

February 2026

# VIA INSIDER

Serving the Community since 1883

## February Activities:

2/5 ~ Executive Board Meeting

2/12 ~ February Meeting (see page 2)

2/12 ~ Social and Puzzle Making Competition

1/31-2/1 ~ Hope Cup Pickleball (Villages of Hope)

Visit our website [WWW.GFVCVIA.com](http://WWW.GFVCVIA.com) for the current calendar. Our club email:

[viagfvc@gmail.com](mailto:viagfvc@gmail.com)

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/VIAGreenCoveSprings>

**VIA Meetings** are on the 2nd Thursday of each month at our clubhouse ~ 17 N. Palmetto Ave, Green Cove Springs.

The women of the VIA focus on service to the community. We strive to impact lives through our actions, both large and small, and build lasting friendships along the way.

VIA is a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) and GFWC Florida.



## President's Message

We have certainly gotten off to a great start, haven't we? I knew January was going to be so busy, and I was almost overstressing it! I should know by now, however, to never underestimate the ladies of the VIA! This was an amazing month. We had two major happenings in our clubhouse, several rentals in between, and you pulled it all off beautifully. I have heard so many great things about our "happenings" this past month.

The January meeting was awesome! We had a packed house, didn't we? Once again, it goes to our enthusiasm when we promote it, and we had some wonderful guests. The building looked beautiful, and it was an excellent representation of our speaker's work. People from the community are still talking about it.

And the District 4 Meeting! This was our fourth one and each time, I have been so "blown away" by your support, your ideas and your participation. I honestly didn't know how we could possibly "top" the past three, but you did it! I should never doubt you! So many volunteered to bring food. I had plenty of help with the decorations, and the service provided to the district was excellent. We got compliments on the meal, the inspiration, the game and everyone said what a fun meeting it was! Our speaker was excellent and even that was a result of the work our members have done.

I am so excited for February, too. I know great things are happening in every committee, and we just seem more involved, more prepared and more connected than ever!



**Larianne**  
[l.stutts@aol.com](mailto:l.stutts@aol.com)

## February 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2026

The Health and Wellness Committee will host the February 12th meeting in honor of February as Heart Month. Our featured speakers will be Matt and Tracy Hardy, owners of Assisting Hands South Jacksonville. While Assisting Hands is undoubtedly a business, Matt and Tracy view it as an opportunity to serve, love, and uphold the dignity of all those requiring assistance.

Please bring Valentine cards as we will be writing "thinking of you" messages to be distributed to the Green Cove Springs Senior Center.

We will also be holding a Your Choice raffle with various items that you might wish to win.

Wear **RED**, and feel free to bring a healthy snack to share (let Cheryl know).



## Congratulations Marnie



**GFWC Florida Flight to Honor 2026** participant, Marnie Buchanen served 29 years as a Navy Nurse Corp Captain O6. She entered the Navy in 1991 while pursuing her Bachelor of Science in nursing at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA. As well as her various duty stations she was

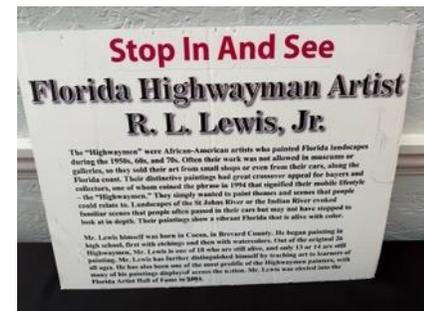
deployed first wave to Iraq in 2003 with Bravo Surgical Company. Personal awards include Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (6) as well as other military decorations and unit awards. Marnie is honored to be on the GFWC FL Flight To Honor. We wish her well.

## January 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2026

The **Arts & Culture Committee** hosted the January meeting, and the speaker was local artist from Tampa R. L. Lewis Jr., the grandson of one of the original Florida Highwaymen painters.

The Florida Highwaymen were a group of African American artists who, beginning in the 1950s, created vibrant landscapes of Florida and sold their paintings directly to tourists and businesses along the state's highways. Working outside the traditional gallery system, their art helped preserve Florida's natural beauty and has since gained national recognition.

R.L. Lewis Jr. stayed after the meeting was over to answer questions and welcome guests.



More meeting pictures are on page 6.

## Health and Wellness

There are many causes to support in February:

- **American Heart Month**
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Children's Dental Month
- Friday, February 6 ~ **Go RED for Women** ~ National Wear Red Day®



Wear red to raise awareness for women's heart health as cardiovascular disease is the #1 killer of women. Wear red to highlight the importance of women's heart wellness and take action.

- **Valentine's Day** ~ February 14 and also National Organ Donor Day

This is a day to bring awareness and educate others on the need for organ, eye, tissue, marrow, platelets, and blood donation. Every 10 minutes a new patient is added to the national transplant waiting list, which currently consists of 100,000 individuals. The need is so much greater than the availability. Most organs are donated upon death. A single donor can save up to 8 lives and help as many as 75 people. However, blood, marrow, platelets, tissue, and some organs can be donated while living.

## February 12<sup>th</sup> is our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Social and Puzzle Making Competition



Join us for "A Piece of Our Heart" fun event  
Sponsored by the Health and Wellness Committee

Celebrate Heart Month in February, with our

### Social and Puzzle Making Competition

Win a Raffle Basket!

Thurs, Feb. 12th  
Social: 6pm  
Puzzles: 7pm

BYO drinks/snacks  
Drinks/Snacks available for donation

Entry Fee  
\$10 per person  
Zelle to  
cheriewlsn@yahoo.com

To Reserve Your Spot:  
Donna Shibley  
413.519.1845  
Call/Text

Set Up: Teams of 5, Singles will be matched to a team  
Awards for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place

Contact Donna ~ 413-519-1845 to secure your Team's spot.

Who will take home the 1<sup>st</sup> place honor this year?

You can pay via Zelle to cheriewilson@yahoo.com.

### Last year's winners:



## VIA supports the Community

Honored to be among those who celebrated in true unity with the community for the **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day** Program. Several organizations and city officials (City of GCS, and Clay County officials, sherriff, police chief, and churches) listened and applauded the keynote speaker, Thomas Huggins III. who lived and grew up in Green Cove Springs and graduated from Clay High School.

He and his wife, Gail, are pictured with Janey Fox representing the Village Improvement Association of Green Cove Springs at the event.



# VIA "Stepped Up" and Hosted GFWC FL District 4 Meeting

All VIA hosting shoes were working overtime at the **Put Your Best Foot Forward in 2026 GFWC Florida D4 Meeting** on January 16<sup>th</sup>. From meeting set up, to prepping the yummy breakfast offerings, pouring endless coffee, tea and juices, with a massive shout out to Tonya and her incredible kitchen crew for plating the delicious lunch that had everyone talking, between the seamless service and spotless clean up, it was a masterclass in teamwork.

Larianne's fun "sneaker vs high heel" mixer was a perfect way to get everyone moving, laughing and putting their best foot forward in 2026.

Ladies of the VIA truly outdid themselves.

From Larianne:  
 Today was AMAZING! Thank you all so much for your part in making it so special! The food was delicious. Your service was impeccable, and you were all so kind and welcoming! The speaker was wonderful and everyone commented on what a great day it was. This meeting was not only informative, but FUN!

It was such an honor, too, to be recognized by 11th Hour for our contributions to his organization. It was very unexpected and I was so proud of our ladies for being recognized in such a public way.  
 I am so grateful for each of you and the part you played in our beautiful day.



## Mission 11<sup>th</sup> Hour speaker at District 4 Meeting



Brian Stewart, President, **Mission 11<sup>th</sup> Hour** was the Guest Speaker at the January 16<sup>th</sup> GFWC Florida District 4 meeting. He was presented a check from District 4 for his work with Mission 11<sup>th</sup> Hour.

The VIA was presented a certificate of appreciation from Mission 11<sup>th</sup> Hour for "Sincere appreciation for your continued support of Florida National Guard Service Members and their Families, and for the meaningful assistance you provided during the past Holiday season. Your generosity helped sustain our military families during a particularly difficult time of the year, directly contributing to mission readiness and exemplifying your role as an indispensable partner in our local military community."

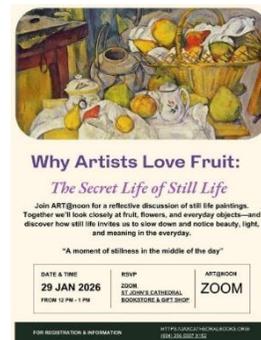


## Arts and Culture Happenings

**Why Artists Love Fruit: The Secret of Still Life** is the 1<sup>st</sup> Arts and Culture ART@ Noon Zoom meeting to be held on **January 29<sup>th</sup>**.

Join a reflective discussion of still life paintings. You will look closely at fruit, flowers, and everyday objects and discover how still life invites us to slow down and notice beauty, light, and meaning in the everyday life.

Sign up at <https://jaxcathedralboks.org/>



## VIA Assisting Green Cove Springs Friends of the Library

Per request from the **Green Cove Springs Friends of the Library**, the VIA is hosting the February 21<sup>st</sup> event ~ Storytime for BIG Kids!

Geared towards 9–14-year-olds, stories will be told by local author Bert Creswell from the Wonder Tree Book series.

Pre-registration at the library is encouraged

All participants will receive a free book.

## Hope Cup Pickleball Tournament to benefit Villages of Hope

January 31 (men's and women's doubles) - February 1 (mixed doubles)

7:00am-3:00pm

\$65 registration fee

Locations: Pickle Rage, 10320 Shops Lane, Jacksonville, FL

Format: Players of all levels ~ beginners to advanced

### Villages of Hope (District 4 Director's Project)

**Vision** ~ The Villages of Hope is a supportive community where women can find safety, healing and belonging while pursuing lives free from sexual exploitation and substance abuse.

**Mission** ~ Their mission is to walk alongside survivors as they reclaim their lives, offering a community that nurtures healing, growth, and restoration. Through community care, educational opportunities, paid vocational training and employment, they support each woman's journey toward stability and self-determined success.



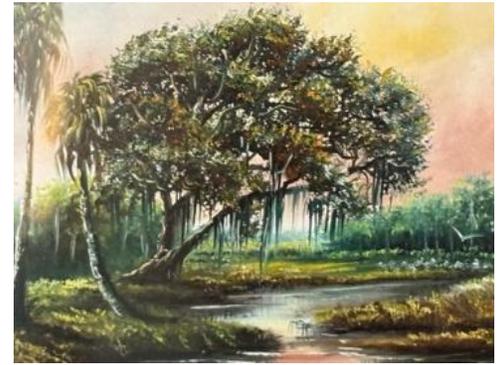
## GFWC Florida Arts and Crafts Competition, submitted at District 4



Calling all arts and crafts competition entries.

The **GFWC Florida Arts and Craft Competition** is swiftly approaching and of course the VIA would like to submit as many entries as might be eligible. If you completed an art project or a craft project in 2025, and you are willing to enter it in the GFWC competition, please contact **Karla Ziegner @ 904.646.8631** to arrange for submission by **January 28th**.

## More January Meeting pictures



← VIA basket raffle at D4 meeting with proceeds to benefit Villages of Hope.

More January meeting pictures are on our VIA website ~ Events, January meeting.

## Save the Dates for VIA Committee Meetings

Are you volunteering on a on a Special Program or Community Service Program Committee?  
If not, any committee could use your help!

Committee Chairs are listed on page 8. Reach out and offer to assist.

Watch for upcoming committee meeting dates posted on the VIA website ~ Events, Calendar.

## VIA Member birthdays

### February:

- 9 ~ Nancy Klopfenstein
- 14 ~ Mary Justino
- 14 ~ Jackie Kajala
- 15 ~ Gale Miller
- 16 ~ Karen MacClaren
- 19 ~ Marnie Buchanan
- 21 ~ Cathy Settle
- 26 ~ Jayne Amos

### March:

- 5 ~ Nikki Glanville
- 20 ~ Donna Habing
- 22 ~ Ellen Greer
- 31 ~ Constance Higginbotham



## February is Black History Month

Florida's Black history is rich and deep, starting with early African explorers, establishing North America's first free Black settlement in St. Augustine in 1738 and seeing the founding of the first Black-incorporated town, Eatonville, in 1887.

Check out: Florida Black Heritage Trail ~ <https://visitflorida.com>

## 2025 VIA Reporting to GFWC Florida

Reports were completed by President Larianne and sent to GFWC Florida on time. The VIA has much to be proud of for the work that was accomplished in 2025.

- Projects ~ 221
- Volunteer hours ~ 5982
- Dollars Donated ~ \$6,500
- In-Kind Donations ~ \$13,573
- Raised ~ \$14,865

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Market in the Park ~ VIA table needs your donations

Not only does the VIA have a presence at a booth for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Market in the Park where we talk about our club and upcoming projects and programs, but we have quite an assortment of items we are selling. From our VIA cookbooks, jewelry, hand and body scrub and bath bombs, we are now venturing into selling gently used brand name handbags. Do you have a Coach, Michael Kors, Kate Spade, the Sak, Kate Landry or any other handbag that you would be willing to donate? All items must be in good condition. Contact Sharon 904.446.5073 to donate. All donations are appreciated.

## VIA Raffles

The VIA also takes every opportunity to conduct raffles. This group of items was raffled off at the recent GFWC FL District 4 Meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>. Lucky winner was Lucy May from the Woman's Club of Palatka. Do you have any items you wish to donate?



## Did you know?

Since 1890, GFWC's impact has been felt throughout communities across the United States and the globe.

**Part 2 ~ GFWC's Impact** (Part 1 was in January's newsletter)

**8-hour Workday, 1910s:** GFWC supported legislation for the eight-hour workday, workplace safety and inspection, and workmen's compensation. Members also supported prison reform legislation.

**Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906:** GFWC member Alice Lakey (1857-1935) spearheaded a letter and telegram writing campaign, which was essential to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act. Dr. Harvey Wiley, the first chief of the Pure Food Bureau, attributed the bill's passing to GFWC and stated, "Trust them [GFWC] to put the ball over the goal line every time.

**Women's Right to Vote, 1934:** GFWC began a 10-year study to review the question of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). In 1944, GFWC adopted a resolution in support of the ERA, which the Federation continues to support today.

**Free Public Libraries, 1930s:** Having founded over 474 free public libraries and 4,655 traveling libraries, women's clubs were credited by the American Library Association with establishing 75 percent of America's public libraries. Supporting local libraries continues to be a Federation priority today.

**United Nations Charter 1945:** GFWC was one of the five women's organizations chosen to participate in the conference to form the United Nations. At the conference, GFWC representatives supported the ratification of the United Nations Charter.

...to be continued next month...

## Headquarters Rental

Our historic 1914 cottage is available to rent for YOUR next party. Have a special occasion such as a Birthday Party, Anniversary Celebration, Wedding, Family Gathering, Graduation or Baby Shower?

**Members task! Anytime the opportunity rises, please share info about our clubhouse.**

For more information contact:

Christy McCarthy @ [gcsviarental@gmail.com](mailto:gcsviarental@gmail.com)

### The Village Improvement Association Venue Rental

17 Palmetto Avenue  
Green Cove Springs

[gcsviarental@gmail.com](mailto:gcsviarental@gmail.com)  
Christy- 904.860.2597

#### Host Your Event in Historic Elegance

Perfect for showers, receptions, parties, graduations, and business gatherings, the Village Improvement Association's historic clubhouse is the perfect place to bring people together.

Affordable, welcoming, and full of character, this Green Cove Springs treasure is ideal for family celebrations, milestone events, and professional gatherings.

Every rental helps our nonprofit continue serving the community—140+ years strong!

Reserve your space and celebrate with purpose. Book your date today!



<https://gfwcvia.com>



## Village Improvement Association Federated Women's Club of Green Cove Springs, FL, Inc. Executive Board

**President:** Larianne Stutts  
[l.stutts@aol.com](mailto:l.stutts@aol.com)

**Vice President:** Cheri Starnes  
[cstarnes2326@gmail.com](mailto:cstarnes2326@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Sharon Nellis  
[snellis@bellsouth.net](mailto:snellis@bellsouth.net)

**Correspondence Secretary:** Tracy Hardy  
[hardy.tracy@gmail.com](mailto:hardy.tracy@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Cherie Wilson  
[cheriewilson@comcast.net](mailto:cheriewilson@comcast.net)

**Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness  
and Prevention:** Janey Fox  
[jmf1052@aol.com](mailto:jmf1052@aol.com)

**Arts & Culture Committee:**  
Terry Wilson  
[ktsswil@bellsouth.net](mailto:ktsswil@bellsouth.net)

**Epsilon Sigma Omicron (ESO):**  
Sandi Dunnivant  
[bookladi2012@gmail.com](mailto:bookladi2012@gmail.com)

**Civic Engagement & Outreach Committee:**  
Mary Justino  
[justinom@clayclerk.com](mailto:justinom@clayclerk.com)

**Education & Libraries Committee:**  
April Pearson  
[aprilapearson@gmail.com](mailto:aprilapearson@gmail.com)

**Environment Committee:**  
Christy McCarthy  
[christy@interiorsrevitalized.com](mailto:christy@interiorsrevitalized.com)

**Health & Wellness Committee:**  
Cheryl Gonzalez  
[Cherylgonzal@yahoo.com](mailto:Cherylgonzal@yahoo.com)

**Building Maintenance Committee:**  
Sharon Nellis

**Building Rental Committee:**  
Christy McCarthy

**Membership Committee:** Pam Harris  
[pamdora878@comcast.net](mailto:pamdora878@comcast.net)

**Communications & Public Relations  
Committee:** Donna Shibley  
[dmshibley@gmail.com](mailto:dmshibley@gmail.com)

**Newsletter articles** are due by the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please email them to:

[l.stutts@aol.com](mailto:l.stutts@aol.com) and [dmshibley@gmail.com](mailto:dmshibley@gmail.com)

*All submissions must represent VIA supported events and activities.*

Larianne Stutts, Newsletter Editor

Donna Shibley, Newsletter Design & Layout

**Facebook postings** are now managed



by Tracy Hardy and Donna Shibley.

Reach out to them for any suggested VIA postings.

## “The House That Built {Us}”

Our clubhouse has had a very busy month, but she never lets us down. It looked incredible with the art displays for our January meeting, and then again with the shoes and purses for our District 4 Meeting. We comfortably sat 76 people and even with the incredibly low temperatures, we remained warm and cozy. It’s always a little “tricky” when we have men in our building, but we managed the restrooms fine as well.



The Archive Room was so appropriate for serving our guests. I love every opportunity that allows us to welcome visitors, especially ladies from sister clubs in that room to see our history. I love it when we get a chance to showcase some of the awards that the VIA has won over the years.

I want to thank each of you for voting to approve the needed repairs. The upkeep and maintenance of our historical building is vital to the longevity of our club. It will be great to see the Archive room at its best again soon.

**Larianne**



← On display the 50-year-old purse from the 1976 Bicentennial ~ a member of GCS VIA Junior Club represented the state of Florida at the GFWC Philadelphia Convention in 1976 by winning best Bicentennial costume.

## VIA History

Copied as printed from:

**The Florida Times-Union, Sunday January 25, 1891  
The V.I.A’s Again.**

It has been just one week since we told the story, in part, of the Green Cove Ladies’ Village Improvement association, and already we can see that the story is going to bear the fruit we hoped for.

Here is what one of our sisters, for instance, has got to say about it in a letter just at hand, dating from one of the most beautiful little towns in Florida:

“I think the Ladies’ Village Improvement association of Green Cove Springs is an admirable institution, and certainly for neatness, cleanliness, and beauty Green Cove is a model to all Florida towns that I have seen.” And a little further on in this letter is another person that we will quote because it leans upon the same subject as beautifying our towns, and shows that our editorial referred to has been taken as we desired it to do in that connection:

“We have a Literary and Debating society, started last July, (in spite of the heat) and at our last meeting one of our members read your article on the ‘Birthday Trees’ with the view of bringing out what had been done in our town in this respect.”

And now mark our words. It will be but a little while before this bonnie little town will have its own Ladies’ Village Improvement association. Not only this town, but many others.

And do not forget that the Green Cove association, our Florida Pioneer, has generously offered to send pamphlets containing their constitution and the outline of its workings, to any who may apply for it. Enclosing a stamp, to the president, vice-president, or secretary of the association.

Or, if it is more convenient, to apply to Our Home Circle: we also can supply Some time in February, the annual meeting of the Green Cove Village Improvement association will be held, as it enters upon its fourth year.

*Thank you to Teresa Moore for this submission.*





## Member/Family Businesses

### Accounting/Tax Services

- Susan Hess CPA, P.A. | 904-500-2100

### Auto Body Shop

- Darren's Custom & Restoration Body Shop | Darren Stutts | 904-509-2420

### Beauty

- Rodan & Fields Skin Care Consultant | Larianne Stutts | 904-251-4995

### Financial Advisor

- Hess Financial Group | John Hess | 904-269-8772
- VyStar Investment Services | Raeanne McCarthy | 904-908-2495

### Gifts

- Nikki's Custom Gifts | Nikki Glanville | 904-476-2475

### Home Care

- Assisting Hands Home Care | Tracy Hardy | 904-746-1036

### Interior Design/Home Staging

- Interiors Revitalized | Christy McCarthy | 904-860-2597

### Pet Services

- Jen's Pet Sitting Service | Jenifer Dunnivant | 904-657-4460

### Outdoor

- Space Coast Green Fence and Gates | Teresa Moore | 904-678-7754

### Realtor

- Davidson Realty, Inc. | Christina Treadway | 904-548-7775

### Restaurant

- Corner Pocket | Cheri Starnes | 904-548-7775

### Scents

- Scentsy | Jo Potter | 541-279-0595

### Specialty Women's Clothing

- One Swanky Chic Boutique | Kristina Byrd | 904-671-3819

### Web Design Development and Photos

- Unicorn Web Development /Foto Fusion Photo | Bobbi Nagle | 904-891-4538



Let's support the businesses of our members and their spouses!

