

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org
info@longislandtraditions.org

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Fall 2015

Boating with the Baymen: Working the Waters of Long Island

Focus on Freeport, September 26 at 2pm

Long Island Traditions is sponsoring another “Boating with the Baymen” tour on Saturday, September 26 at 2 pm aboard the Miss Freeport. The fall tour explores the traditions of fishermen and baymen, and bay house owners. Participants include the legendary Al Grover of Freeport, boat builders and fishermen Rob & Chris Harter of Bellmore, fisherman Tony Sougstad of Freeport and other special guests. Themes of the tour will include:

- “Close Calls on the Water”
- “Boat Builders”
- “Bay Houses after Superstorm Sandy”

The tour takes place on board the Miss Freeport, located at 85 Woodcleft Avenue, Freeport. Tickets are \$40/adult, \$20/children under 16, with discounts for LI Traditions’ members, families and groups. Space is limited and reservations are required! To reserve your spot call Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803 or visit www.longislandtraditions.org. ■



Photo by Nancy Solomon

Master recreational fisherman Reed Riemer will be giving fishing lessons to young and old at the Tobay Boat Show on October 3 & 4.

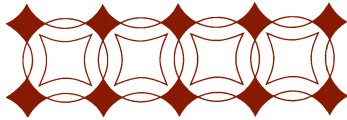
“Working the Waters: Maritime Culture of Long Island” at the Tobay Boat Show

Saturday- Sunday, October 4-5, 2015
Tobay Beach on Ocean Parkway

Long Island Traditions will present its 3rd annual “Working the Waters: Maritime Culture of Long Island” program in collaboration with the NY Marine Trades Association “Tobay Boat Show” on Saturday – Sunday, October 4-5 at Tobay Beach on the Ocean Parkway, east of Jones Beach in Massapequa, New York. “Working the Waters: Maritime Culture of Long Island” will present to the public first-hand accounts about the contemporary and historic traditions of commercial and recreational fishermen, the factors affecting these traditions and their future on Long Island in the wake of Superstorm Sandy and the decline of the bays.

Highlights of the event include decoy carvers Tom Stewart and George Rigby, fishermen Tony Sougstad, Michael Combs, Fred Menges, Bill Fetzer, Chuck Tekula, Tom Kuhner and Joey Scavone, boat model builder Chris Hale and maritime driftwood painter Herb Jurist, among many others. There will also be family and children fishing lessons taught by master recreational fisherman Reed Riemer.

Boat Show and Festival admission is \$10 (seniors \$8, children 12 and under are free) and will take place at Tobay Beach on Ocean Parkway in Massapequa. The event hours are Friday, October 3 at 12 p.m.-6 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, October 4 & 5 at 10 a.m.-6 p.m. For more information, call Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803 or the NY Marine Trades Association at (631) 691-7050 or visit www.nyboatshows.com/Tobay. ■



Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

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LI Traditions is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization registered with the NY State Board of Charities.

For more information call: (516) 767-8803, fax: (516) 767-8805
write to us at: 382 Main St., Port Washington, NY 11050
E-mail: info@longislandtraditions.org
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From Shore to Shore Docks at Suffolk County Historical Society

Our travelling exhibit "From Shore to Shore: Boat Builders and Boatyards of Long Island and Westchester" will continue at the Suffolk County Historical Society through September 19th at the main gallery, located at 300 West Main Street, Riverhead. Upcoming programs in conjunction with this exhibit include:

August 20 - Richard Welch on 19th-Century LI Wooden Shipbuilding

September 2 - Steve Jones on the Long Island Maritime Museum

Project Updates

Long Island Traditions has received one of the coveted National Maritime Heritage Grants from the National Park Service, administered by New York's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The \$40,000 grant will assist in LI Tradition's Freeport Waters exhibition along Woodcleft Canal (The Nautical Mile), our maritime arts education programs, and our various boat tours on the south shore.

In addition LI Traditions will be working with the Town of North Hempstead in its recreation of Port Washington's Town Dock, creating an exhibit and programs on the maritime and ethnic traditions of the waterfront, based on a comprehensive cultural survey in 2015-16. The project is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town" grants. The final project is anticipated in 2017-18. ■

Lecture Programs by Nancy Solomon

August 27 at 6:30 pm: Fire Island Watch Hill Visitor Center, Patchogue Free admission. For information call (631) 597-6455.

In this program the following topics will be discussed and presented in an illustrated program:

- Contemporary Boat Builders
- Boat Restoration Masters
- Historic Boatyards
- Recreational and Commercial Fishermen and Baymen
- Decoy Carvers and Duck Hunters
- Waterfront Traditional Architecture

September 8 at 2 pm: Copiague Public Library, 50 Deauville Blvd, Copiague. In this program the bay houses of Long Island will be the focus, both in the Town of Hempstead and the Town of Islip. Free admission. For information call (631) 691-1111.

October 8 at 6:30 pm: Suffolk County Historical Society, 300 W. Main Street, Riverhead. Bay houses. \$5 admission. ■

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The Harter Brothers Bellmore, Long Island Commercial Fishing Boat Builders

By Nancy Solomon

Editor's Note: Rob and his son Chris Harter will be among the participants on the September 26 Boating with the Baymen cruise.

Commercial fishing was once a thriving industry on Long Island, dating to the colonial period when whaling ports dominated Cold Spring Harbor and Greenport, among other coastal communities. Growing up in Bellmore, Rob and Ron Harter spent much of their youth fishing and boating. As Rob recalls "I always wanted to go commercial fishing. Ronny my brother always talked about how he wanted to build a boat." Their first fishing boat was "The Puffin", a 43-foot boat weighing 25,000 pounds, constructed in 1984 in Ron Harter's backyard. The brothers quit their jobs in 1991, a time when commercial fishing was still a viable occupation, to become full time commercial fishermen and boat builders.



Photo courtesy the Harter family.

The Puffin, captained by Rob Harter, harvested fluke, flounder and squid.

Their next vessel was the "North Sea" built from Scottish builder Maurice Napier's designs. Napier visited the North Sea on several occasions, and when completed, commented "you built it exactly as I wanted, and you did a great job." The North Sea was launched in 1994 from Charlie Hart's boatyard in West Sayville. "We didn't hire out anybody to do the sandblasting, painting, wiring, and plumbing. Charlie was really good to us." Like the Puffin, the North Sea was used to harvest squid, yellowtail and flounder. They often went as far as 100 miles from the Shinnecock dock, in winter and summer.



Photo courtesy the Harter family.

The Puffin and the North Sea c. 2004. Fisherman Timmy Swanson of Freeport purchased the Puffin, renaming her "Li'l St. Pete".

By the end of the day he had a decent amount of money from a little bit of this and that" recalls Rob Harter.

The North Sea was a successful fishing boat until the passage of the 1995 Magnusson Stevens Act, which began a series of fishing regulations that severely restricted the industry, including Long Island's fishing fleet. Ron Harter explains that "These

guys made an empire of fishing rules. They just went wild. Who are they saving the fish for? Nobody can get them. I don't know who is supposed to get them. It's not like you opened up an Off Track Betting parlor. It was an honest living. You can't combination fish anymore because of the way the rules are – you have to target certain species." Faced with the new regulations, they sold the North Sea to fisherman Billy Reed, and the Puffin to Timothy Swanson of Freeport. Both boats are still working.

Rob Harter recalls that "Billy went to college but it wasn't for him at all. Not that he wasn't smart, it was just that he wanted to be a fisherman. So then Bob (Billy's father) asked 'You think he could make a living with the boat?' I said yea. He's not going to be able to buy a Cadillac but he could make a living. If he's happy – that's what it's all about." Billy Reed continues to fish on the North Sea. Finally, Rob Harter reflects that "Anybody who fished with a good boat, who took pride in the boat, they all felt it was a friend of theirs, even though it's an object. It had a life with a soul. "

From Slavery to Freedom: Four Centuries of African American History on Long Island

Jason Crowley, Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities

Slavery in the New York region has a history dating to the earliest settlement of New Amsterdam by the Dutch West India Company; and throughout the eighteenth century New York City had the second largest population of enslaved people in North America after Charleston, South Carolina. On Long Island, 40% of households owned slaves, and nearly a quarter of the total population was of African descent. From August 13th through August 16th, Joseph McGill, founder of the Slave Dwelling Project, will travel across Long Island to sleep in former slave dwellings at three different historic sites and speak about the importance of preserving the built fabric associated with slavery in America.

On Thursday, August 13th, Joseph McGill will begin his Long Island tour with a Lunch and Learn program in Huntington Village at 12:30 pm. To register for this program please call Huntington Historical Society at: 631-427-7045, ext. 404. On Sunday, August 16th, McGill will discuss his experience sleeping in the Halsey Homestead at a public program in Southampton Village, followed by an unveiling of the Pyrrhus Concer historic marker at 11:30am in front of the site of the former Concer Homestead at Agawam Park on Pond Lane. These programs are sponsored by Sylvester Manor, Southampton African American Museum, Southampton Historical Museum, and the Eastville Community Historical Society.

EVENTS OF INTEREST

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.

Don't forget to visit our web site and our Facebook page for timely information.

August 27: Lecture by Nancy Solomon at Fire Island Watch Hill Visitor Center, Patchogue. 6:30 pm. (see accompanying article)

September 8: Bay House lecture. Copiague Memorial Library. 2 pm (see accompanying article)

September 26: Boating with the Baymen, Freeport. 2pm (see accompanying article)

October 4 - 5: Working the Waters at the Tobay Boat Show. Tobay Beach Park. (see accompanying article)

October 8: Bay House lecture. Suffolk County Historical Society. (see accompanying article)

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382 Main Street

Port Washington, NY 11050