



## GFWC Membership Mysteries Revealed

*By 2010-2012 GFWC Membership Chairman Patrice Booze*

*Contributions by GFWC Membership Committee and Regional Workshop Attendees*

GFWC Membership recruitment and retention can be very complex issues. We hope the following insights can help unravel some of the membership mysteries. During the 2010 Region Conferences, GFWC Membership Committee members facilitated two interactive workshops and the enthusiastic attendees were very forthcoming with their reasons for joining and staying in their GFWC club.

### REASONS FOR JOINING A GFWC CLUB

#### *How I Joined*

- Married into a clubwoman family
- Daughter went to a youth leadership conference where clubwomen were working
- Had just retired; visited a club, heard their laughter and joined
- Retired to a new town and joined club at a cookie exchange
- Asked to do a program at a meeting
- Invited to lunch and recognized GFWC logo; had belonged to a Junior club and wanted to be a part of a GFWC club again
- Called the newspaper and asked for a contact to the club after reading an article
- Went to a fundraiser
- **The number ONE answer: "I was asked!"**
  - Knew a member and was asked
  - A group of ladies invited me to join after I had moved from another state and the members assured me: "We'll take care of you"
  - Moved from another state and six days after moving into my house, I was asked to join a club
  - New in town; asked to join by neighbor
  - A good friend asked me to join a new group
  - Postcard from local club invited me to join
  - Moved to town and invited by my doctor's wife to join club
  - Moved from big city to rural area and invited by club to join

#### *Why I Joined*

- To learn to do things I hadn't done before
- Leadership skills
- Meet friends
- Support group
- To work to mold public opinion for betterment of community
- Personal accomplishments
- Had things to offer and could make a difference

- Wanted adult friends and interactions
- Gives one a sense of purpose
- Gives one confidence
- Form friendships
- National organization that I can follow if I move or relocate
- Broadens horizons
- Empowerment
- Strength in numbers
- Sharing ideas
- Diversity of programs offered

While the answers seem as varied as our members, we can see that women do like to be asked and they are looking to be part of a group that fulfills a need. The needs ranged from wanting to help others and improving their communities to self improvement with leadership training, self awareness, and building a support group of like-minded women.

Now why do our members STAY? As you read the list, you will see they stay for many of the same reasons they joined in the first place.

### *Why I Stay*

- I'm worth it!
- Camaraderie/Friendships
- Meeting others
- Second family
- Improve the community/Sense of community
- The projects!
- Help the less fortunate
- GFWC is a worthwhile organization
- Like the challenges of fundraising and membership
- Learning new skills
- Ability to serve
- Work to preserve the clubhouse
- Opportunity to move up to the state and beyond
- Meeting people in state and international
- All time favorite response: "Easier to live with...according to husband...when I attend club meetings!"

As experienced members we tend to forget HOW and WHY we and our fellow club members joined. We get so caught up in the day-to-day running of the club that we sometimes forget the human side of our club.

As clubs prepare recruiting events for GFWC's seasonal recruitment campaigns, please remember that women like to be asked and they want to hear how joining the club gives them the opportunity to reach their own personal goals. We need to tap into those reasons and share with others the gift of GFWC Membership. Share with them what programs and projects the club offers; how the club improves the community; and the benefits of belonging to an international organization. Facts and figures are all well and good, but don't overlook the personal benefits that we have shared here. Plan a club program around: "Why did you join?";

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Why do you stay?; Tell us your stories.” Use the findings to plan the club’s recruitment AND retention campaigns.

Recruitment is essential but do not overlook the very important need to retain members. CONTENT and HAPPY members are the club’s BEST recruiters. Members will decide to stay with their clubs only if they feel that their time is being used effectively to improve communities and if they feel a sense of ownership and pride.

Clubs need to place members first and meet members’ expectations. Members need to feel that they play a role in the decisions of the club and that their opinions count. The best way to accomplish this is to ask for their input. There are many ways to determine what the members in your club are thinking: suggestion boxes, informal interviews, surveys, and even by just striking up a conversation with a member. Club leaders should be willing to ask for input on meeting times, what kind of programs and projects are enjoyable or have no appeal, and other suggestions. Asking for and implementing the suggestions of the members keeps the club happy, strong, and growing. *The GFWC Membership Advancement Guide* is a wonderful resource with samples and examples. There is no need to reinvent the wheel! The advancement guide can be found online at [www.GFWC.org/ClubManual](http://www.GFWC.org/ClubManual).

Each club may seem unique BUT really we are all women looking to make a positive difference in our communities and we want to leave a legacy so new members can stand on the shoulders of the seasoned members and share a vision for the future of GFWC. SHARE GFWC Membership with your neighbors, family, and friends so they too have the same opportunities that we have had the privilege to experience.

**Mystery solved.**

## **FEDERATION FACT GAMES AND ACTIVITIES**

This game can be played every meeting or at special times as needed.

### *“What we were doing in...?”*

Two balloons containing two different dates inside are attached to the podium. The names of all the club members are put into a container, and the president or membership chairman chooses two names. The members are introduced, which helps put a face with a name so all members can get to know each other. They then pop a balloon and read the year out loud. The president or membership chairman hands them an excerpt from the club minutes from that year, which they read to all the members.

This game creates excitement and is an excellent way for new members to learn about the history of the club and to refresh the memories of the experienced members.

### **Adaptations**

This game can be adapted as the club feels appropriate. Instead of years in the balloons:

- 1) Chairmen or officer titles: The information shared with the members could be the duties of that leader.
- 2) Names of projects: The information shared could be the details of this club or GFWC project.
- 3) Names of members: The information shared could be hobbies, interests, family details, etc.

This game is only limited by the imagination and needs of the club.

### *Jigsaw Puzzle*

This activity can be used throughout a whole club year for a recruitment event, an orientation, or a refresher program. Adapt it to the needs of the club.

Create a large jigsaw puzzle of the GFWC emblem (available for download at [www.GFWC.org/GFWCMembers](http://www.GFWC.org/GFWCMembers)). The club president or membership chairman gives a piece of the puzzle to all club members and guests at designated times. Each also receives a federation fact about the club, state, or GFWC.

Send invitations to all who have been given puzzle pieces, and hold a party or program where the puzzle is put together. Each adds her piece to the puzzle and shares their federation fact. This is a fun way to hear about federation on all levels, but also a good visual to demonstrate that each member is valuable to the whole picture.