

**Minutes**  
**126<sup>th</sup> GFWC/CT Annual May Convention**  
**May 20, 2023 at Hyatt House, Shelton, CT**

**Call to Order:** Kathy DeBurra, State President, called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m. honored to welcome all attendees to the 126<sup>th</sup> Annual May Convention honoring PEACE and ALL OF THE GFWC/CT MEMBERS AND THEIR WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES! She introduced the Convention's GFWC Guest; Wendy Carriker; First Vice President of GFWC International. She stated that Wendy is her "Mentor" -as each administration of State Presidents is assigned a contact on the International Board and Wendy is this Administrations assigned contact. Kathy could not be luckier than to get the "buzz" from her! She printed in the Call that you could bring Wendy a "bee" riddle. If you need one during the day there are 50 printed in her script and feel free to ask!

**Inspiration:** Lynne Sarro; President of The Women's Club of Madison, gave a beautiful Inspiration.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Sandra Barry; President of the Woman's Club of Enfield, led members in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**Collect:** Georgeann Kishner; State CPR Chairman/Website and President of the Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield, led the recitation of the Collect.

**Credentials Report:** Donna Farrell; Convention Chairman and Member of The Women's Club of Madison gave the following Credentials report: Past State Presidents – 3; Club Presidents – 14; State Board Members/Officers – 18; Voting Delegates/Board Members – 60; Total Voting – 60; Total Non-Voting Delegates - 0; Registered Guests – 2; Total Attendees – 62; District with the Largest Attendance – SW; & Club with the Largest Attendance – Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield. A quorum was declared.

**Rules of Convention:** JoAnn Calnen; Parliamentary Advisor read the Rules of Convention which were also printed in the program.

**Memorial Service:** Maddy Marzullo; President; Harwinton Woman's Club led the 2023 Memorial honoring the passing of the following Club Sisters: Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield – Deborah Gardiner, Donna Ruccia, Marie Hopkins, Betty Ann Sitting, Elaine Gillotte, and Sheila Macauley; GFWC Harwinton Woman's Club – Alma Silano; Suburban Woman's Club of Greater New Britain – Mary Louise Mancini and Joan Mercier; GFWC Women's Club of North Haven – Carol Geleneau; Woman's Club of Woodbury – Irene Millium; The Woman's Club of Enfield – Germaine Ciriello, Karen Kennedy, and Marilyn DeRose; Hamden Woman's Club – MaryJane Marciano and Annette M. Belevich; East Hartford Woman's Club – Gloria Juergens, Patty Schwab, and Irene Visintainer; The Mystic Woman's Club – Claudia Fridginer.

**Special Recognition:** The following GFWC Past State Presidents from Newtown and East Hartford received a special motif award in a remembrance candle lit service. Jean Audrey Rice Brown memorial award was the Butterfly motif, and Leslie Read Apostalon was the Starfish theme award. Jean Audrey Rice Brown, Newtown Woman's Club passed on November 11, 2022 and Leslie Read Apostalon, East Hartford Woman's Club passed on November 27, 2022.

**Veterans:** Maddy Marzullo, Veterans Chair, spoke about Honor Flight CT which took place on May 6<sup>th</sup> at which 47 veterans were honored at Bradley Airport. There were 4 from WWII, 12 from the Korean War, and 31 from the Vietnam War. A sign was

displayed at Convention made by Kathy DeBurra and Annie Edwards. 14 Members attended the send-off as a Civic Engagement project wearing their GFWC clothing, pins and spirit. A Quilt of Valor that had been made for Kathy DeBurra's recently deceased brother; Vietnam Veteran; Peter Lous Palumbo was displayed at Convention. Donna Farrell wrapped Kathy DeBurra in his honor in a moving and touching moment. The next Honor Flight Connecticut will be on Saturday, Sept. 2, 2023.

**Greetings:** Wendy Carriker, GFWC First Vice-President, shared greetings with everyone. Wendy Carriker shared a story of a student who passed away from suicide. She presented some painted rocks with messages of hope to Kathy DeBurra which were "raffled" to Clubs to place in their Towns in Connecticut and share the moving message around the State. Wendy explained that \$75,000 is needed to restore the marquis at headquarters and is the current fundraising goal of the administration in DC. She also mentioned and announced the GFWC National Day of Service in September to address hunger and food insecurity inviting all to participate. She shared with the Members that a new portal is being updated and designed for members, and the Marketplace is now open again. The first award of the day was an award presented to Wendy Carriker for the day the "Bee Kind" Award by President Kathy from the GFWC/CT Membership! Wendy was presented a gift thanking her for attending.

**Officers' Reports: State President; Kathy DeBurra** introduced the following members of the Executive Board: **Member-At-Large; Anne Edwards** thanked everyone for their support on the new suggestion boxes. She said that anyone who completes a comment today can leave their contact information and possibly win a rose pen. **Asst. Treasurer; Pam Lerner** greeted everyone and reminded everyone to fill out the registration form in the Call, thoroughly and completely. She asked that all Club rosters be sent in Excel format going forward to complete a directory of and for all members. Assistance with Excel will be provided for anyone who needs it.

**Corresponding Secretary & Recording Secretary Protem; Ashley Waseleski** – had no correspondence to read as Corresponding Secretary to report and asked for 3 readers to approve the minutes; The following women volunteered to be readers: Sara Newell ([sdno104@gmail.com](mailto:sdno104@gmail.com)), Jeanne Kehoe ([Jlkehoe@gmail.com](mailto:Jlkehoe@gmail.com)), and Anne Edwards ([aunteedwards@gmail.com](mailto:aunteedwards@gmail.com)). Ashley also announced that a set of minutes for the March Meeting were written, approved and placed on the website. **3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President – Wendy Clery;** Wendy reported on the Membership accomplishments and thanked everyone for their dedication to getting new Members. Her Membership table raised funds to provide monetary Membership Awards to Clubs to further their Membership goals with programming. She thanked all the Members for purchasing items at the tables.

The following awards were announced: Presented by Wendy Clery

### **GAVELS**

Plummer Gavel – Waterbury WC

Pettis Gavel – Manchester WC

Sutton Gavel – Windsor Locks WC (26 new Members)

**Competition Winners** Presented by Wendy Clery

- Windsor WC – increased membership by 120%
- Southeast District – 31% growth

**Honorable Mentions with 25%+**

- NW District 27%
- Thomaston
- Ellington
- Waterbury
- Killingworth
- Bethel

Communication and PR – Windsor WC.

LaFontaine VIP Award – Presented by Kathy DeBurra on behalf of EC - to Kathy Aiello.

Eileen Russell Award – presented by Wendy Clery and Kathy DeBurra chosen by State President Kathy – to Maddy Marzullo.

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; Kathy Barnes** explained the Nominating Committee for the 2024-26 administration. She reminded and asked anyone with interest who had not already spoken to her to do so during social time because later today the Nominating Committee members will be named. Being a Member of the Nominating Committee is an honor and will mold the future of GFWC/CT. Information about the Community Impact Program contest was available at the back of the room and she encouraged everyone to consider taking a packet and submitting a project. **Kathy Matusiak; Recording Secretary and Stephanie Capasso; Treasurer,** were not in attendance. Ashley Waseleski recorded the minutes and took notes for Kathy Matusiak to write. Also introduced were District Presidents, CSP Chairmen, and Presidents in attendance. The aides were introduced -**Sally Johnson, Maddy Marzullo and Sue Michaud. Sandy Barry** was also thanked for always giving a hand when needed!

**President's Report:** Kathy DeBurra; State President, said that she has been very busy since our last meeting enjoying visiting Clubs events and meetings. She attended all the wonderful District Days and thanked the Districts for all their work on the events which were all absolutely enjoyable. Kathy said that she could not thank everyone enough for the kindness bestowed upon her in the loss of her brother, including 159 cards, phone calls, texts, emails and donations to the Veterans in her brother's name.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Heather Spencer AM Session of Awards.** Awards listed in Awards booklet.

**Expression of Thanks:** Madelaine Gross, Co-President of the Bethel Woman's Club, offered the Expression of Thanks. Everyone sang Happy Birthday to Kathy DeBurra, and a cake and cards were presented to her.

**Recess, Friendship Time, and Brunch:** This included BYOB (Bring Your Own Book), Health Habits Jeopardy, and completion of cards to send to the Ukraine Women's Club which will be sent to the Ukraine Club as President DeBurra often has contact with their President; Lora Pavlenko. Some cards were written in Ukraine dialect.

**12:30 Resume Meeting:**

**Approval and Endorsement of 2024-26 NER Secretary:** Kathy DeBurra presented Deborah Fiore as the Executive Committee's recommendation for NER Secretary 2024-2026. Donna Farrell; Madison Women's Club, motioned to approve and Linda Melillo; Hamden Woman's Club, seconded it. All in favor.

Debbie has been a member of The Woman's Club of Enfield for 20 years and served as the Club President in 2010-2012. In addition to actively serving on many committees, Debbie served on the New England Region Leadership Committee from 2018 to 2020. She has also served on GFWC/CT committees and on the Executive Committee. From 2020 to 2022, Debbie was the GFWC/CT State President, and she is now serving as the 2022-2024 GFWC Legislation and Public Policy New England Region representative. This action has been approved by the Executive Committee. NER Standing rules ask that a willing candidate be endorsed at the State Convention this year, as stated below:

*Eligibility: Candidates for office shall:*

- A. *Be a member of a club in active membership in the Region.*
- B. *First have served as State President. If no candidate is available, then second would be a Past State Director of Junior Clubs and third would be a Past State Officer. If there are no candidates for that State, then a candidate from one of the other states, not represented, may be considered following Article IV Section 9. Vacancies.*
- C. *Shall have stated her consent to serve if elected.*
- D. *Each candidate shall be endorsed by her state.*

*The endorsement shall be obtained at the State Convention assembled in the odd-numbered year or in the absence of such previously identified convention by the endorsement of 2/3 of the clubs in the State Federation. Endorsement shall be properly documented.*

**By-laws Committee Report:** Nicole Karalli, NW District President, LEADS Candidate 2023 and By-laws Committee member was ill so Kathy DeBurra presented the following on her behalf –as printed in the Call and Program. This recommendation has come out of Committee from the GFWC/CT Bylaws Committee:

Article IV. Section E.

5. A quorum for a meeting of the State Federation shall be represented by 30 qualified delegates consisting of at least 10% of the Executive Board and qualified delegates representing at least 10% of the clubs and 50% of the Districts.

**Rationale: The current number of delegates required for quorum at Fall Conference and May Convention was defined when the State Federation was 300% of its current size. This does not reduce the number of Clubs or Districts to be represented ensuring state wide participation.**

Article VIII. Section B. The Executive Board shall act upon the admission of clubs, establish standing rules which it may rescind or amend by a two-thirds vote of those present, make appropriations, raise such money as may be necessary and plan and execute such measures as are required to coordinate the activities of the member clubs.

1) Executive Board meetings shall be held at least two times a year at the discretion of the President.

**Rationale: To provide flexibility of the State Federation to increase focus on District level meetings, utilize time for club development such as workshop and lessen conflicts with long standing member club activities.**

Discussion and Voting Results: The Executive CT Board discussed and voted to agree "Yes" to this change at its previous meeting. The general consensus vote was taken today. "All in Favor" was the overwhelming deciding vote to complete this process to move forward with the action.

This had come out of Committee and only needed the approval of the Membership at the May Convention as it is written in the bylaws for a change or modification. (**ARTICLE XIII Amendments.**)

**Afternoon Session of Awards: Heather Spencer.** Awards were presented by Donna Recknagel (Advocates for Children), Heather Spencer (Awards for Chairman not in attendance), Sara Newell Fundraising, Patty Meglio (Arts and Culture), Kathy Barnes, (Leadership), Georgeann Kishner (CPR), Wendy Clery (Membership) An Awards booklet was printed listing all awards.

**Scholarships:** Kathy DeBurra announced that we had twelve thousand dollars to award in scholarships. Beverly Regan, Scholarship Chair announced all the scholarship winners selected by the scholarship committee. She was happy to announce that the pool of candidates was amazing and the Committee had a tough job picking from all the wonderful talent and accomplished Women. The following list was announced: \$2,000 to Emma Kersting, sponsored by the Bethel Woman's Club. \$2,000 to Krista Segreti, sponsored by the Danbury/New Fairfield Woman's Club; \$4,000 to Kimberly DePaolis, sponsored by the Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club GFWC of CT; and \$4,000 to Margaret King, sponsored by the North Haven Woman's Club. Beverly reported that the Scholarship Committee is working on updating the language in the document and updating the application to include fillable areas of the application to help defray printing and mailing costs for the next application season. President Kathy thanked Beverly for all of her work on the committee.

**Program: Arts and Culture: Have you written your book yet?** Patty Meglio, Arts and Culture Chairman, spoke about her experiences of writing and publishing her recent book.

**NERC:** Donna Farrell, NERC Convention Chairman, provided an update about this year's convention and handed out new flyers.

**Health and Wellness:** President Kathy DeBurra spoke on behalf of Sheila Macauley, Health and Wellness State Chairman, 2022-2024. In remembrance of Sheila's dedication, a motion was made by Kathy Aiello to "rename" the GFWC/CT Walking/Exercise Challenge to the "***Sheila Macauley Annual Memorial GFWC/CT Walking/Exercise Challenge***". The motion was seconded by Wendy Clery and approved unanimously. The entire room stood in honor of Sheila including the guests who were moved by this action. Awards of the contest were announced and presented.

**Nominating Committee:** Kathy Barnes, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, presented the Nominating Committee for the 2024-2026 Administration comprised of names from the Executive Committee and names from the Board as required in the by-laws. They are as follows: Helen Barakauskas, Chairman, Jeanne Waseleski, Ginny Chulkovs, Maureen Fernandes, Linda Melillo and Alternates, Sandy Allard and Michelle Eifes.

**Photography Contest Awards:** Kathy Aiello announced the recipients of the Photography Contest Awards. **They were "World Up Close":** 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Kathy Aiello, Bethel Women's Club GFWC (SW), *Little Froggy*; 1<sup>st</sup> Place: -- Karen Allies, GFWC Manchester CT Women's Club, (NC), *Basking Bee*; Natural Wonders: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Carol Stiles, GFWC Harwinton Woman's Club (NW), *Days End on Wononscopomuc Lake*; 1<sup>st</sup> Place -- Donna Addressi, Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield, *Fire in the Everglade*; Reflections: 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Ctaci Bestier, GFWC Manchester CT Women's Club

(NC), *Smythe, St. James Cemetery* ; 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Zunny Martinez, The Hamden Woman’s Club, Inc. (SE), *Tranquil Reflections*.

**GFWC Living the Volunteer Spirit Contest:** 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Kathy Aiello, Bethel Women’s Club GFWC, *Blanket Bonanza*; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Renee Wood, Suffield Woman’s Club (NC), *Spread the Warmth*.

**Fundraising:** Sara Newell and Rainey Pavarini were recognized for their fundraising leadership and announced the “winners” of today’s gifts, prizes and fundraising efforts.

**Other Business and Announcements:** President DeBurra announced that Kathleen Barnes becomes President Elect at the close/end of May Convention 2023 as printed in the program. Members were reminded of important dates. International Convention in Louisville, KY June 9-12, 2023 and New England Region Conference September 21-24, 2023 as Donna Farrell presented prior which will be held here in Connecticut at the Rocky Hill Sheraton South in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. A link will be distributed shortly for rooms at the hotel -\$139.

**Adjournment:** 3:00

Respectfully submitted: Kathy Matusiak, Recording Secretary, GFWC/CT 2022-2024