

**History of the Cary Woman's Club**  
**2014-2015**  
**By Lois Nixon, President**

**Highlights of the Club Year**

By the end of 2014, our club had 50 members, thanks to a year-long focus on membership and a goal to double our club membership in order to meet new friends and expand our capacity to give our time and talents to the Cary community. As an incentive, the President offered homemade jams to anyone who brought a prospective member to a club meeting. There was a new member orientation with a "Speed Up-Dating" theme at our January meeting, with an opportunity to reminisce and add exciting new "CSP dates", programs and events to our club year. Photos and special interests of members were added to our yearbook to help us get better acquainted, with a separate Members Photo Directory that is updated regularly. Our club logo, which had been hand drawn in 1962 by , was updated and digitized so it could be used on printed materials, newsletters, and our future new website for better organization "branding" and visibility. And our monthly newsletters were upgraded with photos, GFWC District and NC news, and member profiles, as well as monthly reminders to bring prospective new members as guests to each meeting. Our Corresponding Secretary also organized an informal "lunch bunch" after each meeting, where members could socialize and meet new friends, many at local International restaurants. All of this was integral to our goals to increase our club visibility and service to the community, as well as to increase our membership through a focus on volunteer and social opportunities.

**Programs for the year**

--Debra Grannan, CEO of the Cary Players Community Theater, shared the performance schedule for the year and taught us, "The Art of the Audition", with clubwomen role playing. Several women then supported the local arts by attending the performance of the play "Wait Until Dark!" and later a performance by the Concert Singers of Cary.

--Vik Chandra, CEO of Raleigh-based Muses Labs, Inc., spoke to us about his company's research on Alzheimer's disease, and a search to reverse its progression.

--Ted Boyd, Cary's Downtown Development Manager, talked about his efforts for the revitalization of downtown Cary, and encouraged our members to participate in the "Imagine Cary" brainstorming sessions for the future of Cary.

--An energetic carole sing-a-long was led by member, Joan Hall, and accompanied a fabulous buffet and gingerbread house displays at Prestonwood Country Club—an annual holiday treat.

--Marie Cefalo, Water Resources Outreach Supervisor for the Town of Cary gave a summary of Cary's award-winning water conservation program.

--Christine Bonaventure, our Mature Woman Scholarship winner, is a nursing student at Wake Tech with a 3.4 GPA, and our speaker at the March meeting. Her goal is to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), working with patients who have experienced brain injuries. She was supported in her

presentation by Stephanie Lake, Senior Director of the Wake Tech Community College Foundation.

--Saskia Leary, born during World War II in the Netherlands, told her family's touching story of survival, and her support of the USO. She was joined by Barbara Shepard, Director of Cary's Sister Cities program. A CWC group later attended the Sister Cities of Cary's Irish/Scottish "Ceilidh". Most members were surprised to learn that Cary has four Sister Cities—in France, Ireland, China, and Canada!

### **Fund Raisers and Recipients of Support for the year**

--Annual dues remained at \$70 per year, with half of that going to dues at the District and State GFWC level.

--Box Tops for Education were collected monthly to benefit the Tammy Lynn Center for autistic and handicapped children.

--Our annual pecan sale raises about \$2000 each year for support of our operating expenses and community service activities. Pecans are pre-sold and distributed at our November meeting in time for holiday baking and entertaining.

--Household items (furnishings, cleaning supplies, etc.) were collected for Oxford House, a clean and sober housing option for individuals in recovery. Value \$800+

--75 members and guests attended the Bridge & Dessert Benefit for InterAct held on Thursday, January 29. InterAct is a private, nonprofit, United Way agency providing safety, support, and awareness to victims and survivors of domestic violence and rape/sexual assault. 75 attendees. Donation about \$1550.

--\$160 was collected at monthly meetings and donated to Heifer International, a GFWC Partner, to use in their program that gives poor families livestock and intensive agricultural training to enable them to lift themselves out of poverty. HI programs place special emphasis on the importance of women in food production.

--\$3500 in scholarships to two rising college students, and the Mature Woman's Scholarship at Wake Technical Community College.

--The Flamingo Fling Fashion Show and Brunch fundraiser on April 25, with special guest Elvis (!), resulted in profit of \$1500 to Wake Tech for our Mature Woman Scholarship for the 2016-2017 year.

--Members participated enthusiastically in the Dress for Success Designer Clothing Sale to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support, and career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

-- Collection of 28 grocery bags of food and gift cards in December for The Caring Place, that teaches homeless, working families with children life skills for independent living while providing short-term housing and support.

--Donated \$500 each to the Caring Place, the Center for Volunteer Caregiving, (volunteer services to improve the lives of seniors, caregivers, and adults with disabilities), and Prison MATCH (Mothers and Their CHildren) to provide opportunities for mothers in prison to have positive interactions and build memories with their children. The Director of the Prison MATCH program personally thanked members at our May luncheon.

--\$250 was donated to WomenNC as an organizational sponsor of their United Nations Forum, that sends university students to the United Nations Commission

on the Status of Women to report on their research on women's equality issues in NC.

### **Other Club Activities and Results**

--In 2015, the CWC joined 100,000 members in 4,000 clubs around the world to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, founded on April 24, 1890. Our newsletter included facts about GFWC each month to educate our members about the Federation.

--Increased attendance by Cary Woman's Club representatives at District and State meetings and training conducted by GFWC-NC. President and one member attended the April 23-26, 2015, GFWC-NC Convention at the Grove Park Inn, Asheville, NC.

--District and State Awards: First place in District 6 for Newsletter, and Runner-up at the State level. Other awards received at the State GFWC Convention included Runner-up for Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention, and recognition for increasing our membership by 10%.

--We moved our monthly meetings to the Page-Walker Arts and History Center beginning with March 2015 meeting.

--Members enjoyed the Annual Valentine Party with dessert and dancing for Life Experiences, which serves as a sheltered workshop for adults with varying disabilities.

--Members made plans to visit the Chrysalis Woman's Club at the NC Correctional Institution for Women (aka, the Women's Prison), providing dessert and a fun time teaching the women to play Bunco, with favors of body lotion and shampoo! However, the event had to be cancelled due to hazardous weather.

--Election of Officers and updating of the Bylaws was completed in April. Pat Davis, past President of GFWC-NC was our guest and Installing Officer of new Board at May luncheon and Installation at Prestonwood Country Club. Guests also included GFWC District 6 President, Stephanie Wallace.

--Honored our long-time member and faithful Home Life Chair, Ellie O'Connell as our Clubwoman with Heart, who best represents the Collect.

--Members and District Clubwomen were encouraged to wear orange on June 2 to honor National Gun Violence Awareness Day, and the right of every American to live a life free from gun violence.

--Domestic Violence Awareness Month was featured in our October newsletter and through donations to InterAct and other DV non-profits during the year.

--Members were encouraged by Public Issues Chair to participate in "Imagine Cary", to help plan for the future of Cary. Information was provided by our Public Issues Chair about voting in local elections, and encouragement to take others to vote on Election Day.

--Members decorated a Christmas Gifting Tree, through the Town of Cary program to increase our club's visibility in the community and to support the diversity of the community. Theme: "Unity in Community".