



GENERAL FEDERATION
of WOMEN'S CLUBS

WHRC NEWS

Newsletter of the GFWC Women's History and Resource Center



Fall 2017

Dear Friends of the WHRC,

Happy Holidays! We hope this newsletter finds you in good cheer and ready for the coming New Year. The past year has been a busy but rewarding one at Headquarters and the WHRC. We have embarked on a massive project to help sustain the archives, contributed to a myriad of scholarly research projects, overhauled the WHRC website, and have continued to digitize our vast collection.

One of the most rewarding undertakings has been that over the past year we have published a version of the WHRC newsletter that is written predominantly by clubwomen. For each edition, the WHRC has requested articles detailing an aspect of your club's history. The responses have been overwhelming, and the ability to learn about your own local histories, and to share those stories, has been gratifying. Incredibly, your responses to our call for library history articles were so expansive that you helped to paint a more cohesive picture of GFWC's astonishing history of establishing public libraries. From your responses we created a guide on GFWC's involvement in public libraries, which you can find [here](#).

For this specific edition of the WHRC Newsletter we asked that you submit an article detailing the service project that your club is most proud of, or that made the greatest impact. Although this newsletter is more reflective of recent history, it has been rewarding to learn about the impact that each of you has in your communities, and the good work that you dedicate yourselves to during the holidays and beyond.

Thank you for all that you do, and wishing you the happiest of holidays and a joyous New Year!

GFWC Women's History and Resource Center

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Holiday Homes of the Beechmont Woman's Club of KY

Submitted by Paulette Sparks

For 26 years the Beechmont Woman's Club (BWC) has celebrated this time of year with a Christmas Tour of Homes. Margaret Bray, a clubwoman since 1985, developed the project and helped to implement it until the program's end in 2006.

Each year, five homes were selected to be included in the tour. Every room of the homes would be decorated and open to the public. Some homes were decorated with multiple Christmas trees, others would have the smell of baking cookies wafting through the air and Christmas tunes softly playing in the background. Each house was a wonderland unto itself. BWC members participated by welcoming guests, taking tickets, guiding guests, answering questions, and providing security for the homeowner.

After touring the homes, visitors were invited back to the BWC clubhouse to purchase a hearty lunch of homemade soup, cornbread, wassail, and desserts. The clubhouse was beautifully decorated and filled with Holiday Bazaar items to view and purchase. The tour, bazaar, and lunch were always successful. One clubwoman even recalled that 180 guests had toured her home during a single season.

The holiday house tour attracted people from throughout the city, and it enabled residents to become familiar with BWC and what clubwomen were accomplishing for the community. The event also functioned as a very successful fundraiser for BWC!

While the program ended in 2006, the members of the Beechmont Woman's Club remain grateful to have had the opportunity to become better acquainted with their neighbors and their community. The club wishes their fellow clubwomen a wonderful and safe holiday season!

The mission of the GFWC Women's History and Resource Center is to collect, preserve, interpret, and promote the history of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and women volunteers.

Subscribe to the WHRC Newsletter

The Women's History and Resource Center is excited to announce that it will now be opening up its quarterly newsletter to all clubwomen. The WHRC newsletter provides an in-depth look at the celebrated history of GFWC on the national, local, and individual levels. A publication primarily written by clubwomen, the newsletter proudly publishes articles written by you and about your history. The WHRC newsletter is also the best way to stay up-to-date on the latest events and happenings in the Women's History and Resource Center. To sign up, please visit www.gfwc.org. An enrollment box is located at the bottom on the website, underneath the *News & Notes* sign up. You can also sign up by providing your name, mailing address, email, and club name to GFWC Membership Services Manager Kate Garlick at kgarlick@gfwc.org.

The Beautification of Farmingdale NY

Submitted by **Maria Ortolani**

All over the world, there are many wonderful and worthwhile programs and charities to support during the holiday season. For many years, The Women's Club of Farmingdale, New York (WCF) has been collecting holiday food items for two local charities, Epic House and St. Kilian's Outreach. Since 2012 WCF has also filled holiday shopping bags with books, stuffed animals, blankets, toys, gloves, hats, and toiletries for the Madonna Heights Homeless Children's Shelter.

The women of WCF also partake in the tradition of helping to decorate the streets of Farmingdale every holiday season. Clubwomen prepare and put up the town's decorations on the streets of Farmingdale, the Village Green, and the village gazebo and fountain. The project offers a chance for clubwomen to get to know members of the community and acquaint them with the WCF's work.

Every November, clubwomen stay after the club's annual Executive Board Meeting to prepare the decorations. The women are also joined by members of the community. Together, they make up the Village Beautification Committee. The committee creates new decorations, fluffs several hundred bows, and replaces the lights on the wreaths. Over the course of several weekends, the committee braves the winter weather to put up the decorations and transform their town into a winter wonderland.

This particular program is meaningful to the women of WCF because it has deep ties to the club's founder, Abigail E. Leonard. Abigail advocated for the first street signs to be installed on Main Street, funded the original fountain of the Village Green, and erected the gazebo. Each year as the club places decoration on these community landmarks, they also honor Abigail's achievements.

Coral Springs Women's Club Adds Some Sparkle into Students' Holidays

Submitted by **Barbara Christopher**

The Coral Springs Women's Club (Florida) began collecting their members' used jewelry in the fall of 2016. The goal was to collect enough jewelry to

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- Preserve and maintain GFWC collections
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- Provide student field study opportunities
- Honor and support WHRC volunteers

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create a holiday gift selection for students to pick out a gift for a family member.

Students of three different Hunt Elementary School classes were invited to the 2016 "Jewelry for Mom Party." The jewelry was displayed on tables and the students were invited to choose an item. Their selections were gift wrapped by club members and clubwoman Carol Johnson dressed as an Elf, presented each student with a candy cane.

The students' excitement surrounding the project has prompted the jewelry collection to be repeated again this year. Due to the enthusiasm of the community and a wealth of donations, at least two additional classes will be invited to the party on December 20, 2017. The program has been expanded to include two holiday craft classes for students. Clubwomen have also provided wrapped gifts for teachers to distribute to children in need at Hunt Elementary.

The Women of the Woman's Club of Clayton NC Shop for Santa

Submitted by Susan Quinn

The Woman's Club of Clayton NC is celebrating their eighth year of playing Santa for a group of underprivileged children in their community. Every year, the clubwomen receive a list of names of children in need from the guidance counselor at a local elementary school. The list can include anywhere from 45 to 75 children.

Each child on the list provides a holiday wish list, inclusive of one "dream item." Members of the Women's Club of Clayton then try to fulfill the children's Christmas wishes. Like any good helper of Santa, the women budget for this expense annually. In addition, they also receive a generous contribution for the project from their local CIVITAN group. Typically, \$100 is allocated for each child's gifts.

Aside from trying to fulfill the one dream item that each child has asked for, the clubwomen also provide the children with warm clothes, pajamas, underwear, and a winter jacket. These winter clothes items keep the children warm and shopping for them truly warms each and every clubwoman's heart.

Christmas for the Troops

Submitted by Connie Seiter

The GFWC Southwest Ohio Valley Women's Club in Sharonville begins preparing for Christmas in July by cutting and sewing over 100 stockings for the military. The completed stockings are donated to Boatsie's Boxes and distributed as part of the nonprofit's holiday program, Operation Christmas Stocking.

The club collects in-kind and monetary donations to fill the stockings and to offset shipping costs. The stockings are stuffed with travel-sized personal items such as deodorant, lip balm, toothpaste, tissues, and a toothbrush. Varieties of candies and food items such as jerky, trail mix, chewing gum, and cookies are also included along with signed cards from local school children.

The club attaches a "Stars for Our Troops" card to each stocking. The cards are decorated with a star from a retired flag and this verse: "I am part of our American flag that has flown over the USA. I can no longer fly. The sun and winds caused me to become tattered and torn. Please carry me as a reminder that you are not forgotten."

Once the stockings are stuffed, volunteers make the trek from Cincinnati to Wheeling, West Virginia to deliver them to Boatsie. GFWC Southwest Ohio Valley Women's Club has been participating in this project for the past 12 years. It gives us GREAT pride to be able to make a merrier Christmas for our soldiers!



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