

DWCLA NEWSLETTER



March 2025, Covering January –March 2025

Resistance 2025

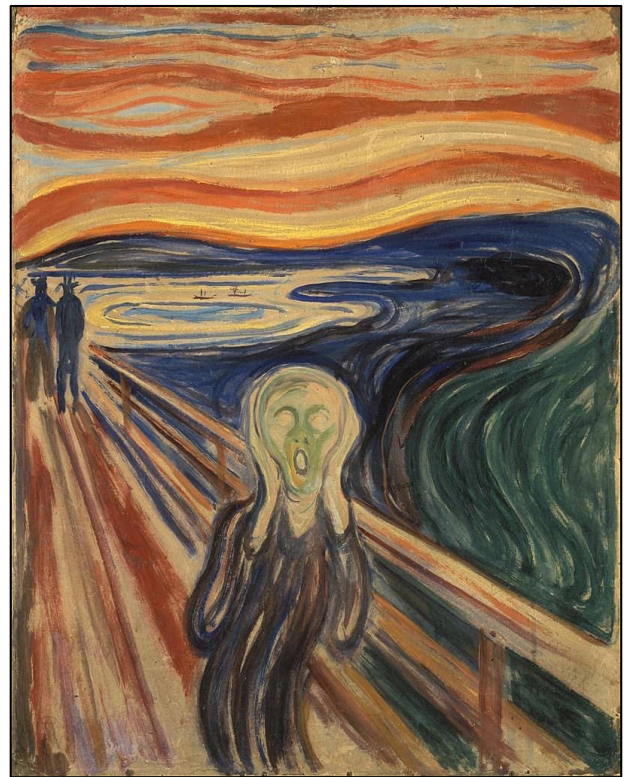
It is Chilling

By Kate Ellison

“These are uncertain times,” they say. How uncertain are these times, really? We know now who we are up against in this country – Putin, apparently. His priority is to be rid of USAID, and the new president’s first move was to shut it down. The president plans to give more and more power and money to the billionaires gathered around him. I expect the new five-million-dollar investment that buys “Gold Card” citizenship will be scooped up by Russian Oligarchs, chosen by Putin.

The uncertainty is in how to respond. Our side is slowly becoming louder and stronger, but how long will the new wannabe King tolerate it? When I think of our future with a transactional autocrat in control, I think of us with no protections for civil rights and no way to be heard because there is no free press, like women were treated in the 1800s. There was no way to prevent unjust arrest, or illegal search and seizure, like Black people were treated until 1964, and like most citizens of most countries in the world today. It is chilling.

I keep coming back to the thought that we must win back our federal and state governments before we lose the right to meaningful elections. I want to spend what days I have left writing poetry and planting a vegetable garden. Instead, I have canvassing to do and phone calls to make. I remember a sign from a recent pro-choice rally: “I can’t believe I still have to protest this shit!” Believe it, we do.



Legislative Liaisons –Action Alerts.

By Rissi Cherie

The Florida Legislature session is from March 4 to May 2. The three areas the executive board has asked the Legislative Liaisons, Rissi Cherie, Pam Perry, Loretta Chandler, Robin Frazer, and Cindy Watkins, to consider are Education, Environment, and Civil Rights, Human Rights, and Immigration. We will send club members email Action Alerts on bills that focus on those subjects. There will also be other Action Alerts, so please check your emails often, because **Action Alerts are time sensitive**, with a

(continued next page)

Page 1

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

Legislative Liaisons –Action Alerts- cont.

short amount of time to get our opinions to our representatives before a bill goes to special committees for votes. The more often we deluge our reps with emails and phone calls, the more chance we have of getting the outcome we want. Remember, there is a super majority of Republicans in both houses. Our work will help the few Dems in the Legislature (See pictures. of prominent examples to the right). Give them your best!

*NOTE: Action Alerts will have scripts, names, phone numbers and email addresses.



Fl. House Minority Leader
Fentrice Driskell



Alachua County Rep.
Yvonne Hayes Hinson



DWCLA Action Alert– Support Your Club



HELP WANTED

Treasurer's Apprentice: Learn to nurture and track our financial foundation, with guidance from our current Treasurer, Sharon Deitz. Her expertise and experience will combine with your energy and fresh ideas to carry us forward smoothly. Sharon will step down in November. Contact Sharon to discuss or volunteer.

Fundraising Team Leader: Call meetings and set agenda for the team, helping our club continue to be financially successful by brainstorming new fundraising projects that other committees will carry out. Contact the Team as listed in the 2025 DWCLA Committees Doc.

Campaign Team Leader: This team promotes our core function, electing Democrats, getting our policies and principles before the public, and forcing the GOP to spend time and money campaigning. The team supports our voters and finds potential new supporters. The job is to keep the team on track by scheduling meetings, fostering internal communication, and making

sure campaigns happen (canvassing, phone-banking, and postcard writing). We already have large teams of volunteers and an expert in creating lists of our voters. Contact Kate to discuss or volunteer.

Opportunities to Volunteer: on any of the other DWLCA committees: Legislative Liaison Team, Plant Sale Team, Equity Roundtable, and the Wine and Cheese (New Members) Meet-and-Greet, Letters to the Editor (LTE) Team, or the Dance Committee.



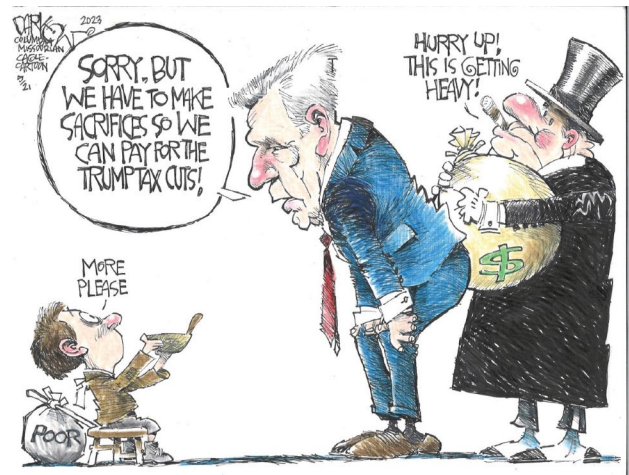
DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

CLUB EVENTS

A Christmas Wrap up

The December 19th Club meeting was set as a potluck and gift wrap 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 camaraderie of efforts to make an enjoyable Christmas for children. Special thanks to Linda Osborne, the Chairperson for organizing the event, members who volunteered to buy gifts, and all the volunteer gift wrappers.



Free Speaking: Notable Quotes from Members

"Directing a Democratic message of moderate objectives to the Oppressed Majority, which includes all minorities of course, will open the party up to many people who feel they don't fit in with either party." ~Rissi

"I suspect that a balance-tipping number of voters in the U.S. would be more inclined to support democracy if it did not appear that they were being made to swallow liberalism with it."

~ a Friend



Page 3

CLUB EVENTS



Speaker's Corner



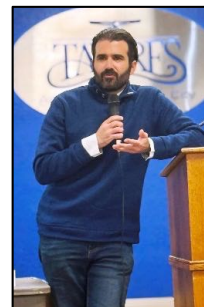
January: A Primary in Putnam

By Kate Ellison

The Republican Representative to the US House from CD 6, which includes all of Putnam County, was drafted into the Trump administration; this led to a special election in that district. There is also a special election in CD 1 in the Panhandle. These elections will be held on April Fool's Day (4-1-25). Prior to the primary for this election, both Democratic candidates were invited to speak at our meeting.

Joshua Weil was unable to attend, but sent volunteer Al Krulick to represent him. Josh has worked in Orange County Public Schools, and since 2018, with the School District of Osceola County as a secondary math and science teacher, coach, a dean of students, and an MTSS Coordinator. He completed his post-grad work in Educational Leadership at Stetson University. He is a single father of two young boys and their black and white cat named Chatterbox.

Josh is a proud progressive, dedicated to preserving Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and advocating for universal healthcare in the United States, and refuses to



Josh Weil



Al Krulick



Ges Selmont

accept corporate campaign contributions. To learn more about Josh and his priorities, visit www.joshweil.us

George "Ges" Selmont holds graduate degrees from Yale and Harvard's Extension School and a law degree from Northeastern University School of Law. Ges has a history of success in law, technology, entertainment, sports and higher education, including two Emmy Awards, a successful documentary, creating the first sports video file sharing app, oversight of major university building projects, and a successful lawyer.

Ges has been a campaign volunteer for Clinton '92 and a White House Intern. Since moving to Ponte Vedra Beach nine years ago, Ges has served as an Associate AD and advisor

(continued next page)

Page 4

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

CLUB EVENTS

Speaker's Corner Cont. – January: A Primary in Putnam



to the president of Jacksonville University and at Edward Waters College, where he was instrumental in securing \$8.5 million in funding for the college.

Ges and Monika were married in Paris seventeen years ago. They are parents of two teenage sons, Luke and Nate, and a Lakeland Terrier named Bill.

Lakes Area Democratic Women have taken a great interest in this Special Election and the chance it brings to be part of flipping the House if Democrats were to win this election, CD 1, and a similar election in New York state.

Note: Josh Weil was the Primary winner for this election. Be sure to vote!!



APRIL 1 (April Fool's Day)
Putnam County Voters
Early Voting 3-22 to 3-29

February: Black Girl in Melrose, circa 1969

By Kate Ellison

Nkwanda Jah is a well-known leader in Gainesville; she attended our February meeting and spoke with us about some of her childhood experiences. She grew up in Grandin and graduated from schools in Melrose after her school closed when integration came to North Central Florida.

She is the Executive Director of the Cultural Arts Coalition, and Chair of the Alachua County NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Committee. She has worked for over 40 years on energy equity and environmental justice issues.



Nkwanda Jah

(continued next page)

Page 5

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

CLUB EVENTS

Speaker's Corner Cont. –



As Co-founder in 1983 and Executive Director of the Cultural Arts Coalition, she helped create the Annual 5th Ave Arts Festival, tours to HBCUs, Black History programs, Kwanzas, African American Men in the Public Schools, Girl Power, Environmental Youth Summit, the Environmental Ambassadors (a 30-year-old teen job training program) and presently seven Science Clubs for Elementary students in East Gainesville.

Her passion for the environment comes from her experience as a girl on her family's farm in Grandin; and she has developed a broad understanding of sustainability as encompassing social needs, education, healthcare, food and an equitable transition to clean energy.

She shared some of her experiences starting out in segregated schools there, where she was surrounded by the supportive guidance of her teachers and extended family. Then she began being bussed to integrate Melrose schools, where she had to learn to face racism. However, on her bus, all the children were Black until the last few miles when white students were picked up and faced hostility from the kids already there. She remembers shopping at Williamson's after school. She moved to Gainesville to work and continue her education. Like so many children in her generation, the Boomer generation, the contradictions and violence of school integration fell on her shoulders.

Tally Days and the Florida Legislature

By Michael Wells

"Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made" is a quote often ascribed to Otto von Bismarck, but probably had an earlier origin with the lawyer-poet John Godfrey Saxe. However, for three of our Club members who visited the Florida Legislature as part of Tally Days, the process was much more inspiring than making sausage. Robin Frazier, Kristen Wood and Regina O'Leary attended the annual Tally Days event sponsored by the Democratic Women's Club of Florida. Tally Days are held as a part of the DWCF's promotion of legislative activism. Members from all over the state gather in force to advocate to Florida legislators in Tallahassee and learn about the legislative process first-hand.



Left to right-Robin Frazier, Kirsten Wood, Regina O'Leary

(continued next page)

Page 6

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

CLUB EVENTS

Tally Days and the Florida Legislature Cont.

Our members spent one day (March 11) in Legislative sessions on a range of topics from education and Medicaid, to criminal justice. All of our Club participants found the experience to be very enlightening and valuable. As Robin, also our DWCLA Club secretary, expressed, "I am very interested in attending Tally Days next year. In fact, I will volunteer to be the Tally Days Chair for our club next year to facilitate a smoother visit to the capitol. In addition, I don't think one day is enough. Next year I may lobby to attend for several days ." For further details, Robin has distributed reports from our attendees to all Club members via email.

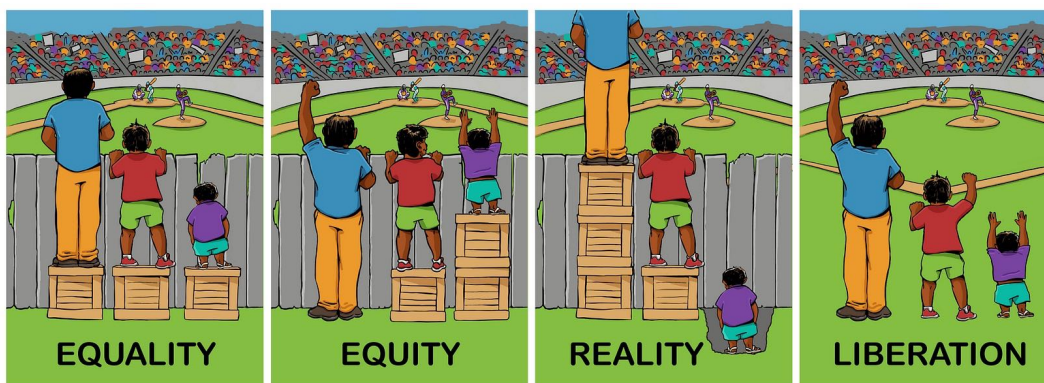


UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS- Plan To Participate The Equity for All Roundtable on June 14th- Calling for Member Assistance

By Rissi Cherie

A note about the Equity for All Roundtable. Some hosts for the tables have been approached to guide discussions on immigration, LBGQT issues, and same sex couples. I am searching for more. However, if a suitable, affordable venue cannot be found, we will have to postpone our June 14th target date.

So far, there is no suitable, affordable place for us to hold this event. I think we need space for 6 to 8 tables and 60+ people. Spaces large enough in and around Melrose are very expensive, or the landlord won't have political events, or the subject is too divisive.



Page 7

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam



UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS-
Speaker's Corner – Our Next Speakers
March 27, 2025

For March: Get Activated!



Pam Smith

**Gainesville
Women for
Democracy**
March 27, 7pm
Doors open @ 6:30



Julie Thaler

Pam and Julie lead Gainesville Women for Democracy. Pam is in charge of actions and events, and Julie does coalition building and voting rights. Together they are keeping alive the resistance to unjust state and federal policies affecting women, POC, and all disenfranchised people.

Meetings held at Melrose Center, 307 SR 26

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area

Facebook: @DWCLA or Facebook.com/groups/dwcla/

Instagram: DWC.LA

www.dwc-la.org



DWCLA ♥ PO Box 802 ♥ Melrose, FL 32666 ♥ 352-235-4161

DWCLA NEWSLETTER



UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS-

April 5- Plan to Plant

Spring is springing, and thoughts of growth and renewal for the coming year abound. Why not get a few plants to renew that garden? Our Club will again be hosting a plant sale this year as part of our fundraising activities. This year's sale will be on Saturday, April 5 at the Faith Presbyterian Church in Melrose at 2738 SE

State Road 21. The sale will feature a variety of plants raised by club members and offered to the public.

Members wishing to donate plants and/or participate in the sale (set up, take down) should contact the Plant Sale Committee Chair, Fran Rossano.

Spring Plant Sale

Sat. April 5
9:00 - 1:00

**Come to the
DWCLA booth
for flowers, plants
& friendly faces!**

**We have
Succulents**

**Faith Presbyterian Church @ Midway
SR 21 between KH & Melrose**

DWCLA ♥ PO Box 802 ♥ Melrose, FL 32666 ♥ 352-235-4161

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS-

**April 26- Recruit New Members
Tell Your Friends**

You're Invited!

We are very excited to announce that our annual New Member WINE & CHEESE MEET & GREET Event is set for Saturday, April 26, 3:30p-5:30p at the Melrose Center (307 FL-26). We anticipate welcoming YOU and celebrating our new Members with an afternoon of camaraderie and FUN! Can't wait to see you there! Bring a Friend!

--Your Friends at DWCLA



You are Invited

Wine and Cheese Meet and Greet

Saturday April 26th

3:30-5:30

Melrose Center

307 FL-26

Melrose, FL



**The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area
wants you to know you are NOT ALONE!**

Join us for food and friendship. Learn what this dynamic club is all about!

Bring a friend!

(904) 860-6458 Text or Call Celina for more information



SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Women in Literature



The Small and the Mighty: Twelve Unsung Americans Who Changed the Course of History from the Founding to the Civil Rights Movement

By Sharon McMahon

Book Review by Sandy Stephenson

If you are feeling a longing for hope and dignity for our country in these recent chaotic times, read Sharon McMahon's recent book. This non-fiction, thoroughly researched book reads as if you were having a conversation with a friend. Ms. McMahon is a former history and government teacher who now holds the nickname "America's teacher" as the result of her popular podcast.

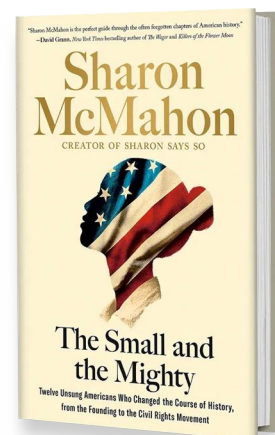
The twelve unsung Americans she writes of range from people we have heard of from Gouverneur Morris who wrote the preamble to the Constitution to Daniel Inouye, the long-time senator from Hawaii. She cites little known details from each of their lives that influenced them "to make a difference".

Lesser-known Americans such as Katherine Lee Bates who wrote "America the Beautiful" and Levi Straus of blue jeans fame are also included. Unique details of their lives are included as well. Bates was paid \$5 for her writing and Levi Straus did not use slave labor to make his products.

As a former history teacher, I was blown away by the unknowns she writes about that I had not heard of. For instance, the fifteen-year-old



Sharon McMahon



girl who refused to give up her seat in Montgomery, Alabama well before Rosa Parks. Also, the Virginia teacher who started educating African-Americans after the Civil War leading to a proliferation of schools in the South secretly funded by one of the founders of Sears and Roebucks.

McMahon's writing style has been criticized by some as "getting off track" and disjointed. I, however, enjoyed her little side stories and off hand comments. She reads the audio version and anyone who enjoys her podcast, "Here Is Where It Gets Interesting", will likely enjoy the audio version.

Editorial Opinion

The Terrorizing of Government Workers

by Theresa Marriott

The notices came as Delayed Resignation emails. Retire or Resign. These are the options offered to federal employees in February 2025. Also, in February came the notices of a Hiring Freeze and probable firing of probationary employees. Probationary employees are either new to federal service or to a different position than was previously held. Emails from Elon Musk flew to current employees, demanding information about what duties they performed the week before, with threats of resignation if they do not reply.

All of this was bombarded onto the federal workers in the space of one month, February, and were obviously designed to stress-out and panic employees. These tactics are specifically designed to destabilize and unnerve our federal workers, but not those cronies in the current administration, even though they're federal employees too.

When an employee resigns a job, they are not entitled to continue benefits after 30 days, receive unemployment benefits, nor any type of welfare assistance. They lose health insurance, life insurance and matching agency contributions to 401Ks.

I'm a retired federal worker – I know about working for the federal government. There are several other benefits too, but these are the main ones and why most of us (I know about) chose to work in the federal government in the first place. Job security, good benefits and belief in the good works of supporting our citizens. We enjoyed the structure and opportunities for career growth while also performing worthwhile duties.

We know every workforce has its deadbeats and they do need to be weeded out and held accountable. What we don't need is to throw out the baby with the bath water; it's just ridiculous.



Careful selection will remove those who are not performing their duties up to standards and work with those who are going above and beyond, to make improvements and support those who insist on working for good advancement/development for all qualified peoples.

Although, federal officials and union leaders and legal experts question the legality of the resignation offer, the administration is still pushing it forward. Several employees have already been affected. They claim those who accept the “delayed resignation” will continue to be paid through September. However, that particular bit of information is not included in the actual resignation form that you are expected to sign, only in the email. Right away, I see a problem with that!

What type of manipulations will it take for the administration to continue to pay employees on a monthly or bi-weekly schedule when they are designated as “resigned” in the many systems we use for processing employee data? Surely the pay systems will require major adjustments.

(continued next page)

Page 12

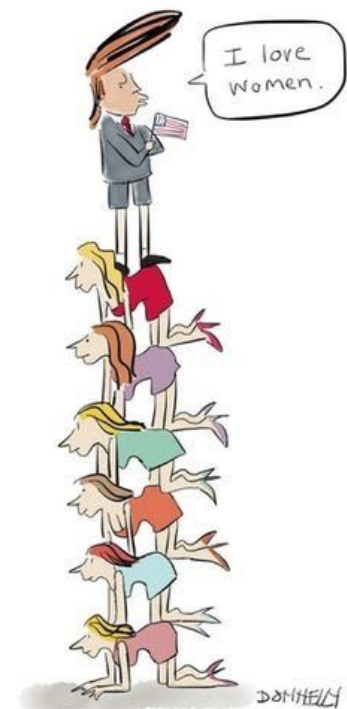
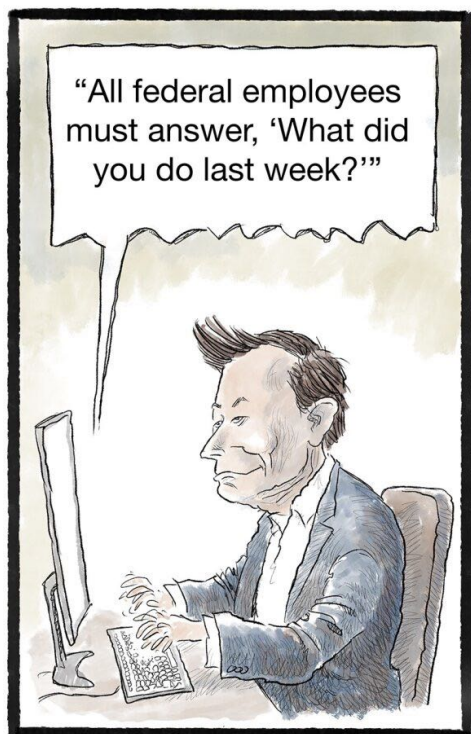
Editorial Opinion Cont. - The Terrorizing of Government Workers

I'm a retired federal HR Specialist and if something is not clearly written and documented, then it didn't happen, and good luck trying to prove otherwise. We must remain consistent in our resolve to continue this fight for democracy. We must endeavor to be self-sufficient through these tragic challenges, inconsistencies and government chaos. The fact that Musk has total access to our information to manipulate as he sees fit is very unnerving.

I recommend that all federal employees print-out and maintain a "hard-copy" of their personnel file and keep it safe. Print your complete E-OPF

(Employee Official Personnel File), while you still have access to do so!!

If you are retired and do not have a copy of your completed retirement package and E-OPF, you can request it (in writing with identification proof) from The National Archives, if that is still an option now. The National Archives for administration records is non-partisan but is already being targeted by this administration. Apparently, the chief of the Archives was fired a couple weeks ago. Seems they want to block that access for us, too !!



DWCLA NEWSLETTER

Democratic Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area
Alachua - Bradford - Clay - Putnam

The Last Laugh



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.



Internet Presence: www.dwc-la.org
Take a look at our web site — no password necessary. You can check the calendar for meeting and event dates, see photos and reporting of Club events, and be inspired.