



GFWC Roswell Cares <gfwc.roswellcares@gmail.com>

Reminder: ✨ GFWC Georgia January Monthly Connections

GFWC Georgia <news@gfwcgeorgia.org>

Sun, Dec 29, 2024 at 9:30 AM

Reply-To: news@gfwcgeorgia.org

To: gfwc.roswellcares@gmail.com



GFWC
est. 1890
**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**
GEORGIA

*Let's Stay Connected!***January 2025****The GFWC Georgia****Monthly Connections***Happy New Year!*

Aw, another year has come and gone, and a new year is beginning—2025. January is the first chapter of that brand new year—a time when we reflect on the past and plan for the future, whether it's eating healthier, traveling more, starting an exercise regimen, or simply living life to the fullest. It's a time for clubwomen to reflect on our past year as we compile, write, and submit our reports on our 2024 club activities. As we look back on the just-ended year, we marvel at how much we have done and what a difference it has made in the lives of others, no matter how small or large the project was. And how those projects have affected each of us -- whether it was seeing the smile on a child's face as he received a book or an elderly adult who received a small bag of much-needed food. I'm reminded of a quote from Fred

Rogers -- "All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we're giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbors--in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver." As we start this new year, remember that we receive as much as we give in the many deeds we do for our communities -- our neighbors. Make this new year a productive one for yourself and others.

Wishing you a year filled with new hopes, new dreams, and new achievements.

GFWC Georgia News and Events

End-of-the-Year Reports

It's that time of year to compile all your club's hours, contributions, and in-kind donations for all your projects for 2024 and submit your reports.

Need Help?

1. **GFWC Georgia Website** – From the website > *Club Resources* > *Reporting and Forms* (remember that this section is password protected.) Scroll down the page to find links to the Online Reporting Forms to report your club data. You will find the reporting forms for the Community Service Projects (CSPs), Advancement Areas, Special Projects, GFWC Georgia Achievement Goal Sheet, ESO Pledge Form, ESO Book Report Form, and GFWC Georgia LEADS.
2. **GFWC Georgia Yearbook** – Click on the link to the GFWC Georgia Reporting Guidelines in the GFWC Georgia Yearbook. These guidelines are also available in the *Reporting and Forms* section at the GFWC Georgia website.
3. **Practice Link for Online Reporting**—Go to the GFWC Georgia website > *Club Resources* > *Reporting and Forms*. The link to the practice form is at the top of the page.
4. **GFWC Georgia FAQ about Reporting**—Click to access frequently asked questions about the reporting process. Also, scroll down the *Reporting and Forms* section at the GFWC Georgia website under 2024-2026 Updated Forms for another version of the FAQs.

Need Further Assistance?

1. **Julie Walters**, GFWC Georgia 2nd Vice President – all reporting questions.
2. **Individual CSP/Advancement Areas/Special Projects Chairmen** – questions regarding a specific area.

When are Club Reports and Contest Entries Due?

Club reports (for work done in 2024 between January 1 and December 31) are due by **January 25, 2025, 11:59 PM, using the appropriate Online Reporting Form.**

If you are not using the *Track it Forward* program to record your club activities and subsequent printouts, a generic **Worksheet** is available to help compile the club's information before completing the Online Reporting Forms.

Some Contest Entries are also due by **January 25, 2025, 11:59 PM**, but several have a **February 1, 2025**, deadline. Each contest has its own form and entrance requirements.

Deadline – January 25, 2025 – 11:59 PM

- **All Community Service Program (CSP) Reports** – statistical data, narratives for top 10 projects*, most outstanding/creative project*, and Community Connection Initiative Project*. *Optional portions of the online reporting forms. Use the appropriate Online Reporting Form to submit your club report.
- **Advancement Areas** – Communication & Public Relations, Fundraising, Leadership, Legislation/Public Policy, Membership, Women's History & Resource Center, and Epsilon Sigma Omicron (ESO) Reports. Use the appropriate Online Reporting Form to submit statistical data and narratives for 10 projects, the most creative/outstanding project, and the Community Connection Initiative Project (if the area has one) for your club work.
- **Special Projects** – Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Project (DSVAP), Advocates for Children, Ella F. White Memorial Endowment Fund, Lipscomb Society, 1734 Society, and Tallulah Falls School Reports. Use the appropriate Online Reporting Form to submit statistical data and narratives for 10 projects, the most creative/outstanding project, and the Community Connection Initiative Project (if the area has one) to submit your club reports.
- **GFWC Georgia Achievement Goal Sheet** – A 2024 plan of club work, completed and submitted by the Club President. Use the **Online Reporting Form to submit your club report**. A **Worksheet** is available to help you compile your information before submitting it.
- **Arts & Culture Writing and Student Art Contests** – GFWC Member Writing Contests (poetry and short story), GFWC Youth Writing Contests (poetry and short story), and GFWC Georgia Student Art Competition. Click on the link for entrance requirements for each contest.

1) GFWC Member Writing Contests (poetry and short story) and GFWC Youth Writing Contests (poetry and short story), send **writing entries** and a **signed GFWC Creative Arts Waiver** to the State Arts & Culture CSP Chairman, either by mail or email. All entries must be postmarked or emailed by **January 25, 2025, at 11:59 PM**.

Submit to:

Julie Wilson
GFWC Georgia Arts Chairwoman
[3000 Hawks Ridge Drive](#)
[Statesboro, GA 30461](#)
E: artsculture@gfwcgeorgia.org, with the SUBJECT
LINE: GFWC Member Writing or GFWC Youth Writing

2) GFW Georgia Student Art Competition, the sponsoring club sends the **entry form** to the District Arts & Culture CSP Chairman via mail or email. All entries must be postmarked or emailed by **January 25, 2025, at 11:59 PM**.

The District Arts & Culture CSP Chairmen are:

Central East-----**Jane Brown**

GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club
[1143 Stephenson Road](#)
[Stone Mountain, GA 30087](#)
P: 404.457.2446 or 770.482.5578
E: mjbrown623@yahoo.com

Central West-----**Ann Lundin**

GFWC Old Campbell County Woman's Club

635 Sullivan Road
 Newnan, GA 30265
 P: 770.251.8035
 E: alundin@numail.org

North East-----**Elizabeth Ann Dalton**
 GFWC Dawson County Woman's Club
 155 Scenic Overlook
 Dawsonville, GA 30534
 P: 561.254.8311
 E: capnea@gmail.com

North West-----**Karen Clydesdale, Chairman**
 GFWC Atlanta Woman's Club
[34 Sloan Street](#)
[Roswell, GA 30075](#)
 P: 404.791.0952
 E: karenclydesdale@bellsouth.net

Joyce Broughton, Co-Chairman
 GFWC Marietta Woman's Club
[732 Registry Run, NW](#)
[Kennesaw, GA 30152](#)
 P: 562.833.2022
 E: jmbro49@gmail.com

South East-----**Julie Wilson**
 GFWC Magnolia Civic Woman's Club
[3000 Hawks Ridge Drive](#)
[Statesboro, GA 30461](#)
 P: 912.536.1763
 E: julieshamon@gmail.com

South West-----**Ginger Myers**
 GFWC Albany Woman's Club
[2301 W. Doublegate Drive](#)
[Albany, GA 31721](#)
 P: 229.886.8672
 E: myersginger@bellsouth.net

- **GFWC Georgia Newsletter Contests** – club newsletters for Woman's Clubs and Junior Clubs.

- 1) GFWC Georgia Garrett Newsletter Contest – for Woman's Clubs. **Submit the GFWC Newsletter Award Form** and eight (8) issues of the club newsletter via email to Cathy Jones, State President (president@gfwcgeorgia.org), and Hilda Hagarty, State Newsletter Editor (news@gfwcgeorgia.org), by January 25, 2024, at 11:59 PM.
- 2) GFWC Junior Club Newsletter Contest – for Junior Clubs. Submit the **GFWC Newsletter Award Form** and eight (8) issues of the club newsletter via email to Jennifer Stalvey, State Director of Junior Clubs (juniordirector@gfwcgeorgia.org), and Hilda Hagarty, State Newsletter Editor (news@gfwcgeorgia.org), by January 25, 2024, at 11:59 PM.

Deadline – February 1, 2025 – 11:59 PM

- **GFWC Georgia LEADS Application** --From the website > *Club Resources* > *Reporting and Forms* (remember that this section is password protected.), scroll down the page to find the Online Reporting Form for LEADS. Use this form to submit your application to be considered as GFWC Georgia's Candidate for the annual GFWC Leadership, Development, and Education Seminar (LEADS) at the 2025 GFWC Convention in Atlanta in June. Click [here](#) for more information about LEADS, including a copy of the GFWC Georgia LEADS application.
- **Arts & Culture: GFWC Georgia Photography Contests** – Two opportunities to participate in the GFWC Georgia Photography Contests.

1) **The World in Pictures** (showcases people, places, and things at home and around the world that impact our lives in a meaningful way – *Our World Up Close*, *Natural Wonders*, and *Reflections* categories) and

2) **GFWC Living the Volunteer Spirit** (captures special moments in the lives of GFWC women as they live the volunteer spirit).

Submit the photograph, **the official entry form**, and a signed **GFWC Creative Arts Waiver Form** via mail to the GFWC Georgia Arts and Culture CSP Chairman, Julie Wilson. All entries must be postmarked by **February 1, 2025**.

Julie Wilson

GFWC Georgia Arts and Culture CSP Chairman

[3000 Hawks Ridge Drive](#)

[Statesboro, GA 30461](#)

- **Arts & Culture: The GFWC Georgia Member Craft Competition** is open to all GFWC Georgia members who are not professional craftsmen. Members can showcase their talents in stitchery, sewing, knitting/crocheting, quilting 1 (hand), quilting 2 (machine), nature crafts, jewelry, miscellaneous (basketweaving, pottery, etc.), painting 1, painting 2 (on materials other than a canvas), and sketch art, ink, or charcoal. Each member may submit one entry per category but can enter multiple categories.

Submit the entry form via mail or email to the District Arts & Culture CSP Chairman by February 1, 2025 – 11:59 PM.

- **Irene J. Watts Outstanding Clubwoman Award (Junior Clubs Only)** – Given to the Junior Clubwoman who has served her club and community through her club work. Mail a special report, as outlined in the format section of the award, to the GFWC Georgia Junior Conference Awards Chairman by **February 1, 2025**.

Shelby Holland

GFWC Toccoa Junior Woman's Club

225 Crawford Circle

Toccoa, GA 30577

- **Outstanding Citizen Award (Junior Clubs Only)** – Given to the Junior Clubwoman who has served her community in many exceptional ways – club, church, employment, and family. Mail a special report, as outlined in the format section of the award, to the GFWC Georgia Junior Conference Awards Chairman by **February 1, 2025**.

Shelby Holland

GFWC Toccoa Junior Woman's Club

225 Crawford Circle

Toccoa, GA 30577

Deadline – February 15, 2025 – 11:59 PM

- **GFWC Georgia Club President's Statistical Report** – Statistical information on the work the club completed in 2024 – just the numbers for projects and dollars. From the website > *Club Resources* > *Reporting and Forms* (remember that this section is password protected.). Scroll down the page to find links to the Online Reporting Forms to report your club data.

Deadline – March 15, 2025 – 11:59 PM

- **GFWC Website Contest** -- Each club or state federation may submit one website for entry. Click on the link for complete details about the contest. A fillable **GFWC Website Contest entry form** is available. Entries may be sent via email to **CPREntries@gmail.com** and **Programs@gfwc.org**. The entry must include the completed GFWC Website Contest entry form, and the subject line must state *Website Contest Entry and the club or state's name*.
- **GFWC Newsletter Contest** – Each club or state federation may submit one newsletter issue for entry. Click on the link for complete details about the contest. A fillable **GFWC Newsletter Contest entry form** is available. Entries may be sent via postal mail or emailed to the GFWC Communications and Public Relations Chairman.

Printed issues, along with the completed entry form, should be sent to the GFWC Communications and Public Relations Chairman and GFWC Programs:

Becky Bolden
GFWC Newsletter Contest Chairman
[4510 Hidden Meadows Lane](#)
[Monroe, GA 30656](#)

And a copy to:

GFWC Programs
[1734 N Street NW](#)
[Washington, DC 20036](#)

The envelope should be clearly marked *GFWC Newsletter Contest*.

Electronic entries (including the completed entry form) should be sent to

CPREntries@gmail.com and **Programs@GFWC.org**. The subject line must include the *GFWC Newsletter Contest and the club or state's name*.

For a PDF of the End-of-the-Year Reports (that includes links to the websites, guidelines, forms, and email addresses), click on the button below.

GFWC Georgia End-of-the-Year Reports

Club Events

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

Thank you for all you do!

The LaFayette Woman's Club would like to invite all
first responders and staff to join us in an
appreciation lunch, FOR YOU.....

JANUARY 9, 2025
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
LAFAYETTE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SOUPS, CHILI, STEWS, SWEET TREATS AND
GREAT FELLOWSHIP

Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
January 9, 2025
GFWC LaFayette Woman's Club

GFWC News and Events

GFWC 2024-2026 Membership "Educate, Engage, Empower" Recruitment Campaign



Fall: FOCUS ON: "Member Value and Benefits of Belonging"
Report Due for October, November, and December Recruitments

Deadline: January 2, 2025

Complete the fillable [Campaign Report Form](#) and send to:

GFWC via mail (address is on form) or email - GFWC@GFWC.org.

- Send a copy of the report to membership@gfwcgeorgia.org for the GFWC
Georgia Third Vice President
Clubs recruiting 3 or more new members will be listed in the *GFWC Clubwoman*
magazine.

THE GFWC LEARNING GATEWAY SERIES



Join us for the Winter 2025 GFWC Learning Gateway Series.

Start 2025 off right with 2024-2026 GFWC Honorary Chairmen webinars. Register Today!

January 27, 2025, at 7 p.m. ET - ESO Beyond the Page, Mystery with a Mission

Join Amazon's best-selling and award-winning author Amy Peele, GFWC Education, and Libraries/Health and Wellness Honorary Chairman, as she dives into her book "CUT" and how she brought a 35-year career in the transplantation field to the pages. Her Transplant Medical Murder Mystery series is referred to as "mystery with a mission and a side of humor" and enjoys five-star reviews on Goodreads and Amazon.

<https://bit.ly/3AkgYoc>

GFWC Chairmen Updates & Handouts

During each administration, the GFWC CSP, Advancement Areas, and Special Programs Chairmen publish a quarterly newsletter to further inform the members about their respective areas. Click below to access these recent newsletters.

Education & Libraries +
ESO

Fundraising

WHRC

Legislation/ Public Policy

January Observances

- Bath Safety Month
- Book Blitz Month
- Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
- Lifelong Literacy in America Month
- National Birth Defects Prevention Month
- National Blood Donor Month

- National Personal Safety & Stalking Awareness Month
- National Poverty in America Awareness Month
- National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month
- National Soup Month
- Teen Driving Awareness Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month

- National Clean Up Your Computer Month
- National Eyecare Month
- National Glaucoma Awareness Month
- National Mentoring Month
- Financial Wellness Month
- Get Organized Month
- International Creativity Month

- Hobby Month
- Hot Tea Month



The Month of January

January is named after the Roman god Janus, who was the protector of gates and doorways and symbolized beginnings and endings. Janus is depicted with two faces, one looking into the past, the other with the ability to see into the future.

The months of January and February were not originally in the ancient Roman calendar, as the winter months were considered dormant in agriculture and war-making.

Stone = Garnet

Flowers = Carnation and Snowdrop



January's birthstone, the garnet, is surrounded by folklore and was known for its healing properties. The gem's name references the bright-red pomegranate fruit, although the stone has various colors. The word "garnet" originates from the Latin word *granatus*, meaning "seeds," likely due to its pomegranate seed-like appearance.

A great amount of folklore surrounds the garnet through many cultures and periods, but one common thread prevails - it protects its wearer from something, whether it's enemies, illness, or bad dreams. For centuries, it was viewed as a symbol of love and friendship and a way to promote protection and healing. In the third and fourth-century Rome, garnets were carried for protection by warriors going into battle. Over the years, royalty favored the gem for jewelry and garment adornments for their protective abilities. Native American healers thought the garnet could protect against injury and poison, while in ancient Egypt, it was thought to ward off bad dreams and cure depression. Asian tribes used garnets as bullets, believing they would cause more harm. In ancient and medieval times, the garnet was used as remedies for inflammatory diseases, to soothe the angry heart, and to cure indigestion and sore throats.

The garnet is one of the oldest known gemstones, dating back to the Bronze Age. The tombs of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs were discovered to include garnet necklaces, talismans, and inscribed rings or stones, thought to have magic powers and bring good luck. The ancient Greeks and Romans used garnet signet rings to wax-seal important documents. Today, due to its tendency to break into irregular grains, it is not simply for fashion -- it is used as an abrasive. Garnet is used in sandpaper for bare and unfinished woods, along with sanding belts, discs, and strips.

It's also utilized for water filtration in abrasive blasting material called water jet cutting.

January's birth flowers are the carnation and snowdrop. Translated from Greek, the carnation is often called the "flower of the gods." It grew in the wild on the hillsides of Greece and is thought to be named by the Greek botanist Theophrastus. Its history dates back to when it was used in ancient Greece and Roman times in garlands, art, and decor.

At one time, the carnation was used to treat fevers in Europe. In the Elizabethan era, it was used to spice wine and ale as a substitute for clove. An essential oil was extracted from its flower and used for aromatherapy and perfumes. It is traditionally prescribed in European herbal medicine to treat coronary and nervous disorders.

The carnation was imported to the U.S. in the 1850s, and within two decades, more than 50 varieties were available. It has long been a staple in the flower industry, especially for Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, due to its meanings of love and remembrance.

Like roses, different-colored carnations convey different meanings -- love, devotion, admiration, and resistance. According to Christian legend, the first pink carnation on Earth grew from Mary's tears when she wept for Jesus as he carried the cross. Thus, a pink carnation often symbolizes a mother's unyielding love. The red carnation symbolizes affection and love but is also a symbol of socialism and the labor movement. White carnations symbolize purity and good luck and are used in remembrance of veterans and the resistance in World War II.

The snowdrop is one of the earliest garden flowers to bloom, emerging in late winter or early spring, sometimes when snow is on the ground. The snowdrop's genus name, *Galanthus*, is derived from the Greek words *gala* (milk) and *anthos* (flower), referencing the flower's pure white appearance.

Native to the cooler mountainous, wooded, and grassland regions of southern Europe and Asia Minor, it was used as a folk remedy for various ailments. The ancient Greeks used an extract from it for its mind-altering effects.

Snowdrops are used to express both sympathy and celebration. It is thought to provide optimism, hope, and rebirth during happy times, but it symbolizes compassion following a death or misfortune. However, in the Victorian Era, it represented death and was considered bad luck to bring even one inside.

"January: The month of opportunity, the month of inspiration, and the month of change."

Anonymous

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Every year since 2010, the President has dedicated the month to raising awareness about human trafficking and educating the public about how to identify and prevent this crime. The U.S. Department of State raises awareness of human trafficking domestically and abroad through U.S. embassies and consulates.

SIGNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING – LOOK OUT FOR:

- Someone not free to leave, come or go
- Owes a large debt, unable to pay
- Does not speak for herself or himself
- Much older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Has bruising or untreated medical conditions
- Unpaid or paid very little
- Scared, anxious, traumatized, malnourished
- Underage
- Has long or unusual working hours
- Lack of clothing or sexualized clothing
- No control over own identity documents
- Seems intimidated or threatened



OCT-2021

During this month, we celebrate the efforts of foreign governments, international organizations, anti-trafficking entities, law enforcement officials, survivor advocates, communities of faith, businesses, and private

citizens worldwide to raise awareness about human trafficking.

More than 20 years ago, the **Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA)** enshrined the United States' commitment to combating human trafficking domestically and internationally. In 2010, by presidential proclamation, President Obama declared January "National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month," and every year since, each president has followed this tradition.

There are estimated to be more than 27.6 million people — adults and children — subjected to human trafficking around the world, including in the United States. Traffickers often take advantage of instability caused by natural disasters, conflict, or a pandemic to exploit others.

To read more about modern slavery and human trafficking in the United States and globally, click on the report from Hope for Justice, one of our affiliate organizations.

Hope for Justice Briefing - May 2024

National Stalking Awareness Month

While legal definitions of stalking vary between jurisdictions, a good working definition of stalking is *a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress*.

Many people use "stalking" as a fun term for digging up details about people through social media, but the true meaning of the word creates fear for those who have been victims of the crime. Stalking is more than just going through a person's status or photos. It

**NATIONAL
STALKING
AWARENESS MONTH**
2025
KNOW IT. NAME IT. STOP IT.

However, you can also face an aggravated stalking charge if you display a weapon, the victim is under 18, and you are at least 5 years older than them, or you make a credible

is following them around to discover every intimate detail about their life. Stalking includes phone calls, obsessive text messages, notes left on cars, creepy gifts, or messages on social media platforms.

In Georgia, stalking occurs when there are repeated and consistent instances that cause another person to grow fearful of the perpetrator. Because this is a broad definition, there are many instances that can warrant a stalking charge. These include but are not limited to following, surveilling, or contacting someone as a means of intimidating and harassing them.

This contact does not have to be in person but can occur electronically via phone, email, text message, or any other device. It is also considered stalking if someone violates a court protective order or even sends unwanted gifts to their victim.

threat against the person or their immediate family.

In Georgia, a first offense stalking penalty is a misdemeanor. However, if it is a first-time aggravated stalking charge, you will face more intense penalties. This is elevated to a felony offense with a minimum of one year in prison but the potential of up to ten years behind bars. You can face the same sentence for a second offense.

For more information about stalking, click the ***Understanding Stalking*** button below from the Stalking Prevention and Awareness and Resource Center.

Understanding Stalking

National Poverty in America Awareness Month



The poverty line is the estimate of the minimum level of income needed for basic life necessities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's report, 37.9 million people in the country lived under the poverty line in 2022, a third of them children. January is National Poverty in America Awareness Month, so it's time

to think of what you can do to ensure the poverty rate goes down yearly.

The government could address poverty in several ways, but it takes your voice to make it happen! You can write to your Congressional representatives about your support for:

- Granting employees more stability and predictability for their work schedules. Low-wage jobs often have constantly changing shifts, which can be a challenge for families and single parents who are already struggling to make ends meet.
- Paid leave and paid sick days. The U.S. is the only developed country that doesn't offer paid sick leave, although individual states are beginning to. Not having paid sick leave can pose an issue for families that must sacrifice necessary income to attend to their health or care for a sick child.
- Pay equity. We've heard that, on average, women make 79 cents for every dollar men make. However, this doesn't acknowledge that the gap is even wider for women of color or that men of color have their own wage gaps. Pay equity for everyone would bring many families out of poverty.

Poverty is a complicated social problem that individuals can't solve, but that doesn't mean there aren't ways for you to help fight against it in your communities or to support those living in poverty.

- Support access to quality education. Education and poverty are tied up in an unfortunate cycle. Children who come from impoverished homes face more challenges in school, especially in underfunded schools. If they don't succeed or can't afford college, it means those who grow up in poverty are likely to stay in poverty. But you can support low-income students by:
 - Creating or supporting after-school meal programs.
 - Establishing libraries or donating books in underserved areas and promoting summer reading programs— low-income students are shown to lose reading skills over the summer while their high-income peers improve.
 - Donating school supplies to children in need.
- Donate necessity items. Collect food, clothing, toiletries, first-aid items, diapers, blankets, furniture, and more items that we take for granted and give them to shelters and local organizations in your community, where they will be put to good use.

This month, spread awareness of our country's poverty problem. With your club, you can advocate for change and make your own changes.

(From GFWC.org)

National Birth Defects Prevention Month

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that about three percent of babies are born with a birth defect each year. Common birth defects include congenital heart defects, cleft lip and cleft palate, and spina bifida— which is an incomplete closing of the backbone. Birth defects can cause serious problems in a baby's health and development and are also the leading cause of infant mortality.

January is Birth Defects Prevention Month. What can you do to help?

Get Educated and Spread Awareness

Promoting awareness of the prevalence and danger of birth defects is important to make prevention possible. But it's important to learn about birth defects and then spread the word.

Some birth defects are tied to genetics and can't be prevented, but others can be. Here are a few ways the CDC suggests that a pregnant woman can reduce the risk of birth defects:

- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes while pregnant.
- Have a preconception check-up. The doctor will make sure you're healthy, up to date on your vaccinations, and not taking medicine that will negatively affect your baby.
- Wash your hands often to reduce the risk of common infections.
- Take folic acid, an essential B vitamin, before and during the early stages of pregnancy.



- If you have a cat, don't change the cat litter. This will lessen your chance of getting toxoplasmosis, an infection caused by a parasite. Cats are the primary living host of the parasite, and it's passed through their feces.

You might not be pregnant or have any plans to become pregnant, but your voice is a powerful tool, and you can make sure that the pregnant women in your life and in your community are aware of how common birth defects are and what they can do to prevent them.

Support GFWC Affiliate March of Dimes

Hosting a fundraiser for March of Dimes will help fund their research and programs that work to prevent birth defects.

Support GFWC Affiliate Operation Smile

While this month focuses on preventing birth defects, that doesn't mean treatment isn't possible. Prevention should be prioritized, but there are still ways you can make a difference in the lives of children who have been born with birth defects. For example, you can support Operation Smile's mission to provide free surgeries to children with cleft lip and cleft palate who don't have safe surgery.

This January, spread the word about birth defects and support the organizations that work to make them less common.

(From GFWC.org)

January 1 -- New Year's Day

Civilizations worldwide have celebrated the start of each new year for at least four millennia. Today, most New Year's festivities begin on December 31 (New Year's Eve), the last day of the Gregorian calendar, and continue into the early hours of January 1 (New Year's Day). Common traditions include attending parties, eating special New Year's foods, making resolutions for the new year, and watching fireworks displays.

The earliest recorded festivities in honor of a new year's arrival date back to ancient Babylon. For the Babylonians, the first new moon following the vernal equinox - the day in late March with an equal amount of sunlight and darkness -- heralded the start of a new year. They marked the occasion with a massive religious ritual called *Akitu* that involved a different ritual on each of its 11 days.

Throughout antiquity, civilizations worldwide developed sophisticated calendars, typically pinning the first

Other common customs worldwide include watching fireworks and singing songs to welcome the new year, including the popular "Auld Lang Syne" in many English-speaking countries. Making resolutions for the new year is thought to have originated with the Babylonians, who promised to earn the gods' favor and start the new year off on the right foot -- they would vow to pay off their debts and return borrowed farm equipment.

The most iconic New Year's tradition in the United States is dropping a **giant ball** in New York City's Times Square at midnight. Millions worldwide watch the event, which has occurred almost every year since 1907. Over time, the ball has ballooned from a 700-pound iron-and-wood orb to a brightly patterned sphere 12 feet in diameter, weighing nearly 12,000 pounds.

Various towns and cities across America have developed versions of the Times Square ritual, organizing public drops of items ranging from

day of the year to an agricultural or astronomical event. In Egypt, the year began with the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius.

The early Roman calendar consisted of 10 months and 304 days, with each new year beginning at the vernal equinox (March), and according to the tradition, was created by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in the eighth century B.C. A later king, Numa Pompilius, is credited with adding the months of January and February.

Over the centuries, the calendar fell out of sync with the sun. In 46 B.C., after consulting with the most prominent astronomers and mathematicians of his time, Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar, which resembles the Gregorian calendar used today.

As part of his reform, Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year, partly to honor the month's namesake, Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future. Romans celebrated by offering sacrifices to Janus, exchanging gifts with one another, decorating their homes with laurel branches, and attending raucous parties.

In medieval Europe, Christian leaders temporarily replaced January 1 as the first day of the year with days carrying more religious significance, such as December 25 (Christmas) and March 25 (the Feast of the Annunciation). Pope Gregory XIII reestablished January 1 as New Year's Day in 1582.

In many countries, revelers enjoy meals and snacks as part of their New Year's celebrations, which are thought to bestow good luck to them. In Spain and several other Spanish-speaking countries, people bolt down a dozen grapes before midnight, symbolizing their hopes for the months ahead.

In many parts of the world, these traditional New Year's dishes feature legumes that are thought to resemble

pickles to possums at midnight on New Year's Eve.

In Georgia, the Peach Drop is returning to Underground Atlanta in 2025 after a long absence.

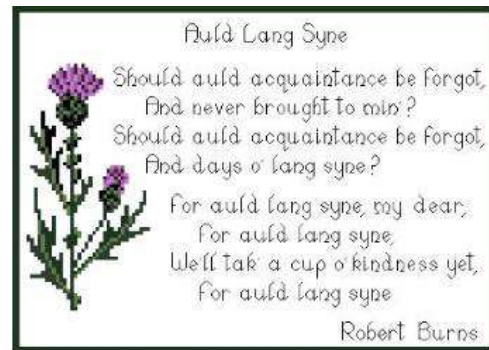
Other cities in Georgia have their drops.

- **Brunswick:** Bob the Shrimp is lowered by the local fire department during the annual shrimp drop at the Mary Ross Waterfront Park.
- **Cornelia:** Cornelia hosts a "Little Red Apple" Drop and Dance in honor of the region's apple growers.
- **Duluth:** A disco ball called the Soaring Spirit Ball is raised.
- **Gainesville:** The "Chuck the Chicken" Drop started in 2009 to benefit the Humane Society of Northeast Georgia.
- **Macon:** A 6-foot wide lighted ball with metal cherry blossoms and pink lights is dropped in honor of the International Cherry Blossom Festival.
- **Perry:** A buzzard is lowered.
- **Savannah:** Since 2014, the Savannah Riverfront has hosted *Up the Cup on River Street*, featuring the raising of a to-go cup.
- **Tallapoosa:** A stuffed opossum named Spencer is lowered.

coins and herald future financial success - lentils in Italy and black-eyed peas in the southern United States. Because pigs represent progress and prosperity in some cultures, pork, in some form, is served in Cuba, Austria, Hungary, Portugal, and other countries. Ring-shaped cakes and pastries, a sign that the year has come full circle, round out the feast in the Netherlands, Mexico, Greece, and other countries. In Sweden and Norway, rice pudding with an almond hidden inside is served on New Year's Eve, with 12 months of good fortune going to whoever finds the nut in the coming year.

- **Unadilla:** A hog is lowered at midnight.
- **Winder:** A Jug Drop takes place at the Barrow County Museum

(Adapted from History.com)



January 20 -- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the nation pauses to remember a civil rights leader. King was the first modern private citizen to be honored with a federal holiday.

But the push to honor him took years. U.S. Representative John Conyers from Michigan called for a holiday honoring Dr. King four days after he was killed. The bill stalled in Congress. He would persist year after year, enlisting help from the Congressional Black Caucus; it took 15 years for King's birthday to become a federal holiday.

In 1983, Congress passed the legislation, and President Ronald Reagan signed it into law. One of the hassles of getting this enacted was the date of January 15. Many said it was a holiday too close to Christmas and New Year's. So, to compromise, it was decided to make it the third Monday in January. Moving the date helped get

He did not achieve national importance until 1955 when he led the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama -- a boycott focused on a black seamstress, Rosa Parks, who refused to give her seat to a white male passenger and was fined \$14. Activists coordinated a bus boycott to end segregation in the city's transit system, which would continue for 381 days, with King as the protest's leader and official spokesman.

In 1957, emboldened by the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he and other civil rights activists -- most of them fellow ministers -- founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a group committed to achieving full equality for African Americans through nonviolent protest. This organization gave him the foundation to expand his civil rights campaign throughout the South. He organized many protests and marches, with his most famous being the 1963 "March on Washington," where he delivered his infamous "I Have a

the holiday passed. The holiday was first observed in 1986

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1920, in Atlanta, GA, the second child of Martin Luther King, Sr., the pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Alberta Williams King, a former schoolteacher.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a social activist and Baptist minister who played a role in the American civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. King sought equality and human rights for African Americans, those at an economic disadvantage, and all victims of injustice through nonviolent resistance and peaceful protest.

King, a gifted student, was admitted to Morehouse College at 15. Although he had not intended to follow in his father's footsteps by joining the ministry, he changed his mind while he was a student at Morehouse, went on to study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, and earned a doctorate in systematic theology at Boston University in 1955.

Dream" speech -- a spirited call for peace and equality. In 1964, he became the youngest person ever to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while in Memphis, Tennessee, to help organize a strike of the city's sanitation workers, who were mostly black, he was shot while standing on his motel balcony. The assassin, James Earl Ray, pleaded guilty to the murder and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. He later recanted his confession and gained some unlikely advocates, including members of the King family.



January 29 -- Chinese New Year



The Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year) is one of the most important celebrations of the year among East and Southeast Asian cultures. It is held for multiple days, not just one day as in the Gregorian calendar's New Year.

Did You Know?

San Francisco, California, claims its Chinese New Year parade is the biggest celebration outside of Asia. The city has hosted a Chinese New Year celebration since the Gold Rush era of the 1860s, a period of large-scale Chinese immigration to the region.

Each culture celebrates the Lunar New Year differently, with various foods and traditions that symbolize prosperity, abundance, and togetherness. In preparation for the Lunar New Year, houses are thoroughly cleaned to rid them of inauspicious spirits that might have been collected during the old

The Lunar New Year begins on January 29, 2025, and is the Year of the Snake. Although the holiday is commonly called "Chinese New Year" in the West, it is the most celebrated and longest of all Asian festivals and is observed by millions worldwide.

Tied to the lunar calendar, the holiday began as a time of feasting and honoring household and heavenly deities, as well as ancestors. It starts with the first moon, which occurs between the end of January, and spans the first 15 days of the first month of the lunar calendar until the full moon arrives.

Each year in the Lunar calendar is represented by one of the 12 zodiac animals. Each year is associated with an animal corresponding to an element -- earth, water, fire, wood, or metal. The year 2025 is the year of the wood snake-- a symbol of craftiness, mysteriousness, luck, authority, longevity, and fortune. People born in the Year of the Snake are known for their mysterious and intelligent nature. They are often deep thinkers with sharp wit and a keen eye for detail.

year. Cleaning is also meant to open space for goodwill and good luck.

The light of fireworks, lanterns, and candles banishes the symbolic darkness of night. Hundreds of man-made paper lanterns are hung in public areas, bringing good luck to the new year.

There are dragon dances, performances, and festival parades with music and acrobatics. The festivities continue for two weeks, finishing with a special lantern festival, which signals the end of the New Year celebration period.

Foods made from glutinous rice are commonly eaten, representing togetherness. It is traditional to serve long noodles -- Longevity Noodles, symbolizing a long life. Another popular recipe is Chinese Dumplings, symbolizing good luck and wealth. Families wrap them up and eat them as the clock strikes midnight.

"Good Luck" is a common theme of the New Year. Elders give out red envelopes containing "lucky money" to children. Sometimes, offerings are made to temples.

Calendar of Events

(Events in **Bold** are GFWC/GFWC Georgia events.)

January 1	New Year's Day
January 1	World Day of Peace
January 2	National Motivation & Inspiration Day
January 2	Deadline for GFWC's "Educate, Engage, and Empower" Recruitment Campaign -- Member Value and Benefits of Belonging—report for October, November, and December Recruitments.
January 3	119th Term of the U.S. Congress begins
January 5	Twelfth Night

January 5	National Bird Day
January 6	Epiphany
January 6	Technology Day
January 9	Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
January 10	National Save the Eagles Day
January 11	National Human Trafficking Awareness Day
January 12	National Hot Tea Day
January 13	Georgia General Assembly convenes
January 13	Korean American Day
January 13	Stephen Foster Memorial Day
January 13	Clean Off Your Desk Day
January 14	Ratification Day
January 15	Humanitarian Day
January 16	National Religious Freedom Day
January 16	GFWC Georgia Finance Committee Meeting
January 17	Benjamin Franklin's Birthday
January 18	National Stalking Awareness Day of Action
January 19	World Religion Day
January 19	National Sanctity of Human Life Day
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day/National Day of Service
January 20	60th Presidential Inauguration Ceremony
January 21	National Hugging Day
January 23	Maternal Health Awareness Day
January 24	International Day of Education

January 25	Robert Burns Day
January 25	Deadline for Club Reports for CSPs, Advancement Areas, Special Projects and Programs, and GFWC Georgia Achievement Goal Sheet via Online Reporting Forms -- due by 11:59 PM
January 25	Postmark and Email Deadline for GFWC Georgia Student Art Competition entries to the District Arts and Culture Chairman. Refer to the GFWC Georgia Yearbook for guidelines and entry forms.
January 25	Postmark Deadline for GFWC Member Writing Contests (short story and poetry) and GFWC Youth Writing Contests (short story and poetry) to the State Arts and Culture CSP Chairman, Julie Wilson. Refer to the GFWC Georgia Yearbook for guidelines and entry forms.
January 25	Email Deadline for the GFWC Georgia Newsletter Contests. Refer to the GFWC Georgia Yearbook for guidelines and entry forms.
January 26	International Customs Day
January 27	International Holocaust Remembrance Day
January 29	Chinese New Year -- Year of the Snake begins
January 31	National Inspire Your Heart with Art Day

Reminders

2025 GFWC Convention

The Countdown Has Begun!

GFWC Georgia is honored to be the Convention Host for the 2025 GFWC Convention, which will be held June 6-10, 2025, in Atlanta, GA, at the Omni Hotel. June will be here before we know it!

How Can You Help?

- **Georgia Welcome Table**

This is a small table area, but we need 1-2 people per shift to give our welcome goody bags throughout the convention.

- **Door Pages**

Both business meetings and meal functions require pages. Please help take tickets and monitor the doorways. Easy role to play!



Want to Help?

All the positions and times needed are listed on the Sign-Up Site

Please get in touch with Tina Neese or Laedenia Jewell if

- **Tour Hostess and Bag Assembly**

You will help ensure the ladies taking the tour are on the bus and distribute the drink/snack totes.

- **District Functions**

Each district is in charge of one to two functions during the convention. Be prepared to help your district décor chairman set up and take down during those assigned times.

- **Office Help**

Deborah Landress will be the office manager and will need people to constantly assist in this area, especially to keep it organized and move things around the room.

- **Table Hostess**

On State Night on June 6, we will feature Georgia and “the Hollywood of the South”. Each table needs a Georgia member to be present as a hostess. Georgia women know how to host events, talk, and be gracious to others! Please plan to attend this fun event, host a table, and be ready to meet and greet others with a smile!.

you have any issues signing up to volunteer.

**Sign-Up
Here**

Questions?

Convention Chairman
Tina Neese

tinadaniel1224@gmail.com

Convention Co-Chairman
Cimi Douglass

cimi.douglass@gmail.com



If you plan to volunteer at the GFWC convention and need a room, **please make your reservation soon.**

The link is [2025 GFWC Annual Convention | Omni Atlanta Hotel at Centennial Park | Omni Hotels & Resorts](#). Please do so as soon as possible, as the inventory for the block is already being booked.

Shoppe for the Greater Good

Did you know that clubs can list their fundraising activities on the GFWC Georgia website? It's especially helpful for extended fundraising events.

Just Remember:

Current Club Fundraising Items

GFWC Magnolia Civic Woman's Club

Personalized Translucent Plastic
File Totes

- items cannot be similar to those offered by GFWC Georgia.
- items must benefit the club's fundraising needs and not for personal gain.
- items must be approved before being posted to the website.

So, if you have fundraising activities, you wish to share:

- Contact Cathy Jones to get your items approved.
- Once approved, send the details to Cimi Douglass at website@gfwcgeorgia.org for posting on the website.

GFWC Cartersville Woman's Club

Handmade bowl koozies, aprons, kitchen boas, etc.

GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club

Under the Dome: How to Navigate the Georgia State Capitol and Legislative Advocacy

Click on the Button Below for ordering information on these and other items in the GFWC Georgia Marketplace.

Shoppe for the Greater Good



The GFWC Georgia Monthly Connections is a monthly e-bulletin supplementing *The Georgia Clubwoman*, our state newsletter. It offers more in-depth monthly information on GFWC and GFWC Georgia events, projects, programs, deadlines, issues and includes monthly observances and a calendar.

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