



KEY NOTES

Federation Motto: "In great things, Unity; In small things, Liberty; In all things, Charity"

Suzanne Gibson
President

February 2026

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Editor

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Education & Libraries

Tracy Draper
Health & Wellness

Linda Urry, CH
Fundraising

Therese Haberle, CH
ESO Book Club

Cathy Kautz/Maureen Melvold,
CHs Hospitality

Denise Mulcahy, CH
Communications

President's Corner

February is all about "heart". It is American Heart Health Month, and February 14th is Valentine's Day; even the flyer for our Quarter Auction this month is titled "Show Your Love," sprinkled with little red hearts.

I love all the pink and red, but as Club President, I like to dwell on all the hearts we have touched since June 1, 2025, until today.

By supporting Families in Transition, LovExtension, MLK Senior Center, Center Street Kitchen, Angel Tree, Empty Bowls, Tour of Homes, Wreaths Across America, and Library Projects, we have touched the hearts of over 10,000 people in our community.

Thank you from deep down in my heart!

Suzanne



American Heart Health Month National Wear Red Day®

February 6, 2026, National Wear Red Day, is the icon day of American Heart Month.

On the first Friday in February, wear RED and help raise awareness of women's No. 1 killer – cardiovascular disease. On National Wear Red Day, wear red and encourage others to do the same.

Women everywhere deserve to be seen, heard, and celebrated. Cardiovascular disease doesn't define us, and that's why we're standing together. We have the power to change the future of women's heart health. Source: goredforwomen.org



FEBRUARY PROGRAM

GFWC Mount Dora Woman's Club
Book Scanning Impact on the
W.T. Bland Library

Guest Speaker:
Cathy Lunday
Library Director

February Dates to Remember

Feb 4 Registration 11:30 a.m.
Lunch at Noon
General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
Feb 6 Center Street Kitchen
Feb 7 Walkie Talkie
Feb 10 MLK Senior Center
Feb 17 President's Day
Feb 24 MLK Senior Center
Feb 25 Executive Board Meeting





Community Service Programs



ARTS & CULTURE

Delores Deen and Donna Biba, CO-CHs

The Committee meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at Foxtail Coffee in Tavares (across from the Library). We are changing our meeting time from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please join in!

At the January meeting, we had 49 entries in our 2026 Arts & Crafts Competition!

There were 27 first place ribbons awarded, 9 second place, and 6 third place! What an amazing display of talent in our club! Congratulations to all. See pictures of the First Place entries in this newsletter (pages 6 and 7)

The 27 first place entries will go on to the GFWC 7th District meeting and competition held February 21st in Orlando - that will certainly be a strong representation by our club!

We have no dates for ushering at the Icehouse Theater for February as they will be preparing for a new show. There will be more information on opportunities for the March/April showing of Guys and Dolls in next month's newsletter. Contact for ushering is Donna Biba.



EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

Cheryl Higgins, CH

The Committee is kicking off the year with several fun activities. Volunteers supported the Sorrento Elementary Spelling Bee judging and reading day for students. The annual book drive will be held at the March luncheon. Remember that books can be purchased at the Mount Dora Library for just \$1. More to come on this event in February.

The Committee is always looking for new opportunities and pursued events with Triangle Community Alliance as well as Tavares Library. While neither of these worked out, it is important to continue to evaluate new avenues. Our next new area of focus will be to expand our education efforts beyond the elementary schools. If anyone has ideas, please reach out to a committee member. Our next meeting is Monday, February 2nd, at 2 p.m. at the Library.

Judy Streeter volunteers to help seniors with taxes and attends training on tax changes. We thought it would be great to share this information with the Club. The "One Big Beautiful Bill" signed into law in July 2025, can have significant impacts on 2025 through 2028 tax returns.

New deductions for taxpayers aged over 64 years:

- \$6,000 deduction for Single taxpayers with income under \$75,000.
- \$12,000 deduction for Married Filing Joint taxpayers with incomes under \$150,000.
- Up to \$10,000 deduction for interest paid on a new car loan if the vehicle was assembled in the U.S. and weighs under 14,000 pounds.
- There is a deduction phase-out at higher income levels

New tax savings available to all taxpayers:

- Itemized deductions cap for state and local taxes raised from \$10,000 to \$40,000.
- Itemized deduction up to \$10,000 for interest paid on a new car loan if the vehicle was assembled in the U.S. and weighs less than 14,000 pounds (Taxpayers over 65 get the deduction whether they itemize or not).
- A deduction up to \$25,000 for cash tips on jobs that customarily involve tipping .
- A deduction for overtime pay (half-time portion of the time and half overtime pay) up to \$12,500 for Single taxpayers and \$25,000 for Married Filing Joint.



ENVIRONMENT

Kim Barnes, CH



GFWC Florida Community Service Program Focus Project 2024-2026 - It's All About Trees! The goal is to plant 8,000 trees, one for every clubwoman in the state of Florida.

We will be making a huge contribution by planting **1,000 longleaf pine saplings** in Seminole State Forest this spring. The Forest Service has already prepared the area with a prescribed burn, and we'll share more details as soon as a planting day is scheduled.



Want to learn more about longleaf pines:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaXPiMGIhoU>



FUNDRAISING

Linda Urry, CH

TICKETS, TICKETS, GET YOUR TICKETS!

Join us on February 12th for a fun-filled Quarter Auction supporting the Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties Inc., and the Florida Elks Children's Charities. It's the perfect chance to show your love for two incredible causes while having an unforgettable time.

Bring your quarters and get ready to bid on fantastic items—you never know what treasures you'll take home! Tables are filling quickly, so reserve yours now and enjoy the evening with your friends and family.

Do a good deed on the way: carpool, save a little gas, and help the environment too.

Your kindness and generosity truly make a difference. We can't wait to see you there!

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENT

P4Patriots Weekend Extravaganza April 11th & 12th
Barbara Little, Fundraising Sub-Committee CH

Three Events Two Days – Save the dates & join the fun!

1. Paddles for Patriots Pickleball Tournament.
2. P4Patriots Vendor Fest
3. P4Patriots Celebrating Women Party (@ Eden Abbey April 12).

Last year's event was a huge success—and this year, we're turning up the excitement! Building on our momentum, we learned that hosting a pickleball tournament is very different from coordinating vendors and activities. So, we're leveling up by transforming the weekend into multiple dynamic events, each with its own focus and flair.

We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help develop and shape individual events. No pickleball experience required — promise! If you're interested, reach out to Barbara Little.

Volunteer sign-ups for the actual events will open in March, but for now—save the dates and get excited!

Our club, through P4Patriots, proudly supports the ongoing maintenance of Ashley's House, a transitional home for women veterans. Sponsored by Villagers for Veterans: New Beginnings for Women Veterans and overseen by The Mount Dora Community Trust, this initiative ensures lasting support.

Each year, a portion of the fund helps meet the House's immediate needs while growing the principal—creating stability and care for women veterans for decades to come.

Together, we're not just hosting an event—we're building a lasting legacy.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Tracy Draper, CH

Please join our Committee meeting to be held on Monday, February 2nd, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Foxtail Coffee located at 315 N New Hampshire Ave, Tavares, FL 32778. Please RSVP so there are enough seats.

The Committee will be collecting eyeglasses to recycle through the Lion's Club from February through May at the monthly meetings.

Karin Pierson appreciated all the hands-on participation we had for the Center Street Kitchen in 2025, and members giving their time to help the Community Outreach Program. She is looking forward to another year together on the first Friday of the month (and if there is a 5th Friday) at the First Presbyterian Church of Eustis, 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

February is National Heart month.

<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/heart-month-in-the-usa/>



Walkie Talkie

February 7th at Hidden Water Preserve, (1600 Country Club Road) at 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.





ESO
Therese Haberle, CH

Next ESO meeting is March 18th, 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the W.T. Bland Library.

Our "group read" should prove interesting! YOUR PICK! Read two books, one by Jodi Picoult, one by John Grisham. You pick the titles of your choice. We'll have a lively discussion for sure!



HOSPITALITY
Cathy Kautz/Maureen Melvold, CHs

Thank you to everyone who baked for the Tour of Homes fundraiser. We received many kudos thanks to you. It was a huge success!

The refreshment station and booth felt like Disney, the happiest stop on the tour. Many thanks to Maureen Melvold and Joanna Fox who helped host at the Ranch Road Classics Barn.

The Hospitality Committee meeting date has changed. We will be meeting the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the W.T. Bland Library from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This will allow Committee members who also volunteer at the MLK Senior Center to participate there on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

The Quarter Auction needs many volunteers. If you can help set up or clean up, please let Maureen and I know. I appreciate all your help and participation.



SUNSHINE COMMITTEE

If you know of a club member going through a rough patch and who could use some TLC, i.e., a ride to the doctor, help with meals, a call, or a visit, please let a Hospitality/Sunshine Committee member know so we may bring some sunshine their way. Contact Cathy Kautz.



MEMBERSHIP
Kim Barnes, CH

We have two new members that joined in January:

Please welcome Jeannette McIntosh who joins us from Lady Lake. She enjoys crafts such as embroidery, quilting, knitting, and crocheting. She is originally from Washington and likes helping people.

We also welcome Rita Von Pusch. She is originally from New Jersey but now lives in Howey In The Hills. Rita also enjoys crafting and restoring furniture.

Your Dues at Work

\$15 from every club member's dues is forwarded to GFWC, helping support important initiatives at the federation level. One of the most visible and impactful uses of these funds is legislative advocacy.

GFWC has a long and proud history of driving meaningful change, including its role in passing the Pure Food and Drug Act and the nation's first child labor laws.

Today, that advocacy continues with a focus on the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act, which will help sustain more than 6,000 victim assistance organizations across the country. These organizations include domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, and child advocacy centers that provide critical support to individuals and families in need. This fund does not use taxpayer dollars. It is solely financed by the fines, settlements, and other monetary penalties collected from Federal criminal prosecutions.

To learn more about this legislation, visit: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/909>

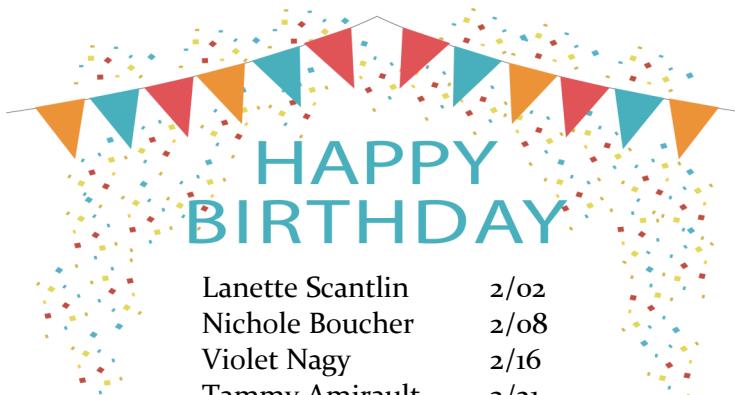


Correspondence Secretary
Denise Mulcahy

If you know of anyone who needs a ray of Sunshine, please send me their name and address so I can contact them with a note from MDWC.



Announcements



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Peggy Grow
 Jeannette McIntosh
 Rita Von Pusch



A \$10,000 check was presented to LovExtension from funds raised through the Tour of Homes. Pictured left: Linda Urry, Perri Nissen from LovExtension, Linda Krupski, LovExtension Founder, Linda Hezlep, and Suzanne Gibson.



JoAnne Hildebrand

JoAnne grew up in South Florida and later spent most of her adult life in Maryland before returning to Florida about fifteen years ago. She became a member of the Mount Dora Woman's Club in April 2025.

Her professional life was devoted to education. JoAnne served as a professor at the University of Maryland and held the role of Academic Director of Fire Science. She and her husband have been married for 48 years, and she has one daughter.

Creativity shapes much of JoAnne's free time. She enjoys watercolor painting, gardening, and cooking with fresh, farm-to-table ingredients. She also volunteers as a recipe tester for America's Test Kitchen, receiving a new recipe each month to prepare, evaluate, and to provide feedback.

During the summer, JoAnne retreats to her cabin in Maryland, where she spends her days gardening. When the season winds down, she returns to the warmth and sunshine of Florida.



Club members who participated in the Arts and Craft Competition/Showcase of Talent, and received 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons for their submissions.

Pictured front row left: Dee Olive, Barbara Little, Lori Steuter, and Gail Mahan. Back row left: Donna Biba, Therese Haberle, Maureen Melvold, Lynn Kirman, Suzanne Gibson, Denise Mulcahy, Cathy Kautz, Diane Cole, JoAnne Hildebrand, Joanna Fox, Diana Johnson, and Karin Pierson. Congratulations!!

Announcements

GFWC Florida Arts and Crafts Competition by Category GFWC Mount Dora Woman's Club First Place Winners



4. Susan Gibson
Serving Tray
Flower Glass
Mosaic



6. Dee Olive
Necklace & Earrings
Peyote & Fringed
Beaded Beads with
Lampwork beads



6A. Dee Olive
Wire Weaving
Pendant
Copper & Black
Marbled Agate



7. Dee Olive
Octopus Peyote Stitch
Warped Square Star
Beadweaving with
Needle



8. Gail Mahan
Diamond Painting
Woodland Animals



13. Diane Cole
Scrapbooking
National Park Visits -
Organized in the
same order as the
"National Parks"



17. Lori Steuter
Upcycled Flower
A week of recycled
materials - no glue
used



18. Lanette Scantlin
Woodland Christmas
Hanging
Floral/No live
materials



20. Diane Cole
Christmas Candy
Cane Wreath
Lights Up



21. Lynn Kirman
Sea Glass & Shells
Wreath Ornament



24. Maureen Melvold
Sweater Original
Design - Fine gauge
yarn for Florida



25. Maureen Melvold
Baby Blanket & Hat
Original Design



27. Therese Haberle
Lap/Crib/Toddler
Blanket 30"x 50" 60
Granny Squares - 40
Unique design/color



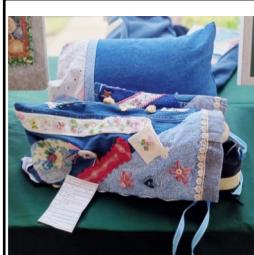
28. Diane Cole
Duel Flowerpots
Crewel



31. Lynn Kirman
Beach Houses
Cross Stitch - Counted

Announcements

GFWC Florida Arts and Crafts Competition by Category GFWC Mount Dora Woman's Club First Place Winners



33. Donna Biba
Travel Set: Inside Reinforced Carry Bag is a Pillow & two shoe bags



38. Barbara Little
Quilted & Applique Holiday Jeans - Thanksgiving



41. Barbara Little
Quilted Holiday Cards. Pieced and machine quilted sewn to blank card.



42. Cathy Kautz
Alcohol Ink Painting Violets



71. Gail Mahan
Acrylic Painting Great Blue Heron



73.
JoAnne Hildebrand
Watercolor Painting American Kestrel from Photo



80. Gail Mahan
Watercolor Flower Garden



90. Dee Olive
Frog on Leaf Our World Close Up



91.
Irene Rosenberg
Morning has Broken like the First Morning



92. Diana Johnson
Whooo's is This? Photography Reflections



93. Karin Pierson
Center Street Kitchen, Eustis, FL. Civic Engagement Members prepare & distribute 250 meals per month



94. Lynn Kirman
Flamingos and Flowers - Tampa Bay Sunken Gardens



Arts & Culture Committee. Pictured left: Delores Deen, Donna Biba, Dee Olive, and Gail Mahan