

GFWC/CT Executive Board Meeting

Saturday, December 7, 2024 --- Café Fiore, Cromwell, CT

Call To Order. Meeting was opened at 11:30 AM by GFWC/CT President Kathy Barnes. Kathy welcomed everyone to the board meeting.

Inspiration was given by Geri Harvey, Windsor WC of GFWC and CT

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Jill Fowler, Windsor WC of GFWC and CT.

Collect for Club Women was led by Lynn Sarro, The Woman's Club of Madison.

Credentials Report was given by Lisa Miller, Windsor WC of GFWC and CT, Credentials Co-Chair:

Past State Presidents: 3. Club Presidents/Co-presidents: 15. GFWC/CT Officers: 7

Executive Board Members: 31. Non-Voting Members: 9. Guests: 2 **Total Attendance: 43**

The President declares a quorum established.

Regrets – Regrets were received from: Sandy Barry, JoAnn Bruno, JoAnn Calnen, Mischa Campbell, Linda Chamberlain, Ginny Chulkovs, Nicole Figuerido, Linda Hotchkiss, Sally Johnson, Kelly Leach, Carin Manini, Sue Michaud, Beverly Regan.

Introductions – Kathy Barnes introduced Past State Presidents in attendance: Kathy DeBurra, 2022-2024; Debbie Fiore, 2020-2022; and Jeanne Waseleski, 2006-2008. Members of the Executive Committee were then introduced and gave their reports.

Officer's Reports - Mischa Campbell, **Member-at-Large**, was unable to attend and sent her regrets. Mischa's report, which was read by Kathy Barnes, addressed a question concerning Ronald McDonald House not being a National or State permanent annual project. There are nine contracted affiliates with GFWC that should be shared and reviewed by Club Presidents each year for participation. Each State administration has a mission and recommendations for Club support, and each Club has their own projects they support in their communities. There is nothing that prevents any member from supporting a specific charity individually or collectively and bringing their club into supporting the organization. If your club needs or would like assistance in sorting through questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mischa. She is willing to come to a meeting to discuss your thoughts. Pam Lerner, **Assistant Treasurer**, thanked everyone for sending their club rosters to her in a timely fashion this year in Excel format as requested. It is making her job much easier and helps in finding information about members when we need it. Since September, we have gained 20 to 25 new members, and Pam congratulated our recruitment efforts.

Jeanne Kehoe, **Treasurer**, reported all accounts are up to date. The Webster Bank account is closed and that money has been deposited into the TD Bank account.

Joann Hohensee, **Recording Secretary**, reported that the 2024 Fall Conference minutes have been read, approved and posted on the GFWC CT website. The Zoom minutes for the E.C. meeting on December 1st have been read, approved and sent to the E.C. She asked for three readers for today's minutes: Sara Newell, Lynne Sarro, and Pam Lerner volunteered.

Sara Newell, **3rd Vice President**, reports that all four Districts have chosen their dates for District Days: **Northwest** – Sat., April 26; **Southwest**, Tues., April 15; **North Central**, Sat., April 12, and **Southeast**, Sat., March 29. Sara has asked each District President to ask club President's to check their membership lists for members with 50 years of service. 50-year pins will be presented at the members District Day. Please let your District Presidents know if you have members who have reached this milestone! Sara also reported that our President Kathy Barnes asked her to be a member of the first Membership Task Force set up by GFWC. The Task Force will be focusing on what is going well in our states, what is not going so well, plus retaining and growing membership. They will have approximately six meetings to address this subject.

Nicole Karalli, **2nd Vice President**, began her report recognizing the CSP and Special Committee Chairs present today: **ESO**, Heather Spenser. **Advocates for Children**, Donna Recknagel; **Leadership**, Wendy Clery; **Legislation**,

Debbie Fiore; and **Membership**, Sara Newell. Nicole reported that she had an opportunity to tour the Prudence Crandall Center. She found out more about the program and was able to see a two-bedroom apartment, a group counseling room, a children's counseling and art center, and a private counseling room. The Center does not have the facilities to store any amount of inventory but can always use gift certificates to CVS, Walmart, Stop n' Shop, etc., as well as monetary donations. Nicole created a reporting guide for club presidents which she made available to all in attendance today. She wrote, printed, collated and stapled the booklet with input and guidance provided by Kathy Barnes, Wendy Clery, and Kathy DeBurra. The guide was sent to Georgeann Kishner to be posted on www.gfwcct.org under the Club Manual 2024-2026 link.

Wendy Clery, **1st Vice President**, began her report saying that GFWC CT LEADS is coming in February. She is working on final locations and is planning on two dates so hopefully more members will have a chance to attend. The GFWC CT Leadership Library was set up on a table with a check out sheet for your name and book title. Take a moment to review the book you've read and to write down your thoughts about it on a piece of paper, and then place the paper in the front of the book for the next reader. She is also accepting donations of leadership related books. Wendy also made available packets of information for each club on the Community Impact Program Award. This information can also be found in the 2024-26 GFWC club manual in the member portal. Next, Wendy updated us on the New England Region (NER) project and fundraising. Unfortunately, a scammer stole money from the region accounts totaling \$900 which we are unable to recover. On a good note, the NER two-year project to raise \$10,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has raised to date, \$6,605. "Thank you for your support! I know we're going to make our goal." Finally, Wendy reported that our state library project was delayed, but will be getting back on track in the new year. In October 2024 she was able to visit with our Massachusetts sisters to talk about our project and how it started. Their Signature Project chairman shared some wallet-size cards about how to recognize human trafficking.

Kathy Barnes, **GFWC CT President**, began her report with a string of successes. Over 220 pounds of food was collected at the Fall Conference for the Cougar Pantry. The appreciation expressed by the students who volunteer in the pantry was significant. She had an opportunity to celebrate 70 years of GFWC service with the members of the East Hartford Woman's Club. It was a two-fold event: a celebration for 70 years of service, and a Friendsgiving event too. EHWC recognized their supporters, and honored one of their charter members – Dolores Kehoe – with a moving tribute. Kathy loves meeting with members, and would like to be invited to your club events, to your meetings, or to help out on a project. She attended the GFWC Holiday Open House at our headquarters in Washington, DC. Ornaments donated by each state were strung along the entrance arch. GFWC CT donated a 4.5inch diameter glass ball, pearlescent white, with a gold and silver glitter design on it. They were also able to tour some of the rooms and speak with officers.

Kathy spoke of the challenges. Volunteers are needed for committees, particularly the ByLaws committee. Our corresponding secretary, Jean Keating, has had to resign from her position. If you're interested, please talk to Kathy, or suggest a name. We are now seeking candidates for the 2025 LEADS program. *The application will be updated on the website and they are due back to Kathy by February 15th.*

The Executive Board meeting formerly scheduled for December 2025 is now TBA.

A pre-meeting field trip is being planned for our May Convention, Saturday, May 3rd. This is the same day as the May 2025 Honor Flight out of Bradley. We will head up to the airport to send off the veterans, then head to Rocky Hill for the May Convention, which just happens to be Kentucky Derby Day. Wear your Derby hats!

Kathy closed her report with a thank you for our service to our communities, our state and GFWC.

Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) World Conference – Olivia Nuccio represented Conn. at the HOBY World Leadership Conference in 2024. She is a high school student from Enfield and we have asked her to share her HOBY experience with us.

"I would like to start off by thanking this wonderful group of women from around Connecticut for allowing me this opportunity to travel to Chicago for the Hugh O'Brien Youth World Leadership Congress. At this conference, I was able to better myself at a whole different level that I wouldn't be able to without your help. It is quite difficult to express my gratitude towards you all. Please know that your generous donation contributed to an experience in my life that will be valued forever. For those of you that may not know much about HOBY, it is a non-profit

organization that hosts leadership seminars around the country. In June, I was chosen to be the representative of Enfield High School at the Connecticut seminar. I had the chance to network with other leaders around the state and develop my leadership skills greatly. After this 3-day seminar ended, I knew I wanted to be a part of this outstanding organization for longer. Every year, HOBY hosts a World Leadership Congress and invites leaders from all over the country and the world to participate. Shortly after the State seminar ended, I was offered the opportunity to apply for a half-scholarship to the WLC. I took this chance and applied. In mid-July, I was informed I was one of two students from the 2024 Conn. seminar to receive the half-scholarship to the WLC. Although I was awarded this scholarship, the cost would still be heavy. Thanks to your help, I was able to attend this week-long seminar.

On July 20th of this summer, I hopped on a plane at 6 in the morning and flew to Chicago. Although it was an early morning, the energy and excitement that was flowing through me was eccentric. I didn't realize how amazing of an experience was ahead of me. The next week was arguably one of the most beneficial weeks of my life. Every day was jam packed with leadership enriching activities from 7:00 am to 10:30 pm. I was able to listen to keynote speakers, all of which had amazing and unique stories to tell. One impactful speaker was Ethan Zohn. He was a former winner of "Survivor" and the founder of Grassroot Soccer. His strong rhetoric and impactful speech accentuate his man ideas of taking action when you can and knowing who you are and what you value. He emphasizes that leadership is a mindset. It is about the experience of trying, not the outcome of failing. Another keynote speaker, Juan Mensizabal illuminates his values of authentic leadership and how one's uniqueness is what makes them the leader they are. The keynote speakers helped me to see myself through a different lens. They encouraged me to really dive deep into my personal values and who I am.

Throughout the week, we had many workshops within our groups to develop our interpersonal skills. We learned and practiced listening to others effectively to be sure everyone's ideas and opinions are heard and taken into consideration. We also did workshops on impactful leadership skills such as empathy, authenticity, creativity, and curiosity. I felt a sense of self-improvement after all of these workshops.

Every day during the week, myself and the other ambassadors broke off into small groups to create an SDG project (Sustainable Development Goals project). My group chose to do our project on quality education. We made a plan to implement more VOTECH programs within high schools to help raise the graduation rate. By the end of the week, we had successfully created a well put-together plan to conquer our issue.

It is nearly impossible to sum up all the feelings I felt during that week of HOBY. I met new friends from all around the world and connected with people who have completely different lifestyles than myself. I felt physical waves of inspiration and determination. I am ecstatic that I was able to experience this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Thank you all so much for donating to this wonderful and greatly beneficial experience. I will be sure to use my skills to make a real difference in my community and the world. Once again, thank you."

A brief question and answer period followed.

Kathy introduced Jeanne Waseleski, **Jenny Award** State Chairman and 2022-2024 candidate, who spoke about the GFWC Jennie Award guidelines for 2024-2026. The award is named in honor of GFWC's founder, Jane Cunningham Croly, who wrote for national newspapers under the pseudonym "Jennie June." It honors one Clubwoman from each GFWC region for outstanding commitment to club, community, and family. The GFWC Jennie Award, the Federation's highest honor, is the only national honor that recognizes individual members for personal excellence. For Award Rules and Nomination Forms, please check the GFWC Manual, pages 211-217 or contact Jeanne. *The first Administration deadline is June 1, 2025 and must be submitted to State President Kathy Barnes.*

Focus on Community Service Programs and GFWC Advancement Plans and Standing Committee Chairmen - Kathy recognized the following committee chairman: Sara Newell, Membership; Wendy Clery, Leadership; Heather Spencer, ESO; Maddy Marzullo, Veterans Chair; Debbie Fiore, Legislative Action and Public Policy. The national chairmen send out quarterly newsletters and these will soon be posted on the website, on the Members Only page. Remember – CASE management (copy and steal everything!)

Eileen Driscoll is our ByLaws chair and Debbie Fiore is our Resolutions chair. Neither of these areas is one on which clubs report, but their work is foundational for our organization and the recognition of how GFWC can lead our communities in change.

Meeting then recessed for networking and small group gatherings, and for lunch.

Expression of Thanks was given by Maureen Fernandes, Windsor Woman's Club.

Meeting Reconvenes

National Coast Guard Museum – Christine Kuczma, President of the Mystic Woman's Club, introduced our next speaker, Mary Catherine Wilder, Foundation Relations Manager, National Coast Guard Museum Association. Mary Catherine explained that the NCGM Association is not part of the US Coast Guard. They're technically separate and their aim is to bring the museum to life through fundraising. They are the non-profit side. The goal of the Coast Guard is keeping the water safe **for** us and **from** us. They protect the environment, i.e. oil spills, US fisheries, marine eco-systems, and also enforce the law, i.e. intercepting narcotics and human trafficking, search & rescue. They save lives on both inland waters and at sea. The CG helped in the search and rescue of victims in North Carolina severely affected by Storm Helene this past summer. Ninety-five percent of everything we encounter daily is affected by the CG. It is their job to make sure the products we use every day arrive in this country safely. The Coast Guard also contributes to climate research. The heavy-duty icebreaker used in the Arctic and Antarctic to break up the ice is navigated by the CG.

Mary Catherine continued with some fun facts:

- Women served in the military before the Revolutionary War but it was in the 1830s that women received official assignments. There was a coast guard before America was a nation.
- The first Black woman in the military served in the Coast Guard...Dr. Olivia Hooker, who died in 2018 at the age of 103. At age 95 she joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- The Coast Guard was the first military service to have a female leader, and the rate of graduating women in the Coast Guard Academy is 100%.
- The Coast Guard has 234 years of history and is the second oldest branch of the US military, the Army being first.

The National Coast Guard Museum being built in New London will be the only national military museum in New England and is the last of the national service museums. It is the home port of "America's Tall Ship" the USCG Barque Eagle. The museum is expected to open in 2026 and to host 300,000 visitors annually in its 80,000-square foot, 5-story building. Why New London? New London has served as a homeport for CG cutters since 1791. Mary Catherine explained that groups like GFWC can support the NCGM through the Argus Promenade Commemorative Paver Program.

President Kathy Barnes reported that the Executive Committee had met earlier and discussed a donation to the National Coast Guard Museum. The recommendation from the EC is to make a donation for a paver for the museum. This will place GFWC Connecticut's name on the museum permanently in addition to supporting development of the museum. This donation is within budgeted items but the EC would like the donation to be brought before the Executive Board for endorsement. Joann Hohensee, Recording Secretary, presented the motion: **The Executive Committee moves that GFWC/CT donate a 4x8 paver to be inscribed: General Federation of Women's Clubs-CT. The cost of this paver is \$1000.** This motion comes out of committee and does not require a second. There was no further discussion. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carries. Mary Catherine was presented with a check and mockup of the paver for a photo opp with Kathy Barnes.

"Santa Baby" – Reports will bring good things for your club! Nicole Karalli, **GFWC/CT 2nd Vice President** opened her Reporting Workshop for club activities with a musical skit "Santa Baby," with help from Kathy DeBurra. Each committee should gather all the statistical data for *everything* that committee did in 2024 **but** only **highlight one specific project**. A quick synopsis for each but just showcase one. Pick your favorite. Do not include photos or program flyers, etc. Send it to Nicole and keep a copy for yourself. You can find more information and all forms in the GFWC Manual. Please contact Nicole directly if you have any questions.

Resolutions: How to make them, how they benefit our clubs was led by Debbie Fiore, GFWC/CT Legislation Affairs Resolutions Chairman. The last GFWC/CT Resolution adopted was on May 14, 2011 and focused on Cyberbullying. This resolution urged the CT State Legislature to amend the states' General Statutes to require school anti-bullying programs and to address cyberbullying and allow local and state police forces to intervene once cyberbullying is reported. It's time to work on a new resolution or two. To find a list of resolutions created by GFWC/CT go to the GFWC manual or to www.gfwc.org where you will find a link under Digital Library. The subject matter of all

resolutions must be germane to the interests or work of GFWC, and must be national or international in scope. This means the subject matter should be relevant to one of the GFWC programs such as Junior's Special Program, Advocates for Children, Education and Libraries, Environment, Health and Wellness, Domestic Violence, etc. Resolutions adopted by GFWC are the foundation of our organization. Begin now working on one or two resolutions your club finds necessary. Look through the list on the GFWC website and select one. Deadline to submit a resolution is November 1, 2025. Resolutions are voted on at the next GFWC May Convention.

Announcements and fundraising followed and the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Joann Hohensee,
GFWC CT Recording Secretary
2024-2026 Administration