



GFWC-Big Rapids, Inc. Newsletter

MARCH, 2025

Welcome to March, St Patrick's day and Spring! (almost) It's getting lighter earlier, staying lighter later and birds are chirping. For GFWC Big Rapids it is a busy time as we get ready for the Northwestern District Gathering, the State Convention which our district is hosting, planning for our annual yard sale and yes, time to sign up for next year's committees and CSPs. It doesn't seem like we are two thirds of the way through our club year and look at all you've accomplished. As always, thank you for all you do.

Sue

Sue Johnson, President (231)349-5137
Linda Telfer, 1st Vice President
Delores Simpson, 2nd VP(Membership)
Leona Royer, Secretary
Ann Stellard, Treasurer
Melonie James, Parliamentarian
Linda Telfer, Newsletter Editor

Due date for the newsletter is the 25th of each month.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

March 2—Read Across America Day

March 11—Club Meeting 6:00 Social/6:30 Meeting @ The Elk's—Wear Green!

March 14—Silk Suncatcher Painting in Pentwater (RSVP to Delores Simpson)

March 15—Northwestern District Gathering—Evert (invitation on page 4)

April 24-27—GFWC Michigan Convention, Park Place—Traverse City (see hotel info pg. 5)

May 13—Spring Banquet (more info coming)

MEETING CHECKLIST

A FRIEND

\$ for Heifer Intl.

Operation Smile Items

Can Tabs

Used Greeting Cards

Batteries

Sneakers

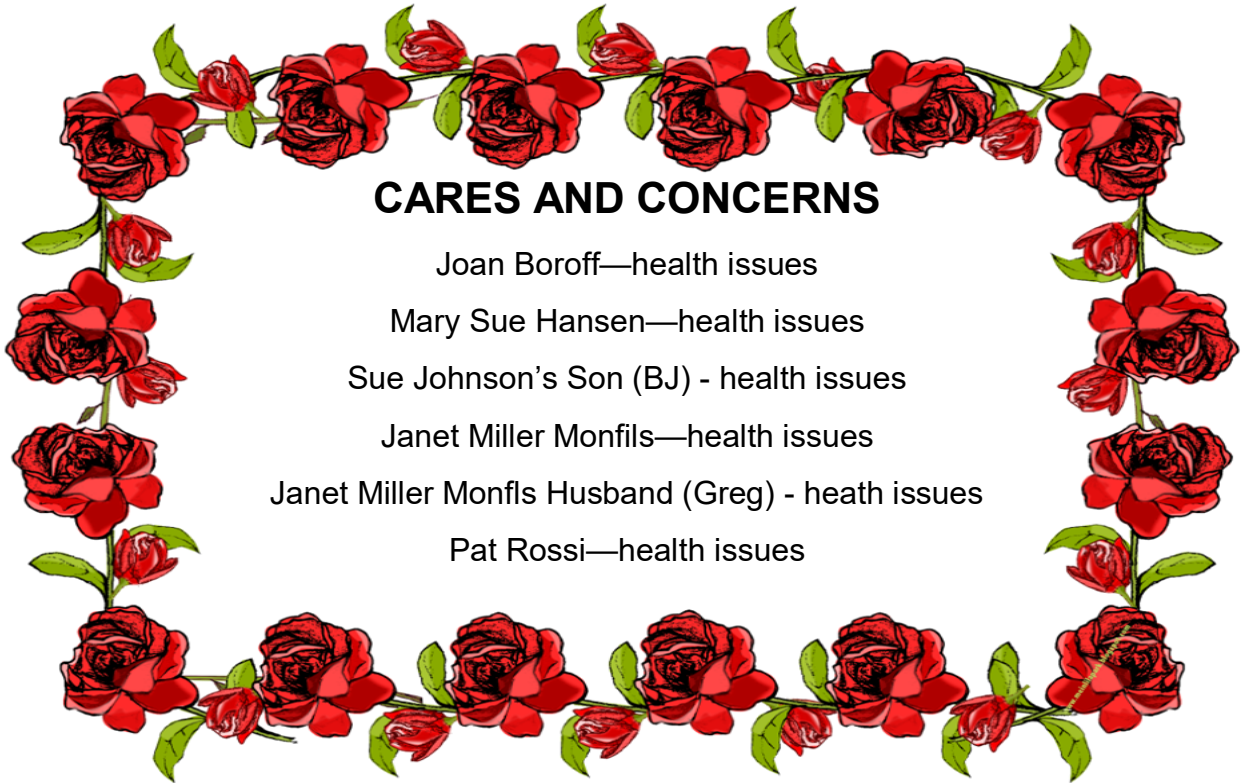
Birthday Bag Items



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

5—Melanie Henry

15—Jerena Keys



CARES AND CONCERNS

Joan Boroff—health issues

Mary Sue Hansen—health issues

Sue Johnson's Son (BJ) - health issues

Janet Miller Monfils—health issues

Janet Miller Monfils Husband (Greg) - health issues

Pat Rossi—health issues



GFWC Tidbits . . .

GFWC International - Local women's clubs initially joined the General Federation directly but later came into membership through State Federations that began forming in 1892.

GFWC-Michigan—Mrs. Emma Fox who initiated the GFWC Michigan Fox Fund was still a vibrant State Parliamentarian at age 91 in 1938.

GFWC-Big Rapids—That same year, 1938, GFWC Big Rapids hosted the 17th Annual Northwestern District Convention which was a three-day event unlike our one-day annual meeting we have presently.

UPCOMING EVENTS



NEXT CLUB MEETING

Tuesday, March 11th

6:00 Social Time

6:30 Meeting

Host: Education & Libraries

Don't forget — wear your green. A prize will be awarded for the best sporting of the Irish.



JUNIOR SPECIAL PROGRAM

Champion for Children

March is Child Life Month — Recognize child life specialists and their work. Child life specialists are health care professionals who help children and their families cope with medical experiences. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is an expert in this type of care.

March is also National Nutrition Month—Donate nutritional snacks to your local schools or shelters. Provide books on healthy eating. Offer to support field trips to a local farm for education or teach a cooking or gardening class.

March 2 is Read Across America Day and is a perfect time to volunteer to read to children at local schools, public libraries or bookstores. Donate books to those in need or host a children's author.



PAINT A SUNCATCHER

MARCH 14 IN PENTWATER

SEE DELORES SIMPSON FOR DETAILS



NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT GATHERING

March 15, 2025

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Evart, MI



SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION

MARCH 15, 2025

**GFWC NORTHWESTERN
DISTRICT**

**ANNUAL SPRING
GATHERING**

SATURDAY, MARCH 15TH

1:00 – 4:00 P.M.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH

9878 US-10, EVART, MI 49631

Come spend an afternoon with your GFWC District sisters!
Enjoy some lunch and hear about all the exciting projects our clubs have planned in 2025 as well as all the ways we will need your help at the State Convention in Traverse City, April 24-27, 2025.

Each Club should bring a dish to pass and the NWD Board will provide the table service and drinks.

Please RSVP to Melissa Povilaitis by text @ [989-429-4479](tel:989-429-4479) or by email Mpovilaitis2002@yahoo.com by March 13th, 2025.

If you didn't RSVP at February's club meeting, please do so ASAP.

2025 GFWC STATE CONVENTION HOTEL INFORMATION

RESERVE YOUR ROOM TODAY!

GFWC-MI 130TH STATE CONVENTION

APRIL 24-27, 2025

PARK PLACE HOTEL INFORMATION

300 E. STATE ST

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN



RESERVE YOUR ROOM BEFORE MARCH 25, 2025

BY CALLING (231) 946-5000, OPTION ZERO FOR RESERVATIONS

GROUP BLOCK CODE: GFWC25

COST: \$119 PLUS TAXES (WEEKDAYS-WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY)

\$159 PLUS TAXES (WEEKEND -FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY)

CHECK-IN TIME IS 4:00 P.M. AND CHECK-OUT TIME IS 11:00 A.M.

LUGGAGE STORAGE IS OFFERED FOR EARLY ARRIVALS AND LATE DEPARTURES.

HOTEL AMENITIES:

- Business Center with Free High-Speed Internet
- Meeting and Event Spaces
- Award-Winning Minervas Restaurant
- Room Service
- Indoor Pool
- Fitness Center
- Free Parking
- Complimentary Shuttle Service to and from Traverse City's Cherry Capital Airport (TVC)
- Laundry and Valet Service

IN-ROOM AMENITIES:

- Free High-Speed Wireless Internet
- Mini-Fridge, Microwave and Keurig Coffee Maker
- Hair Dryer
- Phone with Voicemail Service
- Full-Size Ironing Board with Iron
- Personal Safety Deposit Boxes (Available at the Front Desk)





GFWC Michigan State Convention 2025 Raffle

**Sue Johnson will
have tickets available
at the club meeting.**



**Win the perfect getaway
and support GFWC
Michigan!!!!**

**Retreat to Bellaire and enjoy the comforts
of our home at Hall's Haven in Shanty
Creek Resort Bellaire, MI**



Our cabin offers:

- ◇ **12 beds (4 bedrooms & 3 baths)**
- ◇ **Access to pools @ 2 resorts**
- ◇ **Beach Club on Lake Bellaire**
- ◇ **Private Sauna**
- ◇ **Fully equipped & spacious home**

FIND US ON AIRBNB Hall's Haven—Your Home away from Home

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING...



CRYSTAL TRAVELS . . .

Can you guess where Crystal is? There is a clue in this newsletter.



VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY



Pictured above are Education & Libraries CSP members Cheryl Tessier and Joan Boroff assisting with the Valentine's Day Party at the Big Rapids Library. 18 children attended and was given a special bag with snacks, small water, heart candies, stickers, and valentine trinkets from GFWC.

ANNA HOWARD SHAW DONATION

Education and Libraries CSP members, Joan Boroff and Cheryl Tessier, donated two Anna Howard Shaw posters to the Big Rapids Library. The Anna Howard Shaw statue is in the park next to the library.



Pictured L-R—Joan Boroff and Cheryl Tessier

Valentine's Day Cards



Club members embellished 75 Valentine's Day Cards at the January meeting and were taken to the Senior Citizen Center and were delivered through the Meals on Wheels program on Valentine's Day. Another 28 cards were taken to the Fields Assisted Living facility to brighten their residents' day on February 14th. Thank you to Melanie Henry, Cathy Chapman and Pat Rossi for giving us a start on the cards.



(L-R-Linda Telfer, Beth Whyte (Senior Center) and Ann Stellard

Cookie Decorating Class—Festival of the Arts



Ann Stellard & Mel James



Cheryl Tessier



Joan Boroff & friend



Sue Johnson & Cheryl Tessier

Six members and 1 guest attended a cookie decorating class as part of the Festival of Arts offerings. Each person was instructed on how to decorate a cookie and were able to take home two heart-shaped cookies to enjoy.



President Sue Johnson

MS. FEDERATION 2024



At the February meeting, President Johnson announced **Mary Bechaz** as the club's Ms. Federation for 2024. Mary has been an active member of the club for almost 14 years, she has demonstrated her commitment to the Club and the community through her participation in all aspects of Club Life. When one looks around, they will see Mary's touch in many places in the Club. She served as First Vice President of the club, moving up to a term as President from 2016-2018. Her committee work includes previous membership in the Conservation and Home Life Community Service Programs and currently Health and Wellness and Environment CSPs. She has participated in many club fundraising events including the annual 4B's event, the club yard sale and past home and garden tours. Other events where her service was valued include work

on the "pink book", shopping for a family from the local domestic violence program and assisting with planning of the annual Christmas Party.

In addition to her service at the local club level, she served as 2nd and 1st Vice President for the Northwestern District. Her attendance at state conventions demonstrates her further commitment beyond the local level.

If the time devoted to the club was not enough, she has been a member of the Big Rapids Garden Club for 10 years, serving as President for four years and currently serving as First Vice President. She has served on the Mecosta County Commission on Aging Board for over 10 years, on the Area Agency on Aging of West Michigan for over six years, and serving in township positions.

Mary's career has been as a naturopath. She continues to see clients in her home office and teaches Natural Health classes at several venues. Club members have benefitted from her expertise when sharing health, nutrition and diet recommendations.

Mary has been married to her husband Joe for 55 years and they have four children, nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She takes her commitment to her family seriously, helping whenever she can to assist in helping them meet their needs.

Mary Bechaz—wife, mother, grandmother, community volunteer, and wonderful GFWC sister—what a treasure!

Mary Bechaz receiving her flowers from President Sue Johnson.



MS. FEDERATION LUNCH



Mary Bechaz, Ms. Federation 2024, was celebrated in style and was presented with a ruby crown and scepter, sash and cape. Ten members gathered at a local Mexican restaurant to honor Mary and have a little fun in letting her know how much we appreciate her involvement in GFWC. And... yes Crystal even attended.



HEART HEALTH MONTH WEARING OF THE RED



Club members attended the February club meeting wearing their red attire in recognition of Heart Health Month.

CHAIR YOGA



In recognition of Heart Health Month, the Health and Wellness Community Service Program had club members participate in chair yoga during the February meeting with Instructor Kim Perdue. Healthy snacks were served for refreshments.

INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS



Second VP Delores Simpson, conducted the initiation of two new club members, Cheryl Cunningham and Deb Hill. Delores presented them with the club flower (pink carnation), and President Sue Johnson presented them with a club pin. Their mentor will be Linda Telfer. Welcome Sisters!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Cheryl Cunningham joined GFWC-Big Rapids at the February meeting by finding out about us through our website and contacting our club's email. She was born in Minnetonka, Minnesota and moved to Arizona when she was around 5 years old. She lived there until 1980 when she moved to Catalina Island off the southern California coast where she met her husband Michael. They were married in 1981 and their first son (Michael) was born while on the island. Soon after, they left the island and lived in several places around California, Washington State and Arizona. They had three more sons (Joshua, Daniel and Jared) and with that came two grandchildren Chase (24) and Aeryn (8). She is teaching herself watercolor painting and loves reading, needle felting and most of all traveling. Welcome Cheryl!



Deb Hill also joined GFWC-Big Rapids at the February meeting and is a long time friend of Linda Telfer. She was born in Big Rapids and graduated from Big Rapids High School. Deb worked at the Secretary of State for 27 years and retired from Dial-A-Ride in December of 2024 after 20 years. Deb married Rick Hill in 1988 and together they lived in LeRoy for 26 years until he passed away in December of 2014. She then moved back to Big Rapids in 2016. Deb has no children of her own but has four step children, one granddaughter who is 26 and one grandson who is 28. Deb and her husband raised her grandson Kody since he was three and he continues to live with her today. Deb enjoys cooking, reading and crocheting. She and a couple friends follow ETA Jake Slater, an Elvis tribute artist, and see him several times a year. Welcome Deb!





GFWC BANNER



Thank you to Delores Simpson for taking the lead on creating a banner to be hung in Big Rapids as part of the Festival of the Arts. Also thank you to Ann Stellard, Cathy Chapman and Lynn Abbeduth for assisting Delores in painting the banner. Look for the GFWC banner around Big Rapids once the banners go up this year.



FLOWER OF THE MONTH

(Sponsored by Environment CSP)

Shamrock



The potted shamrock plant (*Oxalis regnellii*), a member of the wood sorrel family, is a small specimen, often reaching no more than 6 inches (15 cm.) tall. The clover-shaped leaves are available in a range of shades, including green, red or purple. Their delicate white flowers bloom off and on during fall, winter, and spring.

Shamrock plants grow from tiny bulbs that may be planted in fall or early spring. Most often, shamrock plants are purchased when foliage is growing and sometimes when in flower. People often buy them to celebrate spring holidays or to add a touch of good luck to their indoor spaces.

Oxalis thrives in bright, indirect light, preferably in a location that is cool at night (60°F) and warm during the day (70°F). The foliage has the unique ability to close its leaves during levels of low light, whether at night or on cloudy days. This behavior serves as a defense mechanism against excessive light. If you notice this, consider relocating the plant to a shadier spot or provide protection from intense sunlight.

Ensure it's planted in well-drained potting mix within a container that has proper drainage. While this plant prefers to be somewhat "[pot bound](#)," it's important to avoid overwatering and ensure the soil remains consistently moist, but not wet. Water two to three times a month, allowing soil to dry out between waterings.

[Fertilize after watering with a balanced houseplant food.](#) Plants can be fertilized with a diluted solution once during the growing season and after flowering. There is no need to apply fertilizer in the winter months or when the plant is dormant.

Caring for shamrock plants is simple when you understand their periods of dormancy. Unlike most houseplants, the potted shamrock plant goes dormant in summer. When leaves die back, the potted shamrock plant needs a time of darkness to rest. Caring for shamrock plants during the period of dormancy includes limited watering and withholding of fertilizer.

The dormant period lasts anywhere from a few weeks to three months, depending on the cultivar and the conditions. New shoots appear when dormancy is broken. At this time, move shamrock houseplants to a sunny window or other area of bright light. Resume caring for shamrock plants to be rewarded with an abundance of the attractive foliage and blooms.

Now that you've learned what is a shamrock plant and how to care for a growing Oxalis houseplant, include one in your indoor collection for winter blooms and maybe good luck.

From gardeningknowhow.com