

# The Information Window

## Wantagh's Florist at Turn of Century

*By Carol Poulos, Second Vice President*

As we turn our thoughts to spring, flowers and gardening, it might be fun to take a look at the florist who served Wantagh over one hundred years ago, Percy W. Behrens. Mr. Behrens was born in England, came to America in 1884 and became a naturalized citizen in 1894. In 1889, he purchased 9 acres in what was then known as Ridgewood, now Wantagh. He began with a little florist business and by the year 1896, he had seven large greenhouses and a steel windmill. This business was located on the north side of Park Avenue, and occupied land that is now part of the parking lot behind the 5 & 10. He grew all kinds of flowers but carnations were his specialty.

He planted flowerbeds in front of Waring's Store, which sold ice cream, toys and notions, as well as shade trees and shrubbery around the schoolhouse, and a flower mound at the staff at the train station. In 1899, he laid out the flower beds in Brighton Beach, which required using all the flowers he had in his hot houses. That must have been an exciting business deal.


Our local florist was also quite an electrician. The local newspapers reported that in 1897, he fitted his greenhouses with electric bells and a telephone between his house and office, where he had a small incandescent light. Quite progressive for the time!

Percy Behrens was elected to the school board in 1897 and joined the Wantagh Hook & Ladder and Mutual Assistance Association in 1900. On Christmas Day 1897, he and Corodon Norton, a teacher and another prominent Wantagh resident, traveled by horse and wagon through town, collecting food and clothing for the needy in the community.

## The 2016 Membership Drive is in Full Swing

*By Mary Wagner WPS Membership Chairperson*

Our 2016 membership year began on January 1 and ends December 31. A special thank you to all who have already joined or renewed your membership for this year. This is an exciting year to be a member of Wantagh Preservation Society, as this year marks the 50th anniversary of the train station being moved to the museum grounds. A big celebration is being planned for the fall.

Funds raised through membership are our main source of income. You are not just joining the society; you become a supporter of history. You can join or renew your membership by sending in the application on page 3, or by scanning or clicking the QR code. 




*One of Behrens Greenhouses, Circa 1890*

**SPRING IS HERE, AND SO AM I,**  
 WITH A FINE VARIETY OF  
**Flowers and Plants,**  
 Ready to fill all orders promptly. Flower Beds Made and Planted, Baskets and Tubs Filled. Call and see stock before buying elsewhere, and have the first choice. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Plants Delivered Free.  
**P. W. BEHRENS, FLORIST,**  
 GREENHOUSES - Rear of Depot, WANTAGH, L. I., N. Y.  
 Choice Cut Flowers and Pot Plants, Floral Designs, All Kinds of Vegetable Plants in Season. Orders by mail will receive prompt attention. Send for catalogue.

*A Behrens Newspaper Advertisement from 1896*

In 1901, he opened a florist store in Brooklyn and in 1905, he built and opened a summer hotel at Brandt Point, about a mile north of the life-saving station at Short Beach. He ran the hotel and sponsored boat races and was an agent for Palmer Engines and launches, a type of open motorboat of the day - quite a businessman.

Percy died at Brandt Point in August of 1917, where according to his obituary, he was known as a congenial host. 

## Wantagh Preservation Society

1700 Wantagh Avenue (Museum Location)

PO Box 132 (Mailing Address)

Wantagh, Long Island, New York 11793

516.826.8767

[museum.wantagh.li](http://museum.wantagh.li)

## Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Trustee Meeting, May 3, 7:30 PM at Wantagh Museum
- ◆ Community Yard Sale, May 14 at Museum (see last page for details)
- ◆ General Meeting, May 24, 7:30 PM at Wantagh Library  
"Show and Tell" night - bring your artifacts and tell your story
- ◆ Trustee Meeting, June 7, 7:30 PM at Wantagh Museum
- ◆ General Meeting, June 26, 7:00 PM at Wantagh Museum  
Metal detector demonstration by Harold Ball

# Wantagh Preservation Society

## Elected Officers

*President:* Karen Chowske  
*1st Vice President:* Bob Meagher  
*2nd Vice President:* Carol Poulos  
*Recording Secretary:* Wayne Wagner  
*Corresponding Secretary:* Mary Wagner  
*Treasurer:* Tom Watson

## Appointed Officers

*Curator:* Carol Poulos  
*Newsletter Editor:* Jim Colotti

## Trustees

Bob Cook  
Ellen Cook  
Joan Mallon  
Claire Reisert  
Joshua Soren  
Mary Wagner  
Elaine Yarris

*The Information Window is the official newsletter of the Wantagh Preservation Society, and is published approximately six times each year. Please obtain written permission from the individual authors before using material contained in this publication.*

*We hope you enjoy our newsletter. Your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome!*

[wps@wantagh.li](mailto:wps@wantagh.li)



*The "Mill House" on Old Mill Road was sold last February to a young family that will now live and care for this historic home.*



**Museum  
is now open  
Sundays  
from 2 to 4 PM**



**More renovations are  
underway!**

## DAR Donation

*By Mary Wagner*

The Daughters of the American Revolution, Jerusalem Chapter, made a donation to the Wantagh Preservation Society. The donation may be used as the WPS wishes to help in their activities. The Jerusalem Chapter has made donations for the past several years, mainly towards the restoration of the post office. 📖



*From Left to right: Sally Boggan, Past Director District X and XI, Mary Wagner, DAR Treasurer, Ellen Cook, Vice-Regent Jerusalem Chapter, and Bob Meagher, WPS First Vice-President*

## Mural at TD Bank Commemorates a Part of Wantagh's History

The TD Bank on Wantagh Avenue and Jerusalem Avenue recently commissioned an artist to create a mural of William Valentine's Store by digitally enhancing and colorizing a photo provided by the Wantagh Preservation Society. The mural of Valentine's Store is prominently displayed on the bank's south wall.

The artist did take some creative license with the photo as the trees are fully crowned while pretty flowers in bloom are seen on the west side of the store. Also a man, presumed to be William Valentine, stands on the steps of the store. Nevertheless the mural remains a charming sight to behold as you enter the bank.

A plaque on the bottom right corner of the mural describes the photo and gives the WPS credit. The plaque reads "William Valentine's Store with Horse & Delivery Wagon, located opposite the depot on Railroad Avenue, Wantagh, LI - circa 1900 - Photo from the Wantagh Preservation Society, Mural provided courtesy of TD Bank".

A stack of 11" by 17" posters beside the mural are offered at no cost. If you're in the area, stop by to see the mural - it's worth the trip. 📖



*The mural of William Valentine's Store now on display at the TD Bank on the corner of Wantagh and Jerusalem Avenues*



*Photograph of William Valentine's Store provided by the Wantagh Preservation Society to TD Bank*

### ***We Need You! Join or Renew Your Membership in 2016!***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ New ☐ Renew ☐  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to help with:

- |   |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening & Planting       | <input type="checkbox"/> General Meeting Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction             | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting museum on a Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Event Planning   | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication & Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                |   |   |                                      |

Check Membership Level: ☐ Individual \$15 ☐ Family \$25 ☐ Friend \$35 ☐ Patron \$50 ☐ Fellow \$100

**Please Make Checks Payable To: Wantagh Preservation Society PO Box 132 Wantagh, NY 11793**

*"Preservation with a Purpose."***Spring Community Yard Sale is May 14***By Bob Cook, Second Vice President*

The Wantagh Preservation Society is again holding a "Spring Community Yard Sale" on Saturday, 2016 May 14 from 10:00 AM to 4 PM (rain date is Sunday, May 15th). If you have sale articles but do not wish to rent space, you may donate them to the Preservation Society table.

All vendors must complete the application below and send it with a check made out to the Wantagh Preservation Society in advance of the event. Vendors who have not pre-registered cannot be guaranteed accepted the day of the event.


Publicity for the Spring Community Yard Sale will be carried in local newspapers and posters will be displayed around the community. The Spring Community Yard Sale is held on the grounds of the Wantagh Museum, on the west side of Wantagh Avenue, opposite Emeric Avenue, between Sunrise Highway and the Southern State Parkway.

Vendor's set-up time is from 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM, and cars being driven onto the grounds to deliver merchandise must be left in the rented \$35 space. Please note that you will not be able to drive a car onto the museum grounds and then drive out after unloading. All cars must be left in a \$35 space.

Vendors must leave their car on the Museum grounds until the end of the sale. Vendors provide their own tables and must remove their unsold items and refuse after the sale. They also agree not to leave before the normal closing hour of 4:00 PM.

The rental fee for one space with car that is approximately ten feet wide is \$35.00 and an additional space is \$25.00 (\$35.00 if an additional car is to be left in a space). Spaces vary in depth and the amount of shade and will be assigned on a "first come, first served" basis. There are no space reservations in advance. No refunds will be made except for rejections. All vendors must send in their application form and check in advance of the event.

Merchandise of all sorts, including new sale items, are acceptable. No food or beverage can be sold by vendors. Merchandise must be displayed on tables or on the ground behind the white space markers and within the rented areas. While personal radios are acceptable, there shall be no public address systems.

For more information about the rain date on Sunday, May 15th, call the Yard Sale Chair Person, Elaine Yarris at (516) 785-0761 or email Elaine at [elainetybooks@optonline.net](mailto:elainetybooks@optonline.net). 



*Last Year's Spring Sale was a big success. Be a part of the excitement this year!*

**2016 "Spring Community Yard Sale" Application Form**

Applications will be accepted as long as space permits. Arrival time is 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM. No food or beverage can be sold by vendors. Vendors must supply their own tables. Vendors must remove their unsold items and refuse. In the event of a rain cancellation on the rain date no refunds will be issued. If you agree with these terms, submit the form below with your check, payable to "Wantagh Preservation Society" and mail to PO Box 132, Wantagh, NY 11793-0132.

Name: (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of \$35 Spaces: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of \$25 Spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ (contact for future events)

Amount Enclosed @ \$35.00 per space w/ car and \$25.00 per additional space: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to remain until closing time, 4:00 PM Signature: \_\_\_\_\_