

**Cary Woman's Club**  
**Membership Report 2023**

Our Club membership goals are threefold: 1) to attract new members who want to join us in serving our community, sharing our time and talents, 2) to recognize and appreciate our hard-working members at each meeting, 3) to retain current members, with special focus on our long-time members who have health and mobility issues. This strategy resulted in our membership increasing by 34% during the 2023 club year, from 29 to 39 members.

**Member Recruitment**

Our Membership Chair hosted a Membership Luncheon and Mimosa Bar at her home in August and invited current as well as potential members. 23 current members and 7 potential members attended this luncheon and enjoyed getting back together since we had not met since May. Two of the guests joined the club and attended the September meeting.

The September general meeting was planned as an orientation for existing and new members. The CSP Chairs each prepared a poster or handout presentation outlining the purpose and proposed projects of their CSP for the coming year. More guests attended this meeting, and 3 more joined the club by December.

Each year we update our Club Yearbook, with information on club projects, finances, and a membership directory with contact information for each clubwoman. Each new member is given a 3-ring binder with the yearbook contents. Existing members are sent the updated yearbook via email and can print and add the pages to their binder. Updates are emailed throughout the year. Sections of the Yearbook include: Administration (officers, trustees, meeting schedule & programs & hostesses, pledges and Collect, Past-Presidents), GFWC, GFWC-NC, and GFWC-NC District VI information, Community Service Programs, Financial, Membership Directory, and Bylaws and Policies & Procedures.

Our club manages and maintains a public Pollinator Garden at the entrance to our meeting space, the Page-Walker Arts & History Center. Each August the town hosts the Lazy Daze Arts & Crafts Festival, attended by 50,000-60,000 people. Our clubwomen host an exhibit at the garden during the festival and this serves as promotion for the club and is a great membership recruitment tool.

**Volunteer Hours: 91                  Dollars: 125                  In-Kind:                  Members: 39**

**Appreciating "Extra Effort Members"**

Our Membership Chair recognizes the extra effort of individual mentors at each meeting. Recognition could be for bringing prospective members, or chairing a fundraiser, or taking on extra duties. A small gift is presented to recognize the extra effort, but also lets all members know who the mentors are who have set a good example of extra effort that month.

Our Hospitality Program has three members who work together to support our members by providing a positive experience at our general meetings as well as at special events. They plan for

the provision of refreshments for every monthly meeting including organizing two club members who serve as hostesses and bring refreshments for a social time 30 minutes before the beginning of each monthly meeting. The committee members set up and clean up.

Our Hospitality committee also organizes an after-meeting dutch treat lunch at a local restaurant each month. This allows new members to continue to visit after the meeting, ask questions, and get better acquainted in an informal setting. This is a time for members to talk about their families and share special interests that they have in common, enhancing their membership experience. These lunches also support local businesses and encourage members to expand their culinary experiences.

**Volunteer Hours: 165**

**Dollars:**

**In-Kind: 60**

**Members: 16**

### **Member Retention**

We maintain regular communication with our members through our monthly newsletter. The newsletter editor collects articles from Board members and CSP Chairs, compiles the newsletter, and sends it out via email on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. In addition to the articles submitted by members, the 6-10 page newsletter highlights Important Dates; Meeting speaker; Member birthdays for the month; Upcoming events of the club, District VI, and GFWC-NC. The editor also designs and sends special edition/interim communications as reminders of events and donation drives. Upon request, the editor will create a beautiful specially designed email invitation for CSP chairs or other members to notify and/or invite members to a scheduled event or program.

Our Hospitality Committee planned a very special Holiday party for us. At the December meeting, 41 members and guests met in a private room at a local country club to enjoy a Christmas brunch, including elegant desserts! In addition to conducting a bit of business, the committee placed handmade favor bags with candle-lit donated centerpieces on each table which were given away after the luncheon as door prizes. We sang Christmas carols and played three fun party games. Interesting prizes were awarded.

The August luncheon mentioned above also had a measurable impact on member retention. The Membership Luncheon and Mimosa Bar at the home of our Membership Chair included current as well as potential members. 23 members attended and enjoyed meeting potential members, but especially enjoyed getting together. Current members have asked that a membership luncheon be scheduled as a regular summer event for members, as a kickoff to the new club year.

During COVID restrictions, our Education & Libraries CSP initiated a Book Club for members, which has been extremely popular and is continuing with increasing interest and attendance. Members read one book per month, with selections made by the group in advance. A monthly gathering to discuss the book is held at a member's home, adding to member cohesion and enjoyment.

Our club has five long-time members (2 have served as Club President a combined 7 times!) who are no longer able to drive to meetings. We have organized volunteers to pick up each of them and bring them to regular meetings and special events. In this way, they are able to continue as active club members, and we benefit from their long experience as clubwomen.

**Volunteer Hours: 307**

**Dollars:**

**In-Kind: 220**

**Members: 39**

## **Publicity & Promotion**

Most of our club members are not big users of social media, but we do have a very user-friendly website, and a webmaster who keeps it updated almost daily. We frequently point people to the website for information, as it contains membership information and membership forms, photo albums of our activities at the local level as well as District and State GFWC events, information about our grants and scholarships, and the activities of the CSP's. The website also serves as our online "scrapbook" and archive with events and documents that go back several years. Website link is: <http://Carywomansclub.org>

For the past few years, we have participated in the Cary Gifting Tree project in December. We decorate a Christmas tree that is one of 101 placed along Academy St. and in the new Downtown Park by the town staff. The town organizes numerous events during December to attract people downtown to enjoy the trees. Each tree is accompanied by a large sign listing the name of the organization, which has resulted in added name recognition. For 4 years we have partnered with Note in the Pocket to decorate our tree with "pocket" ornaments with a url on the back. A sign encourages people to take an ornament and use the url to donate to Note in the Pocket, purchasing clothing for needy children to enable them to confidently attend school. This year our tree was in a highly visible and visited area at the central large fountain at the park entrance. Our tree raised over \$1600 for Note in the Pocket. The visibility of our club was enhanced since all the trees were listed on the Town website, and people were asked to seek out and vote for their favorite tree.

The profile of the club is also raised through our annual pecan sale. The pecans have been a great fundraiser and a great friend-raiser for us since the 1970's! Each year we sell more pounds of pecans than the year before. This year our members sold over 880 pounds of pecans and delivered them to their customers. Each year when the sale is over, we get requests for more pecans, as people hear about them from friends and neighbors, and this increases our sales the following year.

**Volunteer Hours: 214**

**Dollars: 190**

**In-Kind:**

**Members: 39**

## **GFWC-NC event and meeting attendance**

Our club had two members attend the spring District VI meeting. At the September Fall meeting, our club had 3 members who attended, the District President, the keynote speaker, and one member who gave a workshop on Reporting. We had 6 members each attend the GFWC-NC District VI and State Arts Festivals, 2 attended GFWC-NC Convention in 2023. Members paid their own registration fees (\$550).

**Volunteer Hours: 251**

**Dollars:**

**In-Kind: 550**

**Members: 19**

***Our Club leadership is proud of our record of member recruitment and retention!***