



Illinois | Indiana | Michigan | Ohio | Wisconsin

GFWC GREAT LAKES REGION COMMUNIQUE

Editor/Graphic Designer: Jodi Hanson | jshdesign@hotmail.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Spring GFWC Great Lakes Region!

As the vibrancy of spring permeates our region, I find myself uplifted by its arrival. Despite the lingering chill, the increasing presence of sunshine brings warmth and renewed energy. I trust you are preparing your gardens to welcome our pollinators and feathered friends.

With the advent of spring, it also marks the conclusion of my term serving the GFWC Great Lakes Region. While we still have tasks to complete, one aspect I eagerly anticipate is our upcoming State Conventions. This year, I am privileged to attend the GFWC Ohio and GFWC Wisconsin State Conventions. I eagerly await the opportunity to connect with club members from these states and gain insight into their club activities over the past year. I always enjoy a good road trip.

Looking further ahead, the pinnacle event on our horizon is the GFWC Convention in Chicago. I encourage you all to ensure your registration and hotel arrangements are in place for what promises to be a weekend of celebrating the remarkable achievements of our Great Lakes Region states. Rest assured, I will be wholeheartedly cheering on our region throughout the convention.

Additionally, I am excited about our forthcoming GLR Banquet scheduled for Saturday evening. This gathering represents the culmination of our 2022–2024 administration, where we will welcome new officers and partake in a final regional dinner in the esteemed company of GFWC President Deb Strahanoski. Further details regarding this event can be found on page 8 in this current issue of the *Communiqué*.

I extend a heartfelt invitation to each of you to join me in these upcoming events, as we continue to foster camaraderie and celebrate the remarkable achievements of our region.

In Federation, Dana



THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE GFWC ILLINOIS!

As we complete our journey down the yellow brick road and descend upon the Emerald City in April 2024, I am in awe as I reflect upon the courage, passion, and will of the GFWC Illinois club members!

At our annual convention, we will celebrate the successes, leadership, and creativity of our clubs and individual clubwomen in their never-ending journey to make the world around them a better place to be! We established two special awards for this administration – the **Coveted Shoe Award** and the **Food Insecurity Award** and will be recognizing those clubs who submitted entries for these awards. The Coveted Shoe Award was intended to enhance club engagement with district and state leaders and activities, and the Food Insecurity Award spanned 18 months of activities clubs performed to ease food insecurity both locally and globally.

I will personally celebrate the many accomplishments of the GFWC Illinois Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and our Headquarters Executive Secretary, a few of which are:

- Preserved our history by binding 20 years of meeting minutes, yearbooks, and *GFWC Illinois Clubwoman* magazines into hardcopy bound books.
- Updated and approved the 2024–2027 GFWC Illinois Strategic Plan
- Refreshed the *GFWC Illinois Policies Book* to reflect current practices – an overhaul that has been sorely needed.

- Proposed an increase in dues to address operational cost vs. income deficiencies and have begun earnest discussions on other income opportunities to become less reliant on dues income.
- Obtained pro-bono legal opinions to interpret longstanding trust agreements that govern the use of funds in these trusts.
- Held our annual in-person GFWC Illinois LEADS Seminar, and held a virtual Membership Workshop.

And, finally, **GFWC Illinois is proud to host the GFWC Convention in Chicago!** We are so looking forward to greeting and meeting our fellow club members across the country as they descend upon what we call the “Windy City” with all the charm and culture of a big city in the Midwest!

Join us on June 28th, when GFWC Illinois hosts **“A Night at the Diamond Club”** a tribute to the glamour and ritz of the speakeasies 100 years ago! Come in your flapper attire, pearls, gloves, or hats, and toast one another for a job well done!

LeeAnn Conlon
GFWC Illinois President 2022–2024



WOMEN'S HISTORY

We all have a place in history. The closing of my chapter as Indiana's President has guaranteed my place in it, as it has all of yours. Will it be a positive reflection of our time? Only history will be able to answer that question. Since we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us we need to make sure that foundation will be able to hold up the future generations of women.

I just watched a movie called **Cabrini**, about an Italian Nun who came to America at the turn of the century. She arrived one year before the establishment of the GFWC. I can only imagine what could have happened if Mother Cabrini and Jane Cunningham Croly got together during the infancy of this great country that so many of us call home. While Mother Cabrini established orphanages and hospitals, all of which were run by women, "Jenny June", the daughter of a Unitarian Minister, immigrated to the U.S. in 1831 from England to start a career in journalism. It was difficult for her to get a job since "women" were not thought to have as much intellectual capacity as men. Jenny broke out of that confining box and opened the eyes of the world by eventually forming the largest women's organization in the world, GFWC. These two women did not sit quietly in their box. They did not conform to what society had built for them. They had to fight against some of the strongest biases of their times. Our lives and our times are so much greater having had these strong, unapologetic women lead the way and set the examples for us all. Why we don't have a movie about the life and times of Jane Cunningham Croly escapes me. It would be a magnificent boost to women everywhere and would make GFWC more of a household name.

THANK YOU

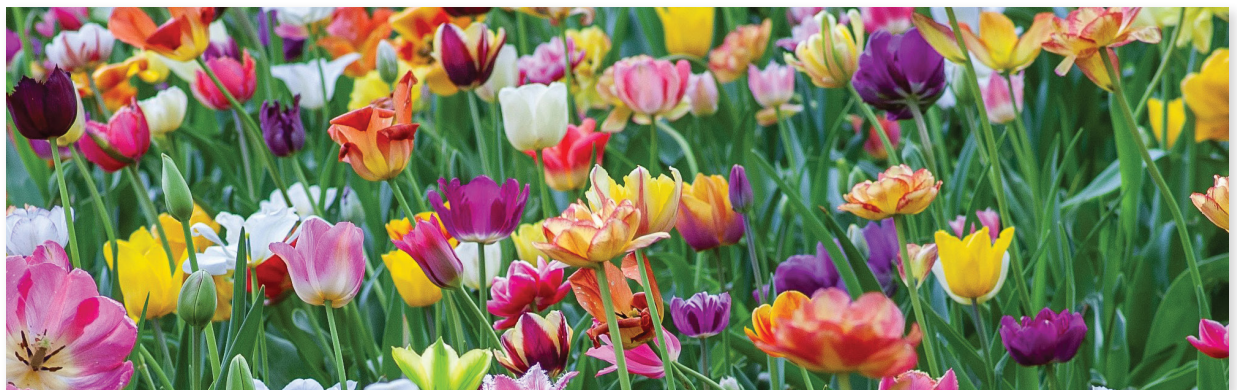
As the President of the Indiana Federation of Clubs, I have always kept in mind WWJJD? What Would Jenny June Do? I tried to live up to the standards put forth by the previous leaders who modeled and followed Jenny's lead. I led in the direction I knew could bring more life into the IFC and often wished for Jenny's strength and courage to take bigger steps to accomplish even more. We learned as we worked and along the way formed new and forever friendships.

Volunteers are a busy lot; time is usually what they run short of daily. The women of Indiana saw needs and they filled many voids. They fed the hungry; they took care of the sick. They helped the prisoners; they clothed the needy. They saved the animals and helped the children. They helped clothe the job hunters and shelter the homeless. They gave hope to the hopeless and comforted the grieving. Time is a fleeting commodity in the life of a volunteer as most of you know. Yet our volunteers give it willingly and freely. The women of the Indiana Federation of Clubs are some of the most timeless women I've ever had the honor to know. I am so grateful to be counted among their ranks. Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!

Marianne McCombs
GFWC Indiana President

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

— ELIZABETH ANDREW



MICHIGAN

This coming May, GFWC Michigan will hold our 129th annual state convention in Menominee. Menominee is a beautiful city surrounded by the Menominee River and the Green Bay, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This is especially exciting because my president's symbol is the anchor... I love that Michigan is surrounded by water!

My president's theme is dream, explore, discover. And that is exactly what we are doing this year. **You see, we are breaking the typical convention mold and not holding our event in a hotel this year!** I must tell you, trying something new has resulted in many challenges. We have room blocks at discounted pricing at four local hotels for our guests. We are holding all business and meals on the 2nd floor of Murray's Irish Pub & Grill. Therefore, our attendees will

be required to carpool from their hotel to Murray's.

I have shared this change with GFWC President, Deb Strahanoski. She is very supportive of Michigan trying something different. We are hopeful in the end it will cost us less than hotel contracts. That remains to be seen, as the bottom line is never actually clear until the final bill arrives. President Deb encouraged us and remarked that we would never know if we did not try! We are exploring this change, and once we discover the results, we will share them with other states interested in "breaking the mold."

I wish all of my fellow Great Lakes Region states a fabulous and successful state convention!

Kathy Lewis, GFWC Michigan President



Greetings from the Great State of Ohio!

Spring is the time for groundhogs, love, and REPORTS!!! By the time you read this issue of the *Communiqué*, club reports will be in the mail and another club year is history. I appreciate how much time and effort go into compiling these reports. The club report is a history of our clubs. It is our club's accomplishments, the changes we have made in our communities, and the friendships we have made along the way. I am so very proud of the accomplishments of Ohio clubwomen!

The Groundhog predicted an early Spring – something everyone in Ohio is really excited about! Another sign of spring is the OFWC Convention! Exciting times for GFWC OFWC clubwomen! The GFWC Ohio Board of Directors met on January 19–21 to plan out our 126th OFWC Convention. **The GFWC Ohio Convention will be at the Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio, April 19–21.** The Board is busy getting speakers and planning out exciting workshops. The Northeast District is the Hostess District for this Convention and I want to say **thank you** to all of them for the effort they are putting into making our 126th convention one of the best! The theme for this convention is **“Power of One the Potential of Many”** and our GFWC Guest is **Dana Jones, GFWC GLR President.** We are asking members to donate pacifiers, baby bottles, baby wipes, blankets, onesies, and sleepers for the **Bundles of Love Workshop** on Saturday afternoon, where we will also be making cards to donate to the Military Family and Readiness Center in Ravenna Ohio. The District Presidents will be having a Basket Raffle, we will have a Fundraising workshop, a Membership workshop, and a workshop on Protocol. We will be wearing pink on Saturday for our Barbie Lunch and GFWC/ Club apparel for Sunday morning. The Junior Board is planning a fun Junior Banquet, “The Sisters of Federation,” and a Junior Fun Night, “Sensational Sisters Shindig.” These are just some of the highlights of a fun-filled weekend that is being planned.

All the Districts will soon be having their Legislation Day where District awards will be given, and we will enjoy local speakers. It's

a great day to support each other and share ideas that can be taken back and tried in other clubs.

Clubs continue to support the President's Special Emphasis to raise money for **Newlife K-9s**, an organization that trains and places working dogs for Vets. I am humbled and amazed at their generosity and dedication to such a worthy cause.

Clubs have embraced the **“Bee the One Be the Change”** and tried many new projects throughout the state. 30-day Environment Challenges were held, new member drives were held, blankets were raffled, hives of bees were purchased, money from fundraisers was donated to K-9s, teas were held, and a chili cook-off corn-hole tournament was held. One club started a secondhand store to help in their community. This is just a small example of the ideas that Ohio women came up with. I am amazed and proud of the Ohio clubwomen who were not afraid of change but embraced it!

Yvonne Ford
GFWC Ohio President



WISCONSIN

Greetings from GFWC Wisconsin!

Spring has come early to Wisconsin after a very strange and interesting winter. With the arrival of spring, the sisters of Wisconsin are looking toward our annual State Convention. The winter workshop is in the past; the reporting is complete; and district meetings are happening all over the state. The slate of new officers is ready for elections. Amendments to Resolutions, Bylaws, and Policies are ready for approval.

As the hosts for the State Convention, the women of the Lakeshore District are planning a fun tour of the architectural gems of Milwaukee and gathering volunteers for all the many tasks needed to make the convention run smoothly and efficiently. Table decorations are ready, gift bags are being filled, and the district meeting will be full of assembly and activity.

At the beginning of her administration, President Dickman challenged all of Wisconsin to **“Be the Light,”** and that is exactly what has happened all over the state. The Director of Junior Clubs Hooser urged everyone to **“Turn Stones,”** and they are turning. New and exciting projects have surfaced, membership has stabilized, a new technology plan with training is beginning to transition to every district in the state, and our Wisconsin mini LEADS program is growing and growing. Dickman and Hooser are leaving a wonderful legacy for GFWC Wisconsin.

As her last meeting approaches, President Dickman is planning a great convention for all. Wisconsin sisters are looking forward to great convention speakers like the Poet-in-Residence at Ripon College, a speaker on building and monitoring financial health for non-profits, and another on the path for professional women in music education. The convention will feature Katie Moydell, GFWC Director of Junior Clubs, as a keynote speaker. Wisconsin will also have an amazing recognition banquet for our LEADS candidate, our Wisconsin Junior of the Year, the Wisconsin Woman of Achievement, and Wisconsin’s own Theodora Youmans Citizenship Award. We will also present and honor the Wisconsin Jennie June finalist. We will announce our club awards for the year,

shop with exciting vendors, and be able to experience our new technology initiative at demonstration tables.

Incoming President-Elect Brown is busy as a bee, planning her installation banquet, finishing her budget, and formulating her strategic plan. Director-Elect of Junior Clubs Kimball is also buzzing about making plans for her administration. Just like the bees buzzing around the spring flowers, Wisconsin is humming with planning activities, projects, and special events for the 2024–2026 Administration.



GFWC Woman’s Club of Pewaukee Wisconsin meeting with the Goldhaubenfrauen this past summer in Austria.

Looking to the future, Wisconsin is getting ready to have a big showing at the International Convention in Chicago, just right over our southern state line. Rooms are rented, train tickets are being bought and reservations are going in. We can’t wait! Our sister club, the **Spittaler Goldhaubenfrauen of Spittal, Austria,** will be installed as a new International Affiliate. Wisconsin is very proud to be their sponsor! It is exciting to have the International Convention in the Great Lakes Region.

The GFWC sisters of Wisconsin are ready and able to move into the future as a result of the great leadership of the 2022–2024 Administration. Forward!

Nancy Niedziela
GFWC Wisconsin Correspondent



The GFWC Wisconsin State Officers hard at work at Winter Workshop.

Past State President Abby Lorenz and Claire Sedushak at Winter Workshop.



GFWC SIGNATURE PROGRAM

By Trisha Schafer, 2022–2024 GFWC Signature Program Chairman Representing the Great Lakes Region

A FULFILLING JOURNEY AS GFWC SIGNATURE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Serving as the GFWC Signature Program Chairman, representing the Great Lakes Region, has been an incredible journey, allowing me to champion causes close to my heart and those of countless others in our communities. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of the GFWC, we've been able to provide hope and support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Throughout this time, our primary focus has been on aiding survivors and supporting the agencies and coalitions tirelessly working to provide essential services. Working hand in hand with clubs across the country, we've aimed to bring about real change and offer comfort to those in need.

One of our main goals has been to connect clubs nationwide with resources and guidance, empowering them to make a tangible impact in their communities. Whether it's organizing awareness campaigns or fundraising events, each initiative has contributed to our overarching mission of aiding survivors and promoting crucial services.

A key aspect of our work has been amplifying the voices of survivors and advocating for their rights. By collaborating closely with local agencies and state coalitions, we've worked to ensure survivors receive the support they deserve while pushing for systemic changes to prevent future violence. Through grassroots

activism and legislative advocacy, we're striving to create a more just and equitable society for all.

Additionally, serving as the President-Elect of GFWC Illinois has provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with local communities. I am looking forward to the 2024–2026 Administration and being one of the Great 8 of the Great Lakes Region (GLR); we've all embarked on a journey of leadership and service that will make a lasting impact on our communities.

Reflecting on these years, it's clear that the journey has been both challenging and immensely rewarding. Every moment, from organizing events to heartfelt conversations with survivors, has reinforced the importance of our collective efforts. As the GFWC Signature Program Chairman representing the Great Lakes Region, I'm incredibly proud of all that we've accomplished, but I'm equally inspired by the work that lies ahead.

Ultimately, it's about the lives we've touched and the communities we've uplifted. It's about standing in solidarity with survivors and being a voice for those who may not have the strength to speak out. As we move forward, let's continue to strive for a world free from violence, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect. Together, we can make a difference, one community at a time.

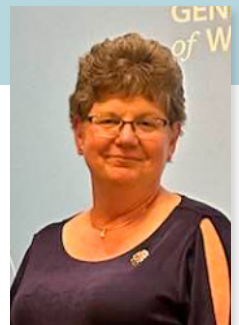


LEADERSHIP

By Deb Brossard, Great Lakes Region Rep. | 2022–2024 GFWC Leadership Committee

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Great Lakes Region Representative on the GFWC Leadership Committee for the past four years. I am grateful to Marian St. Clair and Deb Strahanoski for seeing the leadership potential in me and offering me this awesome opportunity. The GFWC Leadership Committee has worked very hard to create valuable resources for clubs, districts, states, and regions to use. I am particularly proud that most of our GLR states have implemented LEADS programming to

prepare their candidates for the experiences at GFWC LEADS and that all of them are willing to share their information with our sister states that ask for support. I encourage you to keep visiting the **GFWC Member Portal** and **Digital Library** where new resources are added frequently. Your club does not have to reinvent the wheel. The information is at your fingertips as a benefit of membership in GFWC.



2024 GFWC CONVENTION



CHICAGO | 2024
GFWC CONVENTION

OFFICIAL CALL

GFWC Great Lakes Region Semi-Annual Meeting

Hilton Chicago | Chicago, Illinois

Saturday, June 29, 2024 | 7:30 p.m. Banquet

All clubwomen belonging to the Federations of the “Great” States of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin are hereby called to the Semi-Annual Meeting of the GFWC Great Lakes Region.

The meeting will be held at the Hilton Chicago in Chicago, Illinois, on Saturday, June 29, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

- GFWC International President Deb Strahanoski and GFWC Director of Junior Clubs Katie Moydell will bring greetings.
- We will have a short business meeting.
- We will spotlight our State Presidents and Directors of Junior Clubs.
- It is our time to shine as we focus on our Federation’s accomplishments this past year.

- We will welcome and introduce the 2024 LEADS Graduates.
- We will celebrate the new beginnings of the 2024-2026 Administration with the Installation of Officers.
- GFWC Michigan will invite us to their state and share information about the annual meeting of the region to be held October 18–20, 2024.

What a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your region sisters and celebrate the many accomplishments of our region’s State Federations.

Join in the food, fun, and fellowship of the Federation at our dinner banquet on Saturday, June 29th.

Dana Jones
GFWC Great Lakes Region President

