



# The Information Window

## Looking Back at Wantagh News

*By Carol Poulos, Curator*

Travel back in time to get a glimpse at life in Wantagh, decades or more than a century ago!

130 Years Ago - January 1889: A new school house was being erected. The plans could be seen at Willet Whitmore's store. There was a call for a council to organize a Congregational Church.

120 Years Ago - January 1899: Justice Edgar Seaman took his oath of office. On New Year's Day, local resident Samuel Wilson gathered 150 pounds of good honey gathered from the rafters of his home where two swarms of bees had settled during the summer. Mrs. Ira Smith secured a judgement of \$500 against the Brooklyn Water Works for rental of her trout pond. A Wantagh Pigeon Shoot Club was organized with the initial shoot to be held on George Washington's birthday. Plans were underway to organize a baseball team made up of residents of "this section" and Bellmore. Many residents reported seeing a ghost of a wild goose that departed this life 3 years before. It would generally appear east of the depot, give three honks and vanish.

110 Years Ago - February 1909: February brought two blizzards. During the second one, P. W. Behrens, the florist, had a number of fine plants frozen and about 50 panes of glass broken in his greenhouses. William DeMott, employed at the pumping station (Brooklyn Water Works) was snowed in and had to remain on duty for 48 hours with no food. The public school would not be open until the next week.

100 Years Ago - January 1919: The Jan 17th Dance given at the barracks at Lufberry Field was a great success and a large crowd attended. It was a farewell for the 35th Photo section. On Jan 31, the boys of Lufberry Field gave a genuine camp supper to the young ladies of the village. (Read more about Lufberry Field on page 3.) Everyone enjoyed the supper. Although it was a dreadfully stormy night, all the invited guests were on hand as the boys took them down from Fussell's store in Army trucks and after supper, took them to the Parish House (Congregational Church) in the same manner, where they finished the evening with the Thursday night regular community dance. The chaperones were Mrs. J. J. Fussell and Mrs. Charles Schafer.



*Fussell's General Store next to Wantagh's Original Post Office on Railroad Avenue*

80 Years Ago - February 1939: The Wantagh PTA and Girl Scout Committee presented 3 one-act marionette shows in the Sunrise Park School. 📖



See page 3 on becoming a member or scan the QR code to join online!

## Membership Drive 2019

*By Mary Wagner, Membership Chairman*

Our membership drive for 2019 begins on January 1 and ends on December 31. The money raised through membership is used for maintenance of our museum and grounds, as well as the post office and Jamaica parlor car restoration projects. Our latest project is recreating the World War I memorial at the Long Island Railroad Station where it originally stood. You are not just joining the society — you become a supporter of history by enabling the society to continue its work to educate residents, especially children, on Wantagh's past.

Please join us by paying your dues for 2019. We also invite you to become an active member of the society. 📖

### 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, March 5, 7:00 PM at Wantagh Museum (Trustees and Invited Guests Only at the Trustee Meetings)
- ◆ Trustee Meeting, April 2, 7:00 PM at Wantagh Museum
- ◆ General Meeting, April 30, 7:00 PM at Wantagh Library, All are Welcome, Program: "Looking Back at the Saint Matthias Church"
- ◆ Trustee Meeting, May 7, 7:00 PM at Wantagh Museum

# Wantagh Preservation Society

## Elected Officers

*President:* Tom Watson  
*Vice President:* Bob Meagher  
*Recording Secretary:* Open  
*Treasurer:* Wayne Wagner

## Appointed Officers

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

## Trustees

Bob Cook  
Ellen Cook  
Mary Corrigan  
Gary Hammond  
Fred Parola  
Claire Reisert  
Barry Rivadue  
Paul Sigler  
Matt Susco  
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)



*WPS Trustees Mary Corrigan and Claire Reisert serving up delicious hot cocoa and cookies to delighted guests at the Open House last month (please see last page for more photos)*

*Museum is now  
closed but  
will be reopen Sunday  
April 28*



*More renovations are  
underway!*

## Boy Scouts Donate to the WPS

*By Tom Watson, President*

Last October, a donation of \$841.65 was presented to the Wantagh Preservation Society by Boy Scout Packs 96, 189, 191, 341, Troops 189, 341, 656 and Venturing Crew 577.



The donation monies were raised by the sale of Scouting patches commemorating the 100th anniversary of Pack 96. (Please see the article in the 2018 September edition of the Information Window.) Also in the photo are Wantagh Preservation Society Trustees Bob Meagher and Paul Sigler (both holding the check) and Trustee Fred Parola. 📖

## Wantagh Military Air Base

*Compiled from other Publications by: Jim Colotti, Editor*

Following the declaration of World War I, the US army constructed two small airfields on Long Island: Brindley Field located in Commack and Lufberry Field located in Wantagh. The moniker of the latter was in honor of aviation ace Raoul Lufberry who had flown in both the French and American air services.

Lufberry Field leaves its mark in the model plane fields at Cedar Creek Park, and in the name of Lufberry Avenue, which runs east and west between Wantagh Avenue near the High School, and the Seaford-Oyster Bay expressway.



*Gervais Raoul Lufberry  
in 1918*

During the war on 1918 May 19 while serving in France as a member of the Lafayette Escadrille, Raoul Lufberry was killed during a combat mission. His body is interned at the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in France.

Lufberry Field was located south of the Merrick Road and east of the present Wantagh Parkway. Military personnel stationed at the field lived in barracks which were located north of the Merrick Road. Their consolidated mess hall was situated on the northeast corner of Wantagh Avenue and the Merrick Road.

During the war effort about 200 to 400 men were stationed at the Field. Being close to the shore, Lufberry Field had the advantage of using nearby waters as practice ranges with buoys marking off target areas. Understandably, these target areas were off limits to the local bay men denying them access to some prime oyster areas.



*12 Curtiss JN-4 Airplanes (like the one in this photo) were assigned to the base at Lufberry Field*

There were 12 Curtiss JN-4 airplanes assigned to the base. "The Jenny" as these airplanes were nicknamed, were affordable, easy to operate, and versatile. More than ninety percent of American pilots trained during the First World War received their primary instruction on the Jenny.

The 12 Jennys were kept in four hangers at the Field. Four additional hangers were being constructed when the armistice was signed. 📖

### ***We Need You! Join or Renew Your Membership in 2019!***

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.”

### Busy December at the Wantagh Museum

Two big events were held at the Wantagh Museum last month. On December 1st, the Wantagh Chamber of Commerce and Wantagh Preservation Society sponsored the Winter Wonderland Craft Fair which was a festive jump-start to the holiday season. The event featured entertainment by the Fivestone Band, Show Stompin' Irish Dance and the Wantagh American Legion Pipe Band. Food and beverage were provided by Pies on Wheels, Pipeline Coffee Company, Exquisite Eats and Mama's Custom Cookies, all while shoppers enjoyed bargains in apparel, art, accessories, books, holiday décor and more!

The evening also included presentations by local clergy and officials, capped off by the lighting of the Museum Christmas Tree and Menorah.



*Outdoor lighting illuminated the museum grounds during the Winter Wonderland event (large left photo); Mothers and their children enjoying the evening (center); two of the many vendors (right two photos) offering holiday bargains*

Then on December 9th was the family-fun festival also know as the WPS Holiday Open House with Santa. Another free event where residents gathers while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies, a visit with Santa and holiday songs performed by Wantagh High School students. 📖



*Wantagh High School students perform holiday songs (photo above) while families and friends enjoy the festivities*