

Woman's Club of Douglaston

Established 1916



NEWS BYTES

- March 2020 -

Editor-in-Chief, Annette Aloisio



“BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH!!”

Don't we women of the Woman's Club of Douglaston have enough to beware?

Is it necessary we beware of March 15th? If you are Julius Caesar, yes, otherwise, not at all.

The Ides of March traditionally occurs on **March 15th**. We heard of the Ides of March from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, 1601. **“Beware the Ides of March”** is the soothsayer's message to Julius Caesar warning of his death in 44 B.C. It was also known as a day for settling debts. **Evidently, Brutus did!** (“Et tu Brutus”?!).

We know March is the third month of the year and is named after Mars, the Roman God of War. March has 31 days (as previously mentioned). In fact, March 15th once signified the new year which meant time for celebrations and rejoicing. So, why not let us rejoice and celebrate?

*Did you know the birth flower for March is a **daffodil**. Who doesn't love daffodils?*

*Did you know the birthstone for **March is aquamarine (such a gorgeous color)**! It is the symbol of youth, health and hope. **Bloodstone** is also birthstone for March. (No comment) Ladies, please be aware March is **National Breast Implant Month**.*

*“What goes up when the rain comes down?” You guessed correctly...**an umbrella**. Believe it or not, **March is National Umbrella Month**. We all know April showers bring May flowers. It is suggested Thomas Edward Knibb originated National Umbrella*

Day in March to ensure everyone had an umbrella in anticipation of April Showers!

“... make sure you take some time to dance in the puddles; smell the fresh rain and look for the rainbow after the storm”.

More about March (and news to us):

March 15th is Incredible Kid Day (We all have one or know one)

March 16th is Freedom of Information Day (hmmm...)

March 17th is St. Patrick's Day (more about this subject below)

March 18th is Supreme Sacrifice Day – (I kid you not)

March 20th is International Earth day (We all live in the Earth – thus international!)

March 20th is the First Day of Spring (Hoorah!)

March 21st is National Teenage Day (Isn't this every day?)

We have all heard that on St. Patrick's Day, everyone is Irish. It is a time when people (certain people) drink green beer along with their corned beef and cabbage.

There is enough written about St. Patrick – no new information is provided here.

So, why is it incumbent upon people (mostly young) to drink to excess on this Feast Day of St. Patrick? We are now speaking to the Christians only. St. Patrick's Day falls within the period of fasting called “Lent “which precedes Easter Sunday. On St. Patrick's Day, Christians are dispensed with the Lenten restrictions on food and alcohol consumption which is why drinking has become linked with this day.

Note to Women of the Woman's Club:

Having spent many St. Patrick's Day celebrations with you, never have we ever witnessed anyone eating or drinking to excess. One Irish Coffee per member!

Everyone loves a Parade! New York City's St. Paddy's Day Parade is the oldest and largest in the World! In Chicago, the Chicago River is dyed green; ditto in San Antonio, Texas; in Savannah, Georgia, fountains are dyed green; Indianapolis, Indiana, the downtown canal is dyed green; parade routes are painted with green stripes on the road. It is a day of celebration for many.

What is special about March? To this writer, it means we survived another winter; it means we see bulbs struggling through the soil and blooming; we (for the most part and hopefully) can put away our snow shovels, boots, winter gear and look forward to Spring – *a time of renewal and new beginnings.*

Our Next Meeting

The Woman's Club of Douglaston

will meet on
Thursday, March 5, 2020

at 1:00 p.m. at the

Douglaston Club
600 West Drive Douglaston, NY

Program and Meeting Highlights:

Mary Gordon, Author

[Mary Gordon](#) is an acclaimed American writer whose formative roots were spent in Queens. Included in her extensive body of work is the biography of Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk and Douglaston resident. Her writing style is deeply personal, probing and illuminating.

Mary is The MacIntosh Professor of English at Barnard College. Best known for her novels, memoirs, and literary criticism, she was named Official State Author of New York. Her other prestigious awards include The Guggenheim Fellowship for the Creative Arts, Lila Wallace Readers' Digest Writers' Award, O. Henry Award, Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize, and she was inducted to New York Writers' Hall of Fame.

Mary will discuss [Pearl](#), her novel about the “time of troubles” in Ireland. These conflicts began in the late 1960s and ended on Good Friday 1998. Although “the troubles” were primarily in Northern Ireland, they had a ripple effect throughout Ireland, England, and elsewhere. Pearl is a protesting American student who intends to starve herself to death in Dublin while chained to a tree. *“We are taken to the labyrinth of maternal love, religious faith, and Ireland’s tragic history.”*

We suggest you read the book prior to the program to maximize this special opportunity.

The Book Club will meet at 12:15 p.m. Join Joan Curran and other Book Club members in the **Bar Room** prior to our General Meeting. This month's selection is *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett.

Announcements

Next Meeting

Thursday - March 5, 2020 – [Mary Gordon](#), acclaimed American writer will discuss *Pearl*, her novel about the “time of troubles” in Ireland.

Friday, March 27, 2020 – *New Members Cocktail Reception*. (Board members will welcome our new members at an informal cocktail reception from 3-5 pm.)

Thursday - April 2, 2020 – *Underneath the Paramount Hotel* – You will be swept away on a night club adventure while watching a screening of an award-winning documentary about the *Diamond Horseshoe Night Club*.

Wednesday - April 29, 2020 – [Come From Away!](#) – Enjoy a fun day in the city for lunch and a Tony-award winning show. Unfortunately, all tickets are **SOLD OUT**. (However, there is a waiting list so please contact Miriam Albert at miriamalbert@gmail.com if you are interested in attending.)

Friday - May 8, 2020 – *Annual Meeting and Luncheon!*

A sumptuous lunch themed "*Around the World*" at the **Plandome Country Club** is coming up with raffles, vendors, friendship, and fun all included. *Stay tuned for more details. Raffles and donations from members, friends and merchants are welcome. Guests are welcome!*

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE – MONDAY, MAY 25, 2020

DEAR LADIES,

THIS YEAR A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE THAT OUR **WOMAN'S CLUB OF DOUGLASTON** WILL PARTAKE IN MARCHING IN THE **MEMORIAL DAY PARADE**. *THE LAST AND ONLY TIME THE WOMAN'S CLUB PARTICIPATED IN THE PARADE WAS IN 2009!*
(Pres. Akers term.)

WE THINK IT IS TIME FOR US TO ONCE AGAIN BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS HISTORICAL PARADE, ONE OF THE LAST AND LARGEST HELD IN QUEENS, ATTENDED BY MANY LOCAL, STATE AND CITY POLITICIANS AND HELD IN OUR VERY OWN BACKYARD.

WHILE IT IS STILL MONTHS AWAY, PLANS ARE UNDER WAY. WE HAVE **A COMMITTEE FORMED, CHAIRED BY FRAN BELLO AND WELCOME ANY VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE WILLING TO HELP OUT AND/OR ABLE TO MARCH.**

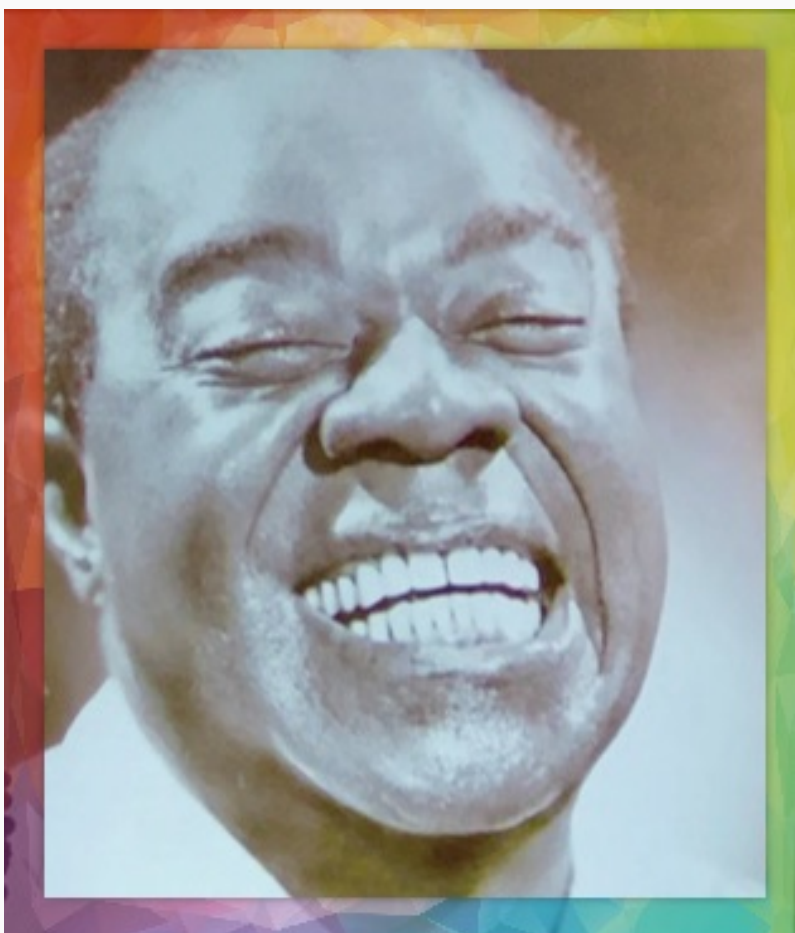
SO, GET YOUR MARCHING GEAR READY; GET YOURSELF IN SHAPE; PUT ON A HAPPY FACE AND LET'S LOOK FORWARD TO OUR VERY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO OUR COMMUNITY AND IN OUR OWN SMALL WAY, HONOR THOSE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED US WELL AND CONTINUE TO KEEP US SAFE.

WE SHALL KEEP YOU ADVISED AS PLANS ARE PROGRESSING.

AS THE WCD GOES DIGITAL MEMBERS WHO DO NOT HAVE EMAIL WILL RECEIVE NOTICES BY MAIL.

February Highlights

Louis Armstrong Jazz Legend, and Queens Resident



On February 13th, 2020, our Program Chairwoman, Helene Schutz, once again provided us with a program “extraordinaire”. *Thank you Helene!*

Ricky Riccardi, (no relation to Ricky Riccardo of I Love Lucy Fame – as he pointed out), gave us a delightful afternoon. We listened, we watched, we reminisced, we sang and we learned.

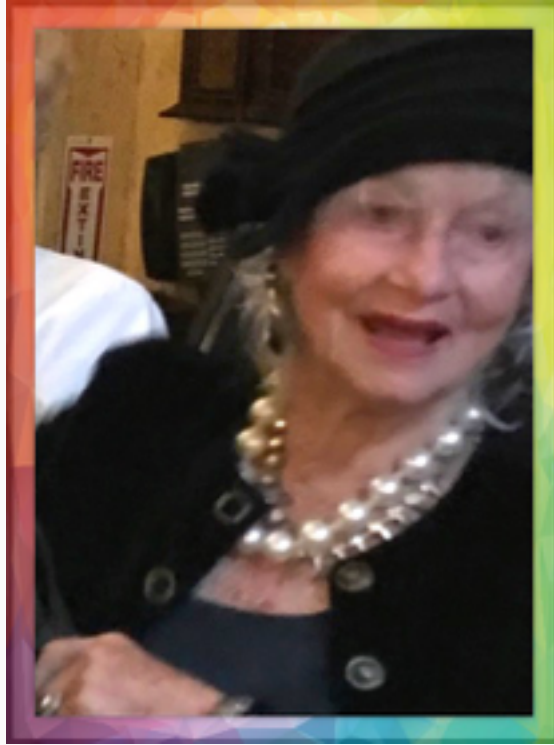
Ricky's life's work is dedicated to Louis Armstrong. Ricky's knowledge of Mr. Armstrong's history, his early years, his poverty stricken childhood, and ultimately, the Louis Armstrong Archives, has brought the memory and lifetime achievements of this great personality and talented musician to new generations and refreshed the memories of the "older" generations.

Ricky was personable, congenial, enthusiastic and informative. We learned little known facts and tidbits about the great "[Satchmo](#)", including how he got that name.

Ricky is the author of two books and is the Director of Research Collections for the **Louis Armstrong Museum in Corona** (my old home town!). **WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD!**

Spotlight On

Elizabetta (nee Favia) Gallo



We know her as Bette. We know her as a warm, charming, charismatic and talented woman. We know her as one of our star entertainers. We can always count on Bette to be the first one to get up on the floor to dance and certainly the only one who entertains us routinely with her ever-present (in her purse) harmonica*. We know Bette to be unstoppable. We know Bette to be strong, direct and intelligent. What we didn't know follows:

Bette was born in New York City in 1928. She was the seventh child of eight children of her mother, Esther Mongelli and her father, Michael Favia. Both of Bette's parents came from Bari, Italy; one from the mountainside and one from the seaside. It is said that Bette's father fell in love with Esther because of her great beauty. They married in Italy and had two sons before emigrating to the U.S.A. Bette grew up in Manhattan in the East 70s.

Bette's father was a well-educated musician who loved to sing (sounds familiar?). Bette's mother did not speak English and obviously, didn't have much time to learn with taking care of a household which contained eight

children.

Sadly, shortly after the birth of Esther's eighth child, she was taken to Bellevue Hospital where she was diagnosed with mental illness. Since Bette's father could not take care of the children, all the children (including one year old Bette) were placed into Holy Angels Home in Bronx, New York.

Bette's father ultimately had a second family. Bette and siblings lost contact with him. She does know he was placed into a facility at some point and passed away at the age of 97.

Bette attended Holy Rosary School, St. Agatha's School and Julia Richman High School where she took a cooperative course in order for her to be able to work. Obviously, she needed money. After graduation, Bette and her two sisters rented an apartment on West 73rd Street and Columbus Avenue. Bette studied piano; one sister studied voice and the other, drama.

As fate would have its way, Bette attended the Friday night dance at St. Vincent Ferreri's School and it was there she met Lou Gallo. He was smitten. After a few weeks, Lou called Bette; they dated and became engaged.

Bette tells the rest of that part of her story quite seriously (we had to smile). Bette was forced to give up her love of piano; her beloved lessons because her soon to be mother-in-law insisted she had to have sheets and towels for her "trousseau"! (we kid you not). Bette obliged. Bette was 23 years of age when she married Lou in 1953 (with sheets and towels). They lived in Lou's mother's house in their own apartment in the Bronx where Lorenzo and April were born.

Shortly thereafter when Bette was 27 years old, they moved to Stuart Lane in Douglaston (where Bette still resides). This is the home in which Guy, Louis, Luanna and Gregory were born. Tragically, Greg passed away at the age of 23 due to a motorcycle accident. (Yet more heartache for our Bette).

Lou was an architect and loved Lake George. He designed and built their amazing Lake House where the family enjoyed all that a lake house affords a family. To our knowledge, Bette has spent every summer there kayaking, hiking, etc. oft times by herself; living and loving the good life.

In 2011, once again tragedy struck when Lou suffered a fall and passed away shortly thereafter at the age of 82. Lou was a well-loved and active member of the Douglaston/Little Neck Community. At the time, Bette and Louis had been married for 58 years.

Sometime in the 1980's Bette joined the Woman's Club of Douglaston. Her children were grown and she enjoyed the socialization and the activities. Bette also became an active member of the Douglaston Garden Club (Bette has a lovely garden).

Bette held the position of "Sunshine Chairwoman" for many years. On a personal note, when I was a member for perhaps one year or more, Bette approached me and with her piercing eyes, informed me that she wanted me to be the new Sunshine Chairwoman. At that time, she also informed me that Lou had directed her to never accept reimbursement for any monies expended in her duties as "Sunshine". She directed me to "do as you want". To this date, and honoring Louis and Bette, I have never accepted

reimbursement for the ordinary expenses of chairing “Sunshine”. Methinks that makes Lou (in Heaven) and Bette pleased.

Bette has/had successful siblings; a brother who sang with Frank Sinatra and sounded like Frank Sinatra); a sister who sang light opera. (Music again!) Bette has several surviving siblings one of whom suffers from dementia who Bette religiously visits. She treks into Manhattan by railroad and foot to dutifully visit him, sing with him and reminisce with him. Bette is 92!

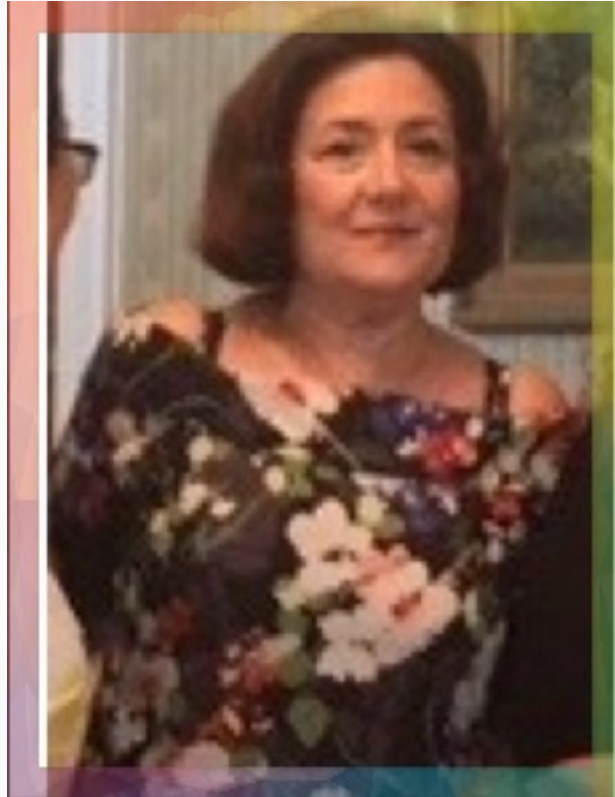
What more can be said about this truly amazing woman? She shares her story with no “woe is me”; no pity wanted or accepted. She is direct, factual and accepting of life’s triumphs and tragedies (my words...not hers). Bette is not your typical 92 year old. She is tiny in stature, but huge in personality and perseverance. I am sure many of you can attest to meeting Bette in CVS, Stop & Shop, the bank, the library, etc. and asking if she wanted a ride home (she always walks everywhere, cane included). Never has she ever, accepted a ride. “I need to walk”, says she!

Bette Gallo is a one-of-a-kind gal; a force to be reckoned with; a pillar of our community and a well-loved and respected member of our Woman’s Club of Douglaston. Bette is an inspiration to all who have endured life, embraced life, and survived along the way.

Rock on Bette Gallo!

*Bette received her first harmonica in her Christmas Stocking at the age of 3.

What's Happening...



The WCD joins the Little Neck-Douglaston Lyons Club in honoring Catherine Touwsma as Woman of the Year!

At a special reception on Sunday, March 29, the local Lyons Club will honor **our member Catherine Touwsma** for her community work, leadership and vision, during her term as President of the DGC. Many of the projects carried out under her leadership included a partnership with NY City Parks to clean up and beautify our parks, cleaning and bulb planting at Catherine Richardson Park, The Westmoreland Glenwood Triangle Park, Alameda Blvd., PS 98, It's My Park Day, and many other public green areas in LN and Douglaston. Catherine and the DGC also offered educational workshops to PS 98 students.

Let's show Catherine our appreciation and support by attending this special reception on March 29 at Douglaston Manor from 3-5 pm.

*More details here **or** johnfduane@gmail.com*

*Stay socially connected at the Woman's Club of
Douglaston!*

Important!!!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE OFTEN

(to access click below:)

www.womansclubofdouglaston.com

***TO VIEW OUR CURRENT AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES,
PROGRAMS, PHOTO GALLERY OF EVENTS, AND ALL
OUR "NewsBytes" COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.***

Remember: "A good friend is a connection to life -- a tie to the past, a road to the future, the key to sanity in a totally insane world. More people are focusing on friendships later in life -- and research reveals the many health benefits".

Warm regards,

Johanna Abramo

President

Woman's Club of Douglaston

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