

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org

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Boating with the Baymen Sailing the Great South Bay

If the tides and structures could echo the sounds and images of the last 300 years, they would tell wondrous stories. Since the Dutch baymen settled in West Sayville during the 1800s many changes have happened. With this in mind, we hope you will join us in West Sayville on Saturday, September 10, for our walking and ferry cruise "Boating with the Baymen: Sailing the Great South Bay." This program will take place from 10:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m.

The Great South Bay supports commercial fishermen who harvest killies, crabs and clams for their livelihoods. Local baymen have learned their trades from traditions that have been passed down within their families since the 1800s. After a 1-hour walking tour in West Sayville including the historic Bluepoints property, guests will board a comfortable ferry boat and enjoy a scenic cruise of Great South Bay and Fire Island. The afternoon's water tour allows visitors splendid vistas of some of the significant waterfront mansions of Blue Point, Bayport and Sayville and more intimate views along the Patchogue River.

While enjoying the walking tour consider the background and motivation for this adventure. Folklorist Nancy Solomon along with others, continue their deeply felt reverence for traditions by working and researching both individuals and communities. One of the many tour highlights includes the Weeks Brothers boatyard of Patchogue and the Bluepoints Company property. This landmark might sound familiar as it is the home of the well known Bluepoint oyster and clam processing plant.

Onboard ferry guests will meet and talk with Patchogue baymen Bill Hamilton, Flo Sharkey and Bob Kaler. These commercial fishermen share their unique perspectives on the changes in the water-ways they know, work and love. Their combined experience adds up to over 100 years. As active

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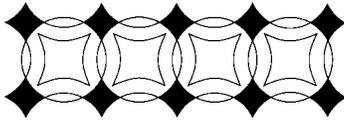
Maritime Profile: Bayman & Educator Cory Weyant

Cory Weyant is one of the most energetic and knowledgeable baymen in Freeport. He is a master storyteller, expert eeler and crabber, dragger mate and fish smoker. Cory grew up on Woodcleft Canal in Freeport. In 1987 Cory reflected "*I was born in Oceanside, but I lived, lived here (in Freeport) for 30 years, I lived here 20, that house next door for 17, 10 here. Guess I'm basically living on the canal all my life.*" When asked how he first started getting into the bay he replied "*Fend for your own! Me and my buddy Bill Ross, we used to, when my friend Mike who owns the fish market up the block, I know him since I'm two, right, so he lived over there, there were no houses, so we used to make rafts, ya know, like Styrofoam rafts, and just rowed across to the island just to see what was over there with an old oar and then we used to find like a dingy with a hole in it and we'd patch it up. We used his mother's fiberglass curtains one time, patched up a boat.....we used to row all over the bay because we didn't have a motor you know.*"

see **Cory Weyant** on page 3



Cory Weyant



Long Island Traditions Inc.

Dedicated to the documentation and preservation of Long Island's living cultural heritage.

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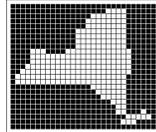
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Boating with the Baymen continued

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members of the Brookhaven Baymen's Association founders, they actively advise the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council on issues affecting their livelihoods. Founded in 1978 this non-profit organization strives to protect water quality, fight price-fixing, conserve the bay's resources, and preserve the Long Island fishermen's way of life. The group also consults with local governments on

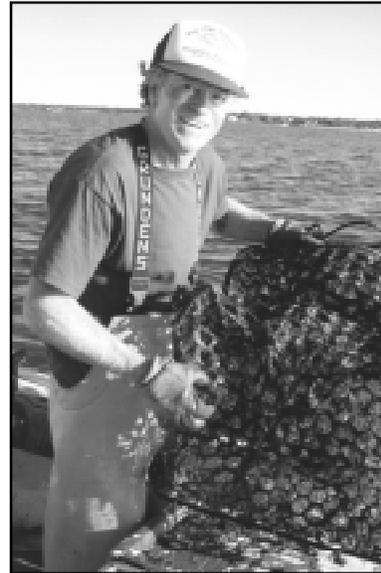


Photo by Sherman Wolfson

Bob Kaler will be among our guides on our "Boating with the Baymen" tour on Sept. 10th.

conservation projects and legislation that affects all fishermen. During the off season, these engaging individuals work with Long Island Traditions' maritime programs and festivals. Their knowledge helps bring home the important value and wonders of the waterways. Bill Hamilton was born in Sayville and now lives in Patchogue. As a fisherman he wields pound traps and fyke nets to catch fluke, flounder and eels. Bill is also a boat builder who specializes in garveys and sharpies. Flo Sharkey is a 2nd-generation baywoman who learned how to clam, scallop, crab and eel from her father. These days she works full-time on the bay from her waterfront dock in Patchogue. Bob Kaler has lived most of his life near Great South Bay. When the clamming industry began to decline in 1985 he continued working the waters as a crabber and when not crabbing, he catches bait mussels on the North Shore of Long Island. At this writing we have a few spaces available but the trip is filling up fast. Please note although good weather should prevail, the rain date is September 25. To reserve your spot send in the enclosed reservation form or call us at (516) 767-8803. Tickets are \$35/person, \$10 for children under 10 with a \$5 discount for Long Island Traditions members. ■

Heckscher Museum Program

The Heckscher Museum in Huntington is offering a special fun-filled festival for children and families during the opening weekend of the special exhibition *Noguchi: The Bollingen Journey: Photographs and Drawings 1949-1956*. Enjoy a one-day adventure to many of the countries that sculptor Isamu Noguchi visited on his six-year journey around the world. Performing artists will include the Sopasinas Hellenic Dance Academy, the Young Indian Culture Group and Italian singer and historian Mark Pezzano, all of whom have been recognized as master artists by LI Traditions. No pre-registration is necessary and admission is free. The Heckscher Museum is located at 25 Prime Avenue in Huntington, inside Heckscher Town Park. For more information call (631) 351-3250. ■

Cory learned early on that in order to make a year round living he would have to master a variety of skills for both the bay and ocean. He learned to clam, crab, trap eels and killeys, catch horseshoe crabs for bait, and to smoke fish from German residents (Cory is German). Cory believes that as long as there are enough variety of species to catch he will be able to continue working on the water. Like most traditional baymen, Cory builds his own traps which differ in design according to the species. In order to smoke eels, he first traps them, prepares them in a traditional brine made from brown sugar, salt and vinegar, then smokes them using an aromatic fruitwood such as cherry or apple in a smoker. His smoker is made from a discarded refrigerator that has shelves. *"Like I said, I just fooled around with it. Oh down, at my uncle's marina, Frank's marina, I just fooled with it, then, like when I ran the fish market tried it a little more, you know, I could sell 'em, then I got into trapping them, made more and more traps, matter of fact every year I try to make more."* His customers learn about him through word of mouth. *"They come to my door, knock on my door, I like, when I get the old German people, ya, you got some eels.....come on over, how many pounds you want?"*

Cory reflects commercial fishermen in Freeport, in that he has learned to work in a variety of different activities in order to work year round. As a teenager he worked on the clammer boat The St. Peter which is directly across the street from the house he grew up in. *"The first time I worked on a dragger I worked right here on the St. Peter, across the street, I worked there like I was 17, 18, 19 till I was about 21. Then I ran that fish market and I got into the smoked fish after that. I just decided I'd had enough of the fish market, said I can go out and make my own living in the bay."*

Cory learned to fish from a variety of commercial fishermen including the Cona brothers, who were dragger fishermen originally from Italy, and from dragger boat fisherman Tony Sougstad. He learned to work on the bay from Elwood Verity, one of the most traditional baymen who taught Cory and other baymen how to make eel, crab and killey traps. Cory also learned about boat design from the Remsen family, another long time Freeport fishing family. Cory works in both the bay and on the ocean.

Cory is a master educator in both children's and adult's programs. Since 1988 he has been the master educator in Long Island Traditions' maritime festivals and maritime education programs. For almost 20 years Cory has taught in Freeport's elementary schools, teaching students about the work and lives of Long Island fisherman and baymen. Students eagerly await his arrival in their classrooms. For some this is their first exposure to local fishermen and baymen, as well as Freeport's working waterfront. In addition Cory has demonstrated fish smoking at hundreds of festivals, including the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and the Woodcleft Nautical Festival in June, entertaining visitors with his stories about the bay. He also works as a tour guide by large sightseeing boats during the winter months for seal watch trips.

In recognition of these and other tireless efforts Long Island Traditions will present Cory with its Honoring Traditions' award in November. We hope to see you there! Please read the accompanying announcement and save the date!

We're Moving to the Same Old Address

After ten years of exciting activities, research, programs and events we have outgrown our modest office (those of you who have been here no what we're talking about). So we are moving to a much larger office on August 1, 2005. Our address, phone number and fax numbers will remain the same. Yes, that's right. We are relocating our entire one room office, two flights downstairs to the street level of the same building. The big news is now we will have breathing room to grow into. We hope all of our friends and family will find some time to stop by and say hello and see the new digs.

In our new location visitors can drive to Port Washington's Town Dock where there is ample dockside parking spaces overlooking Manhasset Bay. Our new more spacious accommodations offer handicap accessibility as well as a comfortable area where researchers can spread their wings and notebooks and work. We have an extensive interview collection that includes over 100 recorded interviews, hundreds if not thousands of photographs, and interesting reports and books. Please come and check it out! If you would like to visit and want directions, please give us a call at (516) 767-8803. ■

A Red Letter Day

Save This Date for the Honoring Traditions Event

On Sunday, November 13 at 2 p.m. Long Island Traditions will presents its 10th Year of Honoring Traditions Programs at the Long Island Children's Museum in Garden City. Throughout this event we will celebrates the living cultural heritage of today's Long Islanders. We will honor the following individuals and organizations:

- The Workmen's Circle of Long Island
- The Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island
- Caribbean Comedian and Storyteller Ken Corsbie
- Freeport Bayman and Master Educator Cory Weyant

As a special treat some of our featured honorees have agreed to perform.

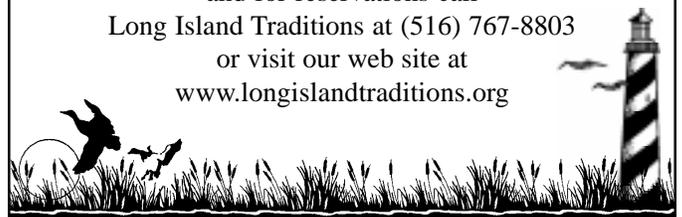
For directions: Call LICM at (516) 224-5800

and for reservations call

Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803

or visit our web site at

www.longislandtraditions.org



PLEASE NOTE: If you have a Long Island concert or program that focuses on some aspect of traditional culture, drop us a line and we'll put it in our "Events of Interest" column. The deadline is the 1st of October, January and April.

- August 10:** Dave Sear. Freeport Memorial Library. 7:30 pm. 144 West Merrick Road, Freeport. For information call (516) 379-3274.
- August 23:** Dave Sear with Tom Paxton. Clark Botanic Garden. 7 pm. 93 I.U. Willets Road, Albertson. Free admission. For information call (516) 263-5752.
- September 10:** Boating with the Baymen Sailing the Great South Bay (see accompanying article).
- September 11:** Family Festival at the Heckscher Museum. 1-5 pm. 25 Prime Avenue. Huntington. Free admission. For information call (631) 351-3250.
- September 17:** Young Indian Culture Group. Open House. 12 p.m. Herricks Middle School, 7 Hilldale Road, Albertson. For more information call (516) 365-4859.
- September 22:** Bungalow lecture by Long Island Traditions' director Nancy Solomon. Sea Cliff Landmarks Society. 8pm. Free admission. For more information call (516) 671-1515.
- September 22:** Author Evelyn Pike Rubin will speak about the Shanghai Ghetto at the Farmingdale Jewish Center, 475 Fulton St., (Rte 109), Farmingdale. 8 pm. For information call (516) 694-2343.
- October 15:** *Island Kings, Whalers and Beach Boys: How Pacific Whaling Introduced Surfing to the World.* Sag Harbor Whaling Museum. Guest speakers include Dr. John Loret of the LI Science Museum and filmmaker Chris Stewart. 10am – 2pm. For information call (631) 725-0770.

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Save the Date!

November 13: Honoring Traditions
Long Island Children's Museum • 2 pm

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