

GFWC Middle Atlantic Region Conference
October 7, 2022

Mary Pat Marcello
President

Since installation in New Orleans in June, this Officer has spent most days working on the agenda for this Conference. She attended the GFWC Board of Directors meeting in Washington DC in August, and thanks the GFWC International President for creating an agenda filled with information, adventure and fun and GFWC President elect for enabling the productive Region Presidents' group meeting and enjoyable off-site dinner.

Some in attendance this weekend were present at the 2022 Semi-Annual meeting in New Orleans in late June. So you may remember the announcement of the goals of this administration. Please allow this Officer to report on the progress achieved to date:

1. At the January 2022 Orientation meeting for the incoming Region Presidents, now President-elect Suellen Brazil challenged the incoming Region Presidents to develop methods to attract members to the Region meetings. Utilization of existing virtual platforms, the MAR website and the MAR Facebook page, have been emphasized, with thanks to MAR webmaster Henrietta Belcher Stack and MAR Facebook manager Deen Meloro. Later in the agenda, you will hear more from those two members about how your state can better utilize both those services to enhance your membership's familiarity with the Middle Atlantic Region clubs and projects.
2. The early plans for the creation of a quarterly newsletter bore fruition with the roll out of the inaugural edition in August. Many thanks to the creativity of MAR Communications Chairman Jill Passaretti. The purpose of the newsletter is to bring MAR out of the shadows and into every club's awareness through spotlights on individual members and club projects. It is this Officer's fervent hope that the MAR State Presidents utilized whatever digital communication methods available in their respective states to share the newsletter with club presidents and members. This officer is cognizant that embracing MAR at the club member level may take time and hopes that each state will "buy in" to this process. Watch for the next edition of the MAR newsletter before the end of the year.
3. The very best way to enable the increase of rank-and-file members to access MAR membership is through enhanced use of virtual technology. Currently, MAR does not have the ability to communicate with individual clubs and members and it is only through the State Presidents that MAR information can be made available. Looking ahead, steps will be taken to improve direct MAR communication with clubs.

Although communication is key to connecting with MAR members, this MAR President would love to present "another face of MAR" through a visit at your respective states during your Annual Convention, if she is invited! Yes, each of our states has an officer seated on the MAR Board, but it could be stated that through the visit of the out-of-state

Region President, members may become more familiar with the concept of GFWC Middle Atlantic Region and decide that attendance at a Region Conference is worth their time and money.

Our region is fortunate to have two opportunities to gather that don't require an air flight, but at the end of the day, it is just two opportunities. Therefore, it is imperative that the agendas at our Region Conferences are maximized. While we are here in Albany for the 2022 Annual Conference, this President urges each in attendance to take advantage of the presentations introducing GFWC program initiatives, along with "tried and true" programs which serve to enable community impact by our clubs. Take lots of notes, whether you are here as your state's president or as a club member. The very best way to recruit new members is to provide those women with impactful projects that they will recognize as worth their time; projects that are readily identifiable as important to their community; projects which provide your club the answer to "why should I join". And this weekend will be filled with just those project ideas.

This President joined her first club in 1978, not knowing exactly what the membership path would be. And that is probably the case for many of you here. You joined for the programs, the sisterhood, the appreciation. Women like us still exist; it's just a question of fitting your club's projects into the extraordinarily busy schedule of today's women and enabling them to know the why.

It is this officer's hope that you all easily remember your why. Use this Conference and the ideas and projects presented to develop the why for your new members.