! GCFP is delighted to have **16 clubs participating in President Pat Wolanski's initiative, the PA Garden Party**, first ever statewide garden tour representing seven districts. Our state will proudly host 14 tours featuring 95 fabulous gardens. The following clubs have gardens on the tour: **District I** - Garden Club of Bala Cynwyd/Villanova Club; Spade and Trowel Club; Springfield Garden Club; Uwchlan Garden Club; **District IV** - Penn-Cumberland Garden Club; Town and Country of Lancaster Garden Club; **District VI** - Bedford County Garden Club; **District VII** - Burrellton Garden Club/Pucketos Garden Club; **District VIII** - Wildflower Garden Club; **District X** - Great Meadows Garden Club; Martha Washington Garden Club; **District XI** - Countryside Gardeners; Norristown Garden Club; Old York Road Garden Club. A \$25 ticket buys a tour booklet and admission wrist bands for two days of garden viewing across Pennsylvania, from 9:30 – 4:00, rain or shine. Tickets sales begin on January 6, 2026, either by check or PayPal through the GCFP website. See as many fabulous gardens as you can and cross county lines if time permits. Every garden club in the Federation can earn \$20 for each \$25 ticket sold. There is

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generous prize money to be awarded for clubs with the highest ticket sales and highest ad revenue. **Most importantly, to fund this project, we need clubs to solicit ads from businesses, visitors' bureaus, horticultural societies, online stores and places that members frequent.** The program will cost more than \$5 to publish. So, ask for those ads, sell those tickets and join the "Party". See the GCFP website, pagardensclubs.org, for more details.

Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) Chair, Mary Lou Colussy, reported award-winning project keeps hard-to-recycle materials out of landfills. In recognition of drop-off hard-to-recycle collection events — which collected nearly one-half million pounds of material in 2024 — Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) has received the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. "At PRC we work hard every day to prevent waste and conserve the environment," said PRC Deputy Director Sarah Alessio Shea. "We are proud of our hard-to-recycle program, which for two decades has offered opportunities to responsibly dispose of materials not accepted curbside. Its success is one example of our environmental impact in Pennsylvania." Last year PRC's hard-to-recycle program served 6,000 households who attended events. In 2024, the program collected 386,000 pounds of electronic devices, 49,000 pounds of small appliances, 36,000 pounds of tires, and 1,410 pounds of polystyrene. "It's important to divert these materials from landfills since many contain toxic elements that can leach into our waterways or introduce dangerous toxic chemicals into our environment, while others contain valuable recyclable resources," according to PRC Collection Events Manager Joshua Schuneman. "By attending PRC events, people know that their materials are properly and safely handled, recycled, and even reused if possible." Awardees were evaluated for their degree of environmental protection, innovation, partnership, economic impact, consideration of climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice, as well as outcomes achieved. "Honorees embody the innovative thinking needed to protect our environment and shape a more sustainable future here in Pennsylvania," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "These projects showcase our ability to work collaboratively to preserve and protect Pennsylvania's natural resources." Since launching its hard-to-recycle program in 2003, PRC and partners have facilitated the safe management of 4,220,000 pounds of e-waste in addition to tires, Freon appliances, fluorescent tubes and other materials not accepted in curbside recycling. View PRC's schedule of 2025 collection events.

Plant-A-Tree/Penny Pines Donations Chair, Nancy Lambert Fulk, was absent and had no report.

Personnel Chair, Betsy Smith, was absent and had no report.

Pollinator Restoration Program Chair, Barbara White, reported during her research she came across a great weekly information newsletter at the national gardening association garden.org. It is basically common plants with a hybrid twist and what pollinating darlings are attracted to in each plant along with pollinating tips. And don't kill that snake!!!! She circulated a black and white copy around but the color on the site is gorgeous. Handouts are on her pollinator board on the table and, also, information about how to get pollinator-friendly garden signs and information for youth groups, etc.

President's Project Healing Arts Chair, Barbara Campbell, reported the Healing Art Program is part President Wolanski's Seed of Service President's Awards, originally created by Gail Manna, GCFP President 2011-2013. The Healing Art Program is about donating a nature-

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inspired original artwork or photography in the name of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania to medical facilities or schools to provide comfort to patients and visitors. An individual or club can donate and be recognized by President Wolanski. The minimum size is 12' x 16" or larger. It can include framed photographs of gardens, flowers, or any other nature scenes, or nature-inspired original artwork, paintings, pressed flower art, or illustrations. A label for artwork will be provided to be included with your donation. These exceptional projects will be noted in the Keystone Gardener/KG Online, as well as presented with Certificates at the GCFP Annual September District Meetings or Conventions. Contact Barbara Campbell (barbarac45@aol.com) for more information about how to donate.

President's Project – Pennsylvania Celebrates Nature and Embraces the Future Awards – Community Gardens Co-Chairs, Arlene Reagan-Harris and Marge Eberz reported this committee has done the following tasks: Submitted articles on Planting a Children's Theme Garden "A Pizza Garden" to the online editor of the Keystone Gardener. Wrote an article on "Red White and Blue Gardens" for the online Keystone Gardener. Planning on presenting information on Sensory Gardens and Colonial Medicinal Gardens to a District XI meeting.

Program Resources Chair, Diane Quinn, reported Program Resource Reporting is underway and has been going well. Several clubs are sending their excellent program recommendations to me on email. She is in the process of compiling them into the existing excel spreadsheet. Once it is complete, she will send it to Vina, our webmaster so it can be shared on the website for all members to view. This document is password protected so you will need to enter our GCFP password to view the document. Reminder to all club presidents to share their programs with me so that they will be included in the updated 2026 Program Resource. This is a wonderful opportunity for program chairs at all our clubs to view the document and gain program ideas for next year. The original program resource document has also been updated to include GCFP members who are also speakers. Thank you to the GCFP Leadership team, Keystone Gardener, KG Online, Vina and all the Club presidents for spreading the word about this valuable resource.

Protocol Chair, Haddie Weber, thanked GCFP President for the honor of serving as your Protocol Chair and Lee Ishman as Vice Char. **A few reminders:** Remember it is God before Country. No flag - No pledge. The flag is to the President's right. The GCFP President is to be recognized FIRST by asking the members to please stand and give a warm welcome to her. In addressing the board, it is Madam President. If a buffet is being served, the Officers and guest speaker are to be FIRST in line. It is not old business, but unfinished business. The Convention registration form MUST be complete to facilitate the registrar on who is serving on the GCFP State Board. On the registration form there is a list of positions that need to be checked: NGC President/District Director/Club President/Flower Show Judge/Garden Club Member. All attendees must pay Registration Fee. Please remember after you have registered, come to her table and receive your seating assignment. Looking forward to seeing you MystERIE by the Bay.- April 26-28, 2026.

Publicity Press Book Awards Chair, Linda Freedman, was absent but reported she knows you have been thinking in the back of your mind about doing a publicity press book for 2026. Now is the time to examine your calendar and see which of your activities would make the news. Your wonderful work should be captured with articles about your club and compiled into a folder. It is sure to impress other garden clubs and hold fond memories for you of a great year. Participation

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in the GCFP Garden Party could be a special addition to your book. Delegate a member, or a few, to collect articles in print of your club activities and assemble them into a folder with brads. Use clear protectors to keep everything clean and tidy. You can find all the details on page 11 of the 2025-2027 GCFP Awards Manual. She encourages you to go for it, have fun and show off your accomplishments.

Sage and Roses Donations Chair, Vivian Abel, was absent and had no report.

Scholarship Committee Chair, Sandra Hendricks, reported updated scholarship material is available on the GCFP website www.pagardenclubs.org under Forms Library and the Application and Financial Need Forms are in a "fillable PDF" form. Please use forms with the date 9/25 on the bottom of forms. All District Directors, scholarship chairpersons, club presidents and garden club members are encouraged to relay information to the local high schools, colleges and clubs in their districts. We're counting on you to identify those deserving students and assist them in meeting the deadline of February 1, 2026. Awardees will be announced at the 2026 convention. In 2025 we had 23 applicates from five districts winning the 13 \$1000.00 scholarships, plus District II/III winning a National and District VI winning the CAR scholarship. Again, she reminds you, a student is not eligible for the National Scholarship until they are a junior in college. Therefore, no need to complete the NGC application until they are a sophomore (or above) in college. Pennsylvania is allowed one NGC winner per year.

Scholarship Donations Chair, Linda Southerling, thanked the clubs, members and districts that have sent in donations. Donations can be used to honor, appreciate or in memory of someone. Be sure to check the Keystone Gardener where these donations are acknowledged. Please use the form for donations found on the GCFP website. **Also, please use e-mail as the preferred mode to acknowledge the donation whether to the recipient or the donor.** It is quicker and less expensive.

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Chair, Betty Grossheim, reported the National 2026 Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest has begun! The only difference from previous years is that there will be no trip to Washington D.C. for the national winner of the prize. We were fortunate to have a regional winner at CAR last year so it would be great to repeat that and have more winners at the state level. She has emailed the district directors with the contact information for them to distribute to their club presidents. The participating clubs from last year have also received the information needed to participate in the very worthwhile contest. Remember, it is open to any child from first grade through fifth grade who is sponsored by a local garden club. Posters are due to her by January 20, 2026. She would appreciate them sooner as they are due to CAR by February 1st. This contest also fits in with our President's program "Sprouts and Seedlings." It would be a great program for a November junior garden club meeting when gardens cannot be worked on. If you have any questions, feel free to contact her.

Sponsorship Committee Chair, Marjorie Sears, reported the better one is acquainted with a client, the better one's chance is of obtaining an ad. Sharon Richardson not only visited Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, but was impressed with how they piped outside noises to their new facility. Phipps will be on the inside back cover (\$750.00). Many thanks to Longwood Gardens forever supporting us (inside front cover for \$750.00) and to Nancy Cuttic for obtaining the back cover (\$1000.00) from Bartlett Tree Experts. If you wish to have an ad from a Garden

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or Garden Center, find someone who knows them! Following the conclusion of the 2025 Convention, Karen Wychock provided me with the additional Program Booklets. She subsequently delivered or mailed these copies to our Sponsors, allowing them to review not only their own advertisements but also those featured by others. So far, at least one hundred potential sponsors have been told about our Garden Party, lots of follow-up is still needed. But, we feel confident that we have or will have ads from the following: Duluth, Fox Chase Cancer Center, Bowmans Hill Wildflower Preserve, McCaffrey's Food Markets, Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Andalusia House, Gardens & Arboretum, Wyck Historic House, Peddlers Village, Laurel Hill, Burpee, Donald Pell, Primex, Weatherwood Design, Road Scholar, Caladium World, Mostardi Nursery, Barnes Arboretum and Henry Botanic Garden. All suggestions are welcome. If she helps you, you will still maintain credit for the Ad.

Sprouts and Seedlings Chair, Cheryl Brumbaugh, reported Sprouts and Seedlings is really Growing! With 7 Garden Clubs signed on and aligned with a youth group she is hearing about lots of fun ideas and projects happening or being planned. The application form has been updated to include an email and phone contact. She will be emailing opportunities for seeds, plants, and other things to the contact person on the form. Eventually, she will plan in receiving feedback from the applicants who have started their programs and sending the reports out in future updates so everyone can see what other clubs are doing with their youth groups. Sprouts and Seedlings is a wonderful opportunity to expand our Garden Clubs in Pa to include youth gardeners and to educate and introduce them to the pleasure and beauty that they can create around them.

Tours Chair, Sharon Richardson, reported writing this report from Italy, midway through our incredible journey. During the first five days, GCFP members explored the stunning Lake Como region, where we had the pleasure of visiting several historic gardens and villas—many of which served as inspiration for Pierre du Pont's design of Longwood Gardens. A particular highlight was our visit to the Orticolario, an annual indoor and outdoor flower show that closely resembles the Philadelphia Flower Show. The event featured impressive landscape design installations, plant sales, and a wide array of juried vendors and artisans. Yesterday was a standout day on our itinerary. We began with a fun and engaging class on how to make authentic Italian pesto. After preparing our own, we enjoyed a delicious lunch paired with a crisp white wine from the Cinque Terre region. In the afternoon, we received a warm welcome from Alfreda Rebizzo, president of both the La Spezia Garden Club and UGAI—the national organization that unites 25 garden clubs across Italy. Alfreda graciously presented us with a beautiful book about her city, along with recent editions of UGAI's publications. She also expressed interest in organizing a future UGAI visit to Pennsylvania. Meeting Alfreda and two fellow club members was a true honor, and we look forward to strengthening this international connection. One of the most rewarding aspects of the trip has been the opportunity to connect with garden club members from across Pennsylvania. We've enjoyed sharing ideas, discussing how President Pat's initiatives are being implemented, and exchanging contacts for potential speakers and programs. By all measures, this trip has been a resounding success. The weather has been perfect, the food exquisite, and the camaraderie among members has made every moment even more special.

Tri-Refresher Chair, Sharon Richardson, reported **EXCITING NEWS** - we've just received NGC approval to offer a Tri-Refresher next September. Write these dates down September 13 and 14. Once you hear what's available, you may want to come earlier to use your Brandywine Treasure Trail Passport, so consider planning a mini-vacation around GCFP's Tri-Refresher! The Tri-

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Refresher will start on Sunday afternoon, September 13th at Longwood Gardens. You'll have a guided tour of the newly opened **LONGWOOD RE-IMAGINED** project and enjoy the evening's award-winning illuminated Fountains show set to music. Monday you'll spend the morning at the Stroud Water Research Center for the Environmental portion and Mt. Cuba for the Gardening portion of the Tri-Refresher. Registration will include a Brandywine Treasure Trail Passport, which includes admission to 12 attractions such as Longwood Gardens, Mt. Cuba, Winterthur, Nemours, Hagey's Mill, etc. The pass is valid from Memorial Day weekend through the end of October. <https://www.visitwilmingtonde.com/passport/>. Watch for the brochure on line and they will also be available at the Convention.

GCFP Webmaster, Vina McLeod Rudolph, reported this Chair has continued to update the GCFP website as requested and add new pages when necessary. I normally do the update I receive on Sunday mornings. The new password for the documents that are protected is _____.

Youth Activities Co-Chairs, Chris Hawthorne and Barbara Oswald, reported there is no High School Essay Contest this year unfortunately due to lack of interest in past years. The poetry theme open for Kindergarten through 12th Grade for the school year 2025-2026 is "Plant America for The Next 100 Years". The Youth Sculpture Contest for the school year 2025 – 2026 is open to Grades 4 through 8. Unfortunately, Chris Hawthorne's computer is still packed away since my home repairs from the April storm are not complete. Since she has been unable to access my computer, she suggests anyone that needs to have the particulars for the poetry contest or youth sculpture contest access the National Garden Club's website at <https://gardenclub.org>. The phone number to National Garden Club is (314) 776-7574. Her contact person is Katie Roth at extension 215. Unfortunately, it is required to create a member login to access the National Garden Club website. At the very top of the page, select member login and create a user name and password. Then follow the prompts for youth contests. I have never had to create an account in the past. She had to contact National Garden Club for assistance. She was told the reason why this has occurred is because the new administration decided this. This info was supposed to be trickled down to everyone involved and this was not done to my knowledge. She felt this is a shame since the general public will not know to select member login, thus not permitting them to be able to browse the website, enjoy the articles, see the winners, participate in a contest, or perhaps interest them in joining a local garden club in their area. **HARD** copies of poetry and youth sculpture pictures need **MAILED** to Chris Hawthorne. **NO EMAILS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO INAPPROPRIATE POETRY ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AND WILL BE DISCARDED.** We would appreciate a contact name, phone number, email, and the name of the garden club sending the entries. All of the entries need to be **TYPED**, including the child's first and last name, school name, age and grade. Any illegible entries will be discarded. The entries need to be **RECEIVED** by Monday December 1, 2025. Please keep in mind that mail will be slower during that time due to the Thanksgiving holiday and the approaching Hanukkah and Christmas holidays. Please send the entries as early as you can & plan accordingly.

Wildflowers Chair, Diane Hughes, reported there are 72 goldenrod species native to North America. These are widespread across the continent from coastal areas to the mountains. Pennsylvania has its share. Many of the species goldenrods are weedy and invasive, especially when planted in good garden soil. This year the fields of goldenrod are impressive. It's everywhere. It's beautiful and not appreciated. Goldenrod is a late-season nectar for migrating

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butterflies and native bees. Goldenrod supports over 120 native bee and 100 butterfly and moth species. It's a keystone flower that is critical for pollinators. Let it bloom through the end of fall. And – as the story goes – Sally Fairfax told George Washington that he should plant some of the goldenrod found in Pennsylvania at Mount Vernon. She does not know if there is any truth of this, but it is a pleasant thought.

Zoom Educator, Sandra Benedict, was absent and had no report.