

GFWC CALIFORNIA CLUBWOMAN MAGAZINE



SEPTEMBER 2026



Chris Herzog
2026 - 2028 CFWC President

A Message From the President

Someone should do something about...

Education for women and study groups in California...we did. In 1900, the California Federation of Women's Clubs was formed, giving women the opportunity for group development, advocacy, and socializing beyond their home parlors. The honor of being the first women's club in California goes to the Ebell Club, founded in Oakland in 1876. Others ready to join included a number of clubs forming the San Joaquin Valley Federation (1897) and the San Diego County Federation (1898).

The battle for women's suffrage—the right to vote in California...we did, 1912. The California Club (1897), a civic club in San Francisco with a charter membership of 500, became the largest club to join the federation and carried national, state, and city legislative programs. Along with many active civic groups and leaders—such as Sara B. Cooper, a kindergarten movement advocate and philanthropist; Mrs. Caroline Severance suffragist and benefactor to CFWC; and Mrs. J. W. Orr, CFWC president from 1912 to 1914—California clubwomen campaigned for and finally won women's right to vote in California.

The juvenile justice system in California...we did. By 1900 most states, including California, still treated children as adults for crime conviction, housing them with adult prisoners and punishing them under adult laws. CFWC fought to change these laws. A bill establishing the first juvenile court system in California was proposed and passed by the Legislature in 1903. However, probation officers would need to be hired and trained—where would their salaries come from? The government offered no money. “The women's clubs of California will pay their salaries—get it done.”

Preserving California history and vanishing landmarks...we did. In 1906, CFWC and the Native Daughters of the Golden West spearheaded efforts to protect one of the most iconic symbols of early California history: the El Camino Real, 1769, California's first highway and the trail linking 21 missions and various pueblos spanning 600 miles. A major task was to reestablish the road and select a representative roadside marker. The chosen design was a cast-iron bell attached to an 11-foot guidepost, marking roughly two-mile intervals along El Camino Real, which largely follows U.S. 101 between San Diego and Sonoma. On August 15, 1906, the first El Camino Real Mission Bell was installed near historic Olvera Street in downtown Los Angeles.

Someone should do something about..... Continued

One hundred years later, the El Camino Real Bell project was resurrected under the guidance of CFWC President Tammy Guensler to replace some of the markers because of vandalism and neglect. In 2006, that very first mission bell ceremony was repeated, along with many others throughout the state thanks to hundreds of clubs and members' efforts.

Saving the redwood forests...establishing state parks...boycotting bird feathers adorning women's hats...exempting the meadowlark as a game bird, (became law) ...supporting kindergartens in public schools (1892)...the highway white line, Penny Pines reforestation (1947), campaign for seat belts (1960), and roadside rest areas...we did, we did much more. Over more than a century, California Federation's advocacy has helped secure many significant social improvements in California that the average citizen today may take for granted.

This is but a small sampling of our California Federation legacy. To better effect our purpose, through resolutions, small groups like our women's clubs will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with others, remaining dedicated to CFWC mission. The process is not easy.

As others have done before us, let's continue to be part of the process, encouraged by the motto Strength United is Stronger, to say "yes, something was done about that."



TABLE OF CONTENTS

California: A Mosaic of Innovation, Purpose, Service, and Legacy

A Message from the President	02
Leadership Notes	05
Women in History	07
GFWC California Wins for Environment	16
Notes from the Editor	19
Apricot Cobbler Recipe	23



FEATURED ARTICLES

08	This Information May Save Your Life
10	Litle Club That Built a Monument
12	Beacons of the Golden Coast
14	The Learning Journey
18	Building for People, Planet and Possibility





Cindy Sanders
1st Vice President, Dean

“A beautiful unfinished mosaic and a legacy with purpose”

Across our great state, from our largest cities to our smallest communities, generations of Clubwomen have come together with a shared belief that together we can make a difference. Each Club, each member, each project, and every kindness adds another piece to the remarkable mosaic that is the California Federation of Women's Clubs.

Our mosaic began with a legacy. Today we stand on the shoulders of women who saw needs in their communities and chose to do something about them. They established libraries, supported education, cared for children and families, preserved our communities, advocated for important causes and opened doors for women who would follow. They may not have known our names, but they put in the effort anyway. They were building something that they would never have the opportunity to experience themselves.

Today we are beneficiaries of their courage, determination and vision. The traditions that we cherish and treasure, the Clubs we call home and the Federation we proudly represent are all part of the legacy that they entrusted to us. But that legacy is not simply something that we inherit. A legacy is something we have to work hard to continue. Every time we welcome a new member, mentor a future leader, preserve the history of a Club, or share the story of Federation, we add another piece to that legacy.

Today, across California, our members are supporting veterans, helping children, providing scholarships, protecting the environment, addressing domestic violence, promoting literacy, supporting the arts, improving health and wellness, and responding to the unique needs of our own communities. Our purpose is greater than completing projects, holding meetings or counting volunteer hours. Those things are important, but behind them is something even more powerful. We are continuing the legacy of helping others. We are creating friendships and connections and adding pieces to our own unique mosaic design. We are giving women a place where their talents are valued, their voices are heard, and their ideas can become action. Our purpose is to look towards the future. We must continue inviting new women into our Clubs, encouraging emerging leaders, embracing new ideas and sharing the story of who we are and why Federation still matters.

The mosaic is not yet finished. There are spaces waiting for new members, new projects, new leaders and new dreams. Sometimes we may wonder where one member, one Club or one project can truly make a difference. If you look at a mosaic closely, you will find the answer. Without each individual piece, the picture is no longer complete. Every piece does matter. Every Club matters. Every member and every hour of service make a difference and adds to the beauty of the mosaic. Every woman who chooses to step forward and serve adds something that no one else can contribute in quite the same way. Together we are preserving a proud legacy. We are transforming communities through service and moving forward with purpose.

We honor the women who placed the first pieces of our Federation mosaic more than a century ago. We celebrate the women adding their pieces today and we welcome the women who will join us tomorrow and make the picture even more beautiful. I am proud of the legacy of strong women in my family that I have descended from. My great-great-grandmother immigrated from Northern Germany, newly wed to a German farmer and together they traveled several months to finally arrive in California. They created their legacy by farming in a new country and teaching their children the importance of making a living from the land. Their tenacity has passed down through five generations, and I am proud to carry on the traditions of my family. ***Her recipe for peach cobbler, which has been handed down for more than a century, a part of her legacy, can be found inside the back cover of this issue for you to enjoy with your family.***



Mickie Reed
2nd Vice President, Membership

Are We Open When They Are? **Creating Clubs That Welcome Today's Working Women**

Think of this scenario: A woman is invited to a women's club event in her town. She loves the experience and is so impressed by the club's causes and mission that she joins on the spot.

This woman works Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., in a town about 20 miles away. When she learns the meeting time is 12:00 p.m. on a Wednesday, she is disappointed because she cannot attend. So, when her dues come due the following year, she does not renew. She sadly vows to come back when things change.

Five years later, she is transferred back to her town and because she can attend during her lunch hour, she returns. She is offered a leadership position and accepts it. She becomes truly committed to the organization. To fully participate in club meetings, district conferences, and other Federation events, she must use her vacation days.

That is a true story, and that woman is me.

Most of our clubs were formed in the first half of the 20th century. Surprisingly, women primarily worked during the day, often outside the home through the 1940s, and many of our clubs originally held evening meetings. After World War II, returning soldiers reentered the workforce, and popular culture promoted the ideal of the full-time homemaker living in the suburbs, and many club meetings transitioned to daytime meetings.

The reality is that today, many women must work. Economics demand it. Those same women must balance careers, caregiving, child-rearing, and family responsibilities. In California, many live in commuter communities, leaving their home communities for the entire workday.

Our mission has not changed, but women's lives have. Ask yourself: Does our meeting schedule fit today's lifestyles? What type of community do you live in? What are the demographics? Are there opportunities for evening or weekend participation? Can projects accommodate different schedules? What message does our calendar send to someone seeing us for the first time?

Just think about everything our 100-year-old clubs have survived: 18 presidents, two World Wars, two major epidemics, the Great Depression, the Vietnam War, Free Love, the apathy of the 1990s, Y2K (which turned out not to be a thing), 9/11 and our political division. Our clubs could only have made it through by making necessary changes. Today is no different.

Membership isn't about asking women to fit into our clubs. It's about creating clubs where today's women can fit in. By understanding our communities and being willing to adapt, we honor our traditions while ensuring that our club will last for generations to come.

The question isn't whether working women have time for service. The question is whether we've made room for them to serve alongside us.



Women In History



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

Learning where we came from and where
we can go from here...

Laura Lyon White was an American activist, best known for founding the California Club, working to preserve groves of redwoods in California, and promoting the City Beautiful movement and was an ardent suffragist. White joined the campaign for women's votes in California in 1896. To that end, she organized the 41st Assembly District Club. Initially unsuccessful at securing suffrage, White refocused her activity on issues of interest to women generally

To read more about Laura Lyon White, scan the QR code below



Laura Lyon White
1839-1916

“Cathy Cheng, M.D., shows samples of a regular CPAP, and a travel-size unit. A mandibular advancement device is on the counter.”



This Information May Save Your Life

by Colleen Janssen

Your health may be at high-risk, even though you may or may not have any symptoms. Please take a few minutes to read this information, then follow up with your doctor. I promise you, the time spent will be worth it.

GFWC California Clubwoman Magazine was fortunate to interview Cathy Cheng, M.D., an expert in obstructive sleep apnea for Kaiser Permanente. Her insights into this problem were startling.

Did you know that the risk of obstructive sleep apnea in women doubles post-menopause? Doubles! This is due to the changes in hormones. At this point, a woman's risk is similar to a man's risk.

What is obstructive sleep apnea, or OSA? According to Dr. Cheng, "OSA is the physical obstruction of air getting into your nose, mouth, or throat."

This condition is chronic, and there may be times when you are choking, or gasping for air while you sleep. You may not even be aware it is happening. You may feel exhausted during the day, falling asleep easily while sitting, or in severe cases, you may fall asleep while driving. Some people have no symptoms.

Often, a bed partner will tell you that you snore or stop breathing when you are sleeping. If you live alone, you may not have any idea this is happening to you.

A doctor can order a sleep test to determine if you have OSA. There are general guidelines to determine the severity of your sleep apnea. The rates show how many times you stop breathing in one hour. These are: Mild: 5 to <15 episodes/hour, Moderate: 15 to < 30 episodes/hour, and Severe: 30+ episodes/hour. The highest number Dr. Cheng has seen is 160/hour. These episodes are extremely stressful for your body and health.

"You spend one third of your life sleeping," said Dr. Cheng, "If it is poor quality, it will affect your body."

Dr. Cheng continued, "Some of the health risks potentially affected by OSA include Dementia and Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, stroke, vision problems, depression, headaches, seizures, heart attack, congestive heart failure, kidney disease, diabetes and pre-diabetes, bone loss, and erectile dysfunction."

She said, "You may not feel anything, and be asymptomatic." Many of Dr. Cheng's patient referrals come from doctors whose practices include cardiology, GI/colonoscopy, Parkinson's, psychiatry, OB/Gyn, and endocrine/Diabetes.

This Information May Save Your Life - Continued

If you live alone, she recommends listening when a friend who travels with you mentions your snoring, or you may want to ask a travel companion if they noticed any snoring. This can be a clue that you have a problem, although not everyone who has OSA snores, it is common.

She had some suggestions for people who live alone, “You can use wearables such as a watch that tells you about your sleep, or bed-wearables.” She suggested using an app that records you while at night while you sleep. You can check the app for your results. If you are overweight or obese, or have high blood pressure, get tested.

She is concerned about children who are prescribed medications for ADHD or other mood conditions, but were not checked for OSA. Children who wet their bed past age five should be checked, too. Children can have OSA as a result of large tonsils and may need them and the adenoids removed. They may also have a small mouth and need palate expansion and tongue exercises.

Dr. Cheng said, “OSA is the world’s most common respiration disorder. It affects all genders, ages, and ethnicities.”

Let’s say testing results determine you have OSA. Now what?

The gold standard of care in 2026 is a continuous positive airway pressure machine, commonly called a CPAP machine. Before you groan, thinking of CPAP machines of the past, know that the new machines are smaller, lighter, and work well to help you regain control of the problem. There are even smaller travel-size machines to take on your cruises, vacations, or business trips. In addition, there are CPAP pillows and accessories to make using a CPAP machine even more comfortable.

A CPAP machine uses mild air pressure to keep your breathing airways open during sleep. A hose connects the bedside tabletop machine to a headgear you wear. There are many options for masks and headgear, so you can customize the therapy to what works best for you. Dr. Cheng said, “CPAP has the most effective and best outcomes.”

There are a few other options to a CPAP machine for people who find the unit doesn’t work well for them. If a person has mild to moderate OSA, there is an oral appliance called a mandibular advancement device that helps keep the jaw forward, so the tongue doesn’t slide back and cause obstruction. It is not recommended for those with TMJ, or people with many crowns or implants, gum disease, dentures, or partials.

Another option is a surgically implanted device that is a hypoglossal nerve stimulator. It sends pulses to your nerve to stop your tongue from falling back. It is for moderate to severe OSA cases where the patient is not obese. The battery must be surgically replaced every 10.7 years.

What can you do to help reduce OSA? In addition to using a CPAP machine, lose weight. It doesn’t guarantee you will be able to stop using a CPAP machine, but it may. After your weight loss, get retested.

The biggest advice from Dr. Cheng, “Some people see snoring as a cosmetic nuisance, but OSA can be easily diagnosed and treated. Don’t ignore this; get checked.”

THE LITTLE CLUB THAT BUILT A MONUMENT

Submitted by Jan West, Trinidad Civic Club Co-President

The Trinidad Civic Club owns a Lighthouse—one of two Lighthouses in Trinidad, a small, coastal fishing village in Northern California, population 325. The original, functioning Lighthouse has existed on Trinidad Head since 1871. In 1949, the Club built the second one on the bluff above Trinidad Bay to house the 1871 Fresnel Lens; the 1898 Fog Bell from the Head Lighthouse was placed nearby, both navigational aids decommissioned by the Coast Guard in the late 1940s due to electrification.

The Club serves as steward of the Memorial Lighthouse. Our world turned upside down when the Lighthouse, one of Humboldt County's most beloved icons, was threatened by coastal erosion in 2017. The project began with 15 active members, mostly senior women, determined to save the Lighthouse and ended with the dedication of the Monument at Trinidad Harbor in October 2025. The Trinidad Civic Club is very grateful to the CFWC for its recognition of our service with the 2024-25 Community Impact Award upon completion of this challenging project.

Club members were instrumental, spending tireless hours fundraising from 2017 - 2025, not knowing the final cost would be a staggering \$650,000! The leadership team included Co-Presidents, Dana Hope and Jan West; Treasurers, Patti Fleschner and Katrin Homan. The Trinidad Rancheria joined as co-sponsor in 2019. Their expertise and support, including the sovereign land where the Monument was built, were key to the project's completion. All the bills have been paid, but fundraising continues into the ninth year to pay significant, annual maintenance costs exacerbated by salt in the ocean air and fierce winds in the harsh environment. It is quite astounding that a small group of ladies were able to raise this much money to accomplish this monumental task.

The Club embarked on a fundraising campaign to gain community support and to organize wonderful events, such as our annual *Holidays in Trinidad* and *A Valentine's Evening*. We sold a variety of donated items, such as art, jewelry, clothing, and household goods in our popup *Unique Boutique*, while providing concessions at many events. The fundraisers provided great entertainment for our small, rural community and offered a chance to tell the story of the Memorial Lighthouse Project.

Along with our direct solicitation campaign, *Memorial Lighthouse Friends*, to acknowledge supporters who donated \$250 - \$100,000 and with the online appeal for the *Season of Giving*, we learned the power of community and found that a worthy cause generates dedicated support from generous donors who care about the Lighthouse. In the process of requesting donations, many stories were shared by those with personal connections to the Lighthouse and what it meant to them and their families.

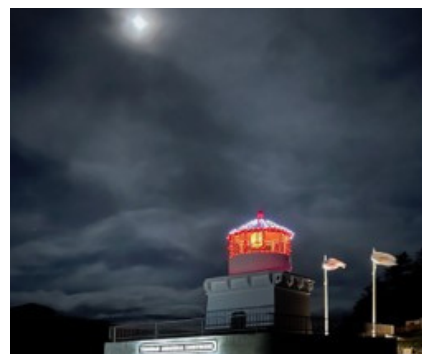
The Little Club That Built a Monument - Continued

Under the Club's stewardship, we are responsible to the families who entrust us with preserving the memory of loved ones for future generations. Beyond the memorializing, the project's importance is to meet the needs of grieving family and friends, a mission the Club established in the 1970's by engraving names on plaques and conducting annual memorial ceremonies for loved ones.

During the beautiful, solemn ceremony, the engraved names are read aloud by Janine Volkmar. Since 1997 when four Coast Guardsmen were lost in a rescue attempt at Cape Mendocino, a Coast Guard representative honors these men and speaks about the men those who dedicate their lives for the safety of others. The ceremony ends with the playing of taps and a dramatic helicopter flyover, directly above attendees. We know we have touched lives by the tears in their eyes, the expressions of gratitude and the hugs we receive. It is an emotional day for those who participate in the ceremony.

Today the Memorial Lighthouse stands among crab pots in a beautiful harbor, preserving maritime history, dedicated to those lost or buried at sea and endures as a Monument to honor the past and serve as a beacon of hope for the future.

Note: The best time to come to Trinidad is the first Saturday of any month, from 10 am – 12 pm, when the Head Lighthouse is open for Trinidad Museum docent tours, with the Lighthouse Monument at the beginning of the hike always open to visitors. Please call Jan at 707-845-5741 or email tcc@trinidadcivicclub.org for a personal tour of the Monument or for more information about your visit. www.trinidadcivicclub.org and www.trinidadmuseum.org



Photos Courtesy of Zack Stanton



Beacons of the Golden Coast: The History and Romance of California's Lighthouses

By Cathie Petithomme

May 18, 1972. I was a 15-year-old girl living in Parma, Ohio, when the song "**Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)**" by Looking Glass first played on the radio. If you're familiar with the song, you know it tells the story of a bustling harbor, sailors coming and going, and a young woman named Brandy who serves them in a seaside tavern.

For me, however, the song became something much more.

As I listened, I imagined Brandy standing in the window of a lonely lighthouse overlooking the sea, patiently waiting for her sailor to return home. To this day, I have no idea why my imagination placed her there instead of the harbor described in the lyrics, but from that moment on, lighthouses captured my heart. They became symbols of romance, mystery, hope, and unwavering devotion. Ever since, I've dreamed of spending a stormy night in a lighthouse, listening to the waves crash against the rocks while the beacon faithfully shines through the darkness.

Years later, after moving to California, I discovered that our state is home to some of the most beautiful and historic lighthouses in the country. Each one has a unique story to tell, and together they form an important part of California's maritime heritage.

Standing proudly along rugged cliffs and windswept headlands, California's lighthouses have guided countless ships safely through fog, storms, and dangerous coastal waters. Their romance extends far beyond their architecture. Built in remote locations where the land meets the sea, they stood as reassuring symbols of safety for generations of sailors. No matter how fierce the weather, the light continued to shine.

California's first lighthouse, the **Alcatraz Island Lighthouse**, was completed in **1854**, becoming the first lighthouse on the Pacific Coast. During the height of the Gold Rush, it welcomed ships carrying thousands of hopeful fortune seekers into San Francisco Bay.

Between the 1850s and the early 1900s, more than two dozen major lighthouses were built from the Oregon border to San Diego. Among the best known are **Point Pinos** (1855), the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the West Coast; **Battery Point** (1856) in Crescent City; **Pigeon Point** (1872), one of the tallest lighthouses in the United States; **Point Sur** (1889), dramatically perched atop a volcanic rock overlooking the Pacific; **Point Arena**, rebuilt after the devastating 1906 earthquake; and **Point Cabrillo Light Station** (1909), one of California's most beautifully restored lighthouse stations.

Life as a lighthouse keeper was far from easy. Before automation, keepers and their families often lived in isolation, tending the light every night regardless of weather. They climbed winding staircases, polished the magnificent Fresnel lenses until they sparkled, maintained the equipment, and sounded fog signals to warn approaching ships. Their dedication saved countless lives and ensured that the light never failed.

Beacons of the Golden West - Continued

By the mid-twentieth century, automation replaced most resident lighthouse keepers. Today, many of California's historic lighthouses continue to operate as navigational aids while also serving as museums, California State Parks, educational centers, and treasured landmarks open to visitors.

One of the most memorable ways to experience these historic beacons is to spend the night at one of the restored lighthouse properties that welcome overnight guests. **East Brother Light Station** in San Francisco Bay offers an intimate bed-and-breakfast experience reached only by boat. **Point Arena Lighthouse** and **Point Cabrillo Light Station** invite guests to stay in beautifully restored keeper cottages overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Near **Pigeon Point Lighthouse**, visitors can stay at the adjacent hostel and enjoy spectacular coastal scenery just steps from one of California's most photographed lighthouses.

A road trip along California's scenic Highway 1 offers an unforgettable opportunity to explore these remarkable landmarks. Whether you're climbing a lighthouse tower, watching whales migrate offshore, photographing dramatic sunsets, or simply listening to the rhythmic sound of the surf, each stop offers a deeper appreciation for California's coastal history.

Perhaps that is why lighthouses continue to capture our imagination long after their keepers have gone. They are more than historic structures of brick and stone. They represent perseverance, faith, hope, and the promise that even in life's darkest moments, there is always a light to guide us safely home.

As for me, the dream that began with a song more than fifty years ago still hasn't faded. I still hope that one day I'll spend a stormy night in a lighthouse, watching its beacon sweep across the Pacific. Until then, every visit to one of California's historic lighthouses reminds me why these magnificent guardians of the coast continue to inspire generations of dreamers.



Lighthouse on Alcatraz Island



East Brother Light Station



Point Arena Lighthouse



Pigeon Point Lighthouse

THE LEARNING JOURNEY

Getting Your Club Back to School

By Jennifer Nickel

Each of us reacts differently when we think of "school." Our opinions are shaped by our own experiences and opportunities. Many people picture a rigid classroom with rows of desks and chairs, where students sit silently and listen to the teacher, with little control over how or what they learn. Such classrooms do exist, and it's understandable that students who came from them run as fast as they can toward the exit, hopefully grabbing a diploma on their way out. If that was your experience, think of it simply as a bad ticket in a lottery — one where you're still guaranteed to win. In high school, I had several classes like that, and my solution was simply not to go. I found them unbearable and preferred spending time with friends instead. But I always showed up for the classes I found interesting — the honors and AP courses that eventually got me into college. And I love college! There, students set their own schedules and choose classes that interest them, while avoiding the ones they don't. Like many of my friends, I actually started at UCR while still in high school, after finding a class on "Politics and Film" that gave me the perfect loophole: a way to see movies with friends despite my mother's rules about school nights. In many ways, that captures what most people find in college — learning, entertainment, friendship, a way around problems, and a path to the things they truly enjoy. That's why your club should consider getting involved with your local colleges.

In California, most communities have a nearby college. The state has 116 public community colleges, 23 campuses of the California State University (CSU/Cal State) system — the largest public university system in the country — and 10 University of California (UC) campuses, which have earned 75 Nobel Prizes since 1934, including 5 in 2025 alone. California also has 164 private not-for-profit colleges and 268 for-profit colleges, 48 of which offer degrees. Every one of these schools offers people to learn from and with — people who could benefit from hearing what Federation has done and how membership might help them create positive change of their own. Colleges also offer skills that equip clubs and members for greater success and enjoyment, along with a more cosmopolitan environment where members can interact with people of different ages, nationalities, religions, races, political perspectives, genders, and more — building understanding and respect for groups beyond their own.

The Riverside Woman's Club has benefited from its relationship with local colleges — not only by gaining new members, but because the skills those members develop become a source of inspiration and admiration within the club. I'm a 4th-generation member of CFWC myself, but I joined after Denise Bressler invited me to a Culinary Academy program event she was attending with her husband, Larry. In turn, friends I met in my classes joined too, and I often bring up our Federation work in class when it's relevant to the topic at hand. Two of my fellow members, Margaret Colvin and Tinka Friend, once astounded and inspired me with work they created in a drawing course. (I later took the same class and improved significantly, but my artwork never came close to theirs.) Both women also discovered the value of study-abroad programs — spending months in Italy learning the language while taking weekend trips across Europe on a shoestring budget, living in nice dorms, enjoying student discounts, and having an English-speaking program coordinator to turn to whenever they needed help. Tinka and her husband spent months in Europe together, earning college credit while saving a fortune. Some members even coordinate their class schedules, signing up together for courses like Food & Wine Pairing or a new language.

Getting Your Club Back to SCHOOL - Continued

Club members don't have to enroll as students to benefit from a nearby college, either. In 2023, the Woman's Club of Bellflower partnered with the Center for Community Engagement at California State University, Long Beach, to help students fulfill their service-hour requirements — and now welcomes 10 student volunteers every semester. The Riverside Woman's Club has done something similar on a smaller, more sporadic basis, hosting student volunteers who carried their Federation experience home with them.

Clubs can benefit colleges in ways that go beyond cash donations to programs and scholarships. Members of the Riverside Woman's Club regularly dine at the Riverside Culinary Arts Academy instead of a restaurant, supporting students training to become professional chefs. Similarly, members have served as language partners for UC Riverside students learning English, helping them practice conversational American English and culture. The vernacular taught in classrooms and textbooks tends to be formal and literary, while everyday spoken language is far more dynamic — shaped by region, socioeconomic background, gender, and more. Even strong students can lack real conversational competency if their only exposure to English comes from the classroom, which is why schools welcome "regular people" who can help. Clubs can consider hosting or joining events that support a college's international students: serving as weekly, one-on-one conversation partners, or acting as cultural ambassadors by hosting participatory events around American holidays like Thanksgiving, July 4th, Juneteenth, Day of the Dead, and Cinco de Mayo. (Interestingly, the latter two are often assumed to be Mexican or Latin American traditions, but they're not widely celebrated there. Day of the Dead, for instance, was created in California in the 1970s, and efforts to export it to Mexico, Central America, and South America have often met resistance, seen by some as disrespectful of the Indigenous and Christian religious beliefs it draws from.)

The Riverside Woman's Club also sponsors Doctor's Corner, coordinated by Dr. Desiree Reedus, which gives medical students a safe space to practice translating medical jargon into language the public can easily understand.

Whether it's taking a class to stay current on software you've used for years, saving money with a fitness class instead of a gym membership, developing a talent in art, cooking, or languages, or picking up an entirely new skill like accounting with help from teachers and tutoring centers — colleges have a lot to offer. Enrollment also comes with student discounts on everything from local restaurants and museum admission to streaming services, software, travel (like discounted bus passes, and previously a free Metrolink pass), and retail shopping at places like Dooney & Bourke, Canon, Adobe, HP, and many others. If making friends, pursuing your passions, learning new skills, and personal growth all sound appealing, look to your local college — you, your club, your community, and the world around you all stand to benefit. Studies even show that learning promotes neural plasticity, builds new brain connections, helps stave off dementia, and aids in stroke recovery.

You're never too old to help build a better future by going back to school! Learning is often taught through example: watching a parent, grandparent, or other adult keep learning shows children, and everyone else, that learning is a lifelong pursuit worth investing time in, not a chore to escape the moment childhood ends. Diplomas don't come with an expiration date. We celebrate centenarians who earn a diploma, whether it's their first or their third doctorate, because it gives us hope and confirms that no matter our age, we can keep growing for as long as we choose to. By investing your club and yourself in your local college, you open the door to adventure and a better world!

Where Curiosity Meets Creativity

GFWC California Wins for Environment at the GFWC Convention!

Submitted by Nancy "Farmer" Jones

"We are so excited that California received the award for Category 1 (States with the biggest memberships) for Environment!"

During this term, the California Federation of Women's Clubs (CFWC) Environment Chair has been promoting "Sunflowers and Sustainability." When members shared their sustainability habits for recycling, reusing, and repurposing, they received little packets of six sunflower seeds - 100 packets in all! Everyone loved growing the 12' tall sunflowers in their gardens. The CFWC Chair created and brought more packets of sunflower seeds harvested from this year's sunflowers to District and State meetings; the rest of the seed heads were left out in the garden to feed the birds.

The CFWC Environment Chair shared our GFWC Environment Chair Sharon Oliphant's newsletters in our state's weekly "QuickBytes" newsletter - we appreciate the inspirations and suggestions for projects that were included. Weekly reminders of the great work our Clubs accomplish for Environment in our communities were summarized from Clubs' and Districts' narrative reports. Special designations focusing on Wildlife, Native Plants, and Pollinators were also shared, along with personal experiences with camping, hiking, volunteering in Vista's Alta Vista Botanical Garden, and growing sunflowers. In 2025, the CFWC Chair shared Club and District projects 49 times. The wonderful projects included in the Clubs' narrative reports don't get shared if they're sitting in my computer ... so into QuickBytes they went!

Our CFWC President reminded Districts to report when members and clubs were affected by fires and asked for donations to the CFWC Federation Disaster Fund. That need became evident during January 2025 when huge fires devastated areas of Los Angeles, burning clubhouses and members' homes. Members, Clubs, Districts, and other state Federations donated generously to the Disaster Fund. In February 2026, \$50,000 (in five \$10,000 grants) was distributed to families that lost everything in the Eaton and Pacific Palisades fires. The recipients were not members of Federation, so our generosity extended to the communities that we serve, which is what Federation is all about.

93 narrative reports for 2025 were received from our CFWC Clubs and 7 reports were submitted by our Districts for 2025. Our Clubs and Districts can be proud of the many amazing projects they completed. They will be shared during the rest of this Chair's term.

In 2025 California Clubs supported Penny Pines by donating \$17,000 to National Forests for reforestation and reported 1300 volunteer hours for the project, both increased over the 2024 reports. 54 Clubs reported sending around their specially-designed containers, hearing from speakers from the National Forests, and collecting "clanking coins and silent dollars" for Penny Pines. Our Clubs sponsored 260 Penny Pines plantations last year! Many Clubs bought \$68 plantations as memorials for members and friends. The CFWC Chair included the link to the list of National Forests in California that accept Penny Pines donations in the state Federation's website: cfwc.org.

In August 2025 the Environment Chair shared the "Hug-a-Tree and Survive" program at the Fall Board meeting. Hug-a-Tree is a successful program for safety in the outdoors which the CFWC Chair shares when leading student field trips. The program was developed after a missing boy died up on Palomar Mountain, right here in San Diego County, in 1981: we urge children and adults to stop if they're lost - to hug a tree instead of continuing to wander - and then searchers can find them. Children should wear a whistle while camping to signal their emergency to the searchers.

GFWC California Wins for Environment..... (Continued)

Working from narratives and the state yearbook, the CFWC Chair built a file for contacts for District Environment Chairs. 11 members from across the state met on Zoom in October to share about what our Clubs were doing for Environment and remind about collecting for Penny Pines. Our “Earth Whispers” poem created with AI was a calming summation of our discussion - we shared the poem in the “QuickBytes” newsletter. Five additional members requested and received our materials.

It is the CFWC Environment Chair’s goal to collate and deliver a procedure book to the next CFWC Environment Chair - a calendar of what worked and what didn’t work during this term, and deadlines to be met.

That notebook will be delivered to her successor by June 30. It would have been a big help to receive a procedure book with historical details back in 2024 - so this Chair pledges to share and pass on the knowledge gained in this leadership position. It has been a pleasure to be the CFWC Environment Chair “Farmer Jones” for two years - I appreciate the opportunity to serve! We care about our Earth and are continuing to take action to encourage Environment projects!



From left to right: Shannon Bailey, Director of Junior Clubs; Sonya Matthies, President CFWC; Nancy Jones, CFWC Environment Chair; and Suellen Brazil, GFWC International President

Building for People, Planet and Possibility

By Luanne Arredondo

California has always been a place where ideas meet possibility. It is a state shaped by people who imagine something different, bring together knowledge from across cultures and industries, and then ask an important question: **How can we use innovation to improve the way people live?**

That spirit is reflected in the work of Positive Homes USA, a Los Angeles-based company focused on eco- friendly residential construction using prefabricated mass timber, energy-efficient design, and a holistic approach to the living environment. Its philosophy combines lower carbon impact, healthier indoor environments, and high-performance construction with the belief that a home should serve the people who live in it—not simply shelter them.

Founder Laurent Heit brought to California experience developed in Europe and a desire to rethink how homes are designed and built. Over time, his focus expanded from technical building systems to include energy efficiency, bio-based materials, indoor comfort, and environmental responsibility. His goal became not simply to construct houses, but to create living spaces that are healthy, energy-efficient, and responsive to the needs of their occupants.

That is where **innovation meets purpose**.

Positive Homes uses Cross Laminated Timber, or CLT, as a central element in its building system. The material is renewable and recyclable and can support a high level of factory prefabrication. According to the company's design materials, this approach can reduce construction time as well as waste, dust, and noise at the building site.

Passive-house principles, solar-readiness, natural materials, and modular construction are also incorporated into the concept.

But perhaps the most interesting part of the story is not the technology itself. It is **what that technology might make possible**.

One example is the Tiny Wood House, an accessory dwelling unit concept designed for existing residential properties. The company presents it as one possible response to California's continuing housing challenges. Smaller homes such as these can create additional living space while allowing children, parents, grandparents, or caregivers to remain close to one another.

In that sense, a building becomes more than a structure. It becomes a tool for **service**.

Service does not always arrive through a traditional volunteer project. Sometimes service is found in solving a community problem, designing something more responsibly, reducing unnecessary waste, creating options for families, or thinking differently about how limited resources are used.

Positive Homes' larger "Tree in the City" concept takes that thinking into multifamily housing. The modular design combines prefabricated construction with terraces, vegetation, renewable materials, and energy- conscious design. The vision is of urban housing that is not separated from nature, but intentionally incorporates it.

And that brings us to **legacy**.

Laurent describes his work as building bridges between Europe and the United States by adapting ideas and practices to new communities and new circumstances. That may be one of the most meaningful definitions of legacy: taking what we have earned, improving upon it, and passing it forward in a form that serves the next generation.

Building for People, Planet and Possibility - Continued

For California clubwomen, that idea should feel familiar. Our legacy is not only found in the programs we complete, the dollars we raise, or the meetings we attend. It is found in the communities strengthened because we were willing to see a need and respond. It is found in the leaders we encourage, the young people we inspire, the traditions we preserve, and the new ideas we are willing to embrace.

Innovation gives us new possibilities.

Purpose tells us why they matter.

Service turns possibility into action.

Legacy ensures that the impact continues.

Together, they form a mosaic—and California continues to show us just how beautiful that mosaic can become.

Visit <https://www.positivehomesusa.com/about-us> to learn more.



Notes From the Editor - Judith Yoakum

Welcome to the new club year, and I hope everyone had a wonderful summer. In this issue, you will notice that several 2024-2026 chairs sent in articles about the projects they submitted for the “Club Achievement Award”. What wonderful projects they are, a testament to the talent that abounds in CFWC, its clubs and its members.

Those women who went before us paved the path for us to follow and created a legacy for us to acknowledge. They took on national issues, state issues, and local issues from center lines to divide our roads, child labor laws, creating libraries, the traveling art gallery, fighting for an eight-hour workday, and they established our presence on Capitol Hill, which continues today. It is our responsibility to extend that legacy by doing our part to create new leaders and grow our membership. Those who went before us expected no less from us to preserve this wonderful organization for future generations.

We are each a piece of the mosaic that is the General Federation of Women’s Clubs.

“A legacy is not what you did for yourself, but what you did for others.” — Anonymous.

A Club Comes Through In Crisis

Submitted by Elena Linehan - Aronos Research CLub

Most of the nation looks at California and fears earthquakes. But those of us who live here know the thing that makes us most anxious is wildfire.

The Aronos Research Club has served our community in the Central Sierras for more than 100 years, and last month, three fires broke out in quick succession over three days – prompting evacuations and the closure of the state highway that runs through the downtown.

Our clubhouse – a block off that highway – was in the standby evacuation area. Many of our 30 club members and our 50 Friends of Aronos members were impacted by the emergency. I'm proud to say the camaraderie in our club network sprang into action.

Allow me to tell some of the stories without using names to preserve privacy.

The first fire broke out between Sonora and Jamestown – two cities that are three miles apart. Our foothill terrain makes it easy for a fire to spread upwards, and the excessively dry grasses in a hot summer provide ample fuel. The wind was blowing East, so a quick phone call to a member in Jamestown found her packing a car and relocating until the crisis was over. She was safe, but if the wind shifted, there would be little time to move.

Meanwhile, downtown, the roads were blocked, and the power was out. It was a hot day, and the skies were filled with smoke. That's where one of our club friends members lives. We knew she was without a car. A club member living next to our clubhouse had power including A/C; she brought the woman without a car to the comfort of her home. The member's husband found all roads to the downtown area blocked when he tried to return home.

Another member without a vehicle, living downtown in a senior housing complex outside of the evacuation area, was safe, but only if the fire behaved. The facility's management had emergency procedures in place, so we knew she'd be in good hands.

One club member put the word out that he and his wife had a guest room available for any member or friend who needed to be housed due to the fires, while yet another member living north of Sonora kept an update of the fire's progress and would relay information to anyone in need.

A club member living smack-dab in the mandatory evacuation area was out of town when the order went out. When she got the all-clear to come back, she had to find a back-road entrance to the downtown, as many main exits from the bypass were still blocked.

The fire department was asking people to keep the roads free for emergency vehicles, so although her home was safe, a member who was an hour away when the fire began bunked with a friend, due to blocked roads, while waiting for the crisis to abate.

A group home for transitional-aged homeless youth that our club supports, was also in the evacuation area. Luckily, the group home is funded through a local Native American Tribe, and the staff there was able to get everyone situated promptly.

The next day, a second fire broke out, and standby evacuations were called for in a neighborhood that included folks we knew and cared for. Luckily, the crew from the first fire was close enough to the new fire to provide resources and quickly contain it. One of our friends was still packing her vehicle when the evacuation notice was lifted.

The third fire was 5 acres and was quickly doused. (Phew) Good news, but enough to keep us all on edge and vigilant.

Today the work of cleaning up is underway. One of our members hosted a calming event at the community pool where meditation singing bowls were played as people floated in the pool. Free dumpsters are available at the local high school parking lot for anyone needing to dispose of food spoiled by the power outage or any other damage.

A preliminary assessment shows that one home and two city-owned warehouses were destroyed, and more than 200 acres of land were burned. Two firefighters were hurt but thankfully had fairly minor injuries.

A new vegetation fire broke out four days ago about 10 miles East of town. No evacuations have been announced for that one so far. It's a blessing to be living in a community and active in a club where everybody reaches out to check in on each other in a crisis. Remember in the Bible where Cain asks God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Here in rural California, our answer would be "Of course you are."

As I wrote this article, the phone chirped with an alert from the county – another fire ignited. Hope the fire engines get there before the wind causes havoc.

ON THE FOREFRONT OF REIMAGINING SERVICE LEARNING

Submitted by, Kay Masonbrink - 2024-2026 Education & Libraries Chair

In the Spring of 2023, the Woman's Club of Bellflower began a partnership with the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) at California State University of Long Beach (CSULB) because one member, who was taking a class and needed credit for volunteer hours, innocently asked if the work for her club could count as the volunteer credit for her Community Psychology class. Thus began the reimagining of service learning as a valuable tool for the club and for students who need to fulfill their service-learning requirement in their coursework. A major issue for many students is that these hours are flexible in timing to coordinate with their work and personal schedules. The club was approved by the CCE and added to their database of nonprofits from which students can choose. Currently, the club has 10 students per semester who dedicate their 20+ hours of service to the Woman's Club of Bellflower. Some of the projects that they have been involved in include enhancing the club's website, analyzing other club websites, assisting with scholarship application processing, organizing the Prom Dress Drive, club hall rental, and organizing/sorting club historical records.

The impact on these students of volunteering with this club has enabled them to see community partnerships in action and who they benefited— the elderly, scholarship recipients, numerous beneficiaries of club donations, and the club members who deeply valued their work. More importantly, the students have learned about this club's history and longevity of 100+ years, the Los Cerritos District, Area C, California Federation of Women's Clubs, and General Federation of Women's Clubs. Feedback from the students volunteering with the Bellflower Club includes: "I really enjoyed and appreciated the advice the women gave us. They were open about their life stories and career paths. Their stories were impactful, which made me reflect on my life goals."

Studies have shown that service learning significantly boosts student outcomes by merging academic curriculum with community service, enhancing critical thinking, problem- solving, and engagement. It fosters empathy, social responsibility, and cultural awareness while improving self-efficacy, confidence, and leadership skills. Additionally, it promotes better attendance, higher grades, and career readiness through networking. The Bellflower Women's Club has received beneficial assistance from educated, motivated, and tech-savvy students. What we have here clearly is a WIN-WIN formula for education and our beloved Women's Clubs, which is why the Bellflower Women's Club is highly deserving of the Club Creativity Award. This is a project that many of our clubs can and should participate in.

CLUBS AND DISTRICTS

Being a Voice for the Voiceless

Submitted by Kathy Holm, 2024 - 2026 CFWC Legislation & Public Policy Chair

Members of the Beaumont Woman's Club undertook a letter-writing public awareness campaign to advocate for the creation of a dedicated animal shelter serving the San Geronio Pass area. This project was developed in response to an urgent community need and reflects the Club's commitment to civic engagement, humane responsibility, and effective public advocacy. Club members wrote postcards and letters urging elected officials to prioritize developing a local animal shelter. The correspondence emphasized public safety concerns, the strain placed on law enforcement and volunteers, and the need for a long-term regional solution to animal welfare in the rapidly growing Pass communities. By directly engaging with decision-makers, members exercised their voices as informed citizens advocating for responsible public policy. The club intends to continue this campaign until a dedicated animal shelter is present in the San Geronio Pass community.

Sowing Seeds for Life

GFWC La Verne-San Dimas Woman's Club is recognized by Sowing Seeds for Life for collecting over 200 chocolate bunnies for their pantry children. The club also donated a check in the amount of \$500 in support of their programs and in June held a huge food drive for the pantry.

Pictured with Bianca Tippet of SSFL are Jennifer Nummelin, Candy Miller and past club president Marlene Carney.



GFWC International Day of Service

The 2026 GFWC International Day of Service (GFWC IDS) will take place on Saturday, September 26, 2026. This annual day of volunteer action unifies members globally to help end domestic and sexual violence. Local clubs can tailor their service to specific community needs.

Groups can find templates, project resources, and registration links directly on the [GFWC International Day of Service Portal](#).

My German Great Great Grandmother's Apricot Cobbler

1 Cup Flour
1 Cup Sugar
1 Teaspoon Baking Powder

Mix dry ingredients together

Add 1 Beaten Egg, mix again,
mixture will be crumbly



Next grease an 8 x 8 baking dish, add sliced, sugared fruit
or prepared fruit pie filling, filling the pan about half way
Sprinkle the flour mixture over the fruit
Melt 1/2 cup of butter
Drizzle melted butter evenly over the top

Bake at 350 degrees until filling is bubbling and
topping is golden brown about 45 minutes

Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipping cream

This recipe can be doubled and baked in a 9 x 13 inch pan. Enjoy!





GFWC California Clubwoman Magazine
c/o Judith Yoakum, Editor
822 Shepard Way, Redwood City, CA 94062

Meet the Clubwoman Team



From left to right: **Judith Yoakum**, Editor; **Cathie Petithomme**, Senior Reporter; **Colleen Janssen**, Reporter; **Jennifer A. Nickel**, Reporter; and **Lu Arredondo**, Contributor

GFWC California Clubwoman is a magazine designed to inspire, educate, inform, and entertain individuals in the work of humanitarian service. It is a lifestyle magazine that features content about health, club life, culture, and community development. *** NOTE: The views and opinions expressed in the magazine in articles and Advertising are not the express views of the General Federation and should not be seen as endorsements.