



Douglas Manor Environmental Association

SPRING 2020 • NEWSLETTER OF THE DMEA

PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Catherine Bealin

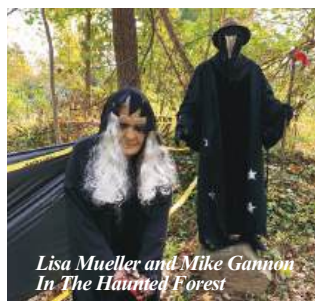
Fellow neighbors and nature enthusiasts, as I write this article, our world has changed more profoundly than any of us could have imagined. The DMEA extends its sincerest wishes for good health, robust immune systems and wise leadership to bring our community safely through this unprecedented global crisis. I hope that the confusion and fear that many of us are feeling dissipates in the coming weeks, as our new reality and its risks become evident, comprehensible and manageable. Or perhaps we might be helped by the small consolation of a warmer sun in blue skies, shoots sprouting up through the dirt and birds singing about spring. The DMEA has decided to share this newsletter with you now in order to give you good news, a renewed sense of beauty and respite in nature. One of the few things that we can safely do right now is get some fresh air, walk outdoors, enjoy nature, at the appropriate social distance apart from others.

The DMEA continues to work passionately and tirelessly to protect our ecosystems and shoreline, engage with community partners and elected officials, and to educate our community. We also like to simply enjoy nature. Did you know that spending time in nature reduces stress? A study conducted by the University of Michigan in 2019 found that just 20 minutes of sitting or walking through a place of nature lowers the stress hormone cortisol! For more information on the relationship between natural environments and psychological stress, take a look at this NIH page:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5981243/>

A few quick items to note:

The DMEA hosted its annual Haunted Halloween Festival at Memorial Field in October 2019. This “back-by-popular-demand” DMEA event was a resounding success thanks in no small part to our partnership with the PS 98 PTA, who provided food, games and haunted-forest decorating talent. But the biggest thanks goes



*Lisa Mueller and Mike Gannon
In The Haunted Forest*



Maggie McGovern and Maddie Stynes



Melanie McGillick with horseshoe crab mug

to all the party-goers, including costumed dogs, children and adults! They made the party a true community event.



A special shout out to Anne Ronan who won the apple pie contest as judged by George Stertsios of Martha’s Country Bakery. It’s a tough job tasting pie, but someone has to do it...

The DMEA also participated in the Douglaston LDC’s 2019 Holiday Festival at the Douglaston Plaza. Despite the wintry weather, protective tents enabled participants to stay dry and get into the holiday mood with music, food, shopping and great friendship. A special shout out to DMEA Board Member

Catherine Touwsma – she added her crepe-making skills to the DMEA’s usual offering of hot mulled drinks and let’s just say that next year, she will have to bring double the batter!



*Jamie Sutherland, Catherine Bealin,
Rebecca Gellos*



*Council Member Paul Vallone and
Mike Gannon, DMA President*

Additional photos from these events can be found on the DMEA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Douglas-Manor-Environmental-Association-229237801145994/> and the Douglaston LDC Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/DouglastonLDC>

(continued on next page)

President's Corner, continued from front page

The DMEA looks forward to partnering with the Douglaston LDC, Udall's Cove Preservation Committee and PS 98 for more wonderful events in 2020.

In February 2020, the Army Corps of Engineers announced that its NY & NJ Harbor & Tributaries Feasibility Study would be put on hold. Readers may recall that as part of an effort to strengthen NYC's climate change resiliency, the Corps had proposed various sea gate barriers around the region to mitigate economic costs and risks associated with storm and flood events. The DMEA had been monitoring and engaging on the status of the sea gate proposed for the Throgs Neck Bridge area. The DMEA was concerned with land flooding, habitat damage and water quality issues that would impact areas east of Throgs Neck. However, last month, the Federal government suddenly pulled funding for this study. The DMEA will continue to watch the situation.



A swinging-gate barrier called the Oosterschelderkering works to prevent flooding in the Netherlands. A similar large structure is being considered to possibly protect New York City.

In March 2020, New York State followed California and Hawaii to enforce a ban on single-use plastic bags. Single-use plastic bags are not biodegradable. They contribute to trash pollution, clog NY waterways and ecosystems, and cause wildlife death and recycling issues. Residents can purchase great reusable shopping bags, either cloth or plastic, from stores, online or... the DMEA! The DMEA bags are perfect for your local pharmacy shopping. They can be purchased for a tax-deductible contribution of \$20 at any of our community events or send us a Facebook message if you want to purchase one now!



As always, service credit opportunities are available to high school students interested in helping the DMEA on some of these projects. Please send us a message via our Facebook page to learn more.

Once again, stay safe and stay strong.

HELP US PROTECT OUR NEW PLANTINGS ON SHORE ROAD AGAINST ONGOING VANDALISM

As the days grow longer and the weather turns to Spring, we all love to meander around the Point and marvel at the fabulous revitalization of Shore Road. It was a long and arduous effort undertaken by many of our neighbors who volunteered their time and expertise. As construction work concluded, the New York City Parks Department provided a landscape design and planted new trees and shrubs along the water's edge. These plantings are not only aesthetic compliments, they are also intended to reinforce the embankment against erosion in future events such as super storm Sandy.

Mike Gannon and I ventured out last year to provide water for these new plantings, purchasing those green water bags you've seen around the base of new trees. We got a city permit to use water from fire hydrants and special equipment to access the water and fill those bags when dry spells occurred. Now someone decided that the bags, at \$20 per, weren't needed and removed all of them. We suspect that perhaps that same individual was responsible for removing the cloth tape that



anchored the new trees to the cedar posts adjoining each new tree.

And now someone has decided to DESTROY about 13 new shrubs that had been planted in the vicinity of Shore Road and Arleigh Road! These shrubs were salt air tolerant and placed where their root systems could expand and help support the embankment. They will

eventually be replaced but our community will have to bear the cost.

We did place three signs along the road notifying everyone that unauthorized pruning or vandalism will not be tolerated and asking residents to immediately notify our grounds crew, call the DMA office at 718-225-3111 or DMA Security at 718-423-0311 if and when they notice any suspect behavior.



Finally, just a note of irony. Two of the three "notice" signs were taken down within 2 days of their installation, but we will not be defeated! I have more signs waiting to replace those that manage to disappear.

—George Schmidt

THE CHILDREN ARE INSPIRED BY THE NEW WETLAND CURRICULUM AT P.S.98

In an effort to build environmental knowledge, stewardship, and civic mindedness, the DMEA has developed amazing partnerships with local public schools to bring wetland curriculum and hands-on learning into classrooms. Among recent developments, the DMEA was delighted to be able to secure \$5,000 of grant money from DEC to support the purchase of science equipment and materials for PS 98's nascent wetland and coastal ecosystem science curriculum. Teachers and DMEA Board members worked together over summer 2019 to develop grade-appropriate lessons and experiments for the entire elementary school, as well as to purchase and deliver \$5,000 of supporting equipment.

The wetland curriculum was introduced to students for the 2019-2020 school year. Principal Lena Kim shares with us some highlights of the brand new science curriculum:

The Kindergarten received many books about the Wetlands and animals in the wetlands. We have used these books to teach about the plants and animals that live there. The children used these books to create Thinking Maps, write about animals they learned about, and create wetlands collages. We will also use them to make wetland dioramas.

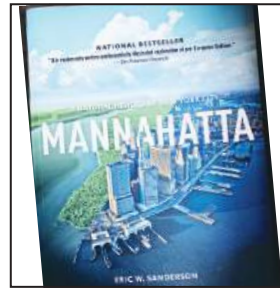
The first grade students have been busy exploring all the wetland texts that were provided to us. The students particularly enjoyed the text *Habitat Survival: Wetlands* by Buffy Silverman. Our students loved learning all about the different animals that reside in the wetlands. This has inspired our students to create their own non-fiction texts about an animal that lives in this



habitat. In addition, the first grade students used the clay provided to create an animal model that lives in the wetlands. The students used different materials such as toothpicks, tissue paper, paper

cup, counters, etc. to add to their clay model in order to mimic animal structures that will keep it "safe" in the wetlands

The second grade students have been studying the relationship between animals and plants in the wetlands and their interdependence on one another. The books we have received have been influential in their research and their projects. This coming spring, we are looking forward to using the owl pellets we received for hands-on learning.



The third grade has been busy studying the Matinecock people. They used the books purchased to further their understanding and were even given the opportunity to learn from the author herself, Donna Barron, who visited the students and shared the passage of legends from one

generation to another. In addition, third grade students used a purchased digital microscope to observe small organisms such as worms and Wolly Bear caterpillars on their promethean board. Everyone was able to make observations together. Third grade students are excited to use their aquarium to explore horseshoe crabs in the spring!



Fourth grade students have been utilizing the equipment and resources purchased last year to solve scientific

challenges related to the Wetlands. We have identified research and issues that our environment is facing, explored

solutions and options through designing and creating devices, testing them with collected data, and improving them through our research and studies.



The fifth graders used their air monitors to determine the amount of air pollution in different areas around the school. This began conversation about toxins in the air and the impact that air pollution has on the wetlands. Students grew their own terrariums that represented the wetlands.

They used leaf blowers to blow "toxins" (baking flour) into the air around their terrariums and observed how these toxins end up in wetland areas, polluting and impacting the habitat in a negative way. In the spring, we are looking forward to researching ospreys with the purchased books and creating osprey nests

—Catherine Bealin & Principal Lena Kim.

DID YOU KNOW:

YOU AND A GINKGO TREE CAN HELP SCIENTISTS' STUDY CLIMATE CHANGE.



That's the idea behind the Smithsonian Institution's Fossil Atmosphere Project. The project's main goal is to clarify the relationship between atmospheric CO2 levels and 2 kinds of cells—stomatal and epidermal in Ginkgo leaves. Once that's fully understood, it will provide more reliable climate proxies and reveal details about climates in the distant past as well as its evolution to our time.

In order to help in that role, any individual,

Association or School can join this project via their free website:

<https://www.si.edu/fossil-atmospheres>

This is an opportunity for any citizen-scientist among us to participate to their hugely important collection of data in a meaningful and real way! Well, this is just what we at the Douglas Manor Environmental Association did late fall, by creating our own account with:



In Douglas Manor, we are blessed to have several amazing specimens, male and female, on Park Lane, Manor Road, Oak Lane, Little Neck Road and Douglas Road to name only a few. DMEA is now partnering with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and will continue to update all information on our Ginkgo tree population in the Manor, as well as send out a few leaf's samples to their Washington DC Lab.

A few interesting facts:

Ginkgo biloba is one of the most distinct and beautiful of all deciduous trees. Its unique, fan-shaped leaves turn a stunning yellow color in the fall and illuminate our streets and fields. It can tolerate many urban conditions including heat, air pollution, salt, and confined space. It is called a living fossil because it has no close living relatives and also appears to be the only plant species dating back 270 million years (Permian) in the fossil record.

The female trees produce fruit in late autumn. These fruits "stink" only when left on the ground to rot. The odorous fruit releases butyric acid, which also gives rancid butter its horrible smell. If carefully harvested, the fruits yield a nut meat that's edible in small amounts. It is worth noting that immature and uncooked ginkgo seeds are more toxic.



In Japanese decorative art, the ginkgo's distinctive fan-shaped leaf has carried symbolism along with its singular beauty.

The ginkgo has been a symbol of longevity (the tree can live for a thousand years) and of a more profound endurance (four ginkgoes survived the

blast at Hiroshima and are still growing today).

HAPPY GINKGO TREE HUNTING!

—Catherine Touwsma

HORSESHOE CRAB MONITORING 2020

DMA and DMEA will participate in the Cornell Cooperative Extension Horseshoe Crab count for the 2020 spawning season!

Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Team members walk the beach at the high tide on the new and full moons (plus a day on either side) twelve times in May and June. We survey the shoreline, identify and count male or female horseshoe crabs.

Then we measure and tag them. All of the data collected is recorded and sent to Cornell to be included in local, national and international Horseshoe Crab Monitoring databases.

The Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Team welcomes new participants. You don't have to commit to all 12 monitoring days. All you need is an interest and a good pair of waterproof boots!

Contact:

Mike Gannon, Co-Chair mgannon51b@gmail.com
Helaine Fiedler, Co Chair helainefi@yahoo.com



WHAT'S BUZZIN'?

As the temperature reaches a steady 52° honeybees will begin their new life cycle. They weren't sleeping during the winter, just resting and trying to stay warm in a cluster with the queen bee in the center maintaining a comfortable 92° for her royal highness. Soon they will venture out for a cleansing flight (to relieve their excrement) and start foraging for food which consists of nectar, pollen, and water. The queen bee will also be stimulated to start laying more eggs (almost 2,000 eggs daily) to build the colony up again.

Honeybees can forage up to 2 to 3 miles if there's not enough food in their immediate area. Dandelion and clover are the best sources of food in early spring but our society has been conditioned to regard them as weeds.

We spend time, money, and energy to rid them from our manicured lawns which serve no purpose to our pollinators and require costly maintenance. This spring, please be a mindful gardener and keep a part of your property wild and chemical-free not only for the benefit of our pollinator friends which include all types of bees and butterflies but for our own health as well.

Planting an herb garden is simple and bee-friendly. Seeds can be sown directly into the soil as soon as the last frost. How about some Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, Thyme? To bees, it's music to their ears and mine too. Oh, but they don't have ears. Still, they can hear through vibrations with their body. They don't have a nose either but they can smell with their antennae. And with their 5 eyes they can see right through flowers with their ultraviolet vision!

Let's take small steps in leaping into making our community an oasis for our honeybees and one that we can all enjoy.

—Ruth Harrigan



MUSINGS MOST FOWL

by Jim McCann (Douglaston's resident nature observer)

I figured I'd tell everyone how healthy our little Udall's cove is to spread the word. I have counted 14 different species of waterfowl in our cove. Those large black ducks out there walking about in the mud are called BLACK DUCKS (not exactly an original name, but they are black ducks). About a decade ago, there was a lack of food during a brutal winter and we lost all but five of them. Today, they have rallied and there must be close to 100.

The other important rebound involves the larger of the black and white ducks. They are called BROADBILL DUCKS. About 20 years ago, there were 100,000 in Little Neck Bay. In recent years, their population declined to zero. Then this autumn, 20 showed up, sent the word out that there was plentiful food, and now we have 40-70.

The little black and white ducks, Cindy's favorite, are called BUFFELHEAD DUCKS. We used to have 5-10, but now the cove is filthy with them. Black ducks are waders and enjoy eating mussels, but all the others are diving ducks and enjoy chasing BAY ANCHOVIES. Our cove is a bad place to be a bay anchovy since everyone is trying to snack on them.



Now my favorites are what the casual observer would call CANADA GEESE but indeed they are not actually Canada geese. At first glance, they look very similar, but are actually smaller with similar plumage. They are called BRANTS. We used to see them in the late fall down on Great South Bay when we would go fishing for Stripe Bass during the Fall Bass Run. Not many, but they were there. Today, there are tens of thousands of them in Great South Bay. Several years ago, I noticed there were 10-20 up here along our shoreline. Now that number is well over 100.

As spring approaches, everyone should be on the lookout for the 2 GOLDEN EAGLES I sighted several weeks ago. Can't count on them returning, but you never know.

All good stuff going on here in our bay...

A HEALTHIER LAWN LEADS TO A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT.

Spring is in the air as residents begin to spend more time enjoying the outdoors. The DMEA wishes you all the best during the Spring/Summer months and want to remind you that communicating with your landscaper can make all the difference in promoting a quieter and ecologically beneficial environment.

Over the years many affluent New York Communities have already introduced restrictions on the use of Gas Power Leaf Blowers. Most restrictions range from May 15-September 15. During this time of year, it is unnecessary to use a leaf blower on your property. These Communities have realized that residents can insist on change. One community at a time is creating a wave of change to a cleaner, quieter environment.

The DMEA encourages Manor residents to do the same. Common practices of landscaper's unnecessary use of leaf blowers such as blowing dusty debris from your yard to your neighbor's yard only to have it blown back by your neighbor's landscaper, is a cycle that never ends and neither does the damage. The pollution from these gas power machines are toxic on their own and they are continuously blowing particulate matter; spores, animal fecal matter and fertilizer into the air. This particulate matter can stay in the air for 4 days. We breathe it in and it also deposits in our Bay.

I hope residents can commit to a cleaner lawn practice. Your landscaper isn't thinking about your health, he is thinking about how to give you a green manicured lawn so he keeps your business.

Please support common sense approaches to limit the amount of damaging pollution your landscaping is producing.

- Limit use of fertilizer to twice a year; do not use fertilizer during the Summer months or after September. Do not overwater fertilizer, too much water will wash fertilizer off your lawn and into local waterways. Simple steps will help protect local waterways from excess nitrogen, which fuels algae blooms that smother fish and harm other important wildlife.
- Limit the use of Gas Power Leaf Blowers. Encourage your landscaper not to use them from May 15 through September 15. This will ensure a peaceful, enjoyable outdoor experience for ALL Manor Residents.

Below is a list of neighboring New York Communities that have implemented restrictions

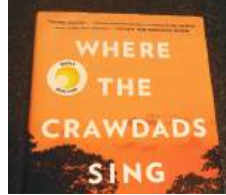
The North Hempstead Town	Hastings
Bronxville	Mamaroneck
Great Neck Estates	New Rochelle
Greenburgh	Oyster Bay
Larchmont	Pelham Manor
Russel Gardens	Pelham
Sleepy Hollow	Rye
Tarrytown	Scarsdale
Thomaston Village	Westchester County
Village of Tuckahoe	White Plains
Dobbs Ferry	Yonkers

—Melanie McGillick

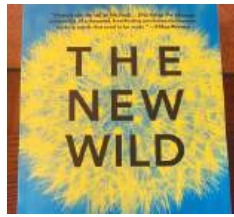
SPENDING TIME ON THE COUCH?

For those of us inclined to pick up a book during these stressful days, here is a short list of some nature-inspired books for adults and children that have been enjoyed by my family. During this crisis, the Queens Public Library is offering digital library access to thousands of titles, or you can purchase e-books in lieu of visiting a bookstore.

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens: NYT Bestseller fiction for a good reason. Gorgeous coming-of-age, murder story set along the North Carolina coast. The habitat settings are stunningly evocative as written by this wildlife scientist.



The New Wild, Why Invasive Species will be Nature's Salvation by Fred Pearce: Non-fiction investigation into what constitutes indigenous species in light of the fact that invasive species have been dynamically changing global habitats since the start of human exploration.



The Lost Art of Reading Nature's Signs by Tristan Gooley: Non-fiction almanac about how to read nature's signs in landscapes for clues to seasons, weather, altitude, and a myriad of other interesting things to detect. Adults and teens might enjoy this equally.



Tracks, Scats & Signs by Leslie Dendy: Children's trekking guide to reading nature's signs. This is a great tool for families going on walks, as children can search for signs of spring wildlife.



Wangari Maathai, The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees, Franck Prevot: Beautiful children's picture book about the Kenyan Nobel peace laureate who founded the Green Belt Movement and altered the intersection of nature, democracy and civic responsibility. —Catherine Bealin



We've come to the conclusion that being out in our kayaks is primal—floating on the water one feels every wave and ripple. Pushing off from the dock there is an immediate sense of peace, a release of breath and a relaxation. Kayaking can also be an excellent upper body and stamina building exercise, and the rhythmic paddling



becomes meditative. Once we go under the bridge at Northern Blvd or turn right past Big Rock at the far end of the point heading South toward Memorial Field, the winds and the waves die down and a sense of being somewhere else comes up.

The vistas are spectacular and the critters abundant. Mostly waterfowl—there are Osprey, Herons, Cormorants, Red Winged Blackbirds, Egrets, Swans, Geese, several species of Ducks, several species of Sparrows, Terns, Seagulls and others. We've seen Hawks and even a sighting or two of a Bald Eagle last Summer. At certain times of the year the water is swarming with minnows being chased by blue fish, the denseness of fish in the water so thick at times it rocks our kayaks, and the minnows popping up out of the water all around.



SPENDING TIME ON THE WATER?

In 2016, while being a caregiver for my ailing husband, for a break and some peace, I started kayaking in Little Neck Bay with my sister and brother-in-law, and we haven't stopped. What started as a release evolved into love for a sport and a deepened appreciation of the salt marshes around Douglaston.

Any Spring, Summer or early Fall morning or afternoon, when the tide is right, and time is free, finds us heading out from the Dock in search of the next nature water trail. If one rides the LIRR in and out of Manhattan the view out over the salt marsh is a welcome tonic from the harshness of crowded city streets. What many don't realize is how deep one can paddle into the grasses, and how much wildlife there is to be seen.

The first rudimentary kayaks were built around 5,000 years ago by the Inuit and Aleut people of North America for travel. Made from driftwood or whalebone covered in animal skins and coated with whale fat, some measuring as much as 60 feet long to carry families, while others were light and agile and used for hunting. Today kayaks are typically made from polyethylene plastics in an array of styles. Kayaks were first used for sport in the mid-1800's in Europe and were introduced to the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936.

Kayaking is a relatively affordable water sport that doesn't require a great amount of skill yet can open up a world of natural beauty not easily accessible otherwise. Living in the Douglaston-Little Neck area around Little Neck Bay, we are grateful to have access to the salt marshes in all of its intrinsic splendor.

—Kathrine Mueller

LANDSCAPING FOR SHADE

Shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce solar heat gain in your home and **cut air-conditioning costs**. To effectively shade your home, you need to know the size, shape and location of the shadow that your shading device casts.



FACT: In tree-shaded neighborhoods, the summer daytime air temperature can be up to **6 degrees cooler** than in treeless areas.



Did You Know: A well-planned landscape can reduce an unshaded home's air-conditioning costs by **15 - 50 percent**.

Maple leaves change color with the seasons



Deciduous vs. Evergreen What's the difference?

Deciduous trees block solar heat in the summer but let in sunlight during the winter

Evergreen trees and shrubs provide continuous shade

Camphor trees are evergreen trees that can grow up to 30 feet tall



Maple tree



Planting Tips

Plant a 6-8 foot deciduous tree near your home, and it will start shading your windows in the first year. Depending on the species and home, it will shade the roof in **5-10 years**

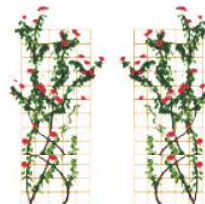


Plant deciduous trees to the south of your home they can screen 70-90 percent of the hot summer sun while allowing breezes through

Oak tree



Plant trees with crowns lower to the ground on the west side if you want to shade from lower, afternoon sun angles



Plant bushes, shrubs or climbing vines with a trellis to shade your patio area

Hens and chicks is a type of succulent groundcover plant



To cool air before it reaches your home **plant shrubs and groundcover plants**



Douglas Manor Environmental Association

234-21B 41st Avenue
Douglaston, NY 11363

Board Members

- Catherine Bealin
- Mary Alice Dadras
- Aline Euler
- Mike Gannon
- Rebecca Gellos
- Hal Goluboff
- Ruth Harrigan
- Melanie McGillick
- Kathrine Mueller
- Anne Ronan
- George Schmidt
- Jamie Sutherland
- Catherine Touwsma
- Joe Warren
- Kevin Wolfe



Occupant or Current Resident

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Flushing, N.Y.
Permit No. 83

STAY SAFE WHILE YOU ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD



photo by Mauro Brattoli@monkfishfilms