

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 21 No. 2
Spring 2014

Boating with the Baymen: Working the Waters of Long Island

May 17: Departs from Montauk at 4– 7pm

June 1: Departs from Bay Shore at 2- 5 pm

Part 1: May 17 in Montauk 4-7 pm

Long Island Traditions is sponsoring three guided tours that explore the maritime traditions of Montauk, Bay Shore and Freeport. “Boating with the Baymen” tours will begin in Montauk on Saturday, May 17 for a sunset tour beginning at 4 pm. While many people know that fishermen in New England and New York face shared challenges, ranging from regulations to hazardous weather, rarely can you learn directly from those involved in this traditional yet endangered occupation. Come join us for a tour, conversations, oral narratives and stories from local tradition bearers



Photo courtesy Working Waterfront Festival.

Reidar and Kirsten Bendicksen of New Bedford, MA will be participating in the Montauk “Boating with the Baymen” program on May 17.

from both Montauk and New Bedford. This guided tour is led by folklorists Nancy Solomon of Long Island Traditions and Laura Orleans of the Working Waterfront Festival in New Bedford, and Bonnie Brady of the Long Island Commercial Fishing Association.

Participants include fisherman Reidar and his wife Kirsten Bendicksen, fisher Sarah Broadwell and Dave Krusa from Montauk, and Chip Duryea of the legendary Duryea lobster company and fish market. Also joining us will be musicians Susan and Stephen Sanfilippo

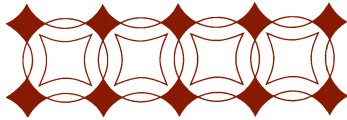
From Shore to Shore Docks at Waterfront Museum

290 Conover Street, Red Hook, Brooklyn

Did you miss last year’s exhibition “From Shore to Shore?” Then come view the exhibition aboard Red Hook’s historic Lehigh Barge #79 this spring. *From Shore to Shore* explores the worlds of craftsmen and the places where boats and ships are still being worked on today. Thirteen exhibition panels, accompanying audio video interviews and a timeline highlight profiles of master craftsmen, their tools and the historic boat yards where they work. Featured boat builders and boatyards include: Peterson Boatyard(Upper Nyack), Rocking the Boat (Bronx) and Consolidated Yacht (City Island), Hanff Boatyard (Greenport), Ida May Project (Oyster Bay) and Bayles Boatyard (Port Jefferson), Toomey Boatyard (Amityville), South Bay Boat Repair (Patchogue), Harter Brothers (Bellmore), Davison’s Boatyard (East Rockaway) Greenport Yacht & Shipbuilding (Greenport), and Knutson’s Boatyard (Huntington).

On May 3rd from 2 – 4 there will be a reception featuring curators Nancy Solomon & Tom Van Buren and invited boat builders, boatyard owners and waterfront preservation specialists. Please rsvp at (718) 624-4719 by May 1st. The program is free. Come explore the world of boat building, and help preserve these places and practices for future generations. ■

See **Boating with the Baymen** on page 2



Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

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Great Neck after the War Lecture

June 10 Great Neck Library 7:30 pm

Great Neck after the Wars will explore the village of Great Neck Plaza after World War II. In this illustrated program architectural historian and folklorist Nancy Solomon will examine how the village changed with the arrival of the United Nations in nearby Lake Success, and the postwar settlement by returning veterans. Highlights will include the veterans' lawsuit against Sol Atlas, developer of many apartment buildings, the impact of the US government's Japanese quarantine program in the village, and the influx of Jewish residents from New York City and European survivors of the Holocaust.



Photo courtesy NY Times.

Wanamakers was a longtime fixture in the Village of Great Neck Plaza. This and other historic sites will be part of Nancy Solomon's lecture on June 10.

The program will take place at the Great Neck Library's main branch, located at 159 Bayview Avenue at 7:30 pm. The program is sponsored by the Great Neck Historical Society. For directions please call (516) 466-8055.

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Passings by Nancy Solomon

We note the loss of two important tradition bearers during this past winter. George Rigby Sr. of Great River, the father of George Rigby Jr. was one of the first members of the Long Island Decoy Collectors Association. He also worked at Wildfowler Decoys. He was an active hunting guide, taking small groups of sportsmen for a day of hunting. The days typically began at 4:30 a.m. and lasted until the early evening. Most of his customers were local residents. George's father preferred hunting to clamming. Like many hunters, George's father made his own decoys, using them every season.

Walter Stenzel of Baldwin was the owner of an historic bay house, one that survived Superstorm Sandy. He was a devoted clammer and fisherman, who spent much of his time at the bay house on Sea Dog Creek. Built c. 1937, it continues to be used for commercial fishing by Ryan Stenzel, the owner's grandson. Walter was a part time baymen until he retired in c. 1995. He and his wife Doris taught their children and grandchildren how to harvest clams by treading with their feet, to catch soft shell and hard shell blue claw crabs, and how to go "jacking" for eels using spears and jack-o-lanterns (hence the term jacking) during the night. Both Walter and George will be remembered for their love of the bay and of the traditions that they passed on to their children and grandchildren. I was fortunate to have known them.

Boating with the Baymen continued from page 1

who perform traditional Long Island maritime songs based on historical research.

Chip Duryea grew up working at the Duryea lobster pound, often accompanying his father on trips to Maine where they purchased lobsters. Chip also recalls how the market purchased fish and shellfish from local baymen including Calvin & Stuart Lester and Stuart Vorpahl. Dave Krusa is a longline fisherman and clamdigger, who has written insightful narrative stories and poems on the lives of fishermen on the East End. He will be reading some of these pieces during the program. Sarah Broadwell was born in New Jersey and is a full time commercial fisher who has worked on day boats and trip boats, harvesting scallops, swordfish, flounder and fluke along with other species. She is completing her marine studies degree from Stony Brook University.

The sea has been a part of Reidar Bendiksen's life from the time he was a boy growing up on the Norwegian Island of Feoy. In 1978 he built and designed the *Viking*, a combination boat which could change from fishing to scalloping while at sea, the first of its kind in the country. The last vessel he owned was the *Narragansett*, the first country's stern trawler. During the many years he worked as a commercial fisherman, Reidar began to invent new types of fishing gear. In 1987 he opened Reidar's Manufacturing which designs, manufactures and builds gear for both groundfishing and scalloping. His wife Kirsten works as the office manager. Kirsten has seen much change in the industry and works to advocate for fair regulations. In 2003 Kirsten joined folklorist Laura Orleans to create the Working Waterfront Festival, an annual event celebrating commercial fishing culture and educating the public about the industry. Orleans will also be participating in this event.

Susan and Stephen Sanfilippo divide their time between the North Fork of their native Long Island and the coast of Downeast Maine. They perform traditional Songs of the Sea which will be featured on the tour. Stephen Sanfilippo received his Ph.D. in History from Stony Brook University where he studied whalemens' songs in the mid 19th century. Susan was the longtime education curator at the Suffolk County Historical Society.

The tour takes place on board the Viking Superstar, located at 462 West Lake Drive, Montauk. Tickets are \$40/adult, \$20/children under 16, with discounts for 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.

Part 2: June 1 in Bay Shore 2-5 pm

The second "Boating with the Baymen" tour explores the traditions of fishermen and baymen, including Ken Budny, Russell Bucking, Tom Kuhner & his grandson Thomas

Ottabio, George Rigby, Flo and Paul Sharkey and retired fisherman Dick Gunther. Ken Budny of Bellport is a part timer clammer and master decoy carver who recently restored a historic Beetle Cat sail boat. He also sits on the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council. Tom Kuhner and Russell Bucking are residents of Babylon and are full time bayman who harvests clams, crabs and other shellfish. Kuhner was featured in the documentary "Baymen" by filmmaker Glenn Gebhard. George Rigby is a full time baymen who resides in Center Moriches. He is a clammer, fisherman and master decoy carver. Flo and Paul Sharkey of Patchogue harvest clams, finfish and bait fish, traditions that run over 4 generations in their family. Dick Gunther is a retired fisherman from Bay Shore who has worked full time in Great South Bay. He also has restored wooden boats for both his own use and for friends.

In Great South Bay there are still commercial fishermen who harvest killies, crabs and clams for their livelihoods. Join us for a day of exploration with local baymen who have learned their trades from a tradition that has been passed down within their families since the 1800s. On this guided tour led by folklorist Nancy Solomon, we will learn firsthand how the bay has changed through its history. Also joining us will be *Boatyard* author Christine D'Alessandro and journalist Shoshanna McCollum, author of *Fire Island*. Families are encouraged to attend and learn how to carve decoys, how to hold a clam rake and other traditional skills used by traditional baymen and fishermen.

The tour takes place on board the Lauren Kristy, located at the Bay Shore Marina at the end of Clinton Avenue. Tickets are \$40/adult, \$20/children under 16, with discounts for 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. These programs are sponsored in part by the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. ■



Photo courtesy Russell Bucking.
Russell Bucking is a full time bayman and will be participating in the Boating with the Baymen program on June 1.

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.

April 19 – July 16: From Shore to Shore Exhibit. Waterfront Museum. 290 Conover Street Brooklyn. (718) 624-4719. Open Thursdays (4-8 pm) and Saturdays (1-5).

May 3: From Shore to Shore exhibit reception. Waterfront Museum. 2-4 pm.

May 17: Boating with the Baymen part 1. Montauk. Viking Superstar. 462 West Lake Drive. 4-7pm. Please call Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803 for reservations.

June 1: Boating with the Baymen part 2. Bay Shore. Lauren Kristy, Foot of Clinton Avenue, Bay Shore Marina. 2 - 5 pm. Please call Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803 for reservations.

June 10: Great Neck Plaza Village History, "After the War" lecture by Nancy Solomon. 7:30 pm. Great Neck Library. 159 Bayview Ave.

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