

# WOMAN'S CLUB CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL



Nick Lippincott/The Voice

*Harpist Mary Gregory entertains the guests.*



Nick Lippincott/The Voice

*Susan Witty greets guests as they enter the Clubhouse.*



Nick Lippincott/The Voice

*Glenne Stoner (right) chats with a fellow member.*

**by Erin Machaby**  
*Voice Contributing Writer*

On Friday, February 10th, 2006 the Oviedo Woman's Club celebrated its centennial anniversary. Woman's Club members from the area gathered for an afternoon tea, and were joined by visiting Oviedo council members, as well as members of the Florida Federated Woman's Club (FFWC).

Pure Southern charm was evident from the moment guests arrived; greeted with smiles by ladies in extravagant hats and gloves, visitors were invited to sign the guestbook and given a lapel pin. Upon entrance to the clubhouse it was apparent that this was a

highly anticipated affair. Women of all ages buzzed around each other catching up on personal lives and gossiping about contemporary issues. A never-ending assortment of lace, velvet, and frills constituted the attire of the occasion. Around the perimeter of the room were heirloom dresses, baby clothes, and memory books...a reminder of this organization's longevity.

After all guests arrived the live harpist stopped playing and centennial committee member, and former Oviedo Women's Club (OWC) President, Susan Witty began the ceremony. After reciting a poem, Witty turned the service over to current OWC President Jane Denning, who thanked guests for attending "our

beautiful birthday party." After thanking the OWC for "changing our world one smile at a time," Charlyne Carruth, President of the FFWC, announced that in April 2005 the OWC received the honor of Most Outstanding Federated Woman's Club in Florida.

Special guests, Councilman Jim Greer and Councilwoman Regina Beriswill, presented the ladies with a letter from the city stating that organizations such as the OWC are an "absolute necessity for the quality of our citizens."

Seven local women founded the Oviedo Woman's Club as a magazine-trading club in 1906. As their club grew, so did their influences on the burgeon-

ing community of Oviedo. In 1910, they created the city's first library, open to the public one day a week. These ladies also utilized fundraisers--penning hogs and charging their owners for release, selling ice cream to train-riders, and traditional bake sales--in order to subsidize community projects such as building sidewalks and maintaining cemeteries. It is this spirit of generosity towards the community that sets the Oviedo Woman's Club apart from similar organizations and merits celebration.

"The Oviedo Woman's Club gives me an opportunity to make a difference to many people and make

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friends,” says Denning, stating that the organization’s goal is to “set an example of how volunteer services can be productive and fun.”

Philanthropic Committee Chair Jonne Sparrow couldn’t agree more. As a transplant from Dallas, Texas, Sparrow was invited to the Woman’s Club for her interest in charity. “These philanthropies are near and dear to my heart,” professed Sparrow, detailing the over \$30,000 distributed in the past year. Nearly half of this money has been given as scholarship money to Oviedo High School seniors, and to women returning to school in order to earn their bachelor’s or master’s degrees.

The remainder of these funds serves the Oviedo Fire Department, the Oviedo Police Department, and often families in need.

Rather than relying on penning hogs like their predecessors, today’s OWC members host “Great Day in the Country” each year on the second Saturday of November. “Great Day” is an Arts and Crafts fair with over 300 booths of hand-made arts and crafts. The fair also features live entertainment, delicious food, prizes, and socialization. “We come [to Great Day] for community spirit. A sense of quality emanates from this organization,” said Regina Beriswill, reflecting on the impact the

OWC has on the surrounding community. “Great Day in the Country” has grown into a thriving community event drawing crowds from the surrounding Central Florida area. This year “Great Day in the Country” will be held on November 11th and planning for the event began in January.

Amidst the finery, the food, and the laughter there was an air of appreciation for the 100 years the Oviedo Woman’s Club has provided friendship and service. Asked to reflect on what this anniversary means to her, Denning replied, “I am overwhelmed. We’re proud to have stayed together and grown... many organizations haven’t.”