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March, 2003

MEETING NOTICE


The Society's meeting for March, 2003 will be "The Great Irish Famine," or *An Gorta Mor*, in the mid-1800's. Our speaker will be Frank McKenna, Director of the Wantagh Public Library.

The meeting will begin with a short business meeting, in which the Society's committees will report their current activities, and then adjourn to the program by Mr. McKenna.


Following the meeting, our Hospitality Committee will provide refreshments appropriate for the beginning of spring. If you'd like to help with refreshments, call Theresa Donahue at (516) 221-2152. 

MISSING FEBRUARY INFORMATION WINDOW

It is possible that you missed receiving the February issue of the Information Window last month. Not surprising, because it never got published. The editor had an automobile accident which distracted him from his regular activities, and the snowstorm in the publishing week finished things off.

We hope this issue will make it through the publishing process with fewer problems, and get to our readers' homes in a reasonable time. 


NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM

The Society's program for April will be an overview of the history of the Nassau County Police Department, presented by Officer Douglas Stiegelmeier. 

GARAGE SALE COMING

The Society's Spring "Garage Sale" is coming in May this year, on Saturday, May 3. There will be a separate flyer mailed to all members and to our Garage Sale mailing list, telling all the details, with an application form for those who want to be vendors. If your main interest is simply to visit a good sale, just mark the date on your calendar.

Weather in Wantagh is always a little chancy in the spring, so we have planned a rain date for the next day, Sunday, May 4.

We will have all sorts of vendors, who will have all sorts of good things for exhibit and for sale. Customers will be welcome on the big day, and can come for lunch as well as to see and buy all the good things on display. 




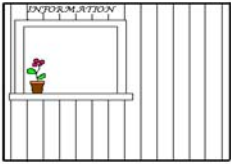
Preservation Society Calendar

Tuesday, March 25: Membership Meeting "The Great Irish Famine" in the meeting room of the Wantagh Library, 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday, April 15: Trustees meet in the waiting room of the Wantagh Museum, 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday, April 22: Membership Meeting "Nassau County Police" in the meeting room of the Wantagh Library, 8:00 P.M.

Saturday, May 3: Preservation Society Spring Garage Sale, 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the Wantagh Museum. 



THE INFORMATION WINDOW

OF THE WANTAGH PRESERVATION SOCIETY

TO JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Name _____

Addr. _____

_____ ZIP+4 _____

Phone _____ New Renewal

Circle one: Indiv. \$6 Family
\$12

Send to: Wantagh Preservation Society

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for Society Membership are the major source of funding for the projects sponsored by the Society, and for the maintenance of the Museum buildings. The major expenditures this year have been for the restoration of the old Wantagh Post Office, which is now externally complete.

We hope to continue with the internal restoration, and ultimately open the Post Office for exhibit.

The different levels of membership recognize the willingness of the members to support our programs.

Dues can be mailed in, using the form on this page, or paid in person at the monthly Society meetings. Either way, after your dues are paid, Alice Blaustein will mail your membership card for the new year, and your dues will begin helping the various projects of the Society.

MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum will be closed, except for scheduled events, from November through March. To schedule a visit, call Gregg Hammond at (516) 826-8374.

THE INFORMATION WINDOW

The *Information Window* is a publication of the Wantagh Preservation Society, and is published preceding its monthly Membership Meetings.

The Editor of the *Information Window* is Dick MacMillan, at (516) 785-3951. Articles and notices are invited on subjects of local interest.

WANTAGH'S FIRST SCHOOL

During the 1800s, school law of the State of New York had no provision requiring parents to send their children to school. This changed in 1891 with a new law which charged parents with a misdemeanor who refused to send children to school. Presiding Commissioner of Education James S. Cooley, representing Queens County #2 (now Nassau County), ordered each of the 25 union free school districts in Jamaica, Oyster Bay and Hempstead to appoint district trustees to represent the freeholders of the districts. Ridgewood was classified as District #26.

After complying with the state law, our school district held its first annual meeting on August 26, 1891, at which three trustees were appointed to the School Board. They were:

Frank C. Young, for a period of three years

Jas. A. Seymour, for a period of two years

Thomas O. Seaman, for a period of two years.

The new board took as its first task to obtain property for erecting the first school house. Mr. James Seaman donated a parcel of his property to the district for a school on the east side of School Street. (School Street was later re-named as Beech Street.) The building cost \$2,700, and was paid for by a bond issue, floated for a period of eight years. Since the village of Ridgewood was re-named Wantagh in 1891, this was the first *Wantagh* school!

The school must have been unsuitable in some way, because at a school meeting held on June 9, 1909, it was voted to sell the building to the Wantagh Mutual Assistance Association. The building was moved to the south side of Railroad Avenue between Beech Street and Grove Street, where it still stood in 1966. Part of the building served as a post office for many years, and the second floor accommodated the lodge members as their meeting place.

The second school house was erected on the very same site where the original school house had once stood, and for now-obscure reasons, became known as the Seymour Avenue School. It served the community for many years, until it was augmented by the Sunrise Park School, farther south on Beech Street.

(from a 1966 booklet by Robert Huhnken)