

# Rotary has beautiful gift for Ardmore

By JIM MCCAFFREY

A gift to Ardmore is scheduled to be unwrapped Thursday.

The Rotary Club of Ardmore will hold a dedication ceremony at noon to officially deliver to the township the fruit of a two-year project to restore the fountain and statue at the Ardmore Library.

Harriet Whitney Frishmuth (1880-1980), a wealthy Philadelphia artist, created the fountain in 1924. Her work depicts a woman in Roman dress kneeling over a fountain, fish beside her. The water spew water into the fountain through gaping mouths.

Frishmuth's art has a distinguished pedigree. She was an apprentice of sculptor Augusté Rodin. Another example of her work resides in the Berwind Memorial in Laurel Hill Cemetery.

"The Ardmore Library fountain is a terrific piece. The quality is very good," said project conservationist Scott Kreilick, of Kreilick Conservation in Oreland.

The fountain was created at the bequest of Kate Clevenger. Clevenger, who died in 1912, left the library \$10,000 to create the fountain as a memorial for her brother, William H. Clevenger, who preceded her in death.

Her will specifically directed the memorial have drinking water "for man and beast in the central part of Ardmore."

In 2000, the Rotary Club of Ardmore was looking for an appropriate way to commemorate its 75th year. To celebrate the milestone, it wanted to find a project to benefit the entire community.

Jane Williams was the club president at the time.

"We wanted to make a gift to the people of Ardmore," she recalled. "We wanted to do something that would not otherwise be done."

The club talked with the township and local civic associations to gather their ideas for the project.

"We settled on the fountain project because it is one of the few pieces of monumental sculpture in the township," she explained. "It is a lovely piece, but it was in such disrepair and in such a prominent place we felt something had to be done to restore it."

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MIKE SILVER

Rotarian

The club asked its members for bids. The membership quickly discovered the statue was bronze and would be more difficult and expensive to restore than anticipated.

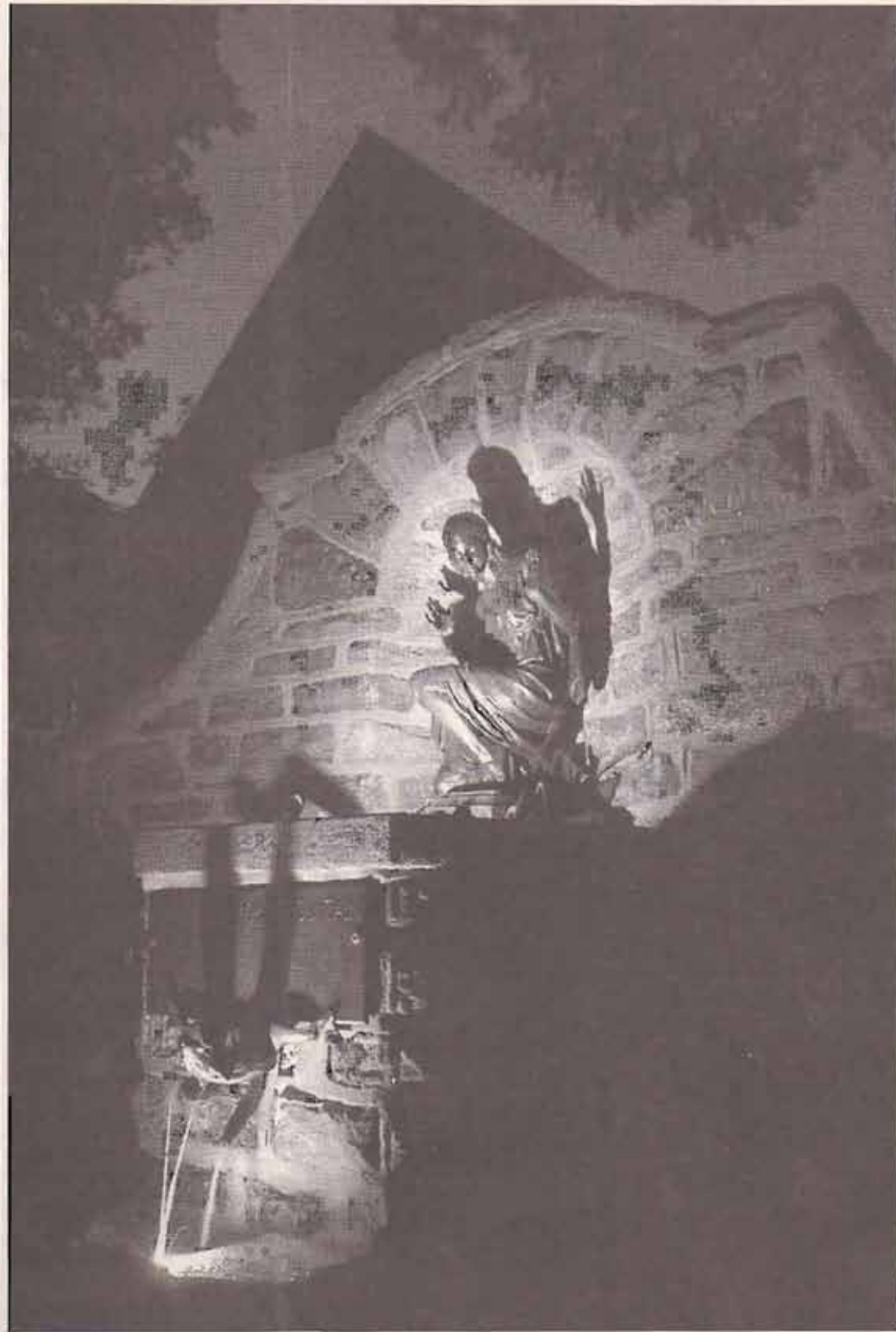
Club member Dave Tarditi found Kreilick, a regional expert on bronze restoration and, happily, a Rotarian.

To clean the statue, Kreilick blasted it at a high PSI with fine crushed walnut shells, then gave in multiple coats of wax. He also re-pointed most of the stonework surrounding the fountain in the 100 block of Ardmore Avenue.

Club member Mike Silver worked with Tarditi to coordinate the construction.

"We spent more than \$13,000 on this project, and the contractors probably underbid it," Silver said. "Scott Kreilick, I'm sure, donated some of his hours. He got it done within budget. The plumber Charlie Gans, of Havertown, is a Rotarian. He probably donated some hours, also."

He added, "We hope with the lights working and the beautiful fountain that this will in some way encouraging learning and get people to use the library."



PETE BANNAN photo

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