

DWCLA NEWSLETTER



January, 2024, Covering October-December 2023

Elections 2024

End of an Active Year; Start of a Critical New One; Time for Action

It is the end of an active political year for America, as we move toward an election cycle which will prove pivotal for the direction of democracy in our country. Moreover, the 2024 election year is critical, not only for the United States, but for the entire planet. It is a [record](#) year for elections worldwide. Over 60 countries will be holding national elections (41 presidential elections), and 4 billion people (about half of the world population) will be voting. The results will have far reaching consequences for our future, both nationally and internationally.



If you have been waiting for a time in which your efforts are most critical to promote or resist elements of political change, NOW IS THE TIME. Do your part to remind everyone to remember in November of 2024, the events of Jan. 6, 2021, when so many would like us to forget.

Volunteers are needed!!! Volunteers are needed in roles that include Texters, Phone Bankers, Door Knockers, and addressing post cards to registered voters. Please contact the Campaign Committee Chair or go to our [website](#) if you are willing to participate.

New Meeting site - Know Where to go

The DWCLA will have a new meeting site beginning with our January 25, 2024 Meeting onward. We will now meet at the Melrose Center at 309 State Road 26 in Melrose, FL. This will include all DCWLA meetings unless otherwise notified. Come check out the new digs!



Election of New DWCLA Officers - It's Official

The election results are in! New Club officers were voted into office at our November meeting. They are: *President* - Cheryl Owen; *1st Vice President* - Kate Ellison; *2nd Vice President* - Rissi Cherie; *Secretary for General Meetings* - Robin Frazer; *Secretary for Board Meetings* - Loretta Chandler; *Treasurer* - Sharon Deitz;— *At Large* - Linda Osborne and Celina Rohman. Congratulations to all our new officers, and special thanks for serving in a year that will prove eventful.

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CLUB EVENTS

Christmas Presence

The DWCLA on/in Parade

The Dec. 9, 2023 Melrose Christmas parade was sponsored by the Melrose Business and Community Association with a theme of "Peace on Earth". Our Club float in the parade this year was a Christmas tree decorated with international flags and a peace symbol over a world map. Float riders included our Club President, Cheryl Owen, Michael Wells, and expert hand waver, 5 year old Marilla Linley. Additional members dressed in peace era tie dye shirts and head bands passed candy out to children along the route. A tip of the hat to Leslie Skeans as Chairperson for organizing the float, and everyone who volunteered to help to bring the float together and participate in the parade.



It's A Wrap



The December 14th Club meeting was scheduled as a gift wrapping party to prepare gifts purchased by the Club for children who might not otherwise be receiving a Christmas gift. The Club sponsored gifts for eight children this year. Members enjoyed potluck treats and the comradery of efforts to make an enjoyable Christmas for children. Special holly wreath to Linda Osborne, the Chairperson for organizing the event, members who volunteered to buy gifts, and all the volunteer gift wrappers.



CLUB EVENTS (continued)



Third Annual Walk Against Hate

With hate speech and hate crimes on the increase nation wide, this year's DWCLA sponsored third annual Walk Against Hate was particularly timely. The event was held on October 22 at Melrose Heritage Park. The featured speakers included Marilyn McCall Wiles from the Enterprising Women Institute in St. Augustine, Indira Moran from Hispanic Caucus of the Clay County Democratic Party, Paul Wolfe from the Stonewall Democrats, Mary Bahr from the Veterans For Peace, Faye Williams, Chair of the DEI Caucus of Alachua County, and Cassidy Oody from the Jewish Council of Central Florida. After the speeches, the walk followed the sidewalk from the Park to the intersection of SR 21 and 26, and back. Special thanks to Cheryl Owen who chaired the event organizing committee (and introduced the speakers) and to all members who contributed and participated in resisting these truly disturbing trends in our nation today.



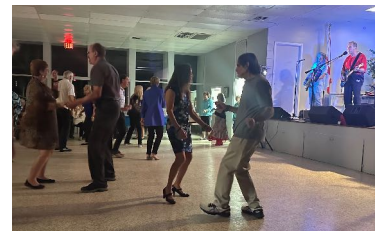
Cheryl Owen, DWCLA President



Speakers, left to right- Marilyn McCall Wiles, Indira Moran, Paul Wolfe, Mary Bahr, Faye Williams and Cassidy Oody

You Can Dance! You Can Jive! (and they did!)

The annual Lakes Area Community Dance was held on September 30, at the Keystone Heights Women's Club, featuring the rock and roll band Crooked Counsel. The new site allowed more space than the previous venue. Party goers enjoyed dance, drink and community as part of our Club's annual fundraiser. A special guitar herald for Sharon Deitz who chaired the Dance Committee, and the Committee Members for a successful fund-raising event. An additional chord for all Club members who assisted in the set up for the dance and the cleanup afterwards. Let the band play on for next year!



CLUB EVENTS (continued)



Speaker's Corner



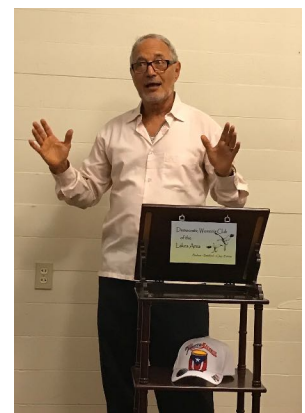
At our Club's fall meetings, we were fortunate to have two guest speakers to provide perspective on community and political issues and how these issues might be addressed. At our September meeting, Jason Stafford, a former educator and current Project Officer for the State of Florida's CDC's Drug Communities Program addressed the challenges of teaching in today's political climate. In particular, he noted that schools are less likely to provide the cultural experiences children need to be prepared for the diversity in our communities.



Jason Stafford

He encouraged the Club to champion events to provide cultural experiences for children. On a political level, action should include a focus on the Florida State School Boards as local leaders with the most influence on education. He also noted that he oversees grant monies available for groups working with young people. These grants are directed toward non-profit 501(c)3's and can be up to \$125,000 annually for a 5 year period. He may be contacted if anyone knows of a group that might benefit from this type of funding.

The recruitment of support from communities of color are a critical part of the Democratic Party's political success. Our October meeting featured Jose Molina, the Putnam County DEC Treasurer, who shared his perspective on the Florida Hispanic and Latino population as a cultural and political force. He described his firsthand experience coming into the US from Puerto Rico at age ten and the challenges he faced with prejudice, language, and differing cultural perspectives. He emphasized the broad racial and cultural diversity within a community which often comes under the general label of Hispanic and Latino. The challenges faced by this community in their efforts to succeed in what is often a foreign land include being forced to be bilingual, accepting inferior jobs and pay, and enduring social and racial prejudice. In recruiting this community as a political force, Mr. Molina recommended keeping an open mind toward often conservative community values, using campaign literature written in Spanish, and contacting community leaders first as an introduction.



Jose Molina

SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND HISTORY



A Tale of Two Women

Book reviews by Sandy Stephenson

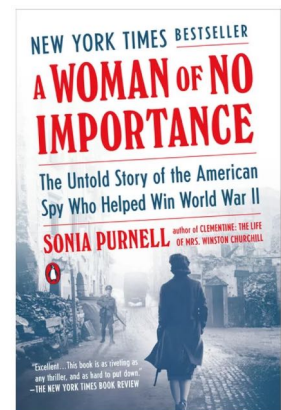
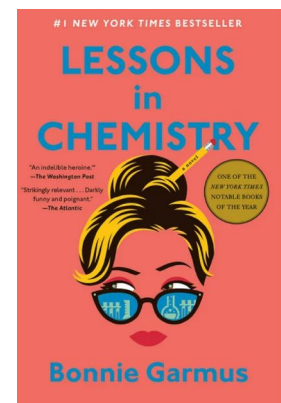
Lessons in Chemistry and *A Woman of No Importance* introduce us to two women who refused to accept the perceived traditional roles of women in a “man’s world.” One, a scientist and the other a spy, they forged their way in unrelenting circumstances. *Lessons in Chemistry* is a fictional satirical account of Elizabeth Zott battling female stereotypes during the 50’s and 60’s, and will make you laugh. Whereas, the non-fiction, *Woman of No Importance* will leave you wondering: with all the books and information available on World War II and the French Resistance, why haven’t I heard of Virginia Hall and her James Bond-like exploits behind the enemy lines?

Lessons in Chemistry’s Elizabeth Zott is a chemist who was denied a doctorate degree after some abuse; fired for becoming pregnant; free lanced to support herself and her daughter; then hired to host a cooking show by chance. Her no-nonsense personality and her insistence that all of life is chemistry because cooking is chemistry makes for an unconventional show. It elicits wild reactions because of her life lessons, along with her recipes.

The story is also full of quirky characters like a dog named 6:30 and a child named Mad, but overall is enjoyable while addressing issues of the time with satire. If interested, an eight-part series on Apple TV was released in October 2023.

On to more serious reading, *A Woman of No Importance* is a biography of Virginia Hall, a girl from a middle-class American background who became one of the greatest figures of World War II. Nicknamed “the Madonna of the Mountains” by the French and the “Limping Lady” by the Germans, she was truly a World War II hero who was instrumental in liberating France. Bored by her studies at Radcliffe and Barnard and able to speak four languages, she traveled to Europe and worked at several embassies but was stuck in clerical positions. She was shot in her leg in a hunting accident and almost died of gangrene. Amputation was required, and thereafter she wore a prosthesis that she nicknamed “Cuthbert”.

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A Tale of Two Women (continued)

After Germany invaded France, she volunteered with the French Artillery Brigade to drive ambulances. After a chance encounter in a train station, she met a man setting up a British Secret Service. After a short training she was on her way to Vichy-controlled Lyon to organize a network of secret operatives. She posed as an American journalist. Being a female had its advantages and disadvantages. No one suspected a woman could shoot and organize a spy ring, but she also had trouble with male operatives who did not want to take orders from a woman. She plotted prison breaks, organized resistance activities, and was continually reestablishing radio operatives for communication with the Allies.

After the United States entered the war, her status as an American put her in greater danger, but she persisted. Under her command, saboteurs put up misleading road signs directing enemy troops in the wrong direction, blew up railroad tracks and even placed explosives in horse dung along roads. These high jinks were a few of her tricks contributing to a successful Allied invasion of France.

The story is full of military strategy and details, but the story flows easily, and you find yourself feeling the stress of the individuals as they perform their duties with little sleep while trying to evade capture.

The movie, "A Call to Spy" was released in 2020 and based on Virginia Hall's story.



Loss of A First Class First Lady

Rosalynn Carter- August 18, 1927-Nov. 19, 2023

"Her life of service and compassion was an example for all Americans," was the notable tribute to his mother by Chip Carter on her death at age 96. Rosalynn Carter was a remarkable example of a First Lady who masterfully worked side by side with her husband during his presidency and afterwards, as an equal partner. It was at her suggestion that her husband invited Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat to Camp David for a summit that resulted in the 1978 peace deal. She was an advocate for mental health, a staunch supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, and made numerous trips as First Lady to highlight humanitarian crises throughout the world. After her husband's presidency ended,



both Carters continued their humanitarian efforts with the Habitat for Humanity as well as the Carter Center, a worldwide organization dedicated to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health.

Editorial Letter- One of these days these boots (Shoes).....

Red shoes are a symbol of unruly women. Here's why you need a pair.

By Leslie Skeans

Attributed to Refinery 29 2017

For centuries red shoes have technically been a symbol for men in positions of power; from kings to popes. So, what happens when a woman tries to claim a traditionally male power symbol? Women with a penchant for scarlet shoes are often seen as unsavory characters.



In 1939, Dorothy tapped her ruby slippers three times while saying "there's no place like home." Since then, multiple generations of women have grown up knowing the unmistakable power of a red shoe.

In 2009 Red Shoes came to symbolize the struggle for Women's Rights and Gender Based Violence following an art instillation by Mexican artist Elina Chauvet.

We associate the color red with passion, with blood; it's impulsive, explosive, bold, so it's no surprise that the color figures so prominently on so many runways. Designers know we dress as a reaction to the outside world, and with the increasing instability of the political and economic spectrum, it's obvious that we would approach getting dressed in the morning as if we were putting on armor. Red, white, and blue stands for America, but red stands for resistance.

Now, wearing red shoes — especially red boots — is the sartorial equivalent of shouting I am woman, hear me roar. When it seems like the world is set on keeping you down, when you wake up to another protest, to another photograph of a group of white men making irreversible healthcare decisions for women and their bodies, do not despair. We'll get through another day if we come together, if we push through, if we follow our own personal yellow brick road back to a place we know feels like home.



Ladies, break out your red shoes, the time has come to march.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT CHERYL OWEN



Cheryl has voted Democratic in every election since she turned 21. In high school and college she followed politics and took part in history, debate, and foreign affairs programs. She followed local, national, and international politics while getting a BA in Psychology with a minor in Economics from the University of Colorado. She continued her studies at UC and received a Masters in Public Administration specializing in nonprofit management.

Cheryl built a career with work experience in state, county and city government. She was executive director of a nonprofit home health agency and director of a nonprofit hospital senior care division. Along the way she owned a health food store, served as a consultant, and ran a couple of farmers markets.

It wasn't until Hillary Clinton ran for President that Cheryl became personally involved in campaigns and political processes. She joined the DEC of Clay County and began to work on Hillary's campaign, but she found the campaign office in chaos and coming apart at the seams. Only five people were available to mount a campaign, records weren't in order, and they had no volunteers and no budget. Cheryl became the VP and spent hours every week for the entire election year of 2016, working to assure that the Clay County DEC fielded an adequate response. With a herculean effort by everyone, they succeeded. (This does not adequately describe the nature of the task. The rebuilding process is ongoing.)

This experience led Cheryl to develop her personal philosophy for revitalizing/building an organization. She puts great effort into bringing about positive change for the future of an organization by using its strengths while adding astute components that enhance the overall mission.

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Member Spotlight-Cheryl Owen (continued)

Cheryl foresees DWCLA as a club that will continue to grow, to expand its committee structure, and to add members from currently underserved areas, like Clay County. Goals for her next two years as president are to strengthen our fundraising capacity and to grow our membership. Meetings, with interesting and educational programs, are where the energy and cohesiveness of the organization are built. Cheryl firmly believes that membership is the lifeblood of the DWCLA, and she encourages all our members to serve as recruiters.



Rescued

With her usual cheerleader enthusiasm, Cheryl feels 2024 will be a challenging year for all Democratic organizations, particularly small ones like DWCLA. There will be lots to do and too few bodies to do it. She expects members to step up into the Campaign and Fundraising Committees.

Still, she thinks we can accomplish the goals in front of these committees without any difficulty. And, she says, we'll have a good time doing it!

The Last Laugh



Women's Rights are human rights!

DONATE TODAY

Your recurring donation of even \$5 or \$10 a month will help! In order to work in the community to energize democratic women, WE NEED YOU! Your donation will be used to help our grassroots outreach in the lake area counties. We write post cards, do door to door canvassing, phone bank, and more to reach voters in our counties. Go Online to the website or to [Act Blue](#), directly.

