

The Westhampton Beach Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2024



Post Office Box 686
Westhampton Beach, NY 11978
Phone: (631) 288-1139
Website: www.whbhistorical.org
Email: contact@whbhistorical.org

Serving the following Communities:
Westhampton Beach, Westhampton Dunes,
Westhampton, Quogue,
Remsenburg, Speonk and Eastport

THE WESTHAMPTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL SOON HAVE A NEW NAME!

In 2023 the Society petitioned the New York State Board of Regents to change our Charter from a “Society” to a “Museum” to better reflect the communities we represent and to enable us to seek public funding to enhance our operations. Our new name will be **The Greater Westhampton Historical Museum**; the Board of Regents is expected to formally approve our new Charter later in January and we are in the process of re-branding our operations with the new name. Although this Newsletter still references our former name, in 2024 please watch for a new website, new logo, and other changes that reflect our new name!

On a parallel track we have been preparing to file a petition with the Westhampton Beach Union Free School District that would enable us to place a **proposition for public funding on the school budget ballot**. This is the same mechanism that the Westhampton Free Library has used for public funding for many years. The petition requires the support of at least 100 voters in the school district – to date we have obtained far more signatures than the minimum requirement, which is a measure of how favorably this proposed ballot proposition is viewed. The **proposition requests \$100,000 of funding during the 2024/2025 fiscal year**; if approved, **this would cost a taxpayer with a \$1,000,000 property a total of \$9.42 per year**.

This additional funding will be added to our existing budget and enable us to offer **far more programming and services** than we have been able to in the past. The additional funding will enable us to **hire professional educational and administrative staff**, have our facilities **open to the public at least 1,000 hours per year**, expand our **community and school programming**, complete much-needed **maintenance and repairs on our campus**, and move towards completing reconstruction of the Foster-Meeker Heritage Center so it can open to the public. If you are a voter in the Westhampton Beach Union Free School District, **we encourage you to vote in support of this proposition in May**. As a member of our organization, please spread the word about this important initiative to support **The Greater Westhampton Historical Museum!**

Our 2024 Winter Lecture Series: *HISTORIC MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE!*

Our 2024 Winter Lecture Series is off to a good start! On Sunday, January 7 our first lecture featured **Amy Kasuga Folk, the Town of Southold Historian**, who presented *The Remarkable History of Plum Island*. She spoke of the mysterious island's history from back in the Pleistocene period when it was formed by glacial activity through to the present time, when its fate is not clear after the Department of Homeland Security's Plum Island Animal Disease Center is removed to Kansas. Of interest, were the multiple conflicts over the island during its periods of Indigenous use, multiple wartime fortifications, and private uses for farming and vacationing. We had a full-house audience for this lecture and lots of interesting questions during the Q&A.



Our next speaker will be **Noel Gish, educator and historian**, on **Sunday, February 11**, who will discuss *Pirates, Raiders, and Rumrunners*. Mr. Gish is a prior participant in our Winter Lecture Series and his talks are well-informed, fascinating, and very entertaining.

Last, but not least, we will have **Bill Bleyer, a prize-winning journalist, author and historian**, on **Sunday, March 10** to tell us *The True Story of the Culper Spy Ring*. Bill's talks are always fun – we hope you can join us!

All the lectures take place on Sundays, starting at 1:30 PM and are held at the Westhampton Beach Public Library located at 7 Library Avenue in Westhampton Beach. Admission is free, but you must register to attend at www.westhamptonlibrary.net to ensure that there is available seating.

Please join us - You don't want to miss these fascinating lectures!



GOV. JOHN ADAMS DIX WINDMILL UPDATE

While it may not seem that much is happening with the “marshmallows” on the Great Lawn that are the protected pieces of the 1870 Gov. John Adams Dix Windmill, there has been plenty of action behind the scenes! In June 2023 an Inter-Municipal Agreement was finalized between the Village of Westhampton Beach and the Town of Southampton that paved the way for completing landmarking of the iconic windmill, which will enable access to the Community Preservation Fund (CPF) for historic restoration.



At the same time a group of volunteer architects, engineers, landscape architects, and others developed plans and specifications for restoration. The plans were submitted to the Town’s Landmarks & Historic Districts Board in mid-2023 and the Board issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the plans in July 2023, paving the way for the windmill’s restoration. In November 2023 the Village issued a Request for Proposals using the approved plans and we are hopeful that restoration will move forward in 2024.

When restored, the windmill will be located on the Great Lawn just to the southeast of the roundabout, *as shown in the rendering at left*, and very visible as you approach the Village. The exterior will be shingle-clad and rise to a height of almost 40 feet, *as shown in the rendering at upper left*.

The sail frames will be rebuilt and fabric sails can be added for demonstrations. The interior will feature operable machinery that can be used to draw water, which was the original purpose of the windmill!

We look forward to the completed restoration and addition of this lovely historic windmill to the Village of Westhampton Beach!

ANTIQUES COLLECTIBLES SHOW AND WINE & CHEESE FUNDRAISER

Last October 20th the Society held an **Antiques and Collectibles Show and Wine & Cheese event** at the *Antiques Road Show*. This fund-raising event included participants bringing a wide variety of antique items to the Society's Museum to have them evaluated and appraised for their market value by an expert while enjoying an afternoon of refreshments with members and guests.

The appraiser was **Jean-Paul Napoli, the owner of South Bay Auctions in East Moriches**, a well-regarded local antiques appraiser with many years of experience. The items that were appraised included a historical map, paintings, sculpture, special tools, jewelry, and more. The program was a big hit as demonstrated by the number of participants and the late hour at which the event wound down. We hope to host similar events in the future, so stay tuned!



HOLIDAY PARTY 2023

Our final event of 2023 was a **Christmas Party** held on December 3rd at our beautifully-decorated Museum. Members were invited to bring guests to enjoy holiday treats, wine, and mulled cider while taking a last view of our 2023 exhibit. Despite the rather awful weather we had a full house and nearly clean plates at the end of the evening. We plan to continue this annual event in 2024!



WALKING TOUR OF HISTORIC REMSENBURG

On Saturday November 3rd over 40 residents of the Remsenburg area participated in a walking tour that featured many of the historic homes located on South Country Road, the original post road through the community. The tour began at the Remsenburg Academy, a Town of Southampton designated landmark, and covered areas to the east and west for a distance of about a half-mile each way, highlighting older homes in the hamlet, some of which date back to the mid-1700s. The majority of the homes date to the late-1800s and were built after the Long Island Rail Road extended tracks through Speonk and eastward to Bridgehampton in 1869. These homes, while retaining much of their historic building fabric and form, include a wide range of additions, renovation, and/or other modifications characteristic of historic homes that have been adapted to modern living.

Stephanie Davis, a local resident, long-time Historic Society board member, and Town Landmarks and Historic Districts Board member, led the tour and answered participants' questions. The tour was co-sponsored by the Remsenburg Academy Association and Historical Society, both of which offered refreshments and additional information at the Academy. The event was much appreciated and acclaimed a very strong success by the attendees. We hope to offer a similar historic walking tour in 2024!



Our Engrave-a-Brick Fundraiser: Your Chance for Recognition!



In 2022 we built a brick walkway for the Foster-Meecker Heritage Center. This project provided inspiration for our Engrave-a-Brick fundraiser as we also needed to replace badly-worn bricks in the Tuthill House front walkway. We launched this fund-raising project in 2022 with good success and our community of friends continued to support us in 2023.

Due to popular demand, **this fund-raising effort will continue in 2024, but there have been a few changes....** When you purchase a brick it includes engraving of a personal message, the name of a loved one, a business promotional message, or nearly anything else you prefer that fits on up to three lines of up to **15 characters per line**. The engraving will last for a lifetime and the proceeds go directly to support the work of the Society. The cost is now **\$250 per brick** as our cost to purchase the bricks has gone up. Please go to our website at <https://whbhistorical.org/> and click on the Donation Form button on the home page. **The updated form includes all the current information.**

The Society (soon to be Museum!!!) appreciates your continued support!

Westhampton Beach Historical Society's 2024 Events Calendar

The Society is beginning to schedule its 2024 events. While our schedule is still somewhat fluid, the preliminary Calendar of Events is shown below. Please join us for the two remaining lectures of our **Winter Lecture Series** at the Library on February 11 and March 10. Other favorite events include the **Cocktail Party** to open our **Summer Exhibit**, which will run from some time in June through September. We are also planning another **Great Lawn event and craft demonstrations on our campus in July and August**. More events will be added as the year progresses - stay tuned.

| | |
|--|--|
| February 11th | Lecture: Pirates, Raiders & Rumrunners, Westhampton Library, 1:30 pm |
| March 9th | St. Patrick's Day Parade |
| March 10th | Lecture: The Cluper Spy Ring, Westhampton Library, 1:30 pm |
| June (date to come) | Museum Opening Cocktail Party |
| June to September | Summer Exhibit , Tuthill House Museum Saturdays 10am to 1pm |
| July (date to come) | Great Lawn event |
| July 20rd to Aug 10th | Craft Demonstrations Saturdays 10am to 1pm |
| December (date to come) | Holiday Party |

We have received many positive comments on our digital Newsletter and hope that you continue to enjoy this new format. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email our office at contact@whbhistorical.org



Happy students at one of our educational programs!