**Minutes**

**GFWC/CT Fall Conference Meeting**

**September 10, 2022 at the New Britain Museum of American Art**

**Call to Order:** Kathy DeBurra, State President, called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. She said that she is honored to welcome everyone to the Fall Conference at the beautiful New Britain Museum.

**Inspiration:** Kathy Tobin, member of the Northford/North Branford Woman’s Club and the GFWC Woman’s League of the Lowcountry in South Carolina gave the Inspiration of the Day.

**Pledge of** Allegiance: Elizabeth Boissard and Mary Ellen Collett, Co-Presidents of Northford/North Branford Woman’s Club GFWC/CT led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Collect: Lynn Nielsen, Northford/North Branford Woman’s Club GFWC/CT led theCollect.

**Credentials** Report: Donna Farrell, Convention/Meeting Chairman, introduced the Aides: Sally Johnson, Maddy Marzullo, and Sue Michaud. She then read the preliminary credentials. They were: Past State Presidents – 5; Club Presidents – 17; State Board Members/Officers – 43; Voting Delegates/Board Members – 60; Total Voting – 60; Registered Guests – 70; Total Attendees – 68; District with the Largest Attendance – Southeast; Club with the Largest Attendance – Madison.

**Introductions** **of Past Presidents and E. C. Board**: Kathy DeBurra introduced the Past State Presidents in attendance: Helen Barakauskas, Leslie Apostolan, JoAnn Calnen, Jeanne Waseleski, and Debbie Fiore. She then introduced the members of the Executive Committee who gave their reports:

Anne Edwards, **Member at-Large**, said that she had one Maddy Memo from the last meeting. It was brought to our attention that someone did not get the Clubwoman newsletter. She was told that they are no longer being mailed, but that she could get it online.

Ashley Waseleski, **Corresponding Secretary**, announced two regrets. JoAnn Bruno is traveling, and Jean Brown had a fall and is at a Rehab Facility in Glastonbury. She would love cards from members.

Kathy Matusiak, **Recording Secretary**, asked anyone planning to speak to state her name and affiliation. She showed everyone a container that would be at the podium for their reports. Kathy asked for three people to read the meeting minutes. The following volunteered: Sara Newell, Nicole Karalli, and JoAnn Calnen.

Pam Lerner, **Assistant Treasurer**, thanked those who have sent in dues. She explained that on the tables there are containers for people to put in loose change for the children’s art program at the Museum.

Stephanie Capasso, **Treasurer**, was absent, but Kathy DeBurra brought cards with her new contact information.

Wendy Clery, **3rd Vice President**, mentioned the benefits of social media. She said that she has started setting up meet-ups and has one scheduled in the Enfield area. She thanked the District Officers whom she introduced: SE – Shirley Cavanagh, District President, and Carolyn DellaPietra, Asst. District President; NW – Nicole Karalli, District President, and Maddy Marzullo, Asst. District President; North Central – Jean Kehoe, District President and Donna Recknagel, Asst. District President; SW – not present. Wendy then said that the Waterbury Woman’s Club had a 33 per cent increase in membership, and the Ellington Women’s Club had a 25 per cent increase in membership. The NW District had the highest percentage gain thus far, and the Women’s Club, of Madison, Suburban WC Club of Greater New Britain, and the Woman’s Club of Woodbury all increased membership by 15 per cent. Wendy talked briefly about Friendsgiving, an initiative that GFWC is promoting.

Heather Spencer, **2nd Vice President**, encouraged Clubs to start now with reports to capture all of their lovely events and programs. She also highly encouraged ALL clubs to submit reports for the 2022-2024 Community Impact Program Awards. Clubs can win up to $100 at our State level and $2500 at a National level. For the 2020-2022 period, the Woman’s Club of Danbury/New Fairfield, the Woman’s Club of Greater New Milford, and the Manchester Women’s Club submitted reports. Heather asked that we make it our goal to have at least 75 percent of our clubs participate and submit reports. Zoom meetings on reporting will be held on 9/30, 10/28, and 11/18 at 6 p.m. One on one meetings can also be scheduled with Heather. She can be contacted at 203 788-2467 after 5:30 M-F. Heather introduced our CSP Chairwomen --Health and Wellness: Sheila Macauley; Fundraising: Sara Newell and Rainey Pavarini; State ESO Chair:

Judith Lefelar; State Veterans Chair: Maddy Marzullo; Advocates for Children: Donna Recknagel; Arts and Crafts: Kathy Aiello; and Beverly Regan: Scholarships.

Kathy Barnes, **1st Vice President**, mentioned the passing of Queen Elizabeth and her attributes for us to remember as leaders. She introduced the Club Presidents who are Kathy Aiello and Madelaine Gross, Bethel Woman’s Club; Georgeann Kishner, Woman’s Club of Danbury/New Fairfield; Sandra Barry, Woman’s Club of Enfield; Maddy Marzullo, Harwinton Woman’s Club; Pat Coyle, Suburban WC of Greater New Britain; Lynne Sarro, The Women’s Club of Madison; Janet Kropp, Mystic Women’s Club; Pearl Bouchard, Woman’s Club of Newington/Wethersfield; Liz Boissard and Mary Ellen Collett, Co-Presidents, Northford/North Branford; Zunny Martinez, The Hamden Woman’s Club, Inc.; Geri Thomas, Waterbury Woman’s Club; Jean Keating, Windsor Woman’s Club; Jean Kehoe, East Hartford Woman’s Club, and Jeanne Waseleski, Terryville Woman’s Club. Kathy said that there are a lot of resources under “L” in the portal.

**Special Focus-“In Her Shoes”**: Kathy DeBurra asked Chris Stanlonis to come forward and introduce the speakers from the Prudence Crandall Center in New Britain

 who were invited to talk about GFWC’s Signature Program, Domestic Violence and Sexual Awareness and Prevention. This program is to increase awareness of and help prevent the widespread occurrence of violence against women in communities across the nation and the world. She showed a video on which two victims of domestic violence spoke about their traumatic experiences. This was followed by an interactive exercise involving all club members in attendance.

**Expression of Thanks**: At 12:03 p.m., Cindi Basil from the Northford/North Branford Woman’s Clubs GFWC/CT offered the Expression of Thanks followed by a Recess and Friendship Time. Lunch, catered by “What’s Cookin!” was served.

**Meeting Reconvenes** at 1 p.m.

**State President’s Report:** Kathy DeBurra said that since our meeting in July, she has been very busy. She just returned from Washington, D.C. where she attended the Board of Directors meeting on August 18-21, 2011, which she found “truly inspiring”. One of the highlights , she said, was visiting the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial which our own Helen Barakauskas was very instrumental in promoting. The Docent pointed out that our organization was the one that donated the highest amount of funding towards completion of the Memorial – well over 60,000. That announcement elicited a cheer from everyone at our meeting. Kathy said that she enjoyed the entire Board meeting at which all of the Community Service Project Chairmen spoke about ideas to inspire projects within our communities. Kathy encouraged us to take advantage of those ideas in the new Manual which is on our website and on the GFWC portal. The last day included a State Presidents Meeting at which attendees were given a long list of tasks to complete, including requesting International guests to visit our meetings. Kathy immediately did that and got answers from those who will be coming in May 2023. Wendy Carriker, First Vice-President, will be visiting us. When we are tasked with hosting NERC next Fall, Deb Strahanoski and Suellen Brazil will visit us and in May 2024 when Kathy Barnes becomes our next President, Suellen Brazil, President-Elect will visit us again. Kathy said that she has been invited to speak at the meetings of some Clubs. She said that Clubs should feel free to contact her and ask her to help with any of their meetings, projects, workshops or information gathering for them. Kathy then said that she was inspired by one of our CSP Chairmen, Ms. Patty Meglio, who is our Arts & Culture Chairman. She was called up to speak. Kathy said that, besides being a wonderful artist who teaches Art, she is also a Whist caller. When she and Patty were discussing some ideas that everyone could participate in together, Kathy fell in love with The Trees of Hope that benefits the Ronald MacDonald House. She then asked all Club Presidents to send her a Christmas card with the Club name on it, and we will decorate our tree with those greetings and other décor. It will be called “The General Federation of Women’s Clubs of Connecticut wishes you a warm holiday season!!”. The Trees of Hope will then be displayed at the Maritime Center in New Haven from December 3-11, and visitors can purchase raffle tickets to try and win one of the trees. Tickets will be only $1, and will benefit the wonderful Ronald MacDonald House. Kathy continued her report by saying that NERC is in two weeks, and after seeing the list of attendees, it is a very nice turnout!

She thanked all who got books for our assignment for the Service Project. She had asked that Clubs write on the inside that it was their Club’s donation, saying that it would be a nice way to connect to the Region and also keep our Club’s names out there! This is a wonderful service project that benefits kids that have been abused. We were also asked to donate a basket from our State, which she said is completed. Kathy said that she received a lot of donations that are mainly “ocean” themed in addition to a great basket donated by our Member At-Large. Kathy will post a picture of it online before NERC.

Debbie Fiore, **Legislation/Public Policy Committee New England Regional Chairman,** then explained what her committee does as well as some changes. She said that during the 2022-2024 Administration, the committee will work in conjunction with the Executive Committee, the Special Program Chairmen, the CSP Chairman, and the Resolutions Committee to identify legislation which impacts each project area. GFWC will ask that members advocate for the passage of these measures and also track these bills through the process and let members know what action needs to be taken via the Legislative Action Center (LAC). The LAC, Debbie said, is the primary tool used by GFWC to educate and mobilize its members. She asked that even if we were signed up before, we should sign up again on the new LAC because we may have “fallen off” the list. Debbie printed instructions to hand out at the meeting. She reported that there is a Community Connection Initiative for Legislation and Public Policy. It is a fun Scavenger Hunt which Debbie explained. She also said that there is talk about arranging for a tour of the State Capitol for our members, possibly with an elected official and on a special day such as Child Advocates Day where we could get a proclamation and wear our GFWC attire. This could be posted on social media. Debbie encouraged everyone to go to GFWC.org and on the Member Portal to Digital Library. Then you select resources and C for Club Manual as well as L for the Legislation toolkit. In closing, Debbie said that she needs Committee members who are interested in working on resolutions that we can present to the GFWC Resolutions Committee for consideration. Meetings, she said will be on Zoom.

**Veterans Chairman**, Maddy Marzullo, announced that Wreaths Across America, is coming in December. She also announced the National Call to Wave the American Flag in honor of September 11th. This will begin at 8:46 a.m. and end at 10:03 a.m. tomorrow. Maddy mentioned Veterans Day in November, and she said that at the December 10th meeting, we will be collecting donations for Wreaths Across America. Members than applauded for two of our Veterans, JoAnn Calnen and Donna Farrell.

**Scholarship Chairman**, Beverly Regan, announced that the Mary Phipps and Dorothy Schoelzel Memorial scholarships are awarded every year to women who are Connecticut residents and in their third or fourth year of college studying towards a Bachelor or post-graduate degree. She asked that Clubs find candidates for this wonderful opportunity. Among ways this could be done is to let friends, neighbors, and family members know about them, post information on college campuses nearby or putting an article in local newspapers or online. Bev provided a poster that Clubs can duplicate and distribute as well as a sample newspaper/online article, explaining the scholarships and how to get applications.

**Fundraising**: Sara Newell and Rainey Pavarini, Chairmen, oversaw the drawings of the raffles.

**Announcements and Meeting Adjournment**: Following several announcements about Club events/fundraisers, Kathy DeBurra adjourned the meeting at 2:09 p.m. Attendees were invited to enjoy the Museum at their leisure.

Respectfully submitted;

Kathy Matusiak,

Recording Secretary, 2022-2024 Administration