



THE BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER OF THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF UPPER MONTCLAIR
MEMBER OF THE NJSFWC OF THE GFWC - LIBERTY DISTRICT
CELEBRATING OUR 125TH YEAR!
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2026

- 2 - Board Meeting - 10 AM
- 4 - Health & Wellness Prog - 1:30 PM
- 5 - NJSFWC Civic Engagement & Outreach Day
- 11 - W&M Valentine's Tea - 1:30 PM
- 14 - Happy Valentines Day!
- 16 - President's Day!
- 19 - Book Discussion Gp - 1:30 PM
- 25 - Arts Performing Prog - 1:30 PM

MARCH 2026

- 2 - Board Meeting - 10 AM
- 2 - Read Across America (After Board Meeting)
- 4 - Ed & Libraries Prog - 1:30 PM
- 8 - Daylight Savings Begins!
- 11 - Health & Wellness Prog - 1:30 PM
- 12 - NJSFWC Liberty District Arts Performing Day
- 17 - St. Patrick's Day!
- 18 - W&M St Patrick's Day Luncheon - Noon
- 19 - Book Discussion Gp - 1:30 PM
- 21 - Snow Day for Liberty District Arts Performing Day
- 25 - Arts & Culture Prog - 1:30 PM
- 31 - NJSFWC Liberty District Achievement Day

Editor - Sarah Ross

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Our President's Message

Dear Members,

If you're like me, as much as I love the holiday season, I always look forward to flipping the calendar to a new year, and I am especially excited to begin 2026. Take a simple glance at our upcoming events, and I'm sure you'll agree we have many interesting programs, events, and seminars scheduled for our members. It promises to be a fun-packed, educational and entertaining 12 months.



However, before ringing in the new year I want to take this opportunity to thank several of our members for volunteering their time, along with lending their expertise, this past year. Many thanks to everyone who volunteered or shopped at the Holly Berry Craft & Gift Show, the Club's biggest fundraiser. Vivien Finn served delicious food and treats in the Holly Berry Cafe. Cathy McCarthy, Chair of our Advocate for Children/Domestic Violence for organizing a workshop and delivering Christmas baskets to Several Sources Shelter, a women's shelter in nearby Bergen County. I also want to acknowledge so many of our members who donated clothing, toys and gift cards to fill those baskets. I also want to thank Sarah Ross, Chair of our Ways & Means Committee, who organized our annual Christmas Tea, and all the "holiday elves" who assisted her making sandwiches and desserts and hosting tables. It was a fun-filled afternoon, enjoyed by everyone.

Now, let's all take this opportunity to ring in the new year together, and I can think of no better way than to reflect upon these words:

A 2026 New Year's Wish For You:

12 Months of Joy
52 Weeks of Laughter
365 Days of Peace
Have a Blessed New Year!

~ CYNDEE



Health & Wellness

Wednesday, Feb 4, 2026 - 1:30 PM

Come hear Stacey O'Brien, RD, CLT from SO Nutritious, LLC when she discusses healthy eating, nutrition and diet... the cornerstones of healthy aging. Learn how to start making smart food choices, shopping for healthy food on a budget, and the essential vitamins and minerals needed as we approach our "Golden Years." ~ **Celia McAllister, Health & Wellness Chair**

Valentine's Day Afternoon Tea & Dessert

Wednesday, Feb 11, 2026 - 1:30 PM

Come for a "Heart-y" cup of tea and dessert from the Valentine's Day tea table as the Club celebrates Cupid's Arrow and Sweethearts. Spend a lovely afternoon with treats and conversation to dispel the chill of winter, and a chance to win a door prize! Reservations are \$15 per person, and are due in by Wednesday, Feb 4, latest (no walk-ins, please). Be sure to wear red or pink to get into the spirit, and to support Women's Heart Health Month. Will you be my Valentine? ~ **Sarah Ross, Ways & Means Chair**



Book Discussion Group

Thursday, Feb 19, 2026 - 1:30 PM

The February book will be decided after the Jan 15 discussion, and the March book will be chosen at the Feb gathering. Everyone is welcome to attend whether you have read the book or not. Hear what your fellow readers have to say about the book they've just read. ~ **Barbara Davey, Moderator**



Arts Performing Program

Wednesday, Feb 25, 2026 - 1:30 PM



The Arts Performing Committee is **calling on all Club members** to participate in the Arts Performing program on Feb 25, either by recounting a funny story, singing a song, reading an essay or a poem, participating in a skit, or a performance of your own choosing. Feb 25 will act as a dress rehearsal for the NJSFWC Liberty District Arts Performing Day scheduled for Mar 12, 2026, when all clubs from the District present a variety of entertainment. Please contact me or Barbara Davey by Wed., Feb 4, if you are interested in participating, and let us know what you would like to perform. Your presence is important as a participant or a member of the audience. Please plan to attend this program, and join in the fun! ~ **Mary Sellitto-Curcio, Arts Performing Chair**

Education & Libraries

Wednesday, Mar 4, 2026 - 1:30 PM

Our own wonderful Heather Zises, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Art and Design at Montclair State University and an experienced editor and writer, will present a talk on her award winning book, **50 Contemporary Women Artists**. She will delight us with fascinating stories about groundbreaking women artists and architects working across diverse media. As an extra treat, signed copies of her book will be available for purchase following the talk. Afterwards, the Education & Libraries Department will provide coffee, goodies and warm conversation with friends. Please come and support one of our fellow, talented members as she generously provides a highly entertaining and informative program. ~ **Arlene Onnembo, Education & Libraries Chair**



Health & Wellness - "Understanding Memory Loss"

Wednesday, Mar 11, 2026 - 1:30 PM

Jenna Noecker, BSW, at the Alzheimer's Association of NJ, will be giving a program that explores the differences between normal age-related memory changes, and those that are associated with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Ms Noecker will also discuss some of the common warning signs. ~ **Celia McAllister, Health & Wellness Chair**

St. Patrick's Day Luncheon & Bag Sale

Wednesday, Mar 18, 2026 - Noon

Faith and begorrah! You will not want to miss this luncheon! Our own Trautie Becker will be making Shepard's Pie for us as well as salad. Dessert has yet to be decided. We will also have our "Old Bags Sale" at the luncheon of very gently used handbags. Reservations are \$38 per person, and are due in by Wed., Feb 11, latest (no walk-ins, please). Trautie needs to know how many to cook for. Looking forward to seeing you there wearing green! ~ **Sarah Ross, Ways & Means Chair & Trautie Becker, Chair of the Day & Chef**



Arts & Culture

Wednesday, Mar 25, 2026 - 1:30 PM

This program is in the works. You will be emailed once the details have been finalized. Stay tuned!
~ **Carla Helb, Ways & Means Chair**

2026 - 2027 Membership Renewal



It's that time of year again! Enclosed with this Bulletin you will find your 2026-2027 Membership Renewal Form. All members are required to fill this out, and return it along with your check, to the Club by Friday, March 6, 2026. This will ensure that your name appears in the Annual Directory ("Blue Book") for the 2026-2027 Club year. Please sign up to be a working member of two or more of the Club's Departments/Committees. Every member is on the Ways & Means Committee, and this membership does not count toward your choice of two committees. Thank you! ~ **Barbara Davey, Membership Chair**



Please bring old eyeglasses you no longer want (prescription, reading, sunglasses) to our next event, or any event, so that we may deliver the glasses to the Lion's Club "Cycle for Sight" program. Regional volunteers clean, sort and distribute the glasses to people of low-income areas who are unable to afford them, helping millions to see clearly. Even broken glasses are accepted!

"Let's Get Moving" log sheets for 2026 are available. It doesn't matter how few activities/hours you accumulate, it will help our club to gain recognition while getting members moving! If you need a log sheet, please contact Celia McAllister at memac230@gmail.com, or you can pick one up in the Club's office.

Spotlight Series: Sarah Ross

In this issue of *The Bulletin*, we continue our Spotlight series, and are delighted to feature one of our esteemed board members—Sarah Ross.

If you're reading this article in *The Bulletin*, if you ever attended the auction at the January Hodge Podge Party, or if you ever marveled at the handmade scarves, hats, and ornaments at the annual Holly Berry Gift and Craft Show, you've witnessed firsthand several of Sarah's many talents. The editor extraordinaire of our newsletter, the accomplished emcee of several of our celebrations, and a gifted knitter and crafter, Sarah has contributed in countless ways to the success of our organization. She is currently serving as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Vice Chairman of the Arts and Culture Committee, and has worked tirelessly on the Holly Berry Committee. She has also lent her expertise to composing countless emails and communication blasts to our entire Club, and we are so fortunate to have her on our board! ~ **Barbara Davey, Membership Chair**



Historical Nugget: WCUM Founder

Mrs. Howard S. Bliss

This article continues the series on WCUM founders.

On November 7, 1889, Miss Amy Blatchford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Blatchford of 375 La Salle Avenue, Chicago, IL, married the Rev. Howard S. Bliss at the New England Church in Chicago. After their honeymoon the couple settled in Brooklyn, NY, where Rev. Bliss served as assistant pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church from 1889 to 1894. In 1894 Rev. Bliss was called to be pastor of the Christian Union Congregational Church on Cooper Avenue in Upper Montclair. He served until 1902.

Born 1860 in Suk-el-gharb, a village of Mount Lebanon, Syria, he was the eldest son of Rev. Daniel Bliss, President of the Syrian Protestant College (SPC). Rev. Howard Sweetser Bliss received a B.A. from Amherst College in 1882, and then studied theology at Union Theological Seminary before receiving scholarship funding for study at Oxford, Gottingen and Berlin Universities.

In 1902, he returned to Syria to assume the Presidency of the SPC in Beirut. Rev. Bliss had a distinguished career, was respected by regional Turkish rulers and survived

WWI. With the encouragement of President Wilson, he argued for Syria's self determination at the Paris Peace Conference following the war. Rev. Bliss died May 2, 1920 (age 61) while being treated for tuberculosis in Saranac Lake, NY (probably at the Trudeau Sanatorium).

Mrs. Bliss's life revolved around her home, family (which included sons & daughters) mission work, and her association with WCUM. She and her husband were remembered as gracious and serene Upper Montclair neighbors. Although she spent many years living in Beirut as a university president's wife, Mrs. Bliss would revisit the Montclair area. In October 1908, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Blatchford, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the Hotel Montclair. Mr. Blatchford was president of the board of directors of the Newberry Library in Chicago. During May 1941, Mrs. Bliss and other American University at Beirut personnel moved for safety reasons to Jerusalem. On June 27, 1941, (age 79) she died and was buried in the Jerusalem Protestant Cemetery. ~

Pat Piermatti, Historian

Sources for this article:

1. The Montclair Times in the [newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com) database and the Internet

NJSFWC News

Operation Duffle Bag

There is a now a new, hands-on project for Special State Project, the New Jersey Children's Alliance, called Operation Duffle Bags. Clubs are asked to donate no more than two (2) duffle bags that will be used for children who need to leave their home in emergency situations. The program runs from Jan 1, 2026, through Mar 10, 2026. Find more information at the NJSFWC website (www.njsfwc.org) under Materials/Almanacs/December 2025 Flyers.

Birthday Cards for Members 90 and Above

Did you know that any member celebrating a birthday, 90 years or more, may receive a birthday card from the Federation? Email the member's name, birthday date, age and address to the NJSFWC Corresponding Secretary, Nancy Levy, at levy@njsfwc.org.

NJSFWC eConnection

The NJSFWC has a weekly email newsletter called the "eConnection." If you would like to be on the mailing list to receive this fact-filled newsletter email your name and email address to: njsfwc@njsfwc.org. Be sure to mention you're a member of the WCUM!

2025 Christmas Tea

Very sincere “thank-you’s” to the Sandwich Elves, Hostesses and Dessert Divas for all of their hard work as they made the various tea sandwiches, sweet treats and festive holiday tables for this year’s Christmas Tea. A grand time was had by all!

Photos courtesy of Sue Yu.



"Old Bags" Handbag Donations

We are looking for donations of very gently used handbags from our members. At the St. Patrick's Day lunch on Mar 18, we will be holding our **"Old Bags" Sale** of these handbags to raise much-needed funds for our Clubhouse. If you have any handbags to donate you can bring them with you to the Club for us to look over. Thank you in advance for your help! ~ **The Old Bag Committee**



Valentine's Day Afternoon Tea & Dessert

Wednesday, Feb 11 - 1:30 PM

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Please reserve _____ seat(s) at \$15 per person.

I cannot attend, but would like to make a donation of: \$ _____

Reservations due by Wednesday, Feb 4, latest!

(No Walk-Ins Please)

Send this reservation form with your check to the WCUM. Mail to: 200 Cooper Avenue, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

St. Patrick's Day Luncheon

Wednesday, Mar 18 - Noon

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Please reserve _____ seat(s) at \$38 per person

I cannot attend, but would like to make a donation of: \$ _____

Reservations due by Wednesday, Feb 11, 2026, latest!

(No Walk-Ins Please)



Send this reservation with your check to the WCUM. Mail to: 200 Cooper Avenue, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

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