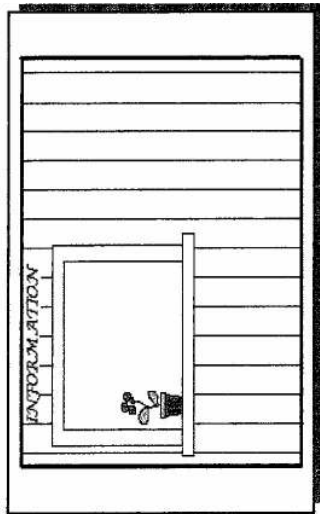


The INFORMATION WINDOW

of the
WANTAGH PRESERVATION SOCIETY
PO Box 132, Wantagh, NY 11793



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February, 2008

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Jim Colloti	Georgia Cotsonas	Grace MacMillan	Harry Strole	Sue Wendt
Rita Coffey	Theresa Donahue	Frank McKenna	Joshua Soren	Elaine Yarris

FEBRUARY 26 MEETING


Our January 22nd general meeting, at 8:00 P.M. in the Wantagh Public Library community Room will feature a history lecture by long time Society member, Milton Seltzer.

Mr. Seltzer, whose talks on Lincoln have become an annual event, will describe "the Lincoln Douglas Debates" of 1858 for the senatorial seat of Illinois. Although Lincoln lost the debates, his popularity grew, helping his eventual nomination in 1860 for President of the United States, then becoming our 16th President.

A display window with the topic of the Lincoln Douglas Debates is featured in the Library for the month of February, and will be a visual reminder of the information in the lecture.

Following the meeting, there will be a period for refreshments and discussion. If you would like to help with refreshments, please contact Theresa Donahue at (516) 785-0739. 


MEMBERSHIP GROWING

Alice Blaustein, our Membership Chair, reports that we have 93 members who have renewed their memberships for 2008. Those who have yet to renew can fill out the form on page 2 and mail their dues to "WPS, POBox 132, Wantagh, NY 11793." 

SAVE YOUR GARAGE SALE ITEMS

Our regular Spring "Community Garage Sale" will be coming up in a couple of months – on Saturday, May 12 to be exact. This is the time when the "clean-up" types collect all their extra items and prepare for a garage sale. Its also the same time that the rest of us go out and look for bargains or hard-to-find things that we've wanted to buy all Winter.

The Society rents spaces for the would-be sellers, and provides the crowds of buyers. For the buyers, it provides not only bargains, but a variety of vendors – and the lunch and rest-room facilities that most home garage sales just don't seem to have.


So make your plans and save the date, May 12, for a satisfying Community Garage Sale at the WPS! 



Preservation Society Calendar

Tuesday, February 26. Membership Meeting in the Community Room of the Wantagh Public Library, 8:00 P.M.

Sunday, March 9. Daylight Saving Time begins, 2:00 A.M.

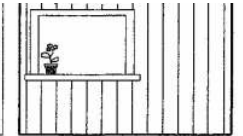
Tuesday, March 18. Trustee Meeting in the Museum waiting room, 8:00 P.M. 

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TO JOIN, OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Name _____

Addr. _____

_____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ New Renewal

E-mail _____

Circle one: Indiv. \$10 Family \$20
 Friend \$30 Patron \$50 Fellow \$100

Send to: Wantagh Preservation Society
P O Box 132, Wantagh, New York 11793

MUSEUM CLOSED FOR SEASON

The Wantagh Museum is closed for the season until Sunday, April 20, 2008, when regular opening hours of 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. will begin again.

If you would like to volunteer as a host for one or more Sunday afternoons, call Claire Reisert at (516) 785-1309, and she will be glad to pencil you into the schedule.

TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Check the subscription date on the mailing label on the front side of your Information Window. There should be the note, "Dues paid to Jan '09" or later. If not, just select a membership level, fill out the form above, and mail it with your check.

THE INFORMATION WINDOW

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

It is available on-line at WANTAGH.LI, along with the Society's event program and all sorts of other good things connected with Wantagh.

You are invited to submit short articles on items of local historical interest. The Editor is Dick MacMillan, (516) 785-3951.

BIRDSALL JAMES AND THE LIRR

Birdsall Post James (1886 - 1973) wrote his "Some History of Wantagh," listing his memories of life in the area that grew up to be Wantagh. Here are his memories of the Long Island Railroad, possibly enhanced by his reading of a history of the Railroad. He also recalls his early life living on a farm on Garner's Avenue (Now Gardiner's) in what is now Levittown. He even adds a note on his cousins, Jesse & Frank James, who may have been famous.

"The first Long Island Railroad locomotives were built and delivered in 1835 by Matthias W. Baldwin. They were named Ariel and the Post Boy. They ran from Brooklyn to a station in South Street Jamaica. By March 1, 1837, the Long Island Railroad had extended a line to Hicksville and in 1839 it built a shore branch from Mineola to Hempstead. But even in those days, regular patrons had their woes. They had two daily trains to choose from but their timetables did not list arrival times.

"Locomotives traveled at 12 miles per hour and were affected by wind and terrain. It was said while going downhill it might hit 15 miles per hour. The average train consisted of a locomotive which was a steam engine and boilers mounted on flat cars. Two flat cars carrying wood and water and three or four stagecoaches mounted on flanged wheels. Commuters were kept busy brushing many sparks.

"Farmers loaded their produce in loaded wagons of the flat cars. In 1836 the Long Island Railroad was the first to mount a steam whistle. The Long Island Railroad went bankrupt in 1850 for lack of passengers and it branched out in 1854 from Long Island City to Flushing and from Hicksville to Syosset. Brooklyn complained about sparks and noise in 1861 and the Long Island Railroad was prohibited from using its locomotives, which were doing 25 or 35 miles per hour.

"In 1869 the L.I.R.R. ran a spur to Whitestone, Queens, with a station on 15th Avenue. Service ended on February 15, 1932. In 1869 they ran from Jamaica to Patchogue. That is when my father, DeWitt Clinton James, worked on the South Side Railroad. There used to be an old station just north of Hempstead Turnpike. It was called Island Trees Station and the farmers used to get their fertilizers from there."