

# GFWC MASSACHUSETTS FEDERATION TOPICS

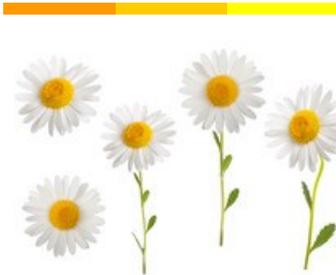
*A Newsletter for Clubwomen*



GFWC MA is a proud member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs

2024 Spring Issue

## GFWCMA Midwinter Meeting January 20, 2024



Darlene Coutu, Editor  
topics@gfwcma.org

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The 2024 Midwinter Meeting was held at the beautiful Wrentham Senior Center on January 20, 2024. Hats and scarves were appropriate for the winter-themed *Baby It's Cold Outside* event as was the soup contest. Attendees enjoyed and voted on some awesome soups that were prepared by contest entrants. Congratulations to Diane Erickson who won first place for her delicious gazpacho. In addition to all the wonderful homemade soups, over one hundred cans of soup were donated for the Wrentham Food Pantry. GFWC New England Region President, Libby Wiers attended. During her talk, she engaged club members by requesting examples of club projects pertaining to her President's Project, Literacy. Robin Bahr Casey from NAMI spoke of the work NAMI does and overcoming the stigmatism surrounding mental health.

In addition to the business of the Federation, winners of the HundredX fundraiser drawing were announced by President-elect Jen Nowak. She also provided a breakdown of the number of surveys and announced the success of the fundraiser in our second year. Fundraising Chairman, Mary Ann Pierce ran another successful basket raffle with many baskets donated by generous clubs and individuals.

President's Focus Area Chairman, Mary Kemp presented Mental Health Grants (pics on page 6).

Nominating Chairman, Martha Casassa presented the nominees for the 2024-2026 administration, and Nominating Chairman for Junior Membership, Katie Robey, presented Junior nominees. Elections will be held at Annual Convention to be held on May 3 and 4.

The call to Annual Convention is provided for your convenience on pages 7 and 8, and also available at [gfwcma.org](http://gfwcma.org)! You won't want to miss the Annual Convention including a fun night on Friday celebrating the 100th anniversary of GFWCMA Junior Membership, election of officers, installation, club awards, raffles, and lots more!

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT T JABLANSKI



Dear Members,

I hope this message finds you well as we welcome in the spring of 2024. As I reflect on my final message as president for our federation TOPICS, I am filled with gratitude for the tremendous support and dedication shown by each of you over the past two years.

*“There’s only one thing more precious than our time and that’s who you spend it with.” Leo Christopher*

Thanks for spending your time with GFWC Massachusetts and me!



I am pleased to announce that we are in the midst of planning our upcoming convention, "Growing With GFWC," which will take place at the Marriott in Marlborough. I am looking forward to celebrating the achievements of our administration alongside Director of Junior Clubs Marisa, incoming President Jen Nowak, and incoming Director of Junior Clubs Beth McKeon. This event will be a weekend of joy and recognition, featuring a special comedian to mark the end of our term and commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Junior Membership. We have lined up two exceptional speakers, Tara Ostromecky on "Marketing for Membership" and Becky Wright, GFWC Treasurer. The weekend will culminate in the installation of the 2024-2026 administration.

I want to extend my gratitude to Terry and Marisa for their diligent work in submitting our state reports to GFWC. I am eagerly anticipating the June GFWC Convention in Chicago, where we will come together to showcase, shout and celebrate the accomplishments of our Massachusetts clubs.

Speaking of shouting did someone say “BINGO”? GFWC Baystate Contemporary Club will once again be hosting a raucous 70’s style Bingo luncheon at our Headquarters on April 7, 2024 at 1:00pm. Get your tickets! Space is limited.

As we approach GFWC Volunteers in Action Week from April 21-27, I encourage you to take a moment to care for the mental health of your volunteers. Whether it's a thoughtful note, a leisurely walk, or a fun outing, small gestures can make a big difference in fostering a healthy and supportive environment.

Join us for Federation Day at the Forest, June 1, 2024. We will be planting a lovely mature purple lilac shrub in honor of Dorothy Graham, Past President compliments of the Framingham Women’s Club.

I would like to end with a quote from Erma Bombeck, reminding us of the importance of utilizing our talents to the fullest. Your support and dedication have made a significant impact on our communities, and I am truly grateful for your unwavering commitment to our General Federation of Women’s Clubs Massachusetts. Thanks for Knowing Your Worth!

I look forward to seeing you all at our Annual Convention.

*“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me'.” Erma Bombeck*

In Federation

Love & Peace,

T

## FROM THE DESK OF DIRECTOR OF JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP MARISA JABLANSKI



Having just submitted the final reports to GFWC, this Director is **STANDING TALL AND PROUD** of Junior Membership for the significant impact made by clubs in 2023. 774 projects were reported by twelve Junior Clubs. These clubs continued successful projects of the past, like filling food pantry shelves, supporting veterans' and women's shelters, providing young adults with scholarships, and advocating for mental health. In addition, Junior clubs really stepped up this year. Clubs worked hard to get their names out in the community more, through press releases, updated logos, clothing, banners, business cards, and town signage. Ten Junior Clubs supported the inaugural year of GFWC's National Day of



Service and three Junior clubs are working hard to earn the Leadership Certification for their club.

Here are the total statistics for GFWC Massachusetts Junior Membership for 2023:

Total Projects: 774  
 Total Hours: 38,282  
 Dollars Raised: \$127,432  
 Dollars Donated: \$98,332  
 In Kind Donations: \$72,286

Looking forward, this Director is eager to celebrate the accomplishments of your clubs at our upcoming GFWC Massachusetts Annual Convention in Marlboro on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Friday night festivities will be a celebration of 100 years of Junior Membership in Massachusetts. Both Women's Club and Junior Women's Club members are encouraged to celebrate the great strides and amazing accomplishments the presence of Junior Membership has made over the last century. Highlights of our impactful history will be shared that evening in an interactive way. This event will take the place of our traditional Junior Fun Night. Everyone is welcome to join as we have appetizers, a comedian, and, of course, birthday cake!

Saturday of Annual Convention brings the time for celebrating the last year of this administration, as we recognize clubs for their hard work with awards. Our guest speaker during the day is Tara Ostromecky, the owner of Makin' It Marketing. She'll be offering her advice to clubs on how to market their club to gain new members and get their names out in the community more than ever. In addition to her speaking engagement, this Director is happy to offer an opportunity for clubs in attendance to submit their names for a few drawings of a networking session with Tara directly. Thank you for your contributions to Junior membership fundraising these last two years that will help support this opportunity. Saturday evening we will have Becky Wright, GFWC Treasurer, as our keynote speaker, with the evening coming to a conclusion with the exciting Installation of Beth McKeon as Director of Junior Clubs and Jen Nowak as President. Their administration is sure to be fabulous, and this Director is looking forward to it!

As always, thank you to all clubs for your support of this Director GFWC MA Junior Membership, and our organization's mission to improve our communities. Keep **STANDING TALL AND PROUD WITH GFWC**.

## FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT-ELECT JEN NOWAK



It is unbelievable that May is fast approaching, and it will be time to change the reigns of GFWC Massachusetts. The last few years have been uncertain times; however, clubs have figured out what their new normal is. GFWC Massachusetts clubwomen have persevered and continued to make a difference in communities across this state. Together we have learned, grown, and concorded, now it is time to use our strengths and talents to succeed in our volunteer efforts.

The 2024-2026 administration is ready for GFWC Massachusetts to soar. Personally, I would like to thank every club woman who said YES when asked to take on a leadership role for GFWC Massachusetts. I am excited to begin this journey with the GFWC Massachusetts Officers, Director of Junior Clubs, and Board Members. It will be wonderful to get to know even more clubwomen across the state, by me attending your club meetings and you attending the state meetings.

GFWC Massachusetts Annual Convention on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> will be a meeting not to miss, we will all congratulate the 2022-2024 administration under the leadership of President T Jablanski for their work and dedication to our federation. Together we will honor the accomplishments achieved at the grass roots club level, proudly announce the tributes to individual club women who have gone above and beyond in their club roles, and have the privilege to hear about the scholarships that GFWC Massachusetts and GFWC Massachusetts Junior Membership awarded to worthy individuals. Please join your federation sisters on Friday night and all-day Saturday to celebrate together.



Super Soup Bosses!

President's Assistants, Martha Michalewich and Diane Murphy

### Attention ALL Junior Club and Women's Club Leaders

The 2024 GFWC Massachusetts Directory/Manual will be printed this summer. It is time to let us know about your current club leaders and club information. The form needs to be completed by June 15, 2024, and sent to [HQSecretary@gfwcma.org](mailto:HQSecretary@gfwcma.org) or mailed to PO Box 679, Sudbury, MA 01776. The Club Directory Form is on page 5, and both the fillable and printable forms are on the GFWCMA.org website under the Women's Club tab – flyers and forms. Please send it in ASAP.

**General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts**  
**CLUB DIRECTORY SHEET for STATE MANUAL**

The information requested is used to update our State Manual/Directory. Even if none of the information has changed, please fill out this form so that we may have complete and verified information for our state records.

**2024**

**Due JUNE 15 - Please submit ASAP**

Mail to: GFWC Massachusetts P.O. Box 679 Sudbury MA 01776  
or email to: HQsecretary@gfwcma.org (preferred)

**CLUB & MEETING**

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

When: (example - 7:30pm third Tuesday) \_\_\_\_\_

Where: (example - St Joe's Church) \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Meeting Month: \_\_\_\_\_

**DUES**

Annual per capita Club DUES amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How many DUES paying members between January 1 - December 31, 2023 \_\_\_\_\_ members

*The number of dues paying members provide is used by the GFWC MA State Treasurer to calculate the club's dues bill, payable by December 31, 2024.*

**President:** \_\_\_\_\_

phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vice President:** \_\_\_\_\_

phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Secretary:** \_\_\_\_\_

phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Treasurer:** \_\_\_\_\_

phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**email:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Any correspondence from GFWC Massachusetts or GFWC Massachusetts Junior Membership will be sent to the Officers listed.*

*The club invoice for dues will be emailed to President & Treasurer in November.*

Upon request, a hardcopy invoice will be available for pickup at the GFWC Fall Meeting – check here \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Officer completing this form:** \_\_\_\_\_

GFWCMA Midwinter Meeting, January 20, 2024

Mental Health Grants



Congratulations to the Mental Health Grant recipients: Millbury Women’s Club, Agawam Junior Women’s Club, Westford Women’s Club, Bay State Contemporary Club, Auburn Junior Women’s Club, Needham Women’s Club, Northborough Junior Women’s Club, as well as Ousamequin Women’s Club (not present).

## General Federation of Women's Clubs & Junior Membership of Massachusetts

### "Growing with GFWC"



### What's Happening!

-  Registration, Raffles and Shopping
-  Reports & Recognitions
-  Clubwoman of the Year
-  **Special Speakers**, Becky Wright, GFWC Treasurer  
Tara Ostromecky "Marketing for Membership"
-  Scholarships presentation
-  Awards & Trophies



**2024-2026 Installation of GFWC Massachusetts Officers**

### Overnight Accommodations

Friday and Saturday nights, May 3 & 4, 2024  
 \$155 per night - **Courtyard Boston Marlborough**  
 Link on our website: [gfwcma.org /events](https://gfwcma.org/events)  
 or call 508-480-0015 and mention GFWC MA  
**Deadline: Friday, April 19**

### Basket Raffle Donation Theme:

#### "A Garden of Opportunity"

Fill a pot, planter, tote or basket



-  Pretty
-  Playful
-  Practical

It's up to you. Thanks for your donation!



KNOW YOUR WORTH



# The CALL Annual Convention

May 3 & 4, 2024

Courtyard Boston/Marlborough  
75 Felton St. Marlborough

**Friday Night:** 6:30 –11pm

Saturday Registration opens at 8:30am

### Friday Night Festivities



#### Join Us for Junior Membership's Centennial Celebration!

Friday night will be an evening of food, fun and laughter with **Comedian Gary Marino**  
*"Boston's, Gary Marino is a media personality, comedic performer, published author, award winning film-maker and live show producer". He appeared regularly on ABC's "Live with Regis & Kelly", over 300 radio stations across the country.*

**Club Connection is BACK**– Tables will be available for YOUR club to sell and promote an event happening in your club. ½ of a six-foot table, must reserve ahead. **Contact: Michelle Butler**  
[mainebound60@gmail.com](mailto:mainebound60@gmail.com)  
**Deadline is April 26<sup>th</sup>**



### What to Bring?

#### Donations to benefit Birthday Wishes:

Paper party supplies, wrapping paper, decorations, napkins, party hats, etc.



**President T Jablanski and Director of Junior Clubs, Marisa Jablanski** have planned and prepared a wonderful weekend celebration and are looking forward to welcoming you to your Annual Convention in Marlborough, Massachusetts.



**General Federation of Women’s Clubs and Junior Membership of Massachusetts**

T Jablanski, President

Marisa Jablanski, Director of Junior Clubs

**2024 Annual Convention**

**Registration Form**



KNOW YOUR WORTH



**Club Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dinner Choice Pick 1**

All attendees must be listed below	Registration	1 <sup>st</sup> Time Attendee	Guest	Friday Night Pasta Station	Lunch Asst. Wraps & Salads Buffet	Fontina Chicken or Pork Loin	Vegetable Ravioli	Total \$\$
<b>Member Name</b>	\$15			\$40	\$35	\$50	\$50	
						Chix	Pork	Veg

**Friday Night:** Appetizers & Pasta Station – **Saturday Lunch Buffet:** Assortment of Wraps and Salads  
**Dinner will be plated and served:** Fontina Chicken or Roasted Pork Loin or Vegetable Lasagna

**Contact person name & phone number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Send to:**  
 Katie Robey 97 Hudson Street,  
 Marlborough, MA 01752

**Checks made out to:**  
 GFWC Massachusetts

**Due by: April 28**  
 No refunds after this date

# \_\_\_\_\_ Registration Only \$15      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ MEALS total      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total submitted with form      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you! Safe Travels! See you soon in Marlborough!**



GFWC MA members, Katie Robey, Diane Erickson, Martha Casassa, and President T Jablanski attended Older Adult Lobby Day on February 27 at the Massachusetts State House in Boston.



March Board of Directors Meeting

## COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Donna Shibley, Chairman

As the GFWC MA **Communications and Public Relations** Chairman, I am inviting you to make sure you are staying connecting with GFWC and GFWC Massachusetts. There are many ways in which you can do this.

Join GFWC in the Member Portal

So much information at your fingertips

<https://gfwc.users.membersuite.com/home>

Like and Save as a Favorite the GFWC MA FaceBook page

You will find daily postings of interest to Massachusetts clubwoman

<https://www.facebook.com/GFWCMA>

Join the GFWC Advancements and Programs FaceBook Forum

Loads of pertinent information

you will be asked to answer a few simple questions about

your GFWC Affiliation (name of club, state) before you are accepted to join

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/892214227854217>

Visit the GFWC MA website

Everything you need and more about GFWC, GFWC MA and how to run a successful club

[www.gfwcma.org](http://www.gfwcma.org)



### WEBSITE:

Please send any club happenings to [dmshibley@gmail.com](mailto:dmshibley@gmail.com) for addition to the state website. We are always looking to help YOU publicize your club event, programs, and projects. We can even feature your event on our GFWC MA FaceBook page. Send a flier to me and I can do the rest.

### Annual Convention ~ looking for a room?

### GFWC Massachusetts Annual Convention and Installation ~ May 3 & 4, 2024

A block of rooms is being held at the Convention location:

Courtyard Boston Marlborough for \$155 + taxes per night

**Last Day to Book:** Friday, April 19, 2024

[Book Your Group/Corporate Rate | Marriott International](#)

Additional details in the call on pages 7&8.



Full house at Midwinter Meeting

GFWC 2024 ORIENTATION

Washington, D.C.



GFWC Director-elect of Junior Clubs Shannon Bailey and GFWC International President-elect Suellen Brazil with Jen and Beth.



GFWC Director of Junior Clubs Katie Moydell and GFWC International President Deb Strahanoski with Jen and Beth.



Jen Nowak & Beth McKeon at GFWC Headquarters

The first weekend in January the Orientation for the 2024-2026 GFWC Board of Directors was held at the Westin in Washington DC. The weekend of “Educate, Engage, Empower – Leadership Reimagined!” was an accurate theme to begin the new administration. The incoming President Suellen Brazil and Director of Junior Clubs Shannon Baily did an excellent job of planning an informative and thorough program to prepare the incoming Region Presidents, State Presidents, and State Directors of Junior Clubs for their administration. The highlights included wonderful speakers, meetings with your incoming groups, the fun night monument tour, and the opportunity to visit our GFWC Headquarters to see the recent property updates and tour all five floors of the building.

The ladies representing Massachusetts were Katie Robey, Member of the Legislation and Public Policy Committee, Beth McKeon as state Director of Junior Clubs, and Jen Nowak as state President. Mary Ann Pierce, who is a member of the Annual Giving Committee, was unable to attend.

It was a whirlwind for three and a half days, building new relationships, reconnecting with GFWC friends, and being inspired for what the future will hold.

*Submitted by President-elect Jen Nowak*



New England Region Leaders

*Looking for a tasty holiday gift?*

GFWC Massachusetts has a webstore with **Terri Lynn Fundraising**.

You can support our state fundraising by purchasing these premium nuts, gourmet confections, and sweet and savory snack mixes. Everything you buy gets shipped right to your door, and a portion of every sale goes directly to support GFWC MA.

A yummy way to support GFWC MA.

<https://gfwc-massachusetts.terri Lynn.com>

## Help Us Reach Our Fundraising Goal!

Every purchase of premium nuts, gourmet confections and sweet & savory snack mixes benefits our cause.



Terri Lynn offers an incredible assortment of premier products not available in retail stores—there's something for everyone!

➤ **SHOP TO SUPPORT US NOW!**

<https://gfwc-massachusetts.terri Lynn.com>



Fundraising Webstore  
Supported by Terri Lynn

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### JULIA WARD HOWE

1819 - 1910



Julia Ward Howe is probably best known for being the author of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic”, and we know her for her involvement in women’s clubs. Did you know that she also published poetry, plays and travel books, as well as many news and magazine articles? She didn’t become active in women’s rights until later in life playing a prominent role in several suffrage organizations and in women’s clubs.

Julia Ward was born in 1819. Her mother died when she was young, so she was raised by an aunt, and later an uncle. She married Samuel Gridley Howe when she was 21 years old. Samuel was the director of the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston, so they lived on campus where they raised their 6 children. Samuel believed women belong in the home, and Julia respected his wishes early on in the relationship.

She remained in isolation living in a little house with little contact outside of Perkins Institute while raising her family. She attended church and loved to write, and it wasn’t long before she became unhappy being a stay-at-home mom. It was known that she and Samuel had a violent marriage, and they considered divorce several times. She left for Rome with the children, but did return and went back with him.

Julia Ward Howe studied philosophy on her own and learned several languages – which, as you can imagine, was unusual for a woman in that time. She worked with her husband publishing an abolitionist paper, and supported his causes. She was a very religious woman who believed in women’s rights and was against slavery.

Samuel and Julia became involved in the US Sanitary Commission in an effort to improve sanitary conditions during the Civil War. It was said that more men died in prisoner of war camps and their own army camps than died in battle.

The unsanitary conditions improved which was a credit to their efforts. As a result of their volunteer work with the Sanitary Commission, they were invited to Washington by President Lincoln. While visiting an army camp in Virginia, they heard the song “John Brown’s Body”. It was there that a clergyman urged Julia to write a new song for the war effort to replace “John Brown’s Body”. This led to her poem in 1862, “Battle Hymn of the Republic”. The poem was put to the tune of “John Brown’s Body”. She had hoped that the song would keep the Civil War focused on the principle of ending slavery.

Affected by not only the death and disease that killed and injured soldiers, but the affect it had on the widows and children on both sides of the war, she turned her focus to the power of women. In 1870, she called for women to rise up and oppose the war. One of her goals was to unite women across the north and south to commit to finding peaceful resolutions to conflicts. She wanted to declare a formal Mother’s Day for

Peace. It didn't catch on, but laid the groundwork for the first Mothers' Day in 1907 which was finally declared a national holiday in 1914 by President Woodrow Wilson.

After the Civil War, Julia Ward Howe started working for legal rights for blacks and legal equality for women AND became active in the woman suffrage movement. In 1868, she helped found the New England Suffrage Association. And in 1869, she and Lucy Stone led the American Woman Suffrage Association. She began lecturing and writing about woman suffrage. *Those of us who attended the New England Conference when New Hampshire hosted, met Lucy Stone!! (Interpretive by Judith Black)*. In 1870 Julia and Lucy founded the Woman's Journal and were editors and writers of the journal for 20 years. She pulled together a series of essays by writers of the time disputing theories that held that **women were inferior to men and required separate education!** *Lucy Stone spoke of this during her presentation.*

So, when you think about it, Julia Ward Howe was involved with the suffrage movement starting in 1868, and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment didn't pass Congress until 1919 and, as you know, was ratified in 1920 – more than 50 years after it was started. Unfortunately, 10 years after her death.

She also supported Russian freedom, as well as Armenians in the Turkish wars.

Beginning in 1873, she hosted an annual gathering of women ministers, and in the 1870's founded the Free Religious Association. It was then that she became active in women's clubs. In 1871 she became president of the New England Women's Club. She also helped found the Association for the Advancement of Women. In 1890 she helped found the General Federation of Women's Clubs. She traveled around the country and helped start many of the GFWC clubs of today.

When Julia Ward Howe died in 1910 at age 91, 4,000 people attended her memorial service.

In closing, I'd like to say that while researching the history of this amazing woman, I found that she resented the fact that she was most famous for writing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". After reading about her many accomplishments, I get it! Julia Ward Howe was one amazing woman!

*Submitted by Darlene Coutu, Editor*

Club Connection Tables are back by popular demand  
at GFWC MA Annual Convention!

Calling all GFWC MA clubs! You are all welcome to bring your wares or fundraiser to GFWC MA Annual Convention. Maybe your club has an event coming up that you'd like to sell tickets for, or a fundraiser that clubwomen may be interested in supporting. Maybe your club has lots of handmade crafts that you'd like to sell. Whatever it may be, you will have one half table to showcase it. Please contact Michelle Butler at [Mainebound60@gmail.com](mailto:Mainebound60@gmail.com). Deadline for registering for a Club Connection table is April 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Worth Your Weight in Gold ~ Day of Honor**

**T Jablanski, GFWC Massachusetts President 2022-2024**

It is a pleasure to invite you to a special celebration for T Jablanski, General Federation of Women's Clubs Massachusetts President so we may express our appreciation for T's leadership and dedication to GFWC Massachusetts.

Please join your fellow clubwoman on this Day of Honor.

April 20, 2024 from 11-3 PM

Trinity Church, 23 Main Street, Northborough MA

The Buffet Way Catering



- Assorted Pastries - Danish, Muffins, Bagels, and Cinnamon Buns
- Seasonal Fruit Display, Red Bliss Potatoes with Colby Cheese
- Bacon Strips, Sausage Links or Virginia Ham and Eggs Any Style
- Real Cinnamon French Toast with Maple Syrup
- Omelette Station with Bacon, Ham, Cheddar Cheese, Onions, Mushrooms, Peppers, Tomato, and Broccoli
- Assorted Juices, Coffee and Tea (regular and decaf)



**\$30.00** (includes meal, taxes, gratuity)

Suggested gift add **\$10.00 - \$20.00** (or your choice)

Invitation is open to any GFWC MA clubwoman who would like to attend.

Martha Michalewicz and Diane Murphy, President's Assistants

Donna Shibley, Meetings and Protocol Chairman

Mary Ann Pierce, GFWC Massachusetts Past President

\*\*\*\*\*cut here\*\*\*\*\*

Name attending the brunch \_\_\_\_\_

Amount contributing to the gift \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend the brunch but want to contribute to the gift \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to Diane Murphy (subject line Day of Honor) or

Venmo [@Diane-Murphy-36186](https://venmo.com/Diane-Murphy-36186) (include note Day of Honor/gift)

Send to: 40 Wilmarth Street, Randolph MA 02368 | 617.435.7417



GFWC BAYSTATE CONTEMPORARY CLUB

# Spring Bingo Mania!

APRIL 7, 2024

1:00P.M.

GFWC MA HEADQUARTERS

245 Dutton Rd

Sudbury, MA

Tickets must be purchased in advance

\$30 Entry Fee mailed/postmarked by March 31 payable to BSCC

Mailed to Donna Shibley

55 Rowley St, Agawam, MA 01001

Or

VENMO Donna Shibley@DonnaShibley

Donna Shibley

@Donna-Shibley



For information contact Donna Shibley @ 413-519-1845 or dmshibley@gmail.com

## LEGISLATION & PUBLIC POLICY

Martha Casassa, Chairman

On February 27, this Chairman attended the Older Adult Lobby Day at the Massachusetts State House. Speakers from various organizations presented on legislation and advocacy efforts in which they were involved. AARP, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health Massachusetts Home Care, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, and Massachusetts Councils on Aging were the primary groups represented. Attached to this issue of TOPICS is a compiled list of 25 bills along with a description of the intent, their legislative sponsors, and the organization advocating for their passage. At the end of the list is a link to the Massachusetts Joint Elder Affairs Committee website where you can view bills they are considering.

Please share this information within your club. Advocating for all would be ideal, but clubs can choose a topic and work on just one as a project. Any and all advocacy is encouraged.

As of December 2023, just 14.6% of our Massachusetts members signed up for the GFWC Legislative Action Center. This GFWC tool can be used to advocate within our state as well as for national legislation. Your voice is powerful. REMEMBER - as a GFWC clubwoman you are dedicated to improving local communities through volunteer service. Legislative advocacy is a volunteer effort to improve our communities. Report your projects and hours next year under Legislation/PublicPolicy.

In addition to the many handouts on legislation and advocacy, a booklet entitled: Savvy Seniors: How to Avoid Financial Scams was available. A limited number of copies were obtained and distributed at the recent Board meeting. The 2019 edition is available electronically: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/savvy-senior-booklet-april-2019/download>. Handouts related to this booklet are also included in this issue of TOPICS.

Relating to our Signature Project is another bill that GFWC can support as it relates to our Resolutions. This is H1579/S983 An Act to strengthen justice and support for sex trade survivors – known as the Equality Model Bill. This bill would decriminalize the act of selling sex while leaving in place criminal liability and penalties for individuals who pay for sex and/or engage in sex trafficking. Representatives Mary Keefe and Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Senator Cindy Friedman filed the respective bills. A letter from the Attorney General's office is included in this TOPICS to explain the bill further. Clubmember advocacy for legislative support is requested. Your activities can be reported under the GFWC Signature Project area.

Thank you for doing your part to make our communities better by improving the lives of older adults as well as supporting sex trade survivors.

# Older Adult Advocacy Bills in MA Legislature – Older Adult Lobby Day 02.27.24

## Bills Where AARP is Leading Advocacy Efforts

LEGISLATION	DESCRIPTION
<p data-bbox="89 283 630 325"><b>CAREGIVING TAX CREDIT</b></p> <p data-bbox="89 357 630 504"><b>An Act to Establish the Family Caregiving Tax Credit</b> <i>H.2932 Representative David Rogers</i> <i>S.764 Senator Jason Lewis</i></p>	<p data-bbox="630 283 1515 724">The Act will provide family caregivers with an income tax credit to cover expenses incurred by a taxpayer for the care and support of a qualifying family member. The amount of the credit is equal to 100% of eligible expenses, with a maximum allowable credit of \$1,500. The tax credit would help address the financial challenges of caregiving and allow more unpaid family caregivers to keep their family members in the community. More than 844,000 Bay State residents are caring for aging parents or loved ones, helping them live independently in their own homes. The total value of unpaid care provided to individuals in need of long-term services in Massachusetts amounts to more than \$11 billion every year.</p> <p data-bbox="630 756 1515 976">While most caregivers are asked to assist an individual with basic activities of daily living, such as mobility, eating, and dressing, many are also expected to perform more complex tasks on a daily basis such as administering multiple medications, providing wound care, and operating medical equipment.</p> <p data-bbox="630 1008 1515 1050">Expenses that would be covered under this bill include:</p> <ul data-bbox="673 1050 1515 1459" style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improvements or alterations to the taxpayer's primary residence thereby enabling the care recipient to remain mobile, safe, and independent in his/her home and community.</li><li>• The purchase or lease of equipment necessary to assist an eligible care recipient in carrying out one or more activities of daily living.</li><li>• Hiring a home care aide or personal care attendant; paying for respite care; paying for adult day health</li><li>• The cost of transportation, legal and financial services, and/or assistive technology to care for their loved one.</li></ul> <p data-bbox="630 1459 1515 1648">On average, family caregivers are spending roughly \$7,000 per year on out-of-pocket costs related to caregiving. That's why AARP urges lawmakers to enact An Act to Establish the Family Caregiving Tax Credit to better support family caregivers.</p>
<p data-bbox="89 1675 630 1717"><b>NURSING HOME REFORM</b></p> <p data-bbox="89 1743 630 1900"><b>An Act to Improve Quality and Oversight in Long Term Care</b> <i>H.648 Representative Tom Stanley</i> <i>S.379 Senator Patricia Jehlen</i></p>	<p data-bbox="630 1675 1515 1942">An Act to Improve Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care is an omnibus bill which takes a comprehensive approach to regulating the long-term care industry and addressing needed reforms in transparency and oversight. The legislation also seeks to provide additional workforce supports and sets the stage for further innovation and development of alternative models of care.</p>



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

ONE ASHBURTON PLACE  
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November 1, 2023

Senator James Eldridge  
Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
State House, Room 511-C  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Michael Day  
Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
State House, Room 136  
Boston, MA 02133

RE: H1579/S983, An Act to strengthen justice and support for sex trade survivors

Dear Chair Eldridge and Chair Day:

I write in support of H1579/S983, An Act to strengthen justice and support for sex trade survivors, otherwise known as the "Equality Model Bill." This bill would decriminalize the act of selling sex while leaving in place criminal liability and penalties for individuals who pay for sex and/or engage in sex trafficking. The bill also provides for expungement of past convictions related to prostitution-type offenses, such as common nightwalking or streetwalking and prostitution.

I would like to thank Representative Mary Keefe, Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, and Senator Cindy Friedman for their leadership in filing this bill and their advocacy on behalf of sex trade and trafficking survivors.

The Equality Model promoted in this bill is consistent with our own Commonwealth's Anti-Trafficking Task Force's philosophy and mission statement. The Commonwealth's Anti-Trafficking Task Force is a statewide, multidisciplinary, collaborative approach for combating both labor and sex trafficking in Massachusetts. As part of our mission statement, we say:

The CAT Task Force believes that adults and children of all genders, races, nationalities, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds should live without risk of exploitation and should be treated with respect. The Task Force commits to prioritizing the safety of individuals trafficked throughout all stages of identifying and responding to instances of human trafficking. By centralizing and coordinating the response to survivors, each person's needs will be identified and addressed in a more efficient, comprehensive, and effective manner. Funding will strengthen the Commonwealth's current collaboration with service providers and law enforcement by formalizing existing partnerships. All identified victims will be offered access to services upon identification, regardless of if an investigation or prosecution moves forward.<sup>1</sup>

The Task Force explicitly commits to not prosecuting trafficking victims for engaging in commercial sex. This commitment is consistent with what we have learned from survivors – that commercial sex is not “work,” and it is not a freely chosen career path. At the Attorney General's Office, we too evaluate each case from a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach. The Equality Model fits with our philosophy and understanding of the inherent exploitation of prostituted persons.

The Legislature already recognized this exploitation in 2011 when it enacted “An Act Relative to the Commercial Exploitation of People.” This law created Massachusetts' sex trafficking statute, which criminalized a broader category of conduct with respect to commercial sex and recognized that a person who is sold for sex is a victim of a crime, not an equal participant in illegal activity. This bill expands on the notion recognized in our trafficking statute that buying a person for sex is abusive and dehumanizing.

This legislation acknowledges the lived reality of survivors and is responsive to that reality.

I encourage the Committee to report this bill favorably. If you have any further questions, please contact Anne Johnson Landry, Chief of my Policy and Government Affairs Division, at (617) 963-2027.

Sincerely,



ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth's Anti-Trafficking Task Force Guiding Principles, at 7.

# SAVVY SENIOR

## FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

The financial exploitation of elders is the improper or illegal use of an elder’s financial resources through, but not limited to, deceit, coercion, or undue influence of the elder.

### Resources

To add your number to the MA

Do Not Call Registry:

Phone: (866) 231-2255

Online:

[www.madonotcall.govconnect.com](http://www.madonotcall.govconnect.com)

To add your number to the National

Do Not Call Registry:

Phone: (888) 382-1222

Online: [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)

#### HOW TO REPORT

Telephone Scams (877) 382-4357

Mail Scams (877) 876-2455

Internet Scams [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov)

Identity Theft [identitytheft.gov](http://identitytheft.gov)

#### CONTACT THE AG’S OFFICE

Elder Hotline (888) 243-5337

Consumer Hotline (617) 727-8400

Fair Labor (617) 727-3465

Medicaid Fraud (617) 963-2360

## IDENTITY THEFT

If you believe that you may be the victim of Identity theft: Place an Initial Fraud Alert (good for one year) by contacting one credit reporting your company. You can also place a security freeze on your credit report. A security freeze stops any hard pull of your credit. When you freeze your credit, you will get a pin number. Keep that safe and available, because you need it to unfreeze your credit if you want to use your credit.

Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell

[www.mass.gov/yourcommunity-engagement](http://www.mass.gov/yourcommunity-engagement)  
[ageconsumerengagement@state.ma.us](mailto:ageconsumerengagement@state.ma.us)

# Scams and ID Theft

Identity theft occurs when a person uses your personal information to assume your identity and gain access to your financial accounts or take out a line of credit in your name

## You may be a victim of identity theft if:

- You notice that you no longer receive your mail
- You receive bills for things you never received
- IRS informs you that more than one tax return was filed using your personal information
- Your credit report has strange entries
- You are contacted by debt collectors regarding unfamiliar debts
- You find storage transactions on your banking or credit card accounts

**There is no one way to avoid scams since they take many different forms, but here are some general best practices:**

<p><b>SECURE YOUR ACCOUNTS</b> Change passwords on your email, banking, and other personal accounts</p>	<p><b>SECURE PERSONAL DOCUMENTS</b> Shred all important documents like medical bills, bank statements, and utility bills</p>	<p><b>CHECK YOUR CREDIT REPORT</b> Get a copy of your credit report and dispute any fraudulent transactions. You can request credit reports online from the three major credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and Transunion)</p>
<p><b>KEEP RECORDS</b> Take notes about all conversations and keep copies of all records</p>	<p><b>DON'T GET TOO PERSONAL</b> Know who you are dealing with when releasing personal information</p>	<p><b>ADD A FRAUD ALERT</b> Place a fraud alert on your credit file. You can do this by contacting just one of the credit agencies to add an alert with all three agencies</p>
<p><b>FREEZE YOUR CREDIT</b>                  Equifax: (800) 349-9960    Experian: (888) 397-3742    TransUnion: (888) 909-8872</p>		

HOW TO REPORT	
Telephone Scams	(877) 382-4357
Mail Scams	(877) 876-2455
Internet Scams	ic3.gov
Identity Theft	identitytheft.gov

CONTACT THE AG'S OFFICE	
Elder Hotline	(888) 243-5337
Consumer Hotline	(617) 727-8400
Fair Labor	(617) 727-3465
Medicaid Fraud	(617) 963-2360

## Woman's Club of Newton Highlands



### Woman's Club of Newton Highlands

#### Quilt to benefit the Scholarship Program

Tickets were sold by members, at our Craft Fair and at GFWCMA Annual Meeting in June 2023. The lucky winner was Edith Edlund from the Greater Taunton Woman's Club who purchased her ticket at the GFWCMA Annual Meeting. The quilt was accepted by Club President, Robin Gendron at the Midwinter Meeting in January 2024 on behalf of Edith.



Woman's Club of Newton Highlands enjoyed the A&W Ukulele Players on Wednesday, February 21, 2024. The Ukulele Players have 15 members from area towns. They give a lively and up-beat performance of songs from the 1920s through the 1990s and play throughout Massachusetts. The audience was invited to participate by singing along, clapping in rhythm and chair dancing lead by Marisa. Several Newton guests attended.



After a year of proudly displaying the Silver Bowl Award, the Woman's Club of Newton Highlands has returned the bowl to Headquarters to be presented to the next recipient. Thank you for the honor of receiving this Silver Bowl.

*Submitted by WCNH President Bernadette Bennett*

## Holly Club of Wrentham



On Saturday, February 10, 2024, members of The Holly Club, led by Janice Wilson gathered to make valentines for all the residents in the 3 nursing homes in Wrentham. We took long stemmed red carnations and attached an old fashioned valentine with red ribbon, and placed them securely in a sleeve.

Janice and Donna Canavan made sure we were all well fed while we worked. It's moments like these that remind us of the power of community and the beauty of spreading kindness wherever we go.

*Submitted by HCOV President,  
Penny Olson*



## Hanover Woman's Club, Juniors



The members of the Hanover Woman's Club Juniors held a meeting at the Hanover Food Pantry toured the facility, found out what it's all about, and why there is such a need for it. Two members from the club who are also on the Board of the food pantry led tours, gave the history of the pantry and answered questions from the members. Eighteen members attended and donated about \$300 worth of food items to be distributed to clients.

*Submitted by HWC Vice President, Mary Anne Cirino*

## Hopkinton Women's Club



### TRULY ELEANOR

The Delvena Theatre Company presents: "Truly Eleanor," a three-person biographical performance about the life of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The show takes a candid look at the First Lady's courage and at her contributions to liberty and human rights. The cast will open up for discussion after the performance. This program is offered in partnership with the Hopkinton Women's Club.

March 23, 2024  
1pm  
Betty Strong Room



### Truly Eleanor

#### at the Hopkinton Public Library

The Delvena Theatre Company presented *Truly Eleanor* at the Hopkinton Public Library, 13 Main Street, Hopkinton on Saturday, March 23, 2024. This Women's History Month performance was cosponsored by the Hopkinton Women's Club and the Hopkinton Public Library.

Here in this 3-person, live performance, Eleanor shares some of her most private and meaningful moments - her lonely childhood; her joyous courtship/marriage with her fifth cousin, Franklin; her devastation at Franklin's love affair with her social secretary; her resolve to make him president after his polio diagnosis; her involvement in his presidency; and her eventual triumph at the United Nations. "Truly Eleanor" takes a candid look at our greatest First Lady's courage and at her great contributions to human rights and liberty for all. The cast was available for discussion of the subject matter after the performance.

*Submitted by HWC President Doris Early*

## Ousamequin Club

In December Ousamequin Club had the 6th Christmas Tree Fundraiser for Charity. The winning ticket was bought by Brittany Coe, who works at the Ashland Animal Hospital.

The charity chosen this year was Southeastern Animal Protection Society in Brockton, who received a donation of \$535--the total proceeds raised from sale of tickets. The tree was beautifully decorated by club member, Paula Cantave. Sharon Graves, clubmember delivered the tree to Ashland Animal Hospital where it was displayed. Tracy--office employee accepted the tree.

Also, Ousamequin Club is greatly appreciative of the grant award of \$625 from GFWC MA to support our Christmas In July project, which will benefit seniors of Bridgewater.



*Submitted by Ousamequin Club President Jean Guarino*

## Millbury Women's Club



On the 16th March along with NAMI, the Millbury Women's Club participated in the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Exposition at the Northbridge High School to spread the word of the partnership between the MWC, NAMI and the Millbury Public Schools. The Expo was very well attended and with support from members of the MWC and NAMI we were able to meet and greet lots of guests that attended the expo.

NAMI is having a Mental Health Awareness Outing at Polar Park Thursday May 16, pregame Ceremony begins at 4:45pm, first pitch at 6:05pm. Tickets are \$23 pp and includes a reserved seat in Section 1 along the 3rd Base line, \$5 donation supporting NAMI Central MA and \$2 of ballpark credit to utilize on concessions or the team store; Visit [FEVO-ENTERPRISE.COM/NAMICENTRAL7](https://FEVO-ENTERPRISE.COM/NAMICENTRAL7) for tickets.

Photo; President Diane Erickson, MWC with President Robin Bahr Casey, of NAMI Central MA

*Submitted by MWC President Diane Erickson*

## Boston Parliamentary Law Club



### Happy Feet Sock Drive

Members of the GFWC Boston Parliamentary Law Club donated socks for veterans at the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital in Bedford, MA. A monetary donation to the Podiatry Care Department was included with 153 pairs of socks. Clean new socks are critical for good foot hygiene and can boost a Veteran's dignity and feelings of self-worth.

## Marlborough Junior Woman's Club



Nomi Munroe, Edna Fine, Kate Fiore  
and Donna Boxell

Denise Ryan and Yvonne Breitenfeld

Almost 2000 gowns the students were able to  
choose from

GFWC Marlborough Junior Woman's Club sponsored our annual Metrowest Princess Boutique <https://www.mwprincessboutique.com/> on Saturday March 16, 2024. Our goal is to help qualified teens get to the Prom by easing the financial burden for them and their families. All gowns, shoes, jewelry, purses and accessories are free.

This year we dressed 160 students from 21 schools thanks to the help of 100 volunteers from Club and the community and the generous support of local businesses. The students each had the help of a personal shopper and seamstresses to make the whole outfit perfect for their Prom or Senior Reception. They were able to choose from a wide selection of jewelry, shoes, purses and hundreds of new gowns.

The Metrowest Princess Boutique serves teens in and around the Marlborough area, including Worcester. We work with area high schools to pre-qualify teens to come shop in our boutique. WHDH sent a crew to videotape a segment for the evening news. Here is a link to the video:

<https://whdh.com/news/metrowest-princess-boutique-dishes-out-free-prom-gowns-items-to-area-teens/>

*Photo credit: @AlyssaChamberlainPhotography*

*Submitted by MJWC Chair of Civic Engagement and Outreach Committee, Georgina Chamberlain*





2024-2026 Administration Nominees



President Jablanski  
and  
Parliamentarian Shirley Gomes

### GFWCMA Scholarship Committee



Kick off meeting of the GFWCMA Scholarship Committee

Under the direction of Chairman Robin O'Connor, the committee will review scholarships to determine the candidates most worthy of receiving aid. One hundred forty application packages were received by the committee. With the help of the Memorial Education Scholarship Committee, directed by Chairman Lynne Stader, the committees will review 140 application packages. Award recipients will be announced at Annual Convention.



## DATES TO REMEMBER

- Apr 1 Clubwoman of the Year and Julia Ward Howe President Award entries due
- Apr 7 Spring Bingo Mania! Headquarters 1:00pm
- Apr 10 Junior Executive Board Meeting
- Apr 20 Day of Honor, Trinity Church, Northborough 11am to 3pm
- Apr 24 GFWC Federation Day
- May 3-4 Annual Convention and Installation of 2024-2026 Officers, Courtyard Boston Marlborough
- Jun 1 Board of Directors Meeting and Federation Day at the Forest
- Jun 27-Jul 1 GFWC Convention, Chicago, IL

On January 20, 2024, Dorothy (Dottie) Graham, passed away after a brief illness. Dorothy was a long-time member of GFWCMA, serving as a Past President, Parliamentarian, Instructor of parliamentary law for more than fifty years, and Club President. She also served as GFWC Parliamentarian and New England Region Parliamentarian. Dorothy will be honored on Federation Day at the Forest on June 1. There will be a planting of a mature purple lilac tree in her memory.

Rest in Peace, Dorothy Graham.

*With Sympathy*



GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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