

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

Suzanne Gibson
President

January 2026

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President's Corner

Happy New Year 2026!

Raise your glass to all we have accomplished in 2025! We will remember fondly.

Raise your glass to all we hope to accomplish in 2026! We are waiting in anticipation.

Now I am raising my glass to you for being loving, caring and generous. It has always been a pleasure serving with you. You are the best.

Love you all! Spark the Fireworks!

Suzanne



The GFWC Story

Founded in 1890, GFWC's roots can be traced back to 1868 when Jane Cunningham Croly, a professional journalist, attempted to attend a dinner at an all-male press club honoring British novelist Charles Dickens.

Croly was denied admittance based upon her gender, and in response, formed a woman's club—Sorosis. In celebration of Sorosis' 21st anniversary in 1889, Jane Croly invited women's clubs throughout the United States to pursue the cause of federation by attending a convention in New York City.

On April 24, 1890, 63 clubs officially formed the General Federation of Women's Clubs by ratifying the GFWC constitution.

Since 1890, GFWC's impact has been felt throughout communities across the United States and the globe.

Source: GFWC Headquarters Website

JANUARY PROGRAM

ANNUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS CONTEST

Guest Judge:

Janet Gamache, Director
Mount Dora Center for the Arts

Hosted by the Arts & Culture Committee

January Dates to Remember

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 3	Walkie Talkie
Jan 7	Registration 11:00 a.m. General Meeting 11:30 a.m. Lunch 12:30 p.m.
Jan 13	MLK Senior Center
Jan 21	ESO
Jan 27	MLK Senior Center
Jan 28	Executive Board Meeting
Jan 30	Center Street Kitchen

“

Approach the new year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day.”

Michael Josephson

martha stewart



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 at 1:00 p.m. (next to the Library). Our next meeting is delayed to January 15th. Please join in!

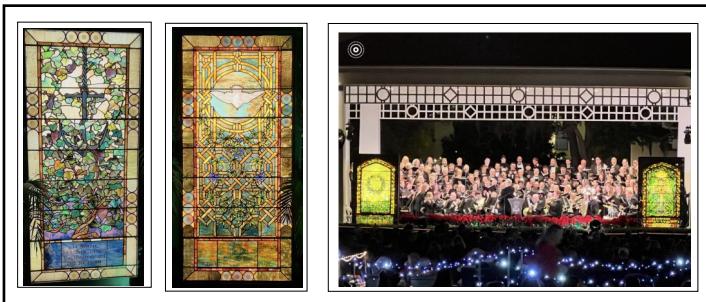
So far, we have 47 entries in 25 categories for our 2026 Arts & Crafts Competition, so it's shaping up to be another amazing display of talent at our January 7th meeting! An email was sent to all participants with detailed instructions. If you haven't received an email or have any questions, contact Dee Olive.

We have dates available for ushering at the IceHouse Theatre performance of "The Cottage" on January 22nd or January 29th. Contact Donna Biba to secure a slot before it's filled! While you can volunteer on your own, it's more fun to join fellow club members at the play!

We were a small but mighty group who took the train or drove to Winter Park on December 4th for the free concert and Tiffany window display at the Christmas in the Park event. It was such a magical evening, we expect this to be an annual event!

Arts & Culture Opportunities! Invite a friend and attend!

- Jazz in the Alley in Deland on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Art in the Alley in Mount Dora on the 2nd Friday of the month from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.



Christmas in the Park in Winter Park on December 4th. The Morse Museum helps launch the holiday season when it lights up eight Tiffany windows and presents The Bach Festival Choir and Brass Ensemble in concert. It was amazing!

happy new year



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Jerry Hardwick, District 7 Point Person

Hope you enjoyed a joyful holiday season and are ready to welcome a bright and happy 2026!

On December 13th, sixteen of our club members—along with a few husbands and even one very well-dressed dog—participated in the Wreaths Across America ceremony. The program was both elegant and deeply patriotic, featuring the presentation of our flag, stirring bagpipe music, the national anthem, and several heartfelt speeches.

It was a beautiful day, and in just one hour, 500 wreaths were placed with reverence on the graves of our Veterans. Each wreath was accompanied by words of gratitude for their service. Among the many honored, we were moved to discover the resting place of a Veteran from the Spanish-American War.

The event's coordinator asked me to extend his sincere appreciation for the generosity and volunteer spirit shown by our members. Your donations and participation made a meaningful difference.



Club members who attended the ceremony: Pictured front: Tracy Draper, Lori Steuter, and Kim Barnes. Standing from left: Suzanne Gibson, Faye Owens, Mary Ann Quick, Jerry Hardwick, Betty Smith, Delores Deen, and Dee Olive.



EDUCATION & LIBRARIES

Cheryl Higgins, CH

At the December membership meeting, the Club presented a donation check for \$10,500, raised from the garage sale, to Families In Transition (FIT). Kristin McCall from FIT was overwhelmed with emotion at the Club's generosity.

We will be organizing volunteers to read to the children in late January, at Sorrento Elementary.

Our next meeting will be January 5th, at 2:00 p.m., at the W.T. Bland Library, and new members are always welcome.



Donation Presentation to FIT. Pictured left: Cheryl Higgins and Kristin McCall, FIT Grant Manager.



ENVIRONMENT

Kim Barnes, CH

The Environment Committee will be meeting on Monday, January 12th, at 10:00 a.m. at the Nunan Butterfly Garden at the W.T. Bland Library (indoor location will be announced in the event of bad weather).

January 17th is Florida Arbor Day! Celebrate trees, learn about trees, and get to know the Forest Preserve behind the W.T. Bland Library. This event, run by the City of Mount Dora and the W.T. Bland Library, is funded with our book scanning funds. It is a brief program followed by a guided hike on the forest's dirt trail, which has steep elevation changes. Refreshments will be served. No registration required. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1HuE7L4VL1/>

Kim is looking for someone to help her process the prescription bottles we collect. They need to be organized and shipped to Matthew 25: Ministries, who uses them in shipments of medical supplies to and in developing countries. Let her know if you are willing to help. It should only take a few hours.



FUNDRAISING

Linda Urry, CH

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your generosity, time, and talent for making the "Tour of Homes" such a great success!

Without your unwavering support, we would not be able to raise the funds for charity as we do. LovExtension is overjoyed with the impact we're making for them, and is so grateful for all the love and care we've shown them in the past. Their gratitude is truly heartfelt.

Teamwork makes the dream work, and I'm so proud of the incredible work that this committee and this Club are doing. Have a very Happy New Year!

SAVE THE DATE! Come to the Quarter Auction on February 12th to benefit Haven of Lake & Sumter Counties Inc., serving victims of domestic and sexual violence, and the Florida Elks Children's Charities! It is so much fun!



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Tracy Draper, CH

Please join our committee meeting to be held on Monday, January 5th, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Foxtail Coffee located at 315 N New Hampshire Ave, Tavares, FL 32778.

We will start the new year off by discussing several exciting projects.

We are bringing the Linus Project back, recycling eye glasses, and planning a field trip to Bountiful Farms in Okahumpka in the spring. There are other gatherings to plan as well, like socials, recipe sharing and more!



Walkie Talkies

Walkie Talkies will meet on January 3rd, at 1:00 p.m., to enjoy a walk around Lake Gertrude to burn off some of our holiday indulgences. <https://www.trailforks.com/trails/lake-gertrude-paved-trail/>

Park at the western trailhead / Gertrude Place, just off Morningside Drive. If you have any questions contact Tracy Draper.

See you there!



ESO
Therese Haberle, CH

Ladies: Join us for a fun get together on January 21st, 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the W. T. Bland Library! January's meeting is a "free read"--so anything goes! Share with us your most recent readings or NOT! If you haven't read anything, come anyway for some good conversation and perhaps some ideas of books to conquer! Speaking of "conquering," congratulations to Barbara Phillips for finishing Dan Brown's latest 700 page "The Secret of Secrets"!

Our ladies have some favorite authors which you might like to check out: Marie Benedict, Kristin Harmel, Shari LaPena, Ruth Ware, Kristin Hannah, Ariel Lawhon, and Kate Quinlan. Seems like those authors names pop up at almost every meeting! Check them out!

Hope to see you!



HOSPITALITY
Cathy Kautz/Maureen Melvold, CHs



Maureen Melvold delivered cookies to the Mount Dora Police Department after the Tour of Homes.



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

MEMBERSHIP
Kim Barnes, CH

We will be holding a New Member Orientation on Wednesday January 7th immediately following the General Meeting/Luncheon. We ask all new members to attend an orientation session to learn:

- how to get involved in ways that match their interests and skills.
- to learn about the GFWC and Club structures, the Club's history, and traditions.

Please say hello and introduce yourself to Vivian De Armas who joins us from Tavares. Vivian enjoys helping others, spending time with friends, cooking and baking.

If you are interested in purchasing a T-shirt (navy), blouse (white), or sweater vest (navy) with our club logo, check them out at the next meeting or contact Kim Barnes for pricing and sizing.

Shirts are available for purchase but are not required. Wearing them is an easy way to increase our visibility during community events.

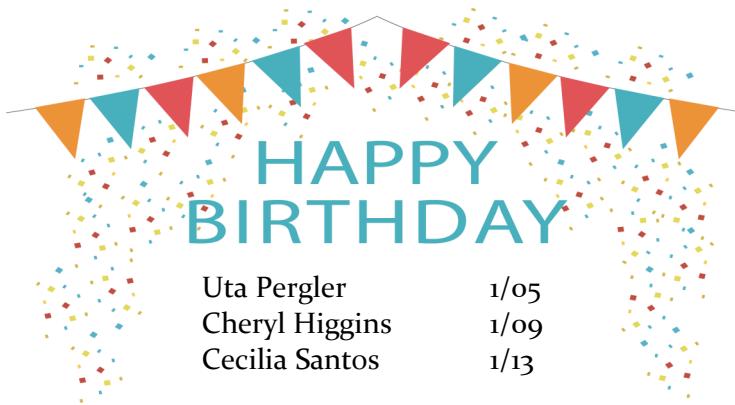


Correspondence Secretary
Denise Mulcahy

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 MEMBER

VIVIAN DE ARMAS

MLK Senior Center Christmas Party



Pictured left: A senior with Santa, Roseanne Miller, and Diana Johnson.

Notes from Roseanne Miller, Treasurer

Thank you all for your generosity towards the Guardian Ad Litem Angel Tree Project. Your gifts undoubtedly brought joy to a child's face on Christmas morning.



Pictured left: Denise Mulcahy, Gina Conway, Cecilia Santos, Roseanne Miller, Betty Smith, and Diane Cole.

Members of the Mount Dora Woman's Club recently joined the Empty Bowls event to support Lake Cares Food Bank. Participants selected hand-painted bowls and enjoyed soup from local restaurants, knowing proceeds would help neighbors facing hunger. It was a simple yet powerful reminder of how compassion and community can bring hope.



Pictured left: Dee Olive, Donna Biba, Jerry Hardwick, Cheryl Higgins, Linda Urry, Delores Deen, and Gail Mahan.

Announcements

Judith Shepp, Honorary Member



The Mount Dora Woman's Club bestowed one of our highest honors—the title of Honorary Member—to an individual whose dedication, service, and spirit have made a lasting impact on our club.

Within the GFWC Mount Dora Woman's Club

- Judith oversaw the building of the Kids & Co. playground in Gilbert Park in 1990.
- She began the first newsletter, "Key Notes" in 1996
- and served as MDWC president for 3 different terms.

Judith started her journey with GFWC in 1971 when she joined the GFWC Longwood, FL Junior Woman's Club. She has also been a member of the New Port Richey Woman's Club and the Denver, Colorado Woman's Club.

Judith also served on the Florida State Scrapbook committee for two terms; served two 3-year terms as a mediator for the GFWC National Organization; and is a contributing member of the 1895 Society of GFWC Florida.

Kim Barnes

Holiday Tour of Homes



Pictured left: Roseanne Miller and Linda Hezlep at registration for the Holiday Tour of Homes. Together they welcomed over 225 people to the Holiday Tour of Homes, sharing joy and community spirit.



Faye Owens admiring a classic vehicle at Horse Ranch Road Classics Barn in Mount Dora, a stop on the Holiday Tour of Homes.



Pictured are the Holiday Tour of Homes welcome cart, and the punch and cookie station at the Horse Ranch Road Classics Barn.