**Call to Order** by President, Ellen Blackmon Ellen reminded everyone to silence their cell phones.

**Oriental Woman's Club Vision:** Women together, making a difference. We are women committed to connecting and making a difference in our community through our service and outreach programs.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by Marilyn Hollingsworth.

We did not have a guest speaker this month.

### **Inspirational Reading**: Marguerite Garrett

Marguerite welcomed everyone to the new year and encouraged members to recognize the uplifting effects of volunteering. She noted that regular acts of service like signing up for committees, helping fellow members, and checking in on absentees benefit both the giver and the community.

### Mini-Grant Program Renamed in Tribute to Carol Herman

The mini-grant program is now officially the "Tribute to Carol Herman Mini-Grant," honoring Carol's lifelong dedication to teaching children.

# **Administrative Updates**

**Minutes & Volunteers**: Previous meeting minutes were approved and filed. Three volunteers (Sharon Gilbert, Donna Crothers, Anne Parker) will review minutes this month. Kim Hutchins (co-secretary) and Donna Crothers will share duties of recording EC (Executive Committee) and general meetings.

Treasurer's Report: Accepted and on file.

**Sunshine Lady**: Elaine Wolfinger stepped down; a new volunteer is needed to send cards to members facing illness, loss, or other challenges (contact Jean Chastang or Ellen Blackmon if you would like to volunteer for this).

# **Committee Updates**

**Education Committee & Arts Festival:** Thank you to the Education Committee for the wonderful potluck luncheon in December. Special thanks to Maryellen

Bickel, Carol Young and Carol McAdoo for a fine job. An additional \$282.00 was raised during this luncheon to supplement the Arts Festival's budget.

Our next event will be the **Arts Festival.** This will be held on Sunday January 26th from 12:00 noon until 3:00 pm. Volunteers are needed to hang artwork on Thursday, January 23, starting at 10:30 AM. The last Arts Festival in 2024 had approximately 400 attendees so there is a signup sheet in the back of the room asking for bakers to provide 3 to 4 dozen each of cookies to serve with punch. Help with setup and breakdown before and after the event is also being requested. A mini-grant teacher has announced she will bring her students to perform on ukuleles purchased with grant funds.

**Next Education Committee Meeting**: This Thursday, January 9th at 10:30 AM (moved earlier due to the festival).

**Building & Grounds**: Sally Farrell reported positive feedback from outside visitors; the facility remains in excellent shape.

The role of Building Maintenance Manager is available as well as the need for Monday Girls. A signup sheet is in the back of the room for volunteers for monthly maintenance participation.

**Programs & Hosting**: Several months still need hostesses for refreshments (September and November still have openings).

**Membership:** Sharon Morgan reported that at the end of last year 2024 we had 61 members, with average attendance of 28.

Members are asked to attend regularly, pay dues promptly, and serve on at least one committee or project. Everyone is encouraged to invite prospective new members. Sharon suggested each member look at the website for opportunities within the club.

**Garden Program**: The plant sale is going to be scheduled for sometime in May. Julie Wiegand and Linda Parker will be arranging garden related speakers for 2025. This club meets on the third Tuesday at 10:30.

**Ladies of the Neuse:** Marguerite announced starting in February we will work on Croaker trophies in the clubhouse after the General Meeting.

**Community Life** (previously known as Home Life) announcements. Gay Webster announced \$726.00 (\$400.00 from the budget) was available for the Christmas

family. Everything that was on the families wish list was purchased as well as \$75.00 gift cards were shared with each family member. A big success to bring joy to a deserving family in Pamlico County.

Gay Webster announced this group does not meet on a regular basis but would like to have more participation so she can have regular meetings. This club's focus is on helping women in the community who do not have a home to go to by supplying them with personal hygiene items, etc. Money for this is allocated through the budget.

The American Red Cross blood drive in December was a success. The next blood drive will be February 7th.

### **Upcoming Events**

Next EC Meeting: Tuesday, January 28, 10 AM.

**Next General Meeting**: Tuesday, February 4, 1 PM.

**Speaker**: Lori Altman (Bayboro Pharmacy) on women's health. Please wear red since it will be February.

**Chowder Cook-Off**: March 15 (sign-up sheet available). We need your help locking in the chefs, selling 50/50 raffle tickets, manning the entry tables, creating the trophies, baking cookies to sell and tallying scorecards. Julie Wiegand is looking for someone to take this event on since she is unavailable this year.

**Trivia Night**: Late March (exact date TBD). Volunteers needed for planning, prize solicitation, ticket sales, and tallying. During the last event over 85 people participated which makes this a very successful event for the OWC.

**Golf Tournament**: Planned for August (Sally Belangia has agreed to be the organizer and will be seeking volunteers and sponsors).

**Polar Plunge** (**Special Olympics**): January 25 at John Bond Beach. Costume contest at 1:30 PM; plunge at 2:00 PM. Everyone is encouraged to participate or go online to donate.

Croaker Festival TBD Fall Bazaar TBD Fine Arts Show TBD Craft Event TBD

# Committee "Speed-Dating"

Each committee had tables set up and members were invited to circulate among committee leads (Arts & Education, Garden/"Garden Program," Community-

Based/Home Life, Ladies of the Neuse, Membership, etc.) in quick intervals to learn more and sign up for volunteer roles.

#### **Additional Notes**

**Dessert-of-the-Month Raffle**: Volunteers needed to provide one dessert per month; a grand prize winner is drawn in December 2025 to receive a dessert each month in 2026.

### **Renaming Committees:**

"Garden Club" may be referred to as the "Garden Program" for clarity.

"Home Life" is shifting toward a more community-based focus, reflecting projects that help local families and service organizations.

### **History & Openness to New Ideas**

The club is no longer federated and welcomes new projects suggested by members. The overall goal remains community support through arts, education, beautification, healthy lifestyles, and outreach.

Members are encouraged to volunteer, sign up for committees, invite new faces, and share fresh ideas as the club carries out a busy schedule of events and continues its longstanding tradition of service.

Meeting was Adjourned.