

The Virginia Clubwoman



DECEMBER 2025



Happy Holidays



*“May your holiday giving be warm
and your blessings, bright”.*

*Your GFWC Virginia General and Junior Executive Committees,
District Presidents and Directors of Junior Clubs, Program and
Standing Committee Chairmen, and Special Appointments.*



President's Message

Susie Mowry

president@gfwcvirginia.org

The President's Message—

Don't know about you, but to me, this year has flown by. Just seems like yesterday when we were celebrating the New Year and wondering what it would bring and what help we could give to our communities. I have to say the ladies of GFWC Virginia certainly found a myriad of ways to provide such help. I am particularly proud of the way you stepped up to help during the Shutdown. Knowing that GFWC is non-partisan, and regardless of the political affiliations of members, clubs across the state helped those in need. Recognizing the situation with SNAP benefits, our members found ways to help those who were hungry. Our members collected food, worked at food banks, distributed food to those in need, and many other like events. Our communities were hurting and will continue to do so for a while unfortunately. Proud that you saw the need and took steps to address it. Let's keep looking forward and continue to address the issues that are facing our neighbors.

Joanne and I had the pleasure to visit two more of our districts: Alice Kyle and Lee Districts. Our hosts at the Alice Kyle District made reservations at Whipping Creek Farm, a beautiful Bed and Breakfast located in Gladys, Virginia. I highly recommend you visit if you are looking for a beautiful, peaceful place for rest and relaxation. The meeting was well attended, allowing the district to conduct all necessary business. As always, the decorations were beautiful, highlighting the Fall season with pumpkins and Fall foliage. It was fun to participate in their district fundraiser – an auction of donated items. Sad to say, I did not win anything, but only because the ladies of Alice Kyle were very generous and outbid me. The next weekend Joanne and I had the distinct honor to attend the 100th Anniversary of the Lee District. It was interesting and fun to hear highlights from each of the 10 decades of the district's existence. These facts, read by different people, were interspersed throughout the meeting. What an interesting and exciting way to bring attention to the district accomplishments. As always, the necessary business was accomplished, while focus was kept on the members in attendance. There was a basket raffle held, with most clubs donating a basket. A great idea to raise funds for the district treasury. I thought one of the highlights of the anniversary meeting was the wonderful toast recited by Pat Cloey, Anniversary Committee member. We raised a glass (of sparkling grape juice) and toasted to Lee District's past and its exciting future. As always, it is such a joy to attend district meetings. They are always different but represent the personalities of the members of those districts. Thank you to each district for making us feel so welcome and special.

Our next adventure was to the Southeastern Region Meeting at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, Virginia. I realize we have been talking about hosting this meeting since this administration began. Well, we did it and did it well! We had sixty-four Virginia clubwomen in attendance, which was extraordinary! You ladies outdid yourselves with Virginia hospitality. The Welcome Table was laden with goodies of all sorts, from sewing kits to tissues to candy to aspirin to small notebooks, just to name a few items. Ladies from the other states were quite impressed. I was very proud of our district's working together to decorate the lunch and dinner tables. Thank you so much for designing the decorations



GFWC VIRGINIA

P.O. Box 8750
 Richmond, Virginia 23226
 Phone: (804) 288-3724
 Email: gfwcvirginia@verizon.net
 Website: www.gfwcvirginia.org

The Virginia Clubwoman

Editor—Pat Jeffress
Editor@gfwcvirginia.org
 Send articles, photos and newsletters

GFWC magazine assumes no responsibility for advertisements in this magazine unless they are published in conjunction with an official GFWC/GFWC Virginia program.

A minimum of 6 issues are published during the 2024-2026 administration.

Deadlines:
 February 18, 2026
 June 5, 2026

ON THE COVER

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2-3
Director of Junior Clubs Message	3
Officers'/Chairmen's Reports	4-14
District News	15-18



Website:
www.gfwc.org

GFWC OFFICERS

President:

Suellen Brazil
GFWC Alabama

President-elect:

Wendy Carriker
GFWC North Carolina

First Vice President:

Jolie Frankfurt
GFWC Florida

Second Vice President:

Mary Beth Williams
GFWC Colorado

Secretary:

Dr. Susan Gettys
GFWC Missouri

Treasurer:

Juliette Casper
GFWC South Carolina

Director of Junior Clubs:

Shannon Bailey
GFWC Florida

to incorporate items to be donated to Early Childhood Education areas. I cannot even begin to explain how heartwarming it was for me to hear Kathryn say at each meeting where the centerpieces were being donated or where there was a donation being made. And yes, before anyone even asks, there were tears a couple of times. I believe our state report was pretty spectacular. Ladies from each of the districts participated, and we were able to highlight the great work done by our members. We will be doing a very similar report at the convention in Williamsburg, so you can hear about the success you have all helped to accomplish in 2025.

It is almost time to begin our preparations for reporting, which we all know is due on January 25th. It is so important to gather statistical information to forward to GFWC. I am sure you have heard over and over that it is critical for GFWC to get accurate numbers to use to guide policy and research. By accurately reporting statistics, GFWC can use this information to provide information to decision-makers and ultimately allow our work to be used and in support of the GFWC resolutions. If you go back and look at News and Notes from November 13th, there is an excellent article about Reporting. And a quote from that article says it all: “Sharing our volunteer activities does more than check a box; it tells our story, demonstrates our impact, and inspires others.” Stephanie Griffin, GFWC Virginia Reporting Chairman, will be providing support and guidance through the reporting process. If you have questions or are unsure of what to do, please do not hesitate to contact her. She is knowledgeable and anxious to make this process as easy for you as possible. The work that the clubs in Virginia do is remarkable, so take the time to share your successes with others.

Wishing all the ladies of GFWC Virginia a joyful and peaceful holiday season. I hope this time brings rest, warmth, and celebration – and hopefully carries our shared spirit of service and community into the new year with renewed energy and purpose. Thank you for all you do, and happy holidays.

Susie

Joanne Dixon
GFWC Virginia Third Vice President
Director of Junior Clubs
directorofjuniors@gfwcvirginia.org

GFWC Virginia Juniors have been on the Ride of a Lifetime since the beginning of the new club year. I was busy this fall attending the Lee and Alice Kyle fall meetings and representing Virginia at the Southeastern Region Meeting in October. As Junior celebrated Junior month in October, we must take this time to thank the Virginia Juniors for their 101 years of leadership and commitment to our communities across the Commonwealth. I would like to personally thank all of the Juniors for their dedication. Advocates for Children is still the focus for this administration. Club women have been working tirelessly to promote not only Advocates for Children week but also support our children every day in the various club activities. I look forward to reading all the Advocates for Children efforts during reporting. Don't forget to review the Advocates for Children award information in the GFWC Virginia Yearbook. This award is open to all clubwomen. I look forward to reading all of the junior reports next year. Please reach out if you have any questions. I'm here to serve you!

Cynthia Baroody

GFWC Virginia First Vice President/President-elect

firstvp@gfwcvirginia.org



Lynn Chapman

GFWC Virginia Assistant Director of Junior Clubs

assistantjrdirector@gfwcvirginia.org

Hello GFWC Virginia Club Members! It was wonderful to see so many of you at the GFWC Southeastern Region Conference held at the Hotel Roanoke in October. Clubwomen from every district in Virginia did an outstanding job hosting this event. We sincerely thank each of you for your time and service, with special appreciation to Susie Mowry, our GFWC Virginia President, and Kathryn Sowers, our Virginia Chairman for SER, for their exemplary leadership.

The SER Conference offered a lively and informative program covering a range of topics. The GFWC Leadership Team shared valuable guidance to help everyone succeed in leadership roles. Ann Landis, our GFWC Leadership Chairman, led a workshop titled “Leadership – Recipe for Great Leaders,” which emphasized the following steps:

1. Start with curiosity
2. Gather ingredients (stir and adjust)
3. Follow the steps, including succession planning.
4. Recognize that mistakes may happen.

Ultimately, we empower others by leading with integrity and courage. Ann encouraged us to reflect on the question: “What is my why?” and reminded us that caring for others is central to successful leadership.

Members are also encouraged to explore “Thumbs Up Thursday,” the GFWC Advancement Programs on Facebook. Ann Landis recently posted an article about the importance of understanding parliamentary procedure for effective leadership, detailing six steps to make, discuss, and pass motions the GFWC way. The GFWC Advancement Leadership Programs focus on helping members communicate the organization’s mission and build a culture of success within clubs.

We are proud to recognize our GFWC LEADS 2025 candidate, Michelle Clary, who attended the SER Conference and served as the credentials chairman. Michelle continues to develop her leadership skills, and our members celebrate her accomplishments.

Looking ahead, GFWC LEADS will take place next year in Scottsdale, Arizona, on 06/26/2026 at the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa. Those interested in applying can find the application in the GFWC Virginia Yearbook Supplement on page 109S. **Applications, along with two letters of support, are due by 01/15/2026.** We hope to see applications from every district!

As the holiday season approaches, please remember that reporting time is near. Begin preparing your summaries and tracking all the time, monetary contributions, and in-kind donations you have made this year. Be sure to record every hour spent on club work, as your dedication is invaluable. We look forward to learning about the wonderful efforts you have made to foster leadership within your clubs.

Enjoy the rest of your fall and have a peaceful Thanksgiving, as well as a joyful holiday season. Remember, your Leadership Team is always here to assist with any questions or concerns. Together, we are working to support your success!

Carolyn Fellers

GFWC Virginia Second Vice President

secondvp@gfwcvirginia.org

Alaina Chaffee

GFWC Virginia Junior Membership Chairman

MembershipJr@gfwcvirginia.org

After years of working alongside dedicated clubwomen, I've learned that retaining members is both an art and an act of love. We put so much effort into recruiting new faces, but keeping them connected — keeping them inspired — is what sustains the heartbeat of our clubs.

Membership retention begins with belonging. When a new member joins, she's looking not just for volunteer opportunities but for friendship, purpose, and connection. A warm welcome matters, but continued inclusion matters even more. Pairing new members with a mentor or "club buddy" helps them feel comfortable and confident participating in projects and meetings.

Keeping our activities fresh also plays a big role. We all appreciate tradition, but it's energizing to add something new — a hands-on service project, a themed meeting, or a social outing that brings fun back into our routine. Asking members what types of projects excite them can uncover new interests and talents.

Recognition is another key to retention. A simple "thank you" at a meeting, a note of appreciation, or highlighting a member's milestone in the newsletter shows that every contribution counts. We should celebrate our longtime members as much as we celebrate our newest ones — they are the living history of GFWC.

Finally, flexibility is essential. Many women juggle family, work, and community roles. Encouraging members to participate in ways that fit their lives — even if that means virtual meetings, short-term projects, or occasional volunteering — keeps the door open for continued engagement.

When members feel valued, included, and inspired, they stay. And when they stay, our clubs — and the communities we serve — grow stronger together.

Enjoy the upcoming holiday season. Thank you for all you do to make our world a better place.

Lynne Wherry

GFWC Virginia Treasurer

treasurer@gfwcvirginia.org

Jessica Thomas

GFWC Virginia Secretary/Treasurer

JRtreasurer@gfwcvirginia.org



As the year ends, treasurers are encouraged to focus on reporting while enjoying the holiday season. They should start by consolidating all donations from each chairman and submitting totals to the club's reporting chairman promptly, including all financial activity from January 1 through December 31, 2024.

This is also a good time to review committee budgets, share remaining balances, and compare actual spending with

district and club budgets. By December 31, checks should be issued to charities for funds raised during the year's events.

Clubs must also pay dues to their district and GFWC Virginia, with state dues due January 25, 2026. District deadlines may vary, so checking the handbook is essential. Additional contribution ideas can be found on page 79 of the GFWC Virginia Yearbook and page 141 for Juniors.

For treasury-related questions, Lynne Wherry and Jessica Thomas are available to assist. Wishing everyone a joyful holiday season, a Happy New Year, and successful reporting!

Parliamentary Notes

Sarah Entsminger, PRP

parliamentarian@gfwcvirginia.org

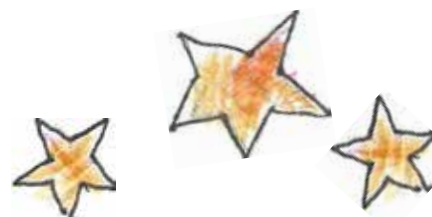
With annual meetings and elections on the horizon, it is time to talk about credentials. In any organization, it is important to know that the necessary people are present in order for business to be conducted or elections to be held. GFWC Virginia's Bylaws set forth who may be a voting delegate at both district and state meetings. For districts, that is Article V Districts, Section 9 Representation. For state meetings, that is Article IX Meetings, Section 4 Representations at GFWC Virginia Business Meetings.

In GFWC VA, there are two ways in which a member is designated as a delegate, and these are clearly set out in the sections listed above. The first group of delegates are those who receive delegate status due to a position they hold in the organization, and the second group of delegates are those who are elected to represent their club (the number of club delegates is determined by club size). The first group of delegates by position are not counted in the number of delegates allowed due to club size; they are in addition to those elected to represent the club. With the recent revision of GFWC Virginia's Bylaws, delegate counts were raised in order for more members to have an opportunity to vote at meetings, so if you have not reviewed this information recently, I would highly recommend doing so before registering for any district or state meeting.

It is incumbent on the club to know how many delegates they are entitled to and to be sure to correctly mark those individuals on the registration form; it is not the responsibility of the credentials committee to correct your forms. The Credentials Committee compiles all the information from club registration forms to create a roster of delegates as well as non-voting members expected to be in attendance. The number of people registered in advance allows the presiding officer to know whether a quorum can be achieved for the conduct of business, if there are not enough delegates registered in advance, it allows time for additional registrations to be solicited.

When a member arrives at a meeting, they will register in person with the Credentials Committee, be marked off on the roster, and issued a voting credential or badge that allows them to participate in business. It is critical that members check in with the Credentials Committee; these are not just name tags at a luncheon to be picked up at will. These are official voting credentials and must be recorded. The preliminary credentials report given at the beginning of the meeting is compiled from registrations and allows the presiding officer to know that business may proceed. Any supplemental credentials reports, along with the final credentials report, state actual in-person attendance (also known as "butts in seats"). These supplemental reports provide the actual voting strength present at the time the report is given. Every member has an obligation to inform the Credentials Committee if they leave a meeting early or arrive after the initial reports have been given.

Please contact me if you have any questions.





Joyce Jolly
GFWC Signature Program Chairman
SignatureProgram@gfwcvirginia.org

At our summer conference in Staunton, President Susie Mowry addressed the impact of the GFWC resolutions on the functioning of the organization. She stated that “The resolutions were the foundation on which all of what we do as GFWC Virginia is built”. Having piqued my interest, I went searching the GFWC website to locate the resolutions relating to the Signature Project.

Key resolutions supporting the signature project focus on: Campus Sexual Assault, Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Awareness, Elder Abuse Prevention, Military Sexual Assault, Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits and Sexual Harassment. These resolutions collectively aim to raise awareness, support survivors, promote prevention, and advocate for legislative changes. One example is to support survivors. The resolutions promote advocating for emergency shelters, transitional housing, legal assistance, and access to medical services like rape kits, and ensure survivors receive the help they need. Another example, to advocate for legislative changes, the resolutions call for laws that strengthen protections for survivors, improve reporting systems, and hold perpetrators accountable.

The GFWC Signature Project is deeply rooted in the organization’s resolutions. These resolutions provide actionable steps for member clubs to address domestic and sexual violence at the local, state and national levels. By implementing these resolutions, GFWC members can make a meaningful impact in their communities, supporting survivors and working toward a future free of violence.

I hope I have piqued your interest and you will take advantage of all of the information available to you on the GFWC website.

Amanda Paez
GFWC Juniors’ Special Project Advocates For Children
advocatesforchildren@gfwcvirginia.org



The holiday season inspires generosity, and many Clubwomen look for ways to brighten a child’s life. Often by purchasing toys or participating in traditional gift drives. Operation Christmas Child, Angel Trees, Christmas Mother programs, and the like are common ways that Clubwomen continue to show their volunteer spirit. However, we can also advocate by giving thoughtfully. While these efforts are heartfelt, financial donations to reputable organizations can often make a deeper, longer-lasting impact on a child’s well-being.

Many children and families face challenges that a single wrapped present can’t fix. Housing insecurity, food shortages, limited access to medical care, and gaps in mental-health support can turn the holiday season into an especially difficult time. When community members give monetary contributions, agencies and nonprofits gain the flexibility to direct resources exactly where they’re needed most.

Unlike a toy, which may bring a moment of joy, financial support can contribute to a child’s overall safety and welfare. It helps ensure that children are living in stable environments, have access to essentials, and receive support services that protect them long after the holiday decorations are packed away. For families in crisis, this kind of assistance can be life-changing.

This doesn’t mean holiday gift programs aren’t valuable - they absolutely bring comfort and excitement to kids who deserve to feel included and celebrated. But expanding our giving to include financial donations acknowledges a bigger

truth: the most meaningful gift we can provide a child is security, dignity, and the chance to thrive.

This holiday season, consider pairing generosity of spirit with practical support. A contribution of any size can help create safer, stronger foundations for children who need it most.

Need some ideas?

- Supporting our affiliate organizations! Gift certificates for Heifer International can be purchased so they can decide what gift to give for families around the world. Add a book that can be found on Amazon that supports Heifer International and tells the story of the difference their gift makes in the lives of others. You can also purchase your Christmas cards through UNICEF USA. Already sent yours out? You can also buy cards for any occasion on their website!

- Check with your local Social Services Agency. They often host dinners or toy drives for families they serve. A monetary donation will ensure the needs are met.

- Make a monetary donation to your local food bank! Rather than paying retail prices, large networks like Feeding America work with major manufacturers, retailers, and farmers to secure healthy food. These larger networks often work with smaller, local branches to get food on our neighbors' tables.

Jean Cobb

GFWC Virginia Community Impact Program Award

cipa@gfwcvirginia.org

As the weather starts to get cooler and everyone is in the holiday spirit, we realize 2025 will be coming to an end, and January will be here before we know it. For clubwomen, January means reporting and evaluating projects we have completed. It is also time to reflect on which projects had an impact on our communities. For me, it is time to stroll down memory lane and remind myself of how much we accomplished.

If you find yourself with a few minutes or hours you can carve out to start on your reports, then January will be much easier. I hope you have chosen a Community Impact Project to report on, and I look forward to reading your reports. The award booklet starts on page 205 of the GFWC Club Manual. Reporting timeframe is January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025. The Entry Form is on pages 209 - 210. The booklet has some valuable information, and we all do so many projects that improve our communities. Please select one project to report.

Reminder: Award Entry Form highlights the following:

- Brief description of the project and the issue/problem you are trying to solve.
- Project scope including:
 - the plan of action.
 - costs to implement and how the project was funded.
 - community collaboration, if any.
 - obstacles, if any, you overcame to implement the project.
- Results achieved and the long-term effects of the project on the community.
- Public relations and media (including internet, newspaper articles, social media, television, etc.), including pictures of the project activities.

Total entry cannot exceed 10 pages, including photos, media, etc.



Lynn Osborne
**GFWC Virginia Communications and
Public Relations Chairman**
communications@gfwcvirginia.org

I hope you have signed up to be a member of the GFWC Advancements and Programs Forum on Facebook. There have been many forums that have proven to be very beneficial to members. GFWC Chairmen have presented some valuable information in the areas of Leadership, Membership, Communication, and Public Relations. Consider joining the Forum on Facebook, you won't be sorry you did!

The holidays are quickly approaching. During this time, keep in touch with your members using social media, emails, and socials. Many clubs don't meet during December, so it's important to communicate with members and have them involved in club activities.

I want to take this opportunity to wish each of you a blessed Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukah, and a peaceful, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Judy Gough
GFWC Virginia Headquarters Chairman
headquarters@gfwcvirginia.org

We have had a fairly large group of women's clubs that are celebrating their birthdays. Imagine coming to Headquarters to get history, past presidents, and information on GFWC-Virginia during the past hundred years. Thanks to our capable Secretaries over the years, and currently Heather – we have tons of information for you. Make an appointment with Heather, and she can show you where to look, files to dig through, and for lots of information in the records. Are you getting ready to make your dues donations? Think about Headquarters – a \$5.00 donation or a \$10.00 donation from every club would make a huge difference in our budget for Headquarters.

Thank you for all you have done this past year -

Carol Outten
GFWC Virginia HOBY Coordinator
hoby@gfwcvirginia.org



Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership
Teaching students how to think, not what to think, since 1958.

Ladies of GFWC Virginia, I bring you greetings from the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Virginia Board of Directors. Planning for the 2026 **HOBY State Leadership Seminar** is well underway, and the HOBY Volunteer Staff have begun receiving applications. Again, this year, the seminar will be held on the Campus of James Madison University, from May 29th to May 31st. Registration for the seminar opened in September, and High School counselors in both public and private schools received registration information for students.

HOBY's mission is to inspire and develop our global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to

leadership, service, and innovation. At HOBY, we believe all students have the potential to lead. Our seminars bring students together across different backgrounds, cultures, and communities. We help students discover a newfound sense of awareness, confidence, connection, and purpose.

HOBY's State Leadership Seminar Attendance: HOBY's flagship program welcomes school and community-nominated high school sophomores to 3-day seminars each spring. These student ambassadors participate in facilitated dialogue and abilities-based workshops to develop awareness of their leadership strengths and an understanding of their leadership values. Through these dynamic activities with their peers, students hone their skills and learn to recognize, amplify, and collaborate with the diverse strengths of others. One weekend at a HOBY seminar unlocks a student's leadership potential and helps them gain the confidence to make a positive impact on the world around them.

School Nominations: All high school sophomores are eligible to attend the Leadership Seminars. HOBY is proud of our long-held partnerships with schools across the United States, and the majority of students attend a State Leadership Seminar after being nominated by their schools.

Did You Know.....A student can "self-nominate" themselves to attend the seminar via their school's guidance counselor simply by requesting an application.

Sponsorship: If your Club would like to provide financial support to the HOBY Virginia Ambassadors, please see page 84 in the current GFWC Virginia Yearbook. Gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated. If you have questions, **please do not hesitate** to contact me for additional information.



As always, HOBY Virginia is grateful to the ladies of GFWC Virginia for their generosity and support of the Leadership seminars and our ambassadors.

Sending HOBY HUGS and wishes for a Joyous Holiday Season!!!!

Dale Fisher

GFWC Virginia Scholarship Program Chairman

scholarships@gfwcvirginia.org



Did you know that November was National Scholarship Month? What a great time to raise awareness about scholarship availability and their purpose of funding higher education.

The maximum amount of funds available per administration from the Phyllis V. Roberts Scholarship Fund was paid out in 2025; therefore, we will not award that scholarship in 2026. However, the monies for the Mary Macon McGuire Scholarship, aimed at assisting a woman returning to school to enhance employment and educational opportunities, are usable. Please refer to the GFWC Virginia Yearbook for guidelines and the application.

As your club prepares year-end reports and completes the Annual Dues and Contributions form, please consider making donations to the Mary Macon McGuire Scholarship and Phyllis V. Roberts Scholarship Funds. As has been mentioned in previous articles, an investment of \$17.50 per scholarship per year will sustain our funds.

Another scholarship opportunity is the GFWC Success for Survivor Scholarship, a program serving as a helping hand to those impacted by domestic or sexual violence. For more information on this scholarship, visit the GFWC website. <https://memberportal.gfwc.org/supportus> Scroll down to MAKE A DONATION, click on the icon on the right – Give By Check Download form.

Give the gift of education.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.



Nancy Vadersen

GFWC Virginia 2024-2026 State Project Chairman

stateproject@gfwcvirginia.org

This fall, the last of the State Project pins were mailed to District Presidents. President Mowry and I understand that not every club member is able to attend a State Meeting, and we wanted to make the pins available to everyone. If you have not purchased a State Project pin, contact your District President!

Highlighted in this issue are projects from clubs from Blue Ridge District and Southwestern District. Several clubs in Blue Ridge District promoted the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, which provides a free book each month to children from birth until they begin school. Over the past thirty years, this program has gifted over 300 million books to children! In Southwestern District, the GFWC Appalachian Leading Ladies JWC held a diaper and wipes drive and a collection drive for school supplies for Head Start. Pennington Gap WC partnered with local businesses to collect items for Early Childhood Education teachers. Several of you have shared success stories about club projects across the state, and I love to hear about how your projects have impacted children ages birth to five!

Remember that I have numerous ECE projects that I would love to share with you. Email me at nsmoskwa@verizon.net I look forward to reading the reports for 2025! May your Holidays be blessed with family and special memories!

Thank you for your amazing support of the State Project, Early Childhood Education!



Hope Royer

Women's History and Resource Center

history@gfwcvirginia.org

WHRC: From the Archives

Have you been following the blog series “WHRC: From the Archives”? The November post: Part II “The Women of 1734 N Street,” features some of the women who, in the 1920’s and 30’s, spent time working and in residence at 1734 N Street NW, GFWC Headquarters. WHRC collections are filled with stories and information. Joanna Church, WHRC Librarian, has asked for GFWC history topics you’d like to read about on the blog. Reach out to Joanna at whrc@gfwc.org with your suggestions.

As the time for reporting club activities fast approaches, **WHRC is the Advancement Area in which the club reports its projects and programs focused on women’s history.** Be sure to include the club’s financial contributions to the WHRC, the Façade Restoration Project and the Women’s Suffrage National Monument Foundation. What else did the club do to recognize women’s role in history? Did you celebrate Women’s History Month? Was the club’s history updated? Was a special club anniversary celebrated? Was there a program on the role of women in history? Was the club newsletter used to highlight women in history? Were there projects to celebrate women in the community? Celebrate women’s history and share your club’s activities.



Carol Guilliams-Mills and Florence Powell
GFWC Virginia Arts Contest Chairmen
artsandcrafts@gfwcvirginia.org

Are you busy being creative?? Your club should be thinking about your Arts Contest We hope to have a big show at Convention.

And Now... it's time to think about the **Writing Contest**. It is for members and students. Please refer to the Arts Contest booklet for the rules. Entries must be sent to your District Arts Contest Chairman by February 1st., for judging, then sent to me (Carol Guilliams Mills) by March 1st. If you have any questions or problems, or just want to say "Hello ", give me a call or text.

"Either write something worth reading or write something worth writing " Benjamin Franklin



Helen Hill
GFWC Virginia Arts and Culture Chairman
arts@gfwcvirginia.org

One of the suggestion from the Arts & Culture CSP is to learn about Native American Tribes in our country. There are 11 tribes recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, and seven of these are recognized by the Federal Government. The tribes have a chief and an assistant chief who govern the tribe. The tribes have always been grouped by language. For example, tribes along the Coastal region speak Algonquian. There are many sources on the web, as well as books in public libraries.

Why not contact the Native American Tribe in your area and invite them to give a program? Most tribes have an event to celebrate their heritage, which the public is invited to attend. Also, the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, located in Richmond, would be a place to visit to study the Native American Tribes.

Whether you have a program or visit a tribe, educate your club members about the Tribe. Such as, where the tribe lived, how they provided food and clothing, and the status of the tribe. For information on the Tribes, go to commonwealth.virginia.gov/virginiaindians./state. The contact information and the festivals can be found there. There are several sites on Native Americans you may wish to read.



Ilia Desjardins
GFWC Virginia Education and Libraries Chairman
education@gfwcvirginia.org

"Share a book and you'll make a friend!" Annie Lang, author

Did you know that people in Iceland have a tradition known as "Jólabókaflóðið", which translates roughly to "Christmas book flood" in English, and is celebrated on Christmas Eve. Everyone gifts each other new books, gets comfy with their hot cocoa or cider, and reads! Not a bad idea to start doing it in your own home with friends and family.

Be on the lookout for when your local public library Friends group has its book sales. You'll be able to find plenty of like-new books, DVDs, CDs, and maybe some other fun treasures! Sometimes they have a "stuff a bag sale" and you can purchase dozens of small, thin children's books to put in your club's Little Free Library box. This system of shopping for books helps to keep them out of the landfill, helps the libraries earn some revenue for projects, and helps get books into the hands of people who may not otherwise be able to start their own home library.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is another great way to start a home library for children. From ages birth to age five, a child receives a free book per month, which means when they turn five, they will have sixty books in their own library!

With all of that reading, they will definitely be ready for school. The service is free for the children, and the expenses are sponsored by community groups and Clubs like yours. Check out <https://imaginationlibrary.com/> to see how your Club can help enrich a child's life with the love of reading and promote Early Childhood Education!



ESO

Ilia Desjardins

eso@gfwcvirginia.org

ESO, or Epsilon Sigma Omicron, roughly translates from Greek to “Enlighten Your Own Pathway”. Established in 1928, ESO strives to provide clubwomen with a structural reading program, which is educational and stimulates a desire for self-improvement. All club members are eligible to join but must complete a pledge application and pay the required dues of \$1.50. Pledges read books in various genres and work their way up through the levels, becoming a member and reaching star level, torch level, century level, and the diamond level- having read 1,000 books! Book totals are cumulative from year to year, and you can join the ESO at any time. The GFWC Virginia ESO has an optional bi-monthly Book Club Discussion via Zoom on the third Tuesday at 7:30pm.

The next Book Club Discussion will be January 20 and will be discussing “The Book Club for Troublesome Women” by Marie Bostwick. The remaining discussions will be March 17, and May 19.

Please be sure to send in your ESO book lists before reporting season!



Emily Amick

GFWC Virginia Environment Chairman

environment@gfwcvirginia.org

Ahh, the holidays. The snow, the gifts, the family and friend time. Spending holidays with people you love is the best part of the season. Whether preparing a large family feast, a small get-together with friends and neighbors, or spending your time volunteering, think about sustainability this season.

If you celebrate Christmas, purchase an artificial tree and use it for years to come. Use decorations you already own. My family has crocheted popcorn from my father's great aunt that we have used every year since at least 1992. When giving gifts, consider an experience—a trip to a concert, museum, or zoo. Check online--these venues may even have special holiday discounts!

If you can, purchase local, thrifted, or vintage gifts and food from mom-and-pop type stores. Locally baked pies are better than store-bought anyway! Instead of wrapping paper, think about using towels. Towels of any size are additional gifts for the recipient and can be seasonal and useful. Old shoe boxes also make nice gift wrapping.

This chairman attended the GFWC Southeastern Regional Conference in Roanoke, Virginia. There were so many wonderful and useful ideas presented by the different state clubs. One fundraising idea was to have a luncheon to support an affiliate, such as Canine Companions. We also heard about the GFWC Annual Giving Program. Also, during the conference, we heard Rob Scheer, founder of Comfort Cases, a charity whose mission is to inspire communities to bring dignity and hope to the nearly 437,500 youth in foster care in the United States. We packed official “comfort cases” for his charity. I look forward to hearing ideas at the next conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee, next year. Since the Shenandoah district was in charge of centerpieces for Friday's lunch, our president asked that district members donate toiletry items for a local homeless shelter. This was delivered to the shelter a few days after the conference. Have a great holiday season and a sustainable, successful 2026!



Maureen Mike
GFWC Virginia Legislation and Public Policy Chairman
legislation@gfwcvirginia.org

Legislation Day is coming up!

Some things to consider when visiting a state legislator

1. **Who will be attending** - an individual or group? Consider wearing GFWC logo wear.

2. **What you are advocating**-Remember, we are bipartisan, advocating for a cause, not a side. Use

GFWC or GFWC Virginia Legislative Priorities to guide your topic.

3. **When are you planning to visit**-**February 16, 2026.**

4. **Where are you going** - State Capital in Richmond, Virginia.

5. **How to have a successful visit**-Practice how your message will be presented, keep it concise, know how the issue affects your community, and bring current relevant statistics.

6. **Prepare a “Leave Behind”** sheet and information-

7. *A summary of GFWC or GFWC Virginia* -outline the history of legislative advocacy, current issue position, and current community activism.

8. *A summary of the problem or cause that you are presenting*--including data and statistics that support your position, as well as the name of and the number of the bill to support or deny.

9. *A summary of the solution to the issue*: What are you asking for? If the legislation were to pass, what would it do for your/our community?

10. *State what the legislator can do to help*-are you asking them to cosponsor, vote for or against, or would they sign a letter of support?

11. *Include a list of supporters*-name other organizations or groups, cosponsors, or signers of the support letter.

12. *Include your contact information*-You may need to be contacted for additional information, leave your information and a business card.

13. *Consider getting a GFWC folder to put all your information* in, including legislative priorities or resolutions that support your topic, club or state information.

14. **Send** a follow-up thank you via email-Let them know you appreciate meeting with them to present the issue, restate the GFWC or GFWC Virginia size, and the position. How would you like the legislator to vote? List the like-minded organizations in your community. In closing, be sure to include detailed contact information.

-Adapted from GFWC and Hope Hockaday (GFWC SER committee member)

Legislation Day – Tricia Duvall & Lynne Wherry

Mark your calendars for **Monday, February 16, 2026** – because you won’t want to miss this powerful day of advocacy and action!

We will kick the morning off with a delicious breakfast and dynamic speakers who will energize and inspire us. Then we will head over to the General Assembly Building to meet with your House of Representatives or Senate members giving you a chance to make your voice heard and connect directly with the leaders shaping our future.

And that’s not all! At noon we are aiming to be recognized on the floor of both the Senate and the House – a proud moment for GFWC Virginia members to stand united in purpose. Stay tuned for more details in a Constant Contact update coming in early December from GFWC Virginia Headquarters.

Advocacy starts with action. Stay informed, get involved, and let us know how we can support you in making a difference.

2025 SER Thank you

I am not sure how to express my thanks to every member of GFWC Virginia for your contribution to making the 2025 GFWC Southeastern Region Meeting at Hotel Roanoke the very best. SER may be the best of the GFWC Regions, but GFWC Virginia is not only the best in the Region, but in all GFWC.

Each of the districts out did themselves with the creative table decorations, table favors, hostesses and the many tasks involved in hosting this meeting we host every 7 years. Even if you were unable to attend, know that your presence was felt due to the many tasks that were completed before the actual meeting.

From the handmade baskets created by Florence Powell to the borrowed bicycle for photo ops, to the pages at the doors, to the hospitality table (everyone loved being able to take only what they needed), to the friendly faces at the credentials table, to the clean-up crew, to the tour guides who went way beyond the call to duty, to working the GFWC fundraising table, to being the official photographer and trying to get 64 women in one pictures, to planning a fun night after the state banquet, to protocol trying to get us to lineup, to printing programs with changes and more changes, to helping me remember a number of details at once, thank you, thank you.

Kathryn Sowers
GFWC VA 2025 SER Meetings Chairman

District News

Blue Ridge District Camilla Cabaniss, President



Fall in the Blue Ridge District has been very, very busy!

The Blue Ridge District Fall meeting was held in Christiansburg, hosted by GFWC Blacksburg Juniors. Our clubs were generous in supporting the Blacksburg Juniors' annual diaper drive! Clubs donated over 5,000 diapers, and the Blacksburg ladies were all smiles! Our clubs also supported the Heifer Project by donating 13 hives of honeybees. Blue Ridge loves helping others!

Five of our six clubs participated in the National Day of Service.

The Southeastern Region Conference was hosted by GFWC Virginia at the Hotel Roanoke. Blue Ridge District enjoyed having so many Federation friends visit our beautiful area. Every club in the district filled pumpkins with toiletries for centerpieces! We enjoyed partnering with Shenandoah District and supporting The Least of These ministry with a truckload of supplies!

Several of our clubs are busy with annual Fall Festivals and Arts and Crafts Shows. GFWC Floyd County, GFWC Bent Mountain, and GFWC Bedford all hosted fun times for their communities. GFWC Roanoke County made over 100 thank you cards for veterans, and GFWC Vinton hosted a wonderful evening of music by musicians playing the mandolins. All of Blue Ridge is preparing for the holiday season and preparing to help others with Angel Trees, Food Drives, and coat and sweater drives.

Reporting is right around the corner! I can't wait to see the year-in-review for the busy bees of Blue Ridge!

Lee District Kelly Lane, President Danielle Basham, Third Vice President/Director of Junior Clubs

A great time was had at the GFWC Southeastern Region (SER) meeting held on October 23, 2025, through October 25,

2025. Lee District donated items for the hospitality table and gift cards. Lee District partnered with Southwestern District to create centerpieces for GFWC Virginia State Night. Favors were made, programs were printed, and both districts made donations to the Alzheimer's Association.

Lee District celebrated its 100th Anniversary on Saturday, October 4, 2025. A procession of Past Directors of Junior Clubs and Past Presidents of the district started the celebration. Facts from decades over the past 100 years were sprinkled throughout the meeting. A celebratory toast was held, as well as an Anniversary cake. Memorabilia was on display, and a special anniversary pin was for sale. Clubs contributed items for a ticket drop sale. The day was enhanced by having GFWC Virginia President Susie Mowry and GFWC Virginia Third Vice President and Director of Junior Clubs, Joanne Dixon, visit for their Official Visit and join in the celebration.

Northern District

Yvonne Sening, President

Jaclyn Francis, Third Vice-President/Director of Junior Clubs



Happy Fall Y'all! While the temperatures remain moderate and colors of yellow, orange, and red leaves currently blanket the District, old man Winter is quickly approaching, we will soon be busy celebrating the holiday season and perhaps seeing our first blanket of fluffy, white snow! GASP! In the meantime, the Northern District has quickly embraced the new GFWC calendar year with Clubs busying themselves volunteering in their communities. Northern kicked off the new year by organizing projects for GFWC's National Day of Service, targeting an End to Domestic & Sexual Violence. Clubs throughout the District donated clothing and other items to support patients served by Forensic Nurse Examiner Programs in the region. Of note, eight Clubs (including Bel Air, Dominion, Herndon, Loudoun Juniors, Manassas, the ND Past Presidents, Springfield, and Woodbridge) joined forces to donate \$3,725 in in-kind donations to Sentra Northern Virginia Medical Center's (SNVMC) program! Christy Grabus, Chief Nursing Officer at SNVMC and for the Sentra Northwestern Market, applauded the ladies' efforts, commenting, "[w]hat you do is heartwarming and so needed. We see firsthand the impact of sexual assault in our Emergency Department. Your gift means so much, it takes a village, and together we can make a difference." WELL DONE LADIES!

At our Fall meeting in Chantilly, VA, District members and guests gathered to enjoy a tantalizing Sunday brunch and shop for seasonal gifts, ornaments, crafts, and books. Continuing the 2024-2026 administration's theme, Be Kind; Mental Health Matters, District members welcomed Dr. Nicole Reed from Aspen Grove Wellness Center, who spoke about hidden traumas, the focus of Northern District's Third Vice President, Director of Junior Clubs, Jacklyn Francis. Members learned that hidden traumas often result in people suffering in silence due to a lack of resources, feelings of isolation, feeling as if no one can relate or understand, guilt or shame, rejection, judgment, or due to our own pasts. The day ended with attendees being invited to strike a pose and participate in a "photo shoot" by Be[ing] the "I" in Kind.

In late October, GFWC Virginia hosted the Southeastern Regional Conference (SER) at the beautiful Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, VA. Over 150 GFWC members from the District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and, of course, VIRGINIA, joined together to celebrate the volunteer spirit, make new friends, and have fun!! The weekend was chocked full of exciting activities, speakers, shopping, table decorating, a few shenanigans, laughter, more shenanigans...and did I mention shenanigans?! If you missed out on all the fun, mark your calendars NOW for next fall's SER October 16-18, 2026, in Chattanooga, Tennessee!! CHOO, CHOO!! AIIII aboard!!!

As we approach the holiday season, Northern District members are preparing to make a difference in their communities by spreading thankfulness and joy to others by adopting families for the season, wrapping presents, baking, performing random acts of kindness, and, of course, living the volunteer spirit!! Speaking of spirit, if you are in the neighborhood, Northern District members would love to see you all at GFWC National's Open House on December 10, 2025!

Come say HI!! Happy Holidays!!



Shenandoah District

Laura Coburn, President



As I reflect on the last few months, I am in awe of the caring, generous nature of our GFWC clubwomen and the manner they translate that into action to improve the lives of others. The Covington Woman's Club hosted the fall district meeting on October 4. The district observed International Day of Service with a speaker from Magnolia Rose, the only temporary emergency shelter for victims of sex trafficking in our region. A large collection of toiletries and cash was given to Magnolia Rose. I hope that all of you at some time may hear of their work and realize how pervasive this social issue really is. Additionally, several clubs observed International Day of Service within their clubs. Covington's project was to create mini-care kits in reusable water tumbler cups for the local women's shelter. Waynesboro/Augusta Woman's Club hosted a speaker from the Augusta Health Forensic Nursing Team. Their work is to examine victims of crime (sexual violence, domestic abuse, and other forms) and collect evidence. The club gave a collection of bras and underwear to the unit, as the victim's clothes are retained for evidence, and victims need clothing to wear when discharged. There are Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Programs in several areas of Virginia, and the need for specially trained nurses is great.

Six district members attended the Southeastern Regional Conference in Roanoke, October 24-25, with 2 being first timers. Along with Blue Ridge, our district provided plastic jack o' lantern buckets and toiletries to fill them with, which were used as centerpieces for the Friday luncheon and program. The collection was donated to The Least of These, a Roanoke ministry for homelessness. The speaker on Friday was Rob Scheer, founder of Comfort Cases, a backpack program to provide essential items for a child's first night in foster care. The backpacks are provided to police departments and social workers to have on hand as needed. We then did a service project of filling backpacks. One important take away from Rob's talk is that there is an overwhelming need for assistance to youth aging out of foster care. Without a plan and resources, they become homeless within 24 hours of leaving foster care and are vulnerable to exploitation. The need is great for assistance to this population.

November saw us providing donations and acknowledgements to veterans organizations. A tour of Salute of Virginia in Waynesboro, as well as a donation to the Wounded Warriors Project, were some of the projects.

We look forward to holiday projects and a visit to the GFWC Headquarters for the Holiday Open House. And then, on to reporting in January!

Southside District

Julie Johnson, President

Mary Katherine Steed, Third Vice President/Director of Junior Clubs

Southside is a wonderful place to be in the Fall! We've seen fields of corn, peanuts, soybeans, and finally cotton being harvested as we've traveled to club meetings, projects and fundraisers. In early October, we held our District meeting in Emporia. Including nine past District Presidents, 69 members welcomed Lindsey Gray from SafeHouse Project, Inc., unfortunately, via Zoom at the last minute. She spoke on their efforts to combat human trafficking, a component of the GFWC Special Project on domestic violence. Our table decorations were twelve "Rosie the Riveter" flower pots, filled with early childhood education school supplies brought to the meeting by all twelve clubs. An extra twelve shopping bags of supplies were left over.

Thirteen Southside members attended the SER Convention at Hotel Roanoke in late October. Several members served as table and door hostesses. Our own Michelle Clary was recognized as our state LEADS graduate at the GFWC Convention in Atlanta this past summer. She spoke of her experience there and how meaningful her service in GFWC has been to her. Our filled "Rosie the Riveter" pots decorated Saturday lunch tables, along with twelve more pots from the Tidewater District. The following week, our well-traveled pots and extra bags were delivered to the club presidents for distribution to the chosen pre-K classes in their areas.

District members will gather one last time in 2025 to celebrate Christmas with Mimosas, sparkling apple cider, and homemade goodies at our District Christmas Party on December 6.



Southwestern District
Amy DeWilde, President
JoBeth Wampler,
Third Vice President/Director of Junior Clubs

September brought our annual Fall District meeting in Grundy. The Grundy ladies decorated with warm, earthy shades of fall colors, which made for a nice and cozy setting. We enjoyed a nice catered lunch and then got down to business. We elected our Virginia nominating committee chairman and heard updates from all the clubs.

Nine members from five different clubs represented the Southwestern District in a gleaning project in Riner, VA. Members joined up with The Society of St. Andrew's Organization (SOSA, a non-profit organization that fights hunger by rescuing surplus food) and helped glean fields of acorn, spaghetti, and butternut squash as well as pie pumpkins, turnips, sweet potatoes, and regular pumpkins. Everything that we harvested, we got to take back to our own community and were distributed to blessing boxes, individuals, food pantries, nursing homes, and schools.



Southwestern District members attended the SER conference in Roanoke, and it was a great learning experience. We got to meet and talk with the GFWC Southeastern Region President, Reno and participated in the election of the 2026 SER board. Southwestern District hosted Friday night dinner along with Lee District which was State night. The theme was hospitality. A glass vase was placed in the center of the table with a pineapple sitting on top. A fall centerpiece was wrapped around the glass vase, showcasing an elegant look. We also had a small card placed at each table representing the \$500 donation from the Southwestern District that was given to the Alzheimer's Association Walk in Madam President Susie Mowry's name.

I can honestly say GFWC Virginia ladies ROCK!! We were asked to bring items for the hospitality table, and you ladies went above and beyond!! We had everything from water to mini sewing kits and received many compliments all weekend.

I am proud and Thankful to be a member of GFWC Virginia! *"We Got This"*

Tidewater District
Jane May, President



In support of IDS, the fall district meeting featured a speaker who presented domestic abuse and trafficking information. Clubs collected sweatsuits for abuse victims and donated supplies to abuse shelters. The Phoebus WC collected yarn, knitting needles, and craft supplies to be delivered to a Navajo reservation. Our Newport News WC held a Red Sand Event.

Nine members attended the Southeast Region Conference. Attendees made new friends and renewed old acquaintances. We also enjoyed coordinating with the Southside District to provide centerpieces for the Southeast Region's Saturday luncheon. Two Tidewater District clubs celebrated milestone anniversaries. Our Great Bridge WC celebrated its 50th anniversary. Accomack WC celebrated 100 years.

The holidays are in the air in the Tidewater District. Tidewater District's sleigh (bus) will be full of holiday cheer as we head to the GFWC Holiday Open House. We hope to visit the Library of Congress en route. Holidays are also a busy time for our clubs. They are busy elves this time of year. They are fundraising with holiday bake sales, craft sales, and holiday décor to support their projects.

It will soon be 2026, and you will be setting your calendar. If you have not, please make sure that April 23-26 is marked for the 2026 GFWC Virginia Convention in Williamsburg. We will be looking for you.

Happy Holidays!

General Federation of Women's Clubs of Virginia
PO Box 8750, Richmond, VA 23226
Phone (804) 288-3724
E-mail gfwcvirginia@verizon.net
Website www.gfwcvirginia.org

Address Service Requested
DECEMBER 2025

In This Issue:

President's Message	2
Director of Junior Clubs Message	3
Chairmen's/Officer's Reports	4-14
District News	15-18



THE VIRGINIA CLUBWOMAN
2025-2026 SUBSCRIPTION FORM
Please make copies and distribute to club members.
Cost is \$15.00 for a 1 year subscription.

NAME _____
First name only-no prefix Last name

ADDRESS _____

CLUB _____ DISTRICT _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Attach your check made payable to "GFWC Virginia" for \$15.00 for each 1 year subscription. You may attach a list. Return your check and form to: GFWC Virginia Headquarters P.O. Box 8750 Richmond, VA 23226