

Linda Beatty -GFWC Virginia Historian – 2024-26 – Northern District

(Tidbits of information gleaned from annual reports, Virginia Clubwoman Magazines at GFWC Virginia Headquarters and 50th & 100th Anniversary books.)

This is a tricky district to research because there are three clubs with Dominion in their names, three with Fairfax, two with Herndon, two with Loudon and one named GFWC Star WC which one would think might be in Blue Ridge District.

Northern was among the “numbered” districts of the state until 1952 when the “glorious Fourth District” became Northern and that name has stayed since then. It is one of the 5 districts that has chartered a **Past District President’s Club (2025)**. Seven state presidents were from Northern membership and four 3rd VP/Jr Directors. And, Northern also can proudly boast of being one of only three districts to have one of its members serve as GFWC International President – Mrs. Phyllis V. Roberts who also had a scholarship named for her and a special state award. Before she was International President, she served as club president (1977) for **Pine Ridge WC** at which time she remarked in the club’s annual report that one of the to most important club projects was – you guessed it – Conservation, which as we know was her theme in 1986-88.

In 1951, Northern District hosted the VFWC Conference at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. Their district shield was designed in 1970 by Jane Kearns.

In **1952 Herndon WC** donated \$1,000 to their Library’s Building Fund.

Woodbridge WC held several workshops during the year to make items to sell at their bazaar netting almost \$700 for their charitable budget in the 70s.

Herndon Fortnightly Woman’s Club which formed in 1889 seems to be the first club from this district to become part of the federation in 1915. However, there were some ladies from the Northern area who were present as guests at the first meeting of the Federation. This club has a history of involvement with Libraries. Even a fire in 1915 that destroyed their entire collection did not stop them as they immediately started collecting more books to start a new public library which was built in 1926 and in 1951 boasted of housing 10,000 volumes.

More Northern clubs joined the federation in the 20s, 30s and 40s but sadly they no longer exist leaving **Herndon Fortnightly, WC of Arlington and WC of Manassas** currently the oldest Northern clubs in the state. Today’s membership is comprised of 21 women’s clubs, **JWC of Loudon, Dominion Juniette Club (chartered in 2019), & Fairfax Juniettes** for a total membership of 777, AND an increase over the previous year. They can still boast of being the district with the most clubs AND the largest membership of Juniettes in the Virginia Federation – twenty members.

In the 70s **Mary Ball WC** chose one large project aimed at making citizens aware of the resources available that would benefit them including blood drives, flu vaccines and blood pressure screenings

Clifton Community WC formed the Holly Singers to perform at nursing homes, churches and other venues in the late 70s.

Bel Air WC provided mini concerts in schools which included members of Woodbridge Music Club to bring vocal and instrumentals so children could experience a real musical performance.

In the late 70s the **WC of Fairfax** helped organize the City of Fairfax Service Council bringing together all of the city's service groups allowing them to schedule fundraisers and other events without overlapping dates.

The Greenbriar WC was chartered in 1968 but in 2004 changed their name to **The GFWC Western Fairfax County WC** in order to include ladies in surrounding communities. In 2020 they used the Zoom format to meet and raise funds by playing Bingo.

WC of Arlington chartered in 1952, reported in 1954 of having the honor of being the first club in VA to form an evening group.

The **McLean WC** raised over \$1800 on various projects to buy a manakin, train teachers and provide supplies to educate public school teachers in CPR and the Heimlich maneuver.

In 1944 the **Alexandria WC** was honored by being permitted to name a new fighter plane because they led the state in sales of war bonds - \$102,770.50 and named the plane "The Wings of Alexandria WC".

The **WC of Fredericksburg** sent fudge candy to Walter Reed Veterans Hospital at Christmas. And the **WC of Loudon** made Christmas wreaths for that same hospital in 1951.

Loudoun Juniors in 1953 sponsored the Miss America Beauty Contest in the county and gave a \$300 scholarship to the winner.

At their 17th annual Arts & Crafts Fair, **Vienna WC** had 40 different categories of entries for all ages. The 2-day event brought in \$1,600 and they immediately earmarked \$1,000 for a scholarship.

New Dominion WC held a Stop & Shop rummage sale and raised \$4,800 with a part of it used to assist a family of 7 who came to Washington, DC for the wife to undergo experimental breast cancer treatment. They provided meals, staples, toys for the kids and household furnishings.

The **GFWC Dominion WC** was represented at the state's 100th anniversary in Roanoke and received their official charter there, quickly establishing activities in every one of the focus areas for GFWC including support of Fisher House and members making Heavenly Hats for cancer patients. With COVID hovering around in 2020 they employed the Zoom platform to hold fundraisers for their charitable budget such as Girls Gone Bunco, Swag Swap and Blingo raising over \$15,000.

Also new to the Federation in 2020 the **GFWC Star WC** was able to participate in the Drumstick Dash to raise money for a homeless shelter, \$1,570 for Help Wild Birds and helping organize the "One Billion Rising" program to raise awareness about violence against women.

Spotsylvania County WC sponsored Cancer Mobile which made stops all over their county in 1952.

Annandale WC sponsored a sewing contest for boys and girls who were taking Home Economics at Robinson HS. The students cooked and served lunch for the club and the cash winners and winners of

sewing contrast provided a fashion show at the district meeting. This club also had a recipe in the Federation Cookbook published in 1969 which was provided by Mrs. Raymond Lynch for Mocha Ice Cream Pie.

In the 70s The **Springfield Community WC** named as their second most important club project their clubs' efforts to collect lost or stolen school library books since it was reported that each year thousands of \$ were lost. They put up collection boxes to allow them to be returned anonymously.

WC of Manassas turned a storeroom into a library and bookmobile and receive statewide recognition by an article published in the Virginia Clubwoman magazine entitled: "An Adventure in Cooperation". Thru their efforts the County adopted the library and assumed the cost of operation in their budget.

The words of past State President Dale Fisher from that club in her report resonated with clubs everywhere when she said: "No one expected the crippling effects that COVID would have on every club level of Federation. It took its toll on clubs just like the war did in our earlier history."