

# GFWC TEXAS CLUBWOMAN

# Newsletter

*The Newsletter of GFWC Texas  
Proud Member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs*

Volume 1, Issue 4      Fall - Winter 2025



*From the GFWC Texas  
President*



### **What Has Been Accomplished and Where We Are Going**

As we move into this part of the 2024–2026 Administration, it is important to reflect on what has been accomplished and where we are headed. GFWC Texas continues to make significant progress in communication, leadership development, advocacy, and membership.

Communication across the state has strengthened through consistent updates to districts and clubs. Using Constant Contact, information is sent to every member on a regular basis, and the streamlined reporting process has resulted in increased participation and stronger engagement statewide.

Leadership development remains a priority. The creation of our state-level LEADS program and the introduction of the Anna Pennybacker Award for Excellence in District Leadership are providing opportunities for members to learn, grow, and step into new roles—ensuring a strong pipeline of future leaders.

On the advocacy front, GFWC Texas continues to support state efforts to address human trafficking. During the 2025 Legislative Session, two significant bills were passed that strengthen protections for victims and increase penalties for traffickers:

- Senate Bill 1212 makes all human trafficking offenses first-degree felonies.
- House Bill 2306 requires traffickers who target children or people with disabilities to serve their full sentence without parole—no early release for “the worst of the worst.”

These legislative victories reflect growing awareness and bipartisan commitment to protecting vulnerable Texans—efforts that align closely with the mission of GFWC Texas.

GFWC Texas was honored to host the South Central Region Conference on the beautiful San Antonio River Walk. The conference was a tremendous success, with both the GFWC International President and President-elect sharing inspiring updates. Another highlight was our September Board of Directors Meeting in Austin, where members supported a shelter for women and girls trafficked for sexual purposes as part of the GFWC International Day of Service and learned more about the Red Lock Campaign from Hope for Justice.

Membership also continues to show positive progress. Clubs across the state are reporting creative programming, expanded community partnerships, and increased visibility—all of which

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strengthen both individual clubs and our Federation.

Looking ahead, GFWC Texas will continue expanding education, awareness, and partnerships related to human trafficking prevention while also remaining focused on leadership development and supporting clubs in recruiting and retaining members.

The next six months will be busy as clubs and districts continue their important work. In February, you will report your accomplishments for 2025, and in April, elect officers for the next administration and begin the transition to 2026–2028.

Time has passed quickly. As we complete the 2024–2026 Administration, let us remain focused on our mission—raising awareness and promoting the prevention of human trafficking.

Remember: It's not where you start—it's where you finish. Let's finish strong. We show up, stand up, and speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

*Barbara Harvey*

63rd President, GFWC Texas

*"It's not where you start, it's where you finish."*



Enjoying the beautiful gowns on display.



With Past Presidents of GFWC Texas, Billie Williams (left) and Mary Beth Guy (right).



Processional at SCR Conference.



Marsha Wellman tells funny stories.

# *GFWC Texas 129<sup>th</sup> Fall Board Meeting*

**September 25-27, 2025**

**DoubleTree by Hilton Northwest Arboretum  
8901 Business Park Dr., Austin Texas**

**TFWC Headquarters  
2312 San Gabriel, Austin, Texas**

**GFWC Texas Board of Directors Meeting**

***Theme: Wings Unfolded: The Power of the Finish***

AUSTIN, TEXAS - The 2025 GFWC Texas Fall Board of Directors Meeting was a wonderful blend of learning, laughter, and leadership — a weekend that reminded us why we are proud to be members of GFWC Texas!

The event began at the Doubletree by Hilton Austin Northwest Arboretum, where Thursday's schedule was filled with important pre-board meetings. The 2025–2026 Texas LEADS class began their leadership journey with nine enthusiastic participants. Meanwhile, the Nominating Committee met to review applications for the upcoming 2026–2028 Administration, and the Scholarship Committee, Executive Committee, and TFWC Historical Foundation Board of Trustees all gathered to conduct essential business.

Friday morning, members eagerly boarded the shuttles bound for our beloved TFWC Headquarters Building — always a highlight of the Fall Board experience. The day was filled with inspiration, education, and purpose.

In recognition of the GFWC International Day of Service, members supported the GFWC Signature Project: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention with a special focus on the President's Special Project: Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes. Attendees donated purses filled with full-sized toiletry items for Magdalene House, a recovery home for survivors of human trafficking. The heartfelt generosity of members filled Program Director Giselle Reinhardt Gillis's car to the brim! Giselle also shared powerful statistics and stories about the impact of Magdalene House's work.

We were also honored to welcome Chelsea Spence from Hope for Justice, one of GFWC's Affiliate Organizations, who introduced the new Red Lock Campaign — a national initiative to combat human trafficking through awareness and prevention.

Adding a practical touch to the day, Lori Peterson Perez provided an insightful presentation on essential legal tools for life and legacy planning. Her guidance gave members valuable

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knowledge to help protect themselves and their families.

An especially inspiring session focused on how cities can work to become designated “Trafficking-Free.” The concept was introduced by Fran Mask, who brought attention to the importance of community-level collaboration to combat human trafficking. Fidelis Inter Se member Janie Grumbles worked with the Celina City Council and the U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking to make Celina the first city in Texas to earn this distinction. Their combined leadership showed how awareness and action at the local level can create meaningful change.

GFWC Texas continued its emphasis on advocacy with an overview of the GFWC Legislative Ladder and training on how to use the GFWC Legislative Action Center — empowering members to make their voices heard on critical issues.

Following a full day of learning, the meeting recessed for a delightful art exhibit and an extraordinary table of heavy hors d’oeuvres beautifully prepared by Fran Mask and Beth Hemby. The stunning display was a feast for both the eyes and the palate — featuring an elegant array of savory and sweet creations that seemed endless. Members mingled, laughed, and relaxed amid the art and the artistry of the food, enjoying a perfect pause before the evening’s entertainment.

The night continued with laughter and lively competition at the Trivia Showdown, hosted by Diann Walleck, Carolyn Swenson, and Carolyn Strnadel from the Eleanor Brackenridge Literary Club of Edna. Every question celebrated women’s achievements and GFWC history, making it a fun and educational evening. Members boarded the shuttles back to the hotel, tired but energized by friendship and purpose.

Saturday morning’s session opened with reports from state officers and the District Presidents, lovingly referred to as Barbara’s Beautiful Butterflies. A highlight of the morning was the announcement of Tissa Peterson as the GFWC Texas Jennie Award nominee — a well-deserved recognition of her dedication and service.

As tradition dictates, the meeting concluded with the reciting of the Club Collect and a heartfelt rendition of Let There Be Peace on Earth. Members departed inspired and united, already looking forward to the 2026 GFWC Texas Spring Convention in San Antonio, where 2025 awards will be presented and new officers installed for the 2026–2028 Administration.

It was a weekend filled with purpose, partnership, and the unmistakable spirit of GFWC Texas — proving once again, “It’s not where you start; it’s where you finish.”



Day of Service at GFWC Texas Headquarters.



Art created by members on display in gallery.



Members art on display along with permanent collection.



First Vice President Dr. Kathy H. Smith (Left) organized the Art Show and Reception.



Plaques were awarded at Trivia Night for best scores and answers.



Trivia Night at Headquarters for attendees.



Heavy hor d'oeuvres served at the Reception.



## Purses with Purpose

By Beth Hemby

Chairman for the President's Special Project

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) Texas has long stood as a beacon of advocacy, compassion, and service across the state. This year, under the leadership of GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey and Chairman for the President's Special Project Beth Hemby, the organization launched its 2025 International Day of Service project—Purses with Purpose—to bring awareness, compassion, and tangible support to survivors of human trafficking.

President Harvey and Chairman Hemby have made it their mission to deter and eliminate human trafficking, particularly for sexual purposes, by combining education, advocacy, and action. Their efforts reached a powerful milestone in April 2025, when approximately 70 GFWC Texas members gathered in Austin for a Day of Advocacy at the State Capitol. Members met with legislators to discuss critical human trafficking issues and advocate for stronger state laws and harsher sentences for traffickers. During this impactful visit, the women of GFWC Texas were recognized on the floor of both the House and the Senate and were presented with an official Resolution urging legislative action to protect victims and prevent future exploitation.

As a continuation of their advocacy and service, the Fall Board of Directors meeting in Austin featured the Purses with Purpose project—an effort that symbolized care, dignity, and hope. Members from across Texas came together, each bringing purses filled with full-sized toiletries to donate to The Magdalene House of Austin, a shelter and treatment facility dedicated to helping survivors heal from the trauma of human trafficking.

Members were asked to avoid hotel-sized toiletries, as many survivors experience triggers associated with hotels where much of their exploitation occurred. This thoughtful consideration reflected the compassion and sensitivity that define GFWC Texas projects—acknowledging not just physical needs, but emotional and psychological ones as well. During the meeting, Giselle Gillis, Program Director for The Magdalene House of Austin, provided an inspiring and educational presentation about the organization's mission and the comprehensive programs available to survivors. Giselle's professional background includes years of service working with individuals experiencing homelessness and

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substance use disorders. Now, she is dedicated to helping survivors of sex trafficking heal from complex PTSD and rebuild their lives through trauma-informed care and empowerment.

Her unwavering commitment to social work and activism shines through her leadership at The Magdalene House, where inclusion, advocacy, and education form the cornerstone of recovery. Giselle’s ongoing mission to raise awareness about human trafficking and advocate for social justice within marginalized communities deeply resonated with the GFWC Texas members, reinforcing their own purpose-driven work.

The hundreds of purses collected during the event were more than donations—they were messages of solidarity. Each purse represented a promise: that survivors are seen, valued, and never alone in their journey toward healing. Together, GFWC Texas women loaded the purses with care and sent them to The Magdalene House as powerful symbols of unity and hope.

Through Purses with Purpose, GFWC Texas continues to demonstrate that advocacy is not just about words, but action. From the halls of the State Capitol to the hands of survivors, these women are proving that when compassion meets conviction, lasting change begins—one purse, one survivor, and one act of hope at a time.



(Above) Giselle Gillis, Program Director for The Magdalene House of Austin.



(Above) Chelsea Spence, Hope for Justice.



GFWC Texas members load collected items for The Magdalene House.



Loaded car preparing to deliver items to The Magdalene House.

# Reporting 2025

**Kathy Horak Smith, PhD**  
GFWC Texas First Vice President

Reporting is how we tell the story of our clubs, our districts, and ultimately, the impact of GFWC women across Texas and around the world. Every project you complete, every hour you serve, and every dollar you donate helps build the record of what GFWC accomplishes together. But those efforts only count if they're reported — clearly, accurately, and on time.

Let's review how the process flows: At the club level, your reports are postmarked or time-stamped on or before February 1. Remember — submit one report per reporting area, not a separate one for each project. Focus on the impact of your programs: who benefited, what changed, and how your club made a difference. Each club submits the Club Level Entry Cover Sheet and up to two pages of narrative to the appropriate District Chairman, either by email or mail. And please — keep a copy for your club's records.

Next, at the district level, reports are due on or before February 20 to the GFWC Texas State Chairman. Each district will send: 1. The District Chairman Award List as the cover sheet, 2. A two-page narrative highlighting the top ten entries and district activities, 3. And the original first-place winners' reports and cover sheets. District First Vice Presidents will also receive a copy of the award list and narrative for their records.

Finally, from the state to international, the process continues. By March 1, GFWC Texas State Chairmen mail their Award List of first and second-place winners to the GFWC Texas First Vice President. By March 15, they mail or email a copy of their narrative and their GFWC Report Narrative to the International Chairman and to GFWC Texas First Vice President, following the latest GFWC State Award Entry Cover Sheet instructions. And remember — the deadline to GFWC is March 15.

Friends, reporting is not just paperwork — it's the record of our legacy. It ensures our collective voice is heard, our efforts are recognized, and our communities know the difference that GFWC women make every day.

With your club year underway, make reporting part of the conversation from the very beginning. Keep notes, collect stories, and celebrate your success. Because every act of service — large or small — deserves to be part of our story. Thank you for all you do, for your leadership, and for making GFWC Texas shine bright at every level — from our local clubs to the international stage. GFWC Texas wants to help you write the best report that you can. Please note that the following dates are for Zoom opportunities to learn more about reporting. They will be at 7:00 pm on each of the dates and will last about 1 hour. The link for each event is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7960859403>

## **Meeting Dates**

October 28 - Club Reporting  
November 10 - District Reporting  
December 8 - State Reporting  
January 12 - Club Reporting  
February 9 - District Reporting

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March 9 - State Reporting

**Report—and be a part of these significant accomplishments!**

Your club's reports help showcase the incredible statewide and international impact of GFWC members. Every hour, every dollar, and every project contributes to results like those reported for 2024.



2024  
**ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT**

**GFWC SIGNATURE PROGRAM**  
Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness & Prevention  
**\$658,429**  
DONATED

**GFWC JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROJECT**  
Advocates for Children  
**174,130**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



**GFWC COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS**  
Arts & Culture  
Civic Engagement & Outreach  
Education & Libraries  
Environment  
Health & Wellness

**5.3**  
**MILLION**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



**ESO READING**  
104,121 books read last year

**SUPPORTING OTHERS**  
\$306,204 raised to support Affiliate Organizations

**GIVING BACK**  
GFWC Members donate millions to worthy projects in their communities and abroad.

**14**  
**MILLION**  
DOLLARS DONATED



# Report from LEADS State Graduate

**Sherry Eishen**  
GFWC Texas LEADS Graduate

On June 6th, 2025, I had the distinct honor of attending the GFWC LEAD Seminar in Atlanta, Georgia at the GFWC International Convention as the candidate from the Great State of Texas! It was very empowering to meet ladies from almost every state in the USA, (and Aruba), who embody the same vision, enthusiasm and volunteer spirit as we do here in Texas!

The night before our class, the LEADS candidates were invited to attend an ice cream social, in GFWC International President, Suellen Brazil's suite, all 50 of us! Each candidate was given a gift to remember this auspicious occasion, a beautiful rose design compact mirror and a card signed by Suellen with the quote: "A team's performance is a mirror of its leader".

The GFWC Leadership Committee began the seminar with a brief history of the GFWC and some of its early leaders and heritage, to its 63,000 members today. They discussed topics such as Public Speaking, Advocacy - Resolutions - Legislation, Health and Wellbeing, Listening with Empathy, Conflict Resolution, Organizing for Success and Building Influence, etc. Each of the instructors did an outstanding job of presenting the subjects in a clear and concise manner.

There were ice breakers and activities throughout the seminar to help us get to know each other. We were also given opportunities to speak publicly and share information and ideas about our individual clubs and receive beneficial suggestions from instructors and classmates.

The topic that intrigued me the most was "Developing Your Why"? Why do we do what we do? How do we do it? What is it that we do? We were given information on how to develop our personal "Why" and make it shareable in a "30 second speech". They suggested reading the book: "Start with Why", by Simon Sinek, and watching his video "The Origin of the Why".

Many other books were recommended throughout the day: "The Success Principles" by Jack Canfield, "Eat That Frog", by Brian Tracy, "Roberts Rules of Order" by Henry M. Robert, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey, and "The Motive" by Patrick Lencione.

They ended the seminar with a "Call to Action": "How will you use the information that you have been given?" I am honored to share that I have accepted the following GFWC leadership roles for the 26-28 term: 1st Vice President of the Wednesday Review Club, President Elect, Texas Capitol District and Outstanding Americanism Program Chairman, GFWC Texas.

My favorite quote from the seminar was from Simon Sinek: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader".



**Sherry Eishen**

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GFWC International President, Suellen Brazil and President-Elect Wendy Carriker were present at our graduation. They gave us our certificates and were the first to congratulate us, what an honor! We were given graduate sashes and LEADS pins, and we were recognized as 2025 LEADS graduates during the business meeting the following morning. We were treated like celebrities for the duration of the convention with everyone congratulating us everywhere we went.

It was truly an amazing experience, and I am very thankful to Capitol District President, Monica Benoit-Beatty, GFWC Texas President, Barbara Harvey and GFWC LEADS Chairman, Lou Hitt for giving me such an awesome opportunity.

Sherry Eishen  
GFWC Texas Capitol District  
Wednesday Review Club

## GFWC Texas LEADS Class of 2026 Begins

**Lou Hitt**  
LEADS Chairman

The GFWC Texas LEADS Class of 2026 officially began its program with the first in-person session held on September 25, 2025, in Austin, Texas. This year's class consists of nine outstanding members:

- Capital District: Judy Boram and Kathye McGregor
- Magnolia District: Lisa Kotz and Marianne Chase
- Pioneer District: Christi Melton and Kathy Horak-Smith
- South Texas District: Marcia Bordovsky
- Trinity District: Keisha Head and Wanda Godso.

During the opening session, participants explored the history of GFWC and TFWC, examined various leadership styles, and completed an assessment to identify their dominant leadership traits.

Since the Fall Board meeting, the class has convened for two virtual sessions via Zoom. The first session focused on the impact of body language – how it communicates unspoken messages to others and reveals insights about oneself. The second session centered on the key components of designing a successful meeting.

GFWC Texas commends these nine dedicated women for their commitment to enhancing their leadership abilities and for their active participation in the GFWC Texas LEADS program.





## The Mansion: Preserving Our Legacy and Securing Our Future

**Lou Hitt**

**GFWC Texas Historical Foundation, Pioneer District**

Our beloved GFWC Texas Headquarters – The Mansion – is more than just a building. It is a living symbol of our history and mission, a place that has hosted thousands of weddings, galas, and community gatherings for almost a century. Yet behind its beauty lies a financial strain we can no longer ignore.

Last fiscal year, The Mansion generated over \$907,000 in sales but only \$54,500 in net profit – a razor-thin margin given the costs of maintaining an aging, historic property. In the last 14 months, we've replaced the roof, cleaned graffiti, and navigated zoning changes in Austin – all costly undertakings.

Recent challenges have compounded the strain:

- A \$263,000 property tax bill resulted in \$13,000 in legal fees and \$9,000 in penalties before we ultimately paid to avoid up to \$250,000 in further costs.
- Our parking situation is deteriorating as UT builds an underground garage nearby. Rental costs for 66 parking spaces will rise from \$57,000 this year to \$81,000 by 2028, with no alternative options.
- We've faced HVAC repairs, increasing utility costs, and code compliance issues with our tenant, the Longhorn Network, which will move out when UT completes its new building.
- Insurance premiums reached \$97,000 last year and are expected to rise again at renewal in mid-November.

These expenses are unsustainable, and without change, we risk financial failure.

However, there is hope.

On July 2, we were approached by Evan Baehr, founder of Arena Hall – a nonprofit 501(c)(3) located just four blocks away. His organization hosts over 300 events annually, focusing on

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economic empowerment, human rights, and women's leadership – values deeply acclaimed projects such as The Adolphus Hotel and The Driskill in Austin.

After careful consideration, the Historical Foundation and Executive Boards evaluated three paths:

1. Continue operating as is,
2. Sell the Mansion, or
3. Enter into a long-term lease.

We unanimously agreed that a long-term lease offers the most promising future.

Under the proposed agreement:

- GFWC Texas retains ownership of The Mansion.
- We may host two meetings annually, free of charge, and keep two offices in the building.
- The tenant assumes all operating costs – repairs, improvements, taxes, insurance, and maintenance.
- Each year, 5% of the tenant's net income (minimum \$50,000, increasing 3% annually) will be donated to a charity we select, with GFWC Texas eligible.
- Our memorabilia and furnishings will be preserved or displayed under our guidance, with one room dedicated as the TFWC Meeting Room celebrating our history and available to us at any time.
- The tenants will maintain our name, comply with preservation guidelines, and make only historically appropriate improvements – enhancing the property's long-term value.

We are still negotiating and will have legal counsel review all agreements before signing.

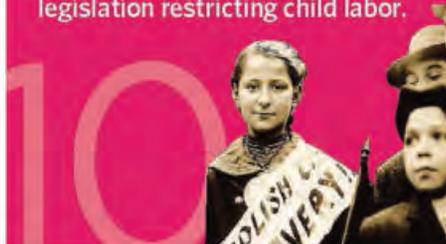
The Mansion is our heritage – but also our responsibility. This lease provides a sustainable way to protect it, maintain our presence, and ensure its legacy for generations. It's not just a business decision; it's a forward-looking commitment to preserve our past while building a secure, vibrant future.

1900

The Indiana Federation of Clubs was the only state organization that made an obvious **ALLOWANCE FOR MALE MEMBERS** by omitting "Women's" from their name.

1901

Chicago clubwoman and social reformer Jane Addams headed **GFWC'S CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE** to advocate for legislation restricting child labor.



The 56th Congress of the United States of America granted the General Federation of Women's Clubs a **FEDERAL CHARTER**.



# TRIVIA Showdown

Author Roald Dahl once stated that “Life is more fun if you play games.” General Federation of Women Club members from across Texas came to Austin for serious issue studies at the Fall Board meeting in September but were also treated to a taste of GFWC Trivia at the behest of President Barbara Harvey, who had experienced the locally held game that has provided multiple scholarships for the Eleanor Brackenridge Literary Club.

Teams formed by lot clustered in the Mansion’s ballroom to compete by answering ten questions in four categories covering GFWC topics ranging from Women icons on stamps to scrambled areas of GFWC concerns.

Winners were declared after moments of perplexed looks and bursts of revealed knowledge! Laughter and comradery obviously grew as the Trivia contest continued, and the hosting EBLC members loved being the source of women’s abilities being displayed.

Trophy plaques for 1st through 3rd place winners were ultimately awarded to those whose sharp knowledge proved best while it’s believed all found Trivia at the Mansion to be an entertaining element for Texas clubwomen to enjoy, thus proving “Life is more fun if you play games.”

Written by Diann Walleck  
EBLC Secretary / and Question Creator  
EBLC President Carolyn Strnadel  
EBLC Past President Carolyn Swenson



(Above left to right ) Carolyn Swenson, Carolyn Strnadel, and Diann Walleck. Thank you, ladies!



(Above) Diann Walleck ( moderator and question coordinator) (President Carolyn Strnadel and Past President Carolyn Swenson in background) Also one of the categories is on screen.



# Photography Contest

Tina O'Connor  
GFWC Texas Photography Contest

I hope that you are taking pictures and keeping the Photography Contest in mind! It is easier than ever to enter since digital pictures are now preferred. Do not forget the categories:

**Our World Up Close**—Create a visual that offers a novel viewpoint or a macro image that takes the viewer into a whole new, tiny world. Macro photography creates photos of small items that are larger than life. Some common examples are bugs or parts of flowers.

**Natural Wonders**—Use wide angles and panoramas, or changeable landscape images, to showcase mountains, meadows, sandhills, rivers, waterfalls, oceans, deserts, or any other magnificent vista.

**Reflections**—Feature a setting, situation, or landmark that brings back poignant memories, or capture a fleeting image reflected in glass, water, or another mirrored surface.

**GFWC LIVING THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT CONTEST** —These photographs capture the special moments in the lives of GFWC clubwomen as they meet, plan, advocate, volunteer, or celebrate, in groups or one-on-one.

## Texas For Fun Contest:

**Grandchildren Gems** – Best Pictures of a Grandchild... Be creative. Judging will be based on the quality of the photo as well as the appeal of the photo (not the cutest grandchild!)

**Texas Our Texas** -The Best Picture reflecting Texas that is also entered in one of the GFWC Categories.

The Deadline to enter is not until **March 15th**, so you have plenty of time to take some great photos! Your District president has the complete rules and requirements and you can always contact me for more information! I would love to have everyone enter photos this year!

Tina O'Connor      806 891-1591      [totexasclubwoman@gmail.com](mailto:totexasclubwoman@gmail.com)

## PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST - Deadline is March 15th

- Photographs may be vertical/portrait or horizontal/landscape.
- Photographs must be the original work of the member submitting the photograph.
- Photos can be digital (preferred by GFWC) or an 8 X 10-inch print.
- Print photographs must be mounted on a rigid 8 X 10-inch board and overall thickness may not exceed 3/8 inch. No mattes, frames, or hangers are to be included.
- Printed photographs will not be returned.
- Each photograph must have with it the following information: Contest name; World in Pictures ( Our World Up Close, Natural Wonders, Reflections) or GFWC Living the Volunteer Spirit, Grandchildren Gems, Our Texas; Photographer's Name, Email

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Address, Mailing Address, and Phone Number; Name and State of the sponsoring club; Title and a brief caption giving location, date, and other pertinent information about the photograph; Arrow indicating the top of the photograph. The information needs to be emailed to me along with the photo. Do send by email... not text.

## CATEGORIES

**THE WORLD IN PICTURES CONTEST** — These photographs showcase the people, places, and things at home and around the world that impact our lives in a meaningful way, as expressed in these three categories:

**Our World Up Close**—Create a visual that offers a novel viewpoint or a macro image that takes the viewer into a whole new, tiny world. Macro photography creates photos of small items that are larger than life. Some common examples are bugs or parts of flowers.

**Natural Wonders**—Use wide angles and panoramas, or changeable landscape images, to showcase mountains, meadows, sandhills, rivers, waterfalls, oceans, deserts, or any other magnificent vista.

**Reflections**—Feature a setting, situation, or landmark that brings back poignant memories, or capture a fleeting image reflected in glass, water, or another mirrored surface.

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Texas Our Texas -The Best Picture reflecting Texas that is also entered in one of the GFWC Categories.



**Pick your device  
and  
take pictures!**



# FUNDRAISING AT GFWC TEXAS FALL BOARD



OUR MEMBERS ARE GENEROUS AND LOVE TO  
SHOP THE FUNDRAISING TABLES.  
THEY ARE ALSO  
COMPETITIVE!

# Fall Board Art Exhibit and Reception



Heavy hors d' oeuvres, water, and tea were served to members and guests.

Wine was furnished by the Executive Committee.



## GAY CHEDESTER

### Artist Biography

A native Texan, Gay Chedester attended North Texas State University (now UNT) where she majored in Art – Drawing and Painting. Additional studies in art included a master’s degree from Eastern Washington State College (now EWU) in Cheney, WA. As a Graduate Teaching Fellow at Eastern, Gay taught Basic Two-Dimensional Design. She later became an Instructor of Art at Spokane Falls Community College where she taught Color Theory, Painting Media, and Art Appreciation.

As an Instructor of Art at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, Gay taught all of the art methods courses required for Art Teacher Certification, both elementary and secondary. While living in Augusta, Georgia, Gay was an assistant professor of art at Augusta College, teaching art history and supervising student art teachers.

Gay went on to study art education under Edmund B. Feldman and creative thinking with E. Paul Torrance at the University of Georgia, where she earned her doctoral degree.

Gay has exhibited in juried shows in Corpus Christi and Houston. Her works explore the relationships of color, line, and visual texture in order to create the illusion of contemporary abstract landscapes.

She is a member of the San Antonio Women’s Federation, Alamo District, and served as Club President from 2018 to 2020.

### Captions for the art work

*Sea Breeze* – “The calm after the storm”

*Coastal Canyon*. Theodore Roethke’s poem “In a Dark Time” is the inspiration for Coastal Canyon. By creating a visual place midway between perilous heights, sand and “tearing” sea, I attempt to replicate Roethke’s search for meaning and his introspection of his inner landscape.



Sea Breeze



Coastal Canyon

Acrylic and Prismacolor

## RENU KUPPUSWAMI

### Artist's Biography

Renu Kuppuswami is a resident of Hillsboro, Texas. Renu has been in Hillsboro for ten years where she teaches at Hill College. Classroom is her "happy place." Renu has resided in the United States for forty years and likes to quote her late husband who would say she is Indian by birth and Texan by choice! She is the proud mother of two young men who live in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Renu writes, "I owe my art to the good God above for gifting me the ability and to my late husband Dr. James Earhart for unleashing my potential. I primarily like to sketch women. I sketch women's faces and their varied expressions that grab my attention. My medium is charcoal and graphite. I have now been sketching for a little over ten years.

"I am new to GFWC Texas, a member to the Monday Review Club of Hillsboro, Capitol District. I extend my gratitude to all concerned for this opportunity to share my art."

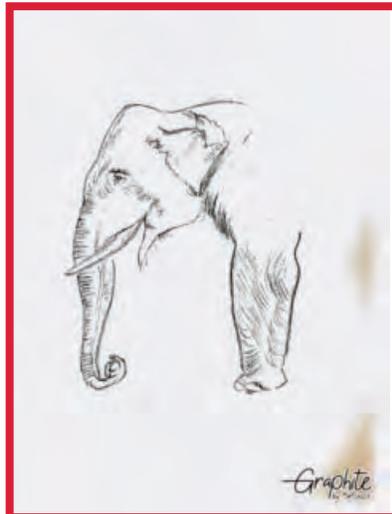
### Captions for the art work

die Mähne  
Elefant  
Self-immolation



die Mahne

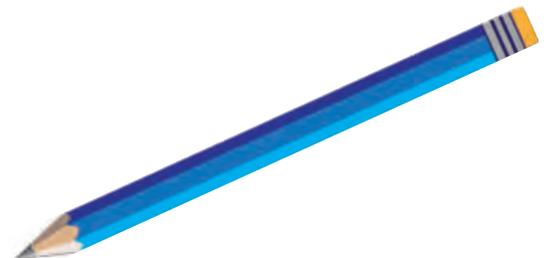
Charcoal and Graphite



Elefant



Self-immolation



## TINA O'CONNOR

### Artist's Biography

Tina O'Connor lives in Levelland, Texas, and is a member of the Las Fidelis Study Club in Caprock District.

Tina taught History at the high school level for 26 years before she retired and joined Federation. Having grown up with a mother who was a member of the same club for sixty-two years, she grew up knowing about Federation.

Her mother was an artist, and Tina always drew but did not attempt much else until she retired from teaching. Her first attempts at painting were using oils. Within the last year, Tina began to try her hand at watercolors. Very much still an amateur, Tina says that she really enjoys using watercolors and finds it relaxing and enjoyable to dabble with this art medium.

### Captions for artwork:

Oil - Winter Isolation

Watercolor 1- Spicy Colors

Watercolor 2 - Hummm! Mimosa, Lemonade, Margarett!



Winter Isolation



Spicy Colors



Oil and Watercolor



Hummm! Mimosa, Lemonade, Margarett!

# GFWC South Central Region

## Conference



September 4 - 7, 2025

San Antonio, Texas

Debbie Thomas, SCR President

## Report and Photo Highlights

## GFWC South Central Region Conference: Fiesta with a Purpose

When GFWC asked Texas to host the 2025 South Central Region Conference the weekend after Labor Day, we eagerly said yes—even though visions of a scorching San Antonio September immediately came to mind. We selected the vibrant River Walk as our backdrop, confident that its charm would outweigh the heat. As registrations opened, it became clear our members felt the same. More than 105 attendees joined us for what became a warm, festive, and unforgettable gathering.

Our home for the weekend was the Courtyard by Marriott Riverwalk, where the spirit of “Fiesta with a Purpose” took shape. The conference opened Thursday evening with a special welcome dinner honoring GFWC International President Suellen Brazil and the SCR Executive Committee, hosted by GFWC Texas Officers. Guests boarded a river barge for an evening of good food, cool breezes, and sparkling views of the River Walk—an experience that set the tone for the days ahead. And we had a bit of unexpected excitement: GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker’s daughter went into labor, delaying Wendy’s arrival until Friday. Fortunately, both mother and baby were doing well—and Wendy arrived ready to jump into the celebration.

Friday brought a deeper dive into San Antonio’s culture and history. Following the SCR Board meeting, attendees explored the Witte Museum, the city’s most visited museum, and a celebration of everything Texas. The stunning gowns of Fiesta Royalty captivated our group, offering a glimpse into the pageantry and tradition that make San Antonio unique.

From there, we traveled to the historic Market Square for lunch at Mi Tierra Café y Panadería, where descendants of the founding family welcomed us and shared the café’s story—from its humble beginning with three tables in 1941 to the beloved landmark it is today. Of course, no visit to Market Square is complete without a bit of shopping, and our members embraced the opportunity to pick up colorful fiesta items to wear throughout the conference.

Friday evening’s State Night featured a powerful presentation by Christina Mitchell, Uvalde District Attorney for the 38th Judicial District, on prosecuting human traffickers. The evening wrapped up with laughter and friendly competition during a lively game of Mexican Bingo—a perfect blend of fellowship and fun.

Saturday morning began with an opening ceremony, including the National Anthem led by a talented student from Incarnate Word High School and greetings from a local councilwoman. The day continued with reports and mini-workshops covering Community Service Programs, Leadership, the 2025 LEADS Graduates, Membership, Annual Giving, Protocol, and Communications and Public Relations. Jennie Award nominees were recognized for their exceptional service and leadership.

In a moment that had everyone smiling, the SCR state presidents took the stage in full fiesta flair—bright outfits, oversized glasses, and pompons—to share the projects that had made the most significant impact in their states this year. It was a joyful celebration of creativity, commitment, and the heart of GFWC service. President Debbie Thomas also ensured that, in the spirit of the GFWC International Day of Service, the SCR would participate, even though we could not gather on the actual date, September 27. Attendees brought toiletry items for a local women’s shelter, and the response was overwhelming—it took two full carloads to deliver the donations.

The conference concluded with uplifting and inspiring presentations from both the GFWC International President and the GFWC President-elect, leaving attendees renewed, energized, and proud of the work we continue to do together.

The Arizona State President invited everyone to the 2026 South Central Region Conference in Arizona this October, adding with a smile that it may not be much cooler there, either.



SCR Conference Chairman, Sylvia Reyna.



SCR Done in a Day Project.



One of many excellent dinners provided.



GFWC International President Suellen Brazil.



Enjoying Social Hour on the Riverwalk



(Top Left to Right) Arkansas and Louisiana State Presidents.



(Left to Right) GFWC Oklahoma President and GFWC Texas President viewing the Fiesta Dresses at the Witte Museum.



GFWC International President Suellen Brazil and the GFWC Executive Committee.



GFWC members on the bus taking in the sights.



Welcome Dinner for SCR Conference attendees.



GFWC State Presidents attending the SCR Conference.



Luncheon at Mi Tierra.



GFWC Texas Secretary Nancy Snead enjoyed some shopping.



Group enjoying a river cruise at night.



GFWC International President Suellen Brazil with SCR Jennie June Nominees.

(Right, Left to Right) GFWC International President Suellen Brazil and SCR President, Debbie Thomas



# “What’s Been Brewing?”

Odds and Ends of GFWC Texas Club Activities



## Western District

### Fall Board Meeting Held in Fort Stockton

(Fort Stockton) The GFWC Texas Western District Fall Board Meeting was held on October 11, 2025 at the restored Old Officer's Headquarters at the old fort in Fort Stockton, Texas. President Melissa Farley held a short executive committee meeting, then the convention was brought to order. GFWC second vice President Kathy Hajek was welcomed as special guest and speaker. A breakfast buffet and coffee were served.

Executive committee officers gave their reports. Kathy Hajak presented an interesting power point presentation highlighting the background and achievements of GFWC International and GFWC Texas. Kathy also offered a perspective on the Lone Star Administration District. Western District members had many questions about this area of interest and how the clubs would be affected should Western District decide to disband.

Maridell Fryar, who was not able to attend, provided an in-depth report on the Day at the Capitol and it's success which was read to the group.

After a delightful boxed luncheon, the meeting reconvened and Lindy Stumberg, Vice President Western District, gave a recap of the training and programs presented at the State Fall Board Meeting in Austin. She was proud to announce that Western District won eight state awards last spring! All four clubs gave a report on their club's activities since the district spring convention in April.

A wonderful selection of door prizes was handed out, and we were all delighted that Betty Ice, who has been a club member for over 60 years, won the Bee Basket, which was a district fundraiser.

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# Caprock District Dissolves, Joins Lone Star

## Caprock District Report Spring 2025

President Harvey, Executive Board, Fellow members....

As Caprock District President, I have rather unwelcome news to report with a saving grace to go along with the sad news. Caprock District has lost another club. The Progressive Study Club of Tulia has dropped out of Federation, so Caprock is now down to two clubs. This along with the inability to fill our offices has left Caprock District in the unfortunate situation of being no longer viable. The saving grace is that the two remaining clubs do have an alternative way of remaining part of the Texas Federation. The members of the remaining two clubs, the Las Fidelis Study Club of Levelland and the Phebe K. Warner club of Tahoka have voted to ask the redistricting committee for permission for these two clubs to go to the Lone Star District.

On the positive side, the two clubs are still continually active in their communities with numerous projects to serve their fellow citizens. Both clubs are participating in the National Day of Service and both clubs support Open Door, Voices of Hope, Honor Flight, Backpack programs for school children, and have numerous other local projects. Both of the remaining clubs in Caprock give scholarships and will continue to do so.

I have spent the last three years trying to motivate interest in Caprock District and Federation to no avail. I have visited each club more than once and have conducted installations and have given programs. I even traveled to Albany, Texas to give a program last spring at the invitation of Mary Lou Gilbreath. I drove to Tahoka last week and gave a program over the book, *With Courage and Common Sense*, which came about as the result of a group, The Older Women's Legacy Circle, the OWL Project, which is dedicated to getting older women to write their stories.

I find it incredibly sad that Caprock District is ending.

Caprock District has a long history. Starting in 1927, the area that covers Caprock was then Region 7. In 1960, the districts were given names, and we became the Caprock District. In 1985, there were sixty-three clubs in Caprock.

Now down to the last two clubs, Caprock is coming to an end. Caprock District will not survive but the two remaining clubs are looking forward to becoming part of Lonestar and will continue to serve their communities and be part of the GFWC Texas Federation.

Thank you.

Tina O'Connor  
Caprock District



## Caprock District

# Las Fidelis Study Club Finds Need And Fills It.

(Levelland) The Las Fidelis Study Club of Levelland, Texas participated in the National Day of Service to help victims of Domestic Violence. The Las Fidelis Study Club took a two-pronged attack to help victims of Domestic Violence by doing two separate projects.

After contacting the Women's Shelter to find out a need that this small club could help with, the Las Fidelis Ladies donated packages of underwear to the women's shelter. The Director of the shelter said that one of the first things the women coming into the shelter want is a shower. Since these women often come with nothing but the cloths on their back, the shelter keeps a supply of underwear. Las Fidelis donated 122 new pairs of panties to the shelter to help with this situation.

Since children are often victims either directly or indirectly of domestic violence, Las Fidelis reached out to a foster care agency to see if they did want luggage. The club was told that most of the children they served were impacted in one way or another by domestic violence and that yes, they did want luggage. Having a suitcase as opposed to a trash bag to carry their possessions gave them a psychological boost. They said that having a suitcase ... " provided dignity, a sense of security, and stability during a chaotic and emotionally traumatic transition." Las Fidelis gathered suitcases of assorted sizes and took two carloads of luggage to the foster care facility. Both groups were very appreciative of the donations provided by the Las Fidelis ladies.

## Capitol District

# Capitol District Holds 66th Fall Board Meeting

(Lampasas) GFWC Texas Capitol District members and guests gathered in Lampasas, TX for their 66th Fall Board meeting. Hosted by the local '36 Club, this event brought together 8 clubs across Central Texas, plus GFWC Texas & Lampasas leaders to strengthen our collective community service efforts.

GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey addressed attendees, highlighting the organization's enduring commitment to volunteerism and civic engagement. Capitol District President Monica Benoit-Beatty presided over the meeting, which featured updates from various clubs and recognition of ongoing club projects.

Our Project for the Day was a collection drive for Lampasas County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Members donated oodles of stuffed animals, blankets, sheets, comforters, bedding, suitcases, backpacks, socks & underwear valued at over \$2000 to benefit children in the legal courts and foster care system. The initiative reflects GFWC's broader mission to support vulnerable populations through hands-on service.

The '36 Club President Juliann Chaney welcomed guests and introduced the Mayor of Lampasas, Honorable Herb Pearce who addressed the crowd. Luncheon speaker was Aysa Province, founder of Beautifully Loved, a children's charity that supports children and families who are undergoing childhood cancer and medical illnesses in Central Texas ([beautifullyloved.org](http://beautifullyloved.org))

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Additional highlights included a presentation from each Club President as well as highlights of recent, current and upcoming programs from our GFWC Texas Executive Leaders: President Harvey, First VP Kathy Horak-Smith, Second VP Katherine Hajek and Recording Secretary Nancy Snead.

Attendees were also treated to a wonderful homemade breakfast, a scrumptious tortilla soup, salad and dessert luncheon and adorable door prizes from Modern Study Club of Killeen.

The gathering underscored the strength of GFWC's network in Texas and the Capitol District, showcasing how local clubs like the '36 Club of Lampasas, Pierian Club of Lampasas, Modern Study Club of Killeen, Franklin Woman's Reading Club, Wednesday Review Club of Killeen, San Gabriel Woman's Club of Georgetown, Austin Woman's Federated Club and Monday Review Club of Hillsboro are continuing to make an invaluable impact in their local community every single month.



FUN!



(Right)  
Aysa Province,  
founder of  
Beautifully  
Loved.



(Left, left to right)  
The '36 Club  
President Juliann  
Chaney and  
Capitol District  
President Monica  
Benoit-Beatty



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## Lone Star District

# Activities Abound in Lone Star District

### Lone Star District Administration District - Katherine Hajek

The clubs of the Lone Star District have been very active this fall with a wide range of projects and community service.

The Albany Study Club held its annual Scholarship Quilt Show Fundraiser, raising approximately \$1,400. In May, they awarded two \$500 scholarships to deserving students.

In June, members assisted with the Shackelford County Library's Summer Reading Program for children in grades K–5. At their first meeting of the fall, the club welcomed four guests, with two deciding to join. To support continued membership growth, they voted to adjust meeting times and days to better accommodate young mothers.

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention in October, members decorated pumpkins that are now displayed at the Shackelford County Library.

The Fortnightly Club of Brenham has also been busy preparing pillow covers for veterans in honor of Veterans Day and working on their Annual Book Sale. Members of the Public Affairs Department and several others enjoyed a special gathering at the historic home of Pat Weeks. She shared the history of her home and read newspaper articles describing social events held there in 1898 and 1901, offering a wonderful look into Brenham's past.

The Literati Club of Nacogdoches continues its work supporting the preservation of the Old Main University Building at Stephen F. Austin State University and welcomes its new president, Tracy Covington-Hasbun.

## Magnolia District

# Highlights of Magnolia District Fall Board

### Julia Napper, President

(Beaumont) The Magnolia District Fall Board theme was "United in Purpose, Bound by Legacy". During our meeting we recognized four District clubs who are celebrating milestone anniversaries this year. These are GFWC The Woman's Club of Beaumont celebrating 130 years, GFWC The Woman's Civic Club of Jasper, celebrating 115 years, Woodville Woman's Study Club, celebrating 100 years, and GFWC Texas the Kirbyville Woman's Civic Club, celebrating 90 years.

Each of the eight district clubs in attendance gave a short presentation on how their club began, projects that have had the greatest community impact, and either ongoing projects or plans for future projects. This session was very well received as it allowed newer club members to learn more about their federation sisters from across the District.

As Magnolia District has several members who have served the District with distinction for many years, but who are not eligible for District Life Membership by virtue of having served as District or State President, the Executive Committee created the distinction of Magnolia Matron to recognize

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these servant leaders. We were honored to present former GFWC Texas State President Mary Beth Guy as the inaugural Magnolia Matron. She moved everyone to tears as she accepted this tribute.

Those attending were led by Billie Williams, Magnolia District Parliamentarian, in a rousing GFWC themed version of "This Little Light of Mine" as we joined our GFWC Texas sisters in celebrating World Singing Day.

GFWC The Woman's Club of Beaumont did an outstanding job hosting the meeting in their historic clubhouse. It was a wonderful day for Magnolia District.



(Left to right) Past GFWC Texas President Billie Williams, GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey, and past GFWC Texas President Mary Beth Guy.



Two presidents.



Magnolia District President Julia Napper opens the meeting.



Preparations.



A flurry of activity.

Editor's note: These pictures, some others, too, were taken at too small a DPI, plus too small for me to work with. Pictures need to be at 225 DPI and 4 x 6 size, if not larger. Thanks! Information for cut lines would be nice to receive, too.

## Pioneer District

# Pioneer District's Compass is Fixed on the Future

(Comanche) The Pioneer District recently held its Fall Board meeting in Comanche, Texas, where clubs from across the district gathered to share their favorite programs and projects. The event was an inspiring display of the hard work and dedication that these clubs put into making their communities better. Here are some of the initiatives that are making a real difference: The clubs showcased their impactful community service initiatives. They shared their popular Mad Hatter Tea and Style Show, along with plans for Wreaths Across America; one club set a record for the most

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donations raised during their Salvation Army bell-ringing campaign at Wal-Mart. Another club wowed attendees with their Taste of Granbury event, partnering with local restaurants and wineries to raise funds for community projects.

Other clubs are enriching the lives of local nursing home residents by creating fidget mats to help those with dementia and Alzheimer's stay engaged. Meanwhile, a club has been feeding their community for years through their community garden, which provides fresh produce to combat food insecurity while promoting sustainability. These examples of dedication and service demonstrate how Pioneer District clubs are making a lasting difference through creative fundraising, volunteering, and hands-on community projects.

With a shared commitment to service, the Pioneer District is poised for continued growth and positive impact in the years ahead.

These are just a few examples of the many wonderful programs that the clubs in the Pioneer District are involved in. Each of these projects reflects the shared values of service, community, and dedication to improving the lives of others. The Pioneer District is clearly thriving, with each club bringing its unique touch to the table. As they look ahead to the future, it's exciting to think about the new ideas and initiatives that will continue to shape the district and the communities they serve.



Pioneer District Executive Board.



The Amity Club of Bowie was well represented.

## South Texas District

# GFWC Texas Execs Attend Fall Board

(Kingsville) The GFWC Texas South Texas 66th Fall Board of Director's meeting was held on October 4, 2025, 9:30 a.m. at the Helen Kleberg Community Center in Kingsville, Texas. The convention was attended by 19 club women from across South Texas, including two women from the GFWC Texas Executive Committee: President-elect, Novella Byrd, and GFWC Texas President, Barbara Harvey.

The program for the meeting was given by Maribel Arredondo from the Purple Door Sexual Assault Services. Club members from South Texas District learned about the services provided to individuals who have been sexually trafficked which include counseling, legal advocacy, support groups, and

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shelter. The speaker focused on risk factors involved, behavior of traffickers, and how to potentially identify a situation where trafficking may be occurring. Members in attendance brought toiletries, household cleaning supplies, diapers, and baby wipes to be distributed to those seeking refuge in the shelter provided by The Purple Door.

All members of the convention took part in a team-building activity which involved working in groups to answer questions whose answers could be found on the GFWC Texas website as well as questions regarding GFWC Texas By-laws. This was a great opportunity for new members to learn more about GFWC and their club sisters.

A special award was presented to Lonnie Matthew for achieving her Fifth Century ESO Award for reading and reporting on 500 books. South Texas District honored Tissa Peterson for receiving the GFWC Jennie June Award at the GFWC Texas Fall Board meeting.



(Above) South Texas Team building winners!



(Above) Marsha Wellman addresses members as President Cammie Hyatt looks on.



(Right) Lonnie Matthew achieved her Fifth Century ESO Award. Congratulations!!

(Below) Items collected by members to be donated to The Purple Door.



GFWC Texas President Barbara Harvey and our "Jennie June", Tissa Peterson.



# *Calendar of Events*

*September 2025 - May 2026*

## **2025**

December 10                      GFWC Holiday Open House, Washington, DC.

## **2026**

January 19-20                      GFWC Texas HF and GFWC Texas EC Meeting,  
Austin, Texas.

March 13-14                      South Texas Spring Convention.

March 21                          Magnolia Spring Convention.

March 28                          Pioneer Spring Convention, Decatur, Texas.

April 1                              Capitol Spring Convention

April 29 -  
May 3                              GFWC Texas Spring Convention

*Calendar will be updated each issue.*

*Please send updates.*