

Linda's Notes

GFWC of Tennessee

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State Updates

Your GFWC of Tennessee Board has been very busy with reporting, planning for the Spring Convention, and traveling to club and district meetings. We look forward to seeing everyone in Murfreesboro where we will welcome SER President Mary Jo Thomas! We will also welcome two new clubs!

~ Linda ~

What does "Unity in Diversity" really mean?

Recently GFWC of Tennessee has welcomed in two new members – men. Some members have been surprised and asked for clarification on whether males can be members of GFWC of Tennessee. Since GFWC of TN is a 501(c)3, we are required to not exclude anyone based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, etc. As a club, if you are already or wanting to become a 501(c)3, your bylaws will need to

reflect this. It is also important to remember that GFWC was created because Lizzie Crozier French was kept out of a meeting because of her gender – since then we have fought for women to be included everywhere, even be able to vote. So we welcome these new members remembering our history and our motto – Diversity in Unity!

Where in the World does GFWC of TN still need to visit?

Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Remember to take your banner with you and help us complete our mission!!!



Dates to remember:

Spring Convention:
April 21-23, 2017
Holiday Inn,
Murfreesboro, TN



GFWC Convention
June 24-26, 2017
Palm Springs, CA

Fall Conference
October 20-21, 2017
Nashville Area

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 101

Several GFWC of TN clubs and districts have presented speakers and training on Human Trafficking. As a result, International Outreach Chairman Kathryn Hopkins and I are arranging for GFWC of TN to be involved and educated on this subject. Kathryn will present a short seminar at our Spring Convention and announce the major training session for our summer meeting. In the meantime, here are some facts:

In 2013 Governor Haslam mandated the creation of the Tennessee Human Trafficking Services Coordination and Service Delivery Plan, a statewide plan for delivering services to survivors of human trafficking. The Governor appointed the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation the lead agency for all human trafficking

crimes in the state of Tennessee. The TBI then established a regional, single-point-of-contact system, four non-governmental organizations. Those four NGOs are RestoreCorps (Memphis), End Slavery (Nashville), Second Life (Chattanooga), and Grow Free (Knoxville). The way we have been asked to help is in awareness and education.

Definition: Sex trafficking is any commercial sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.

Recognize the signs:

- Injuries: multiple bruises or cuts at different stages of healing
- Same attire or little belongings; unsuitable living conditions

- No identification documents
- Fearful or timid of authority figures
- Unable to move independently; controlled movements
- Always accompanied by another person
- Coached what to say
- Disoriented or confused signs of mental abuse.

Respond appropriately:

- Add the National and Tennessee Hotline to your phone contacts
- Never intervene
- Document what you are observing (car, license plates, physical descriptions)
- Call immediately

Report what you are observing:

- Call the National HT Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
- Or Call the Tennessee HT Hotline: 1-855-558-6484



The Collect

“May we never be hasty in judgment —”

When I ponder these words the first thing that comes to mind is how easy it is to judge others. One of the best examples is how Southerners are portrayed on TV shows, especially news shows. They

seem to find the typical stereotype of someone from the South – backwards, uneducated, bigoted, and often having poor hygiene. Luckily most are NOT barefoot! I love the saying,

“We Southerners may talk slow, but that doesn’t mean we are stupid.”



However, it doesn’t seem to bother me that I judge people from the Northeast as being rude, Californians as being surfer dudes or valley girls, and those from the Northwest as being tree huggers. Where in the world did I get such impressions?



I asked a friend of mine, a clubwoman, Louisa Mesich, who taught a high school class called Contemporary Issues to weigh in on this. During this class she challenged the kids to really examine the lens in which they judged and internalized all things. They looked at the two major lenses we all use. First, they looked at their “internal environment” lens which is how information came into their lives through family, friends, their school, and the people in their

personal lives. As I examine my own internal environment lens, I see that I not only have negative or toxic people in my life but also those who are positive and affirming.

The next thing they looked at was their “external lens” – the things that came to them through what they read, what they saw on TV, the music they listened to, and often the organizations they belonged to including their houses of worship. And let’s not even start talking about social media!



Louisa then challenged the kids to pick a “trusted” news source and investigate who the source was owned by, what other entities were owned by that company, and what the company’s agenda and interests were. She stressed that it is important to know who is creating the information you receive since so much of our external lens contributes to our judging.

I know that I have been incredibly guilty in my own

life of jumping to judgments of people, sometimes with embarrassing results. Once in my early years as a court reporter I traveled to a small town to report the deposition of a man. The man who was seated at the table was not in a suit and tie. My instant judgment of him was a “small town hick.” And when I asked him to raise his right hand to take the oath, he raised his left hand. Of course, I judged him to be not smart enough to know his left from his right, especially since he lived in such a small town. I said, “Your right hand?” At that point he reached under the table and pulled a wax prosthetic arm up and propped it on the table. Hard lesson to have to learn, but one that stayed with me – never judge someone by how they look or where they live.



I must add that in my maturing I have come to love little towns just as much as big ones! Every place has its own charm!

As clubwomen we have a chance each day to judge –

judge the people we are trying to help, judge an organization we are working with, and to judge each other. We often are harshest on each other.

I have started trying (I don't think there will ever come a time where it will be natural, but I keep hoping) to take a step back from a situation and instead of instantly judging what someone has said or done or not done, to try to see why. To ask what is going on in their lives; to find out what may have caused them to react in some way or is keeping them from following through; and, instead of judging them, to simply say, "Is there some way I can help?" "Can we talk about this?"



So, with all this in mind, I am going to ask each member in the upcoming months to proactively look at how they judge other people – especially the victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking.



Many times people judge victims, especially women and young girls who are living in domestic violence situations or in prostitution, as being at fault for staying and not "just getting out." As

I was asked recently: just get out and go where? To do what? To live on what?

I am going to ask each member to examine their own internal lens and external lens to see where their information is coming from.



Lastly, I want to ask each member to pick one person that you have judged badly and to re-examine if your judgment was hasty. If it was, can you fix it? A tall order, but we clubwomen are up to the task!

Next month: And always generous.



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