



GFWC-Big Rapids, Inc. Newsletter

June, 2025

Happy almost summer! Our club year has officially ended but I know many of you have CSP projects that go on into the summer and thank you for that. What you do continues to show throughout our community; beautifying the gardens, filling the Little Libraries, donations and time volunteered to the food pantries, shelters and so much more. You are an amazing group of women and what you do makes our community a better place in which to live.

Be sure to look for our new signs going into the gardens.

Sue

Sue Johnson, President (231)349-5137
Linda Telfer, 1st Vice President
Delores Simpson, 2nd VP(Membership)
Leona Royer, Secretary
Ann Stellard, Treasurer
Melonie James, Parliamentarian
Linda Telfer, Newsletter Editor

Due date for the newsletter is the 25th of each month.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

August 12—Summer Picnic (more information coming)

September 9—First Club Meeting of the Year

September 27—Northwestern District Meeting at Mecosta

September 27—International Day of Service

SAVE THOSE BATTERIES AGAIN

**Celeste has found a place that takes batteries so.....
start saving those batteries again.**

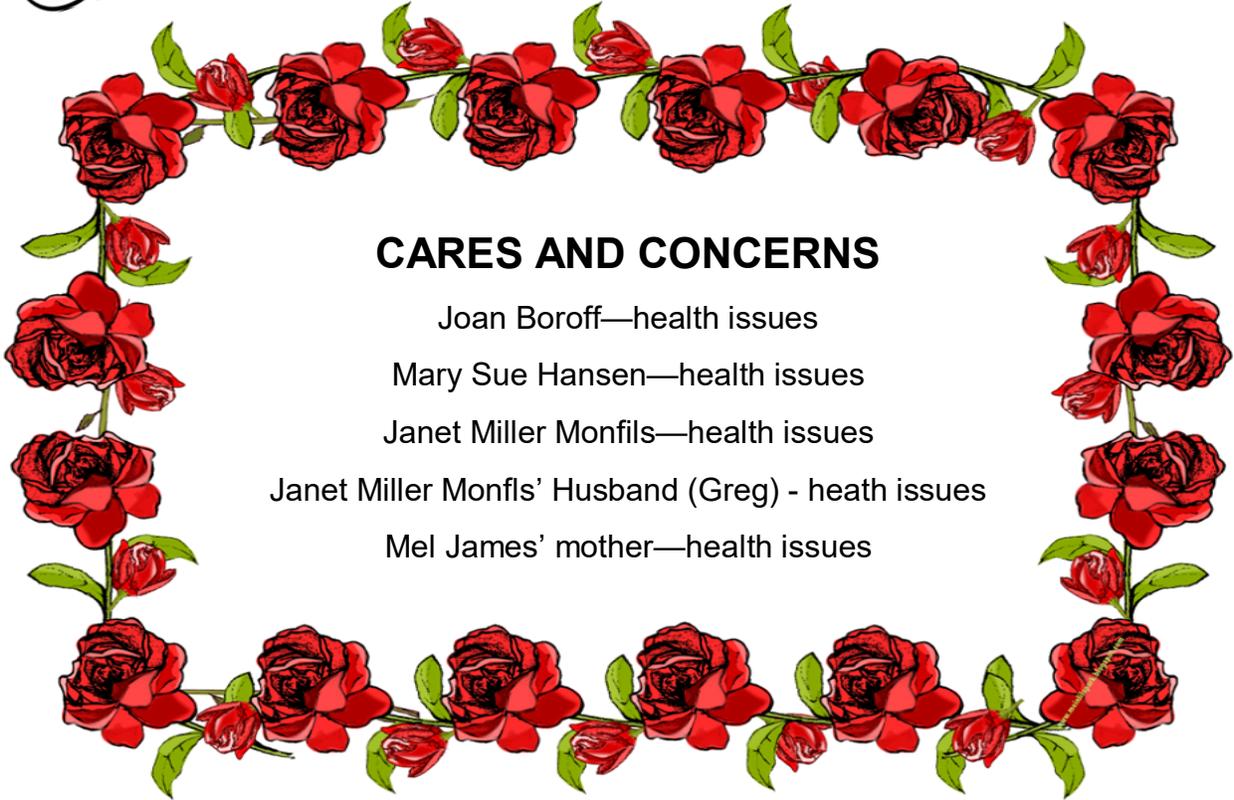




JUNE BIRTHDAYS

9—Mary Beth Vanderlist

22—Celeste Szczerowski



CARES AND CONCERNS

Joan Boroff—health issues

Mary Sue Hansen—health issues

Janet Miller Monfils—health issues

Janet Miller Monfils' Husband (Greg) - health issues

Mel James' mother—health issues



GFWC Tidbits . . .

GFWC International: GFWC Headquarters was named a historical landmark in 1991.

GFWC Michigan: Michigan used to have Junior Clubs. In 1923, the first group was organized in Highland Park and by 1924 there were 48 Junior Clubs in Michigan.

GFWC Big Rapids: Chartered as GFWC Big Rapids in 1971, our club will celebrate 55 years in 2026.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Information will be coming on summer events that are being planned.



Mark Your Calendar

SUMMER PICNIC

August 12, 2025

More information coming

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING...



CRYSTAL TRAVELS . . .

Can you discover where Crystal was last month in this newsletter?



Crystal was designed by Cathy Chapman a member of the Arts & Culture CSP.

GFWC-BIG RAPIDS BANNER



Have you found the GFWC-Big Rapids banner in Big Rapids that was created by members of the Arts & Culture Community Service Program?

ANNUAL YARD SALE



Crystal was in attendance at the yard sale.



Front Row: Sue Johnson, Mel James.

Back Row: Mary Beth Vanderlist, Ann Stellard, Vickie Vogel



Whose feet are these?

Thank you to Sue Bean, Mary Bechaz, Karin McKean, Ann Stellard, Mary Beth Vanderlist and Vickie Vogel for planning this and to all those who donated and/or worked to make this successful. A total of \$1226.00 was raised and will be donated to "Save the Pond" project in Paris, MI.



2025 END OF YEAR CLUB BANQUET



**GOOD
TIMES!**



Melissa Povaliatis, North-western District President



New Member Cheryl Tessier (right) with mentor Linda Telfer.

2025 END OF YEAR CLUB BANQUET continued. . .

YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS



Ruth York honored for 35 years of membership. Pictured L-R—Melissa Povilaitis (NWD President), Ruth York, and Delores Simpson (GFWC-Big Rapids 2nd VP)



Melanie Henry honored for her 20 years of membership. Pictured L-R—Melissa Povilaitis (NWD President), Melanie Henry and Delores Simpson (GFWC-Big Rapids 2nd VP)

Congratulations to the following members who were not in attendance to receive their membership awards.

Pam Muccio—45 years

Celeste Szczerowski—10 years

Dee Van Horn— 20 years

2024-2025 CLUB AWARDS



Clubwoman of the Year

Cathy Chapman awarded Clubwoman of the Year by Delores Simpson (last year's Clubwoman of the year).



CSP of the Year Award—Environment

Pictured L-R—Ann Stellard, Janet Miller-Monfils, Leona Royer, Sue Johnson, Linda Telfer, Cheryl Tessier and Mel James.



New Member of the Year

Cheryl Tessier (left) was awarded New Member of the Year by mentor Linda Telfer.



Ms. Federation for 2024

Mary Bechaz awarded Ms. Federation 2024 by Linda Telfer (GFWC-Big Rapids 1st Vice President).

2024-2025 FUN AWARDS



50'S COSTUME AWARD

Pat Rossi was a runner up in the State's costume contest BUT she was our winner by a long shot.



4B'S FUNDRAISER AWARD

President Sue Johnson presented Melanie Henry with a glass purse for her years of dedication in chairing the 4B's fundraiser.



WOMAN OF MANY HATS AWARD

Ann Stellard was awarded the Woman of Many Hats Award for serving on committees, chairing committees, serving on the board, and always being there to assist with the many projects.



Pictured is Cathy Chapman holding Crystal. Cathy created Crystal as part of the Arts & Culture CSP. Pictured is L-R Cathy Chapman and De-lores Simpson.

HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP COMPLETED



Highway Clean-Up is finally done after re-scheduling several times due to weather and schedules. Seven members participated and collected 11 bags of trash plus some construction debris on a perfect spring night. Thank you Sue Johnson, Leona Royer, Mary Bechaz, Ann Stellard, Mel James, Cheryl Tessier and Linda Telfer. Looking forward to YOUR participation next time.

GARDEN WORK



Thank you Environment CSP for making the Post Office garden better each year. We now have recognition in the garden.



FLOWER OF THE MONTH

Peony



Instead of informing you about growing peonies this month, listed below are six fascinating facts about the peony that you may not know. Enjoy!

1. **Peonies Have Centuries of History.** Peonies are native to Asia, Europe, and Western North America. Early in Chinese history, the peony was considered the national flower (although it's now officially the plum blossom). The Tang Dynasty of China began breeding peonies in the imperial courts in the 7th century BCE. Their popularity spread to Japan in the early 11th century and France and England in the 18th century. Then, in the late 1800's and early 1900's, they began gaining popularity in the U.S. The peony even became the state flower of Indiana in 1957, replacing the zinnia for the honor.
2. **There's a Huge Variety of Peonies.** There are more than 6,500 varieties of peonies, with new ones being introduced all the time. The American Peony Society keeps track of them, and each year, awards its Gold Medal to an outstanding variety. They all fit into three main categories: tree, herbaceous, and itoh (a cross between the other two). Most types are happiest in full sun, but some tree peonies do best in part shade. Peonies usually bloom from late spring to early summer, with early, midseason, and late blooming varieties that allow you to extend the flower show.
3. **Their Name is Rooted in Greek Mythology.** The peony is named after Paeon (also spelled Paeon), who was a student of Asclepius, the Greek God of medicine and healing. One version of the story goes that Paeon, known as the healer of the gods, used a peony to treat a wound for Zeus. When Asclepius became murderously jealous of his pupil, Zeus saved Paeon by turning him into a peony.
4. **Peonies Have Medicinal Properties.** Studies have shown that peony plants have immune-system and mood-boosting properties and can be used to effectively treat inflammation, blood clots, and general pain. In fact, the roots and seeds of peonies have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries to treat headaches, asthma, convulsions, liver disease, and several more ailments. Peonies also have been used in European herbal medicine as a remedy for bladder and kidney problems.
5. **Peony Flowers Have Symbolism.** Aside from their fragrance and wide availability as cut flowers, peonies are a common flower choice among brides, thanks to their symbolism. They represent romance and love and are considered a good omen of a happy marriage. They're also the traditional flower for 12th wedding anniversaries. Interestingly, during the Victorian Era, peony flowers represented shade and shyness. In China and Japan, they stand for strong and positive virtues such as bravery, honor, respect, nobility, good fortune and prosperity.
6. **Alaska Produces Millions of Cut Peonies.** The Netherlands is the largest cut peony producer (over 40 percent of the estimated worldwide production), but an up-and-coming source is, perhaps surprisingly Alaska. The longer, cooler growing season there allows for larger blooms later in the growing season, according to the Alaska Peony Society. That means they're available from June to September, during the prime wedding season. The most commonly grown variety is "Sarah Barnhardt" which has a soft pink, petal packed double bloom and is one of the few that florists will request by name.

FROM BHG.com