



The Gainesville Altrusan

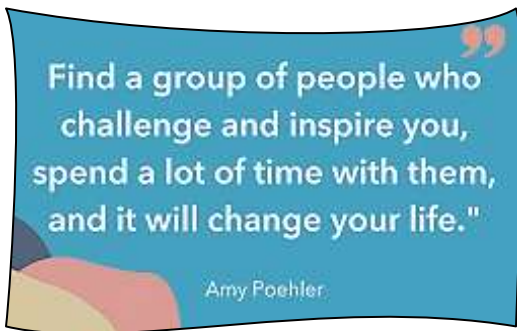
Newsletter for Altrusa International of Gainesville, FL, Inc

**Outstanding Alachua County Volunteer Civic Organization
2010 "Work of Heart" Award
Home Club of 2009-2011 International Altrusa President,
Donna Johnson**

June 2026

**A recap of the previous month (May)
and a brief look ahead**

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For many years our club has been recognized at District Three Conferences for newsletter (Kim Pace, editor), ASTRA, Literacy Awards, Earnestine Milner Program Excellence and Outstanding Community Service.

Helpful Hint: If you find any font size too small for your comfort, please use the zoom function on your computer or device to enlarge text.

Editor: Carolyn Harrell

Thanks to Dee Dugger and Sara Freeborn for photos on pp 3 and 5

Altrusa International of Gainesville, FL
PO Box 358510, Gainesville, FL 32635-8510

President's Message

Hello friends,

Just a few short weeks ago, over 100 Altrusans met in Spartanburg, SC for our annual district conference. The conference was changed to a two-day format as a trial for this biennium. This change was made to encourage better attendance.

Some participants arrived on Thursday night (especially if they were district board or committee members). We had a wonderful dinner at a nearby restaurant, which gave us an opportunity to greet old friends and make new ones.

On Friday morning, there was a hike in a local state park. Approximately 20 people hiked about 3 miles through the lovely forest. In the early afternoon, the first-timers (all 9 of them) met for a group photo, then spent more time socializing before the business meeting and dinner. One of the best things about conference are the awards. District Foundation awards were presented, including the Joey Robison Award to Heidi Faith, a Santa Fe College student. We were awarded FIRST PLACE for the Wilma B Hogan Literacy Service Award for our Spooktacular Book Giveaway (Boo at the Zoo). This award comes with a \$1000 check, which will be used for future literacy projects.

The next morning, District Awards breakfast. Wafa Berberi and Ginny Percy were recognized for sponsoring 1 person. We won FIRST PLACE for the Ernestine Milner Program Excellence Award (thanks to Sara and everyone who recommended a program). We received a \$25 check for membership incentive for having 3-5 new members. We also received recognition for the Todd Jordan Yearbook and Outstanding Community Service.

Even though a few of us represented the Club, the awards reflect us working together to serve our community.

In the afternoon workshops, there was a book club, a session on genealogy, and another session on beekeeping. We finished our day by participating in a service project benefiting residents in the Spartanburg area.

The evening was topped off with the Governor's Banquet and a Dance Party. Lots of fun was had by all.

I promise this will be the last time I mention the conference until later in the fall. Please mark your calendars for the 2027 District Three Conference, April 23-24, 2027, here in Gainesville.

"Being in the same room with people and creating something together is a good thing." Robin Williams

In Altrusa friendship,
Dee

May 14 Luncheon Meeting: Barbara Oberlander

Discusses Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor

We read on the agenda and heard from Pat's introduction about the extensive accomplishments of Barbara Oberlander. And we experienced first hand one of her accomplishments (from over 100 presentations she's given) as she wowed us with the life of Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor, and wowed us with her engaging research. A few bullet points can't do justice because every slide and every comment mattered. However,



here's a taste: Barbara began with information about quarters honoring women and ended with a photo of Dr. Mary Edwards-Walker's quarter. (I) But soon after that, we realized that the motif of the presentation would center around wardrobe! What was scandalous in the 19th century (women in pants) Dr. Walker saw as a health issue (and freedom issue) for women. We've seen the pictures of cinched waists that hampered breathing and flowing skirts that swept up dust and grime to the wearer. From girlhood, to her military uniform, to the Matthew Brody photo with her medal, on to major changes in 1870s and top hat photo in 1900, Dr. Walker was undeterred though viciously attacked and ridiculed. She

championed the bloomers and even designed a reform undersuit (not very pretty, but loose fitting).



- Out of 3500 recipients, she's the only woman to ever receive the Medal of Honor (and she treasured it).
- She was a nonconformist (hippy) in a family of nonconformists. Her father built one of the first pre-schools. She advocated press reform as well as dress reform.
- In 1855 she was the only woman graduate in medical school.
- She refused to use the word "obey" and hyphenated her name Dr. Miller-Walker (unusual for that time)
- Wanted to be a surgeon in the Civil War but wasn't allowed so she volunteered and served as an unpaid doctor who hated to see what she deemed too many amputations.
- Went to Virginia where the worst battles were being fought so she could use her skills to the fullest.
- She had to be an "Acting Assistant Surgeon" and even that title took years. Even President Lincoln couldn't get her the title of Doctor.
- Undaunted she rode a horse into enemy lines to rescue wounded (and got intelligence to pass on while she was at it).
- In 1864 she was captured and imprisoned in Castle Thunder (a hell hole) for 4 months.
- Received her award in 1865 and never took the medal off even though the honor was later stripped from her and she was put down spitefully for how she dressed and all she did. Finally in 1977 it was restored by President Jimmy Carter.
- After the war she went on speaking tours advocating for dress reform allowing health and comfort. She called women's clothes "mechanical displacement."
- Campaigned for suffrage but insisted it was already given in "we the people." She died in 1919 the year the 19th Amendment passed.
- A number of Health Centers and The Whitman-Walker Health Clinic (in DC for aids) honor her as well as a stamp (and the quarter) but this photo shows what Barbara feels is the best memorial.



April 28 Meeting: Conference Highlights and Installation of Officers



Sara (winning the first place program award for the third year in a row and Dee for spearheading the Service Award (our Boo at the Zoo) which came with \$1000 were honored by Shea on behalf of the club. And here's



Donna receiving her Governors Circle Award at the conference



Our attendees having fun and popping up everywhere!



UNsung HEROES

Ginny and Bob Percy

Bob and Ginny were honored as our very deserving heroes. As your editor was out of the country during this meeting and wants to write a full report and take a photo (well stage a photo after the fact) we will see this wonderful couple reported on in the July newsletter.

As always, Shea Huey planned and presented a memorable Officer Installation. This time she based it on candy bars.



Tobi, as Treasurer I give you this Million Dollar Bar as you are custodian of the funds, keep the books balanced and pay the bills.

Ginny, as Secretary I give you this box of Dots Candy to remind you to dot all your i's and cross your t's when taking those monthly board minutes.

Cherise and Carolyn, as Directors of Membership I give you these Good & Plenty to represent all the good members you will recruit. I know the numbers will be plentiful

Bob, as Director of Fundraising/Projects I give you this Payday Bar because it's up to you to keep the club informed about fundraising and projects to accomplish the goals of the club.

Sara, as Vice President I give you this Crunch Bar as you offer support and assistance to the President and in a crunch can be called on.

Dee, as President I give you this Mounds Bar for the mounds of fun you will have and the mounds of work it takes to lead this group of wonderful people to the next level. I am also giving you an Almond Joy Bar because you have to be a little nutty to take this job.

Finally, **Members** you are our life savers. You step up when needed, represent Altrusa at various events and provide wonderful fellowship. These lifesavers represent the various ways you come to the rescue. By the way, here are two rescues needed by the board:

- 2nd Vice-President (Programs) and Communications (Social media) Director.
- Who will jump in to be our life savers?



What's Coming Up

Monday, June 1, Write notes for Community Spring 11-12:30 at 218 NW 2nd Ave

✚ Tuesday, June 2 Carol Meyer's Birthday

✚ Wednesday, June 3 Bob Pearcy's Birthday

Thursday, June 11 Club Meeting

Sunday, June 14 Cherise Bartley's Birthday

✚ Sunday, June 14 Donna Pitts' Birthday

✚ Monday, June 15 Lorna Rubin's Birthday

✚ Friday, June 19 Doris Hargrave's Birthday

July 6, Community Spring note writing 11-12:30 (you can be late and leave early)

July 9, State of the Club meeting



What's Been Going On

Eighth-grade Literacy Awards (our 17th year to date)

From May 20 through June 2 some happy students will learn they have received accolades from their teachers and a \$100 gift certificate from Altrusa.

Thanks to Cherise, Dee, Tobi, Marcia, Ester, Kimberly, Harriet (x2) and Sara for being wonderful representatives and spokeswomen by presenting awards to 9 deserving students. Here is just a sampling of why they were chosen by their teachers:



Being an English Language Learner at the beginning of the year, this student could hardly hold conversations in English and needed translations for all class activities, but now she is one of the best English writers.

This student shows great integrity in reading class, always completing work honestly and taking pride in doing the best.

What makes this student stand out is not only commitment to doing well, but also the determination and maturity brought to everything encountered and done. Challenges are approached with focus and followed through with responsibility. This student continues to push ahead even when things are difficult.

This honor reflects not only growth in academic abilities, but also genuine commitment to reading, writing, and lifelong learning. This student consistently demonstrates an appreciation for literacy, approaching texts with curiosity and insight.

This student has been a consistent and steady force in the classroom naturally stepping into leadership roles and serving as the go-to leader for both his team and the entire class. He encourages and supports peers while holding them to high standards, leading with kindness and a firm, respectful sense of accountability that is recognized by both classmates and teachers.

During lunch she is usually found in the Media Center building puzzles or playing games with her friends. This student entered as a bilingual student; speaking both Spanish and Q'eqchi' (a Mayan Language). She is leaving middle school as a trilingual student!

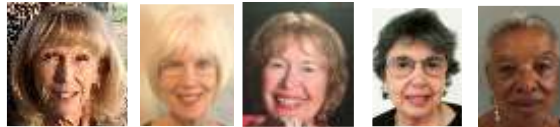
Rising to challenges through effort, participation, curiosity, a genuine interest in learning, this student's willingness to learn and improve are preparations for greater challenges in high school and beyond.

What's Been Going On



Wafa, Trish and Carolyn decided to wrap up their birthday month with lunch at Humblewood Fire. Although Wafa shared about her upcoming knee replacement and Trisha was given a big job to do for literacy awards we all seem to be in good spirits. That's Altrusa for you!

May 13 lunch line up:



The Village was a serendipitous meeting place for Harriet and Carolyn who met for lunch there and bumped into Pat and friend at the café. Then on to Lorna's new place at Jasmine Point to welcome her-- and her room turned out to be practically next door to Norma so we could check in there as well. Let's hope more Altrusans are out and about bumping into each other or planning times to visit members we don't see as often (and lunching together as friends).

And of course, a monthly Monday service together at Community Spring remains a great idea! Join Cherise and Carolyn.

Community Spring's guaranteed income program is a model for impactful and efficient policy. Just Income reduces recidivism, allows people to get back on their feet, and saves taxpayer dollars.

The notes we write are worth reading, and doing the writing is worth so much. It seems a small thing but it matters...as does Community Spring as you'll see if you

Ctrl+ click and read.

https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2026/04/10/guaranteed_income/

**YOU
TOTALLY
EARNED
IT!**



Justine Vaughen just celebrated her 94th birthday and we celebrate her as she becomes an Emeritus Altrusan. She has been/is so valuable to our club for many reasons. But you can read about a major one on page 7.

We were so pleased to welcome emeritus member, Barbara Scott, to our May 28 meeting to help us pay tribute to the late

Mary Britt.



Mary was educated at Wake Forest, both her undergraduate and graduate degrees being in Medical Technology, and was employed as a professor at Duke University. Mary also served ably over the years in professional national organizations in her field. After a number of years at Duke, Mary was recruited by the University of Florida and served for a number of years as head of the Med Tech program.

Mary served as president of Altrusa in 1989-90 and through her organizational skills helped prepare our club for what would be necessary in the selection of our major project, Altrusa House, and what would be demanded of us in bringing the project to completion. A major contribution in the early days was her arrangement of a large meeting place for the very earliest planning. Through Mary, the First Methodist Church graciously offered their facilities for a number of working luncheons that accommodated a large gathering of Altrusans to gather and plan.

For the remaining years of her membership in Altrusa, Mary could always be counted on to do whatever was necessary, from garage sale work to promotion of Altrusa House to all with whom she came in touch. If Mary was asked or if an opportunity for service presented itself, it was accomplished!

fyi.

CONTINUING

**to serve
and to donate**

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."
C.S. LEWIS

No one has ever become poor by giving.
- Anne Frank

"We make a living by what we get.
WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE."
-WINSTON CHURCHILL
@BOOCHICAGO

- ✓ Clean Non-recyclable tops and lids for AH art projects (Sara is contact)
- ✓ For **Displaced Homemakers**: gas cards, canned meats, Progresso soups with meat, saltines, jelly, fruit cups, individual boxes of cereal, nuts, microwavable pasta, canned corn and beans (Shea is contact)
- ✓ Children's and young adult books and women's inspirational books for **Majestic Oaks** and **SWAG**
- ✓ Suggested fabrics and supplies for **Sewing Center** (Dee is contact)
- ✓ Gently used clothing for **Mobile Clinic**, **SWAG** and **Community Spring** (Carolyn is contact)

Outstanding Organizations/People We've Heard From:

Please follow their activities on-line and help out in any ways you can.

- Enjoy/support the Performing Arts Center events that Brian shared with us
- Voices Rising (attend/enjoy their seasonal concerts)
- Bread of the Mighty (donate and/or deliver)
- UF Field and Fork Program (food donations if requested)
- North Florida Sewing Center (help sew as needed)
- Peak Literacy (tutor on-line or in person)
- Akwaaba (summer tutoring)
- Putting Families First (become a volunteer for student interactions via zoom)
- Partnership for Strong Families (respond to their requests)
- Child Advocacy Center (donate and volunteer)
- Women's Giving Circle (\$1,000/year from many women provides amazing grants and benefits, and lunch and learn events inform givers.
- Mobile Health Clinic and Grace Market Place (supplies as needed)
- Community Spring (letter writing first Monday of the month 11-12:30 at their building 218 NW 2nd Ave).
- The Preserve (Norma's project) Support fund raisers
- Honor Center for Veterans (respond to their requests)
- Shana Smith www.RememberingRosewood.org <https://shanabanana.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ShanaSmithWriter/>
- Assurance: Empowering Caregivers (volunteer as requested)
- Elder Care (support as needed)
- Volunteer at **Altrusa House** (Fran, Harriet, Bennye are contacts)
- Displaced Homemakers (JoAnn and Shea are contacts)
- Family Promise (donate and volunteer as requested)
- Women Build (prepare Saturday lunches December -June)



Our Club's Anchor Project Since 1998

Please visit Altrusa House website and Facebook (and like/love it) each time.

<https://altrusahouse.net/>

<https://www.facebook.com/altrusahouse/>

Altrusa House Board Officers

President: Bennye Alligood

Vice-President: Fran Vandiver

Treasurer: Shea Huey

Secretary: Sara Freeborn

Altrusa House Director: Lee Johnson

(The entire board meets 3rd Thursday each month at Altrusa House)

Altrusa House Bingo games include prizes for the winners which add quite a bit of joy as clients shop at Bingo Bucks Store. Here is an inventory of needs that can be brought to meetings or dropped off at Altrusa House.

Fun socks (Dollar Tree),
coloring books,

Gator items-- water bottles, key chains,
gently used hats, water bottles

large print word search and puzzle books,
inexpensive women's jewelry

small travel size hand lotion
bags for walkers,

small vases with flowers in them.

Other items such as these that you have



Continued from p 5, more about Justine to honor her as an emeritus:

In the late 1980's, the Gainesville Club was looking for a project that would fill a need within the community. Justine Vaughen is a physician with an emphasis on vocational rehab. She presented the idea to the project committee of an adult day-stay facility that would serve persons age 18 and over with physical and mental limitations as an alternative to nursing home care. After the project was approved, Justine became the chair of the fundraising committee. They organized garage sales, sold BBQ chicken and much more to raise over \$400,000. In October 1998, Altrusa House of Gainesville opened, mortgage free, thanks to the vision and efforts of Justine. She sits on the Altrusa House board of trustees and provides valuable historic information.

The May meeting was the board's annual retreat at the regular meeting time. The new budget and potential new projects to address once the kitchen is finished were discussed so stay tuned for information.

Summer games are going on. Please check and like the Facebook page weekly or even daily for what's happening.



The kitchen and garden will be getting some fresh looks so stay tuned for that too.

The Garden of Memories pathway is constructed of engraved commemorative 4" x 8" brick pavers placed within the landscaped grounds to honor or remember special person(s) including clients, families, friends, and supporters of Altrusa House. Contact Carolyn Harrell if you would like information about this. harrellland@cox.net

Altrusa Club Board of Directors

President: Dee Dugger
 1st VP (Awards): Sara Freeborn
 2nd VP (Programs): TBD
 Treasurer: Tobi Doering
 Recording Secretary: Ginny Pearcy
 Director of Projects and Fundraisers: Bob Pearcy
 Membership Directors: Cherise Bartley, Carolyn Harrell
 Immediate Past President: Carolyn Harrell
 Director of Communications: TBD



**Our purpose is to better our community
 by bringing together volunteers
 to identify and meet needs of our local area
 through service and leadership.**

“Everything should be made as simple as possible
 but not simpler.”
 Einstein

ALTRUSA OPERATING BUDGET 2026-27

INCOME
 DUES: 42 Full Members @ \$275 and
 11 Emeritus Members **\$11,550**

EXPENSES
 District Three Dues \$1,050
 International Dues \$2,310
 Int'l Club Registration (yearly) \$30
 Meeting Costs
 Facilities \$4,000
 Speaker Lunches \$385
 Business
 State Farm Fidelity Bond \$85
 Fl Dept of Corp (sunbiz) \$62

Technology (ZOOM) (Non-Profit Discount) \$86
 P O Box \$285
 Storage Unit \$638
 Member materials
 Name tags \$120
 Florist \$40
 Printing \$50
 Treasurer's expenses \$50
 Member pins - Altrusa Store \$79
 Installation of Officers \$50
 Other expenses
 Conference Expenses \$1,630
 Convention Expenses \$600
TOTAL EXPENSES \$11,550

Please note: Our whole club does not meet for monthly business meetings. Along with announcements from club members about items of need or interest, we usually focus on Accents, speakers and service projects.

Business is taken up in monthly board meetings but, as stated in the bylaws, some items such as club fundraisers, club projects, board selection and budget are presented to the entire club for discussion and voting. PDF minutes of a board meeting can be requested from the club president.

Any club member wishing to attend a zoom board meeting to present an agenda item or just to see how a board meeting works (with a view of perhaps considering a board position) should contact Dee a week prior to the meetings, which are the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm.

Any member wishing to nominate an Unsung Hero can text or email that information any time to Dee Dugger to present to the board. Anything a club member might want included in the newsletter can be sent to Carolyn Harrell before the 25th of each month. Thank you.



DISTRICT THREE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Governor Mantha Young Lake City, FL AltrusaDistrictThreeGovernor@gmail.com
 Governor-Elect Nancy Shumaker Statesboro, GA nancyshumaker.altrusa@gmail.com
 Vice Governor Scott Frieser Charlotte, NC Scottfrieser.altrusa@gmail.com
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 Director Dee Dugger Gainesville, FL Ladydragonfly54@gmail.com
 Director Randi Kahl Orlando, FL Randi_altrusa@yahoo.com
 Director Rosemary Leake Spartanburg, SC Rosemary1976@msn.com
 Secretary Nanci Schwartz Lake County napschwartz@gmail.com
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