



# GFWC-Big Rapids, Inc. Newsletter

## February, 2026

I hope everyone is staying warm as we head into February. January has been brutal with the cold and snow. I know I'm tired of wearing multi-layers and shoveling!

I want to thank all of you for the many hours and contributions you put in over the last year. I reviewed all the reports that were submitted and it's amazing what has been accomplished in 12 months. You are truly the epitome of caring, generous and giving women.

I also want to give a heartfelt "thank you" to our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Linda for all her work in preparing our reports. She puts many hours into them, and she always goes above and beyond to make sure they are correct and in order.

As we move forward into 2026, I know you all will continue to do the great work that has made GFWC Big Rapids a club to be proud of for all the work that is done to make our community a wonderful place to live in and be a part of.

Happy Valentines' Day to everyone and don't forget to **wear red to our meeting** as we recognize "Heart Health" month.

*Sue*

Sue Johnson, President (231)349-5137  
Linda Telfer, 1st Vice President  
Delores Simpson, 2nd VP( Membership)  
Leona Royer, Secretary  
Cheryl Tessier, Treasurer  
Melonie James, Parliamentarian  
Linda Telfer, Newsletter Editor -  
231-250-2088  
Due date for the newsletter is the 25th of each month.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**February 10—Club Meeting— 6:00 Social/6:30 Meeting @ The Elks**

**February 15—FSU International Festival—1:00-4:00 pm—FSU David L. Eisler Center**

**March 10—Club Meeting—6:00 Social/6:30 Meeting @ The Elks**

**March 14—Northwestern District Gathering in Ewart (More info coming)**

**April 14—Club Meeting 6:00 Social/6:30 Meeting @ The Elks**

**April 23-25—GFWC Michigan State Convention—Troy, MI (More info coming)**

### CHECKLIST FOR MEETING

**A friend who is interested in GFWC**

**Used Greeting Cards**

**Can Tabs**

**Used Batteries**

**Used Sneakers**

**\$ Heifer International**

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**



**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

**11—Leona Royer**

**19—Sue Johnson**



**CARES AND CONCERNS**

Sue Bean—knee surgery

Mary Bechaz—death of her sister

Joan Boroff—health issues

Janet Miller Monfils—health issues

Pat Rossi—health issues



## GFWC TIDBITS.....

**GFWC International**— February has traditionally highlighted GFWC's partnership with USO, providing in-kind donations for military families.

**GFWC Michigan**—GFWC Michigan Education Foundation was established in 1985 as an endowment fund to provide scholarships for members, emphasizing "Women Investing in Women".

**GFWC Big Rapids**—In 1943 the Big Rapids Women's Club began preparing for the "Golden Anniversary" of the club, which was organized by public spirited women in 1893, and the celebration was observed at the annual Spring Luncheon in May.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FSU INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



Sunday, February 15, 2026

1:00—4:00 p.m.

David L. Eisler Center @ FSU

*Let's go as a group!!!*



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## GFWC NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT GATHERING

Evart, MI

March 14, 2026

More information coming.



# BACK YARD BIRD COUNT

February 13-16, 2026



Participating is easy, fun to do **alone or with others**, and **can be done anywhere** you find birds.

**Step 1:** Decide where you will watch birds.

**Step 2:** Watch birds for **15 minutes or more**, at least once over the four days, February 13–16, 2026.

**Step 3:** Identify all the birds you **see or hear** within your planned time/location and use the best tool for sharing your bird sightings:

If you are a **beginning bird admirer and new to bird identification**, try using the [Merlin Bird ID app](#) to tell us what birds you are seeing or hearing. This is the app that Linda uses.

If you have **participated** in the count **before** and want to record **numbers of birds**, try the [eBird Mobile app](#) or enter your bird list on the [eBird website](#) (desktop/laptop).

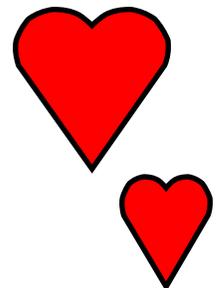
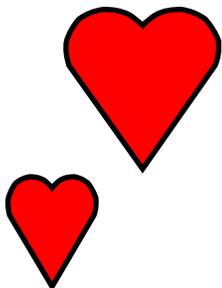
## **PARTICIPATE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN ZEISS BINOCULARS!**

Identify one bird or more using Merlin Bird ID or complete one eBird checklist or more over the 4 days during the Great Backyard Bird Count and be automatically entered to win a pair of Zeiss Terra 8x42 binoculars.

To find out more information go to <https://www.birdcount.org/participate/>.

AND.....let Linda know if you participated and for how long for reporting purposes.

**WEAR RED  
TO OUR  
CLUB MEETING  
FEBRUARY 10, 2026**



**MAKE YOUR RESERVATION**

**GFWCM 131st STATE  
CONVENTION  
APRIL 23-25, 2026  
SOMERSET INN  
2601 W. BIG BEAVER  
TROY MI 48084**



**RESERVE YOUR ROOM BEFORE APRIL 8, 2026**  
COST: \$139 PLUS TAXES for up to 2 people; \$10 for each additional person  
WEDNESDAY – SUNDAY  
CHECK IN TIME: 3 PM      CHECK-OUT TIME: 12 NOON  
**RESERVE BY**  
GROUP BLOCK CODE: **General Federation of Women’s Clubs of Michigan**  
CALL – 248-643-7800      Or visit the link in this email to register online  
**Convention activities will be Thursday noon through late Saturday Night (10 pm)**

**IN-ROOM AMENITIES**

- Complimentary wireless Internet
- Flat-screen TV with accessories
- Large working desk with charging ports
- Blow dryer, Iron and board
- Messages and voicemail
- Same day valet laundry service
- Rollaway, extra towels or extra pillows upon request
- Coffeemaker

**HOTEL AMENITIES**

- Business Center and Free High Speed Internet
- Sundries Shop
- Fitness Center
- Golf Course
- Crumpets Restaurant
- Flat-screen TV with accessories



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



The library is looking for reliable people to deliver books once a month for our **Homebound Program**. This program provides books to those who are unable to leave their homes to visit the library. For more information, contact Jean LaLonde at [jlalonde@bigrapidslibrary.org](mailto:jlalonde@bigrapidslibrary.org)



**Big Rapids  
Community Library**

For more information: [jlalonde@bigrapidslibrary.org](mailto:jlalonde@bigrapidslibrary.org)

**SIGN UP TODAY USING THE QR CODE BELOW.....**



# **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**Support your neighbors in need at our  
FREE MEDICAL CLINIC coming to**

***BIG RAPIDS, MI***

Remote Area Medical (RAM®) provides free, quality healthcare to those in need:



### **DENTAL CARE**

Dentists, Oral Surgeons,  
Dental Assistants, Hygienists



### **VISION CARE**

Optometrists, Ophthalmolo-  
gists, Opticians, Vision Techs



### **MEDICAL CARE**

Physicians, Physician Assistants,  
Nurse Practitioners, Nurses



### **GENERAL SUPPORT**

Interpreters, Guides, Data Entry,  
and Much More!

**JOIN OUR  
MISSION  
BY SIGNING  
UP TO  
VOLUNTEER  
TODAY!**

***MAY 30-31, 2026***

**R.L. Ewigleben Sports Complex  
210 Sports Drive  
Big Rapids, MI 49307**

*Presented By:*



**FERRIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING.....

### 4B'S FUNDRAISER CHECK



Thank you to everyone who participated in some way with the 4B's Fundraiser in October. A check for \$2495.33 was presented to Artworks for the Children's Art Program at the January meeting. Pictured above are committee members L-R—Linda Telfer, Cheryl Tessier, Karin McKean, Sue Johnson, Melanie Henry (Chair), Arthur Johnson (Program Director at Artworks) and Cathy Chapman.

### CHILI COOKOFF

And the results are in for the Chili Cookoff.....

**3rd place** went to Cathy Chapman (on left)

**2nd place** went to Delores Simpson (white chili) (middle)

**1st place** went to Linda Telfer (right)

Thank you to the Arts & Culture Community Service Program for sponsoring this fun event and to everyone that attended. Also to Therese Allen for counting the votes. Great turnout!



# 2025 WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT

## LINDA TELFER



Linda Telfer was chosen as GFWC-Big Rapids Woman of Achievement at the January club meeting. Linda joined GFWC-Big Rapids in 2009 and immediately became very active in the club in many ways. She has chaired several committees and CSPs as well as holding club offices through club President and currently is 1st Vice President for the second time and President Elect for 2026-2028. She is currently the Northwestern District 1st Vice President and is the incoming President for 2026-2028. She has also been on State committees including the 2025 State Convention.

In addition to her GFWC commitments, she is very involved in many other local organizations including being an 18 year United Way Board member and is currently the Secretary to the Clear Lake Association Board. She has also served her church as elected Secretary, Decorating Chair and has taught children's church and Vacation Bible School.

Linda is a lifelong member of Big Rapids who worked for Ferris State University and retired as Executive Secretary to the Vice President for Student Affairs after more than 45 years of service. While at Ferris, she served on many committees including national search committees, planning committees, organizational committees, retreat committees, and was Chair of the Women's Conference, to name a few. She was also the second mother to many students. During her tenure at the university, she received awards for volunteering for over 250 hours in a school year.

Linda is the mother of two married sons and has been blessed with three grandchildren with another one coming in June. She is a devoted and loving mother and grandmother to all of them and shows it proudly. She is also very artistic and creative and has shown this in her work around town as well as within the club.

Artistic, creative, dedicated, hardworking, community and family minded, these are the attributes that have made Linda our GFWC Big Rapids, Inc. "Woman of Achievement".

## VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS



Thank you to everyone who assisted with the Valentine's Day cards at the January meeting for the Meals on Wheels clients. The cards turned out great and it was nice to see the talent that you have. Pictured above L-R—Cathy Chapman, Linda Telfer, Meals on Wheels Director, De-lores Simpson.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE



After speaking with the homeless shelter and discussing our budget and the number of residents currently at the shelter, it was decided to provide Martin Luther King Jr. day winter care kit gift bags for the 13 children who are at the shelter. Items in the bag were 1 natural lip balm, dove body moisturizer, a Kleenex pack, 3 fruit strips, 1 GoGo squeeze applesauce and a pack of Wet Ones hand wipes. A note was attached to the front of the bag about MLK day, a MLK Jr. quote and our GFWC Big Rapids donation sticker.



GFWC Big Rapids club members assisted with the packing and inventory of the Jim Crow Museum at Ferris State University in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Another day of service will be planned in the future to assist with the move to the new museum.

## THE MORE YOU KNOW.....

### HEALTH AND WELLNESS TIPS.....

“Go Red for Women”

The “Go Red for Women” campaign began in 2003. Its purpose was to bring attention to heart health for women by designating the first Friday in February as National Wear Red Day.

February, recognized annually as American Heart Month, serves as an important reminder to prioritize cardiovascular wellness. Heart disease remains a leading health concern for women, but adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle can significantly reduce risk. This month, commit to incorporating habits such as regular exercise, a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, routine checkups and getting adequate sleep. By making small, sustainable changes now, you can help safeguard your heart for a longer healthier life.

Stay healthy my friends!

“Go Red for Women”

## FLOWER OF THE MONTH- From the Environment CSP



### The Violet

**Violets** come in a whole rainbow of colors. They're usually found in bright jewel tones, but softer pastel varieties exist. While many of the 500+ species of violet flowers are perennial, these rugged plants can also be treated as [fragrant annual plants](#) for early spring color. Because violets tolerate cold temperatures, they can be the first flowering plants placed outdoors in the garden or containers. Once violets are in the ground, they'll reseed for years.

This small plant can stand up well as a cut flower in a small bud vase. Plus, edible violet petals can be used to garnish cakes and pastries or tossed in a salad for a bright dose of color.

**ONLY CONSUME VIOLET FLOWERS KNOWN TO COME FROM A PESTICIDE-FREE SOURCE.**

**Where to Plant Violet Flowers**—Plant violets along garden borders or line walkways with them. They're a good flower to plant alongside spring-blooming plants since they'll keep their color as other shorter-lived flowers fade. They're dependable and cheery bloomers for window boxes and hanging baskets in spring. If you want flowers to return reliably every year, check to make sure that the violets you choose are hardy for your Zone, as there are so many varieties.

**Light**—Although violets can live in various light conditions, most will grow best in full sun to partial shade. Some woodland species tolerate more shade; they can be planted in areas considered full shade. In warmer climates, plant violet flowers in areas that receive afternoon shade to help keep plants cool in the hot summer months. Even if you do this, it may not be enough to pull violets through because they're cool-season plants. For this reason, violets often are treated as annuals and torn out once summer begins.

**Soil and Water**—Many violet flowers are best grown in a woodland-type setting using rich, organic soils. Make sure violets have consistent moisture, especially in warmer months, but don't overwater. If left in standing water, violets can develop root rot or moldy leaves.

**Temperature and Humidity**—While violets do ok in the cold, they are neither drought-tolerant nor heat-tolerant. If it gets hot, add mulch to keep them cool.