

# Long Island Traditions

## NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org  
info@longislandtraditions.org

Vol. 23 No.2  
Spring 2016

### Boating with the Baymen: Working the Waters of Long Island

Focus on Freeport, June 12 at 2pm

Long Island Traditions is sponsoring another “Boating with the Baymen” tour on Sunday, June 12 at 2 pm aboard the Miss Freeport. The spring tour explores the traditions of fishermen and baymen, and bay house owners. Participants include the legendary Bob Doxsee of Doxsee Sea Clam in Point Lookout, bay house owners Frank Passalacqua and Jack Combs, master recreational fisherman and author Tom Schlichter of Newsday, recreational fisherman Reed Riemer, and retired charter boat captain Bill Marinaccio. Themes of the tour will include:

- “Close Calls on the Water”
- “Bay Houses”
- “Hunting and Fishing”

The tour takes place on board the Miss Freeport, located at 85 Woodcleft Avenue, Freeport. Tickets are \$45/adult, \$20/children under 16, with discounts for LI Traditions’ members, families and groups. Space is limited and reservations are required! Long Island Traditions members can reserve their spots beginning on April 11 at 1 pm. All others can reserve beginning May 20 at 1 pm. To reserve your spot call Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803 or e-mail us at [info@longislandtraditions.org](mailto:info@longislandtraditions.org). Payment information will be sent separately. ■



Photo courtesy Frank Passalacqua

Frank Passalacqua (left) with his dad c. 1960. Frank will be on board as part of our Boating with the Baymen program June 12<sup>th</sup>. ■

### From Shore to Shore Docks at Oyster Bay Historical Society

April 29 – September 4

Our travelling exhibit “From Shore to Shore: Boat Builders and Boatyards of Long Island and Westchester” will be opening at the Oyster Bay Historical Society on Friday, April 29. The exhibit will be on view from April 29 - September 4<sup>th</sup> at the main gallery, located at 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay.

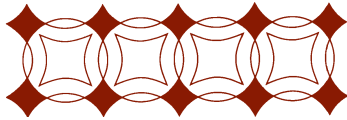
On *Sunday, May 15 at 2:00 PM* visit the museum when Nancy Solomon will give a curator’s talk about the creation of the exhibit and how the waterfront of Long Island has changed.

### Radical Seafaring at Parrish Art Museum

Tideland Sessions Program

May 21, 11am – 8pm

The Parrish Art Museum is hosting an all-day program in conjunction with its exhibit Radical Seafaring. The program will explore the heritage and ecology of the East End through a series of panels featuring artists, writers, scientists, folklorists and tradition bearers. Admission is \$10 and includes free admission to the museum. Participants will include Nancy Solomon and baymen Jon Semlear and Ken Mades. The Museum is located at 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY. For information call (631) 283-2118. ■



## Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

**Executive Director:** Nancy Solomon

**Board of Directors:** Mirna Cortez-Obers, Guy Edwards, Pat Healy, Ken Maltz, Dan Pollera, Ken Robinson, Jude Schanzer & Michael Scully

**Advisory Board:** Paul Bentel, John Eilertsen, Dorothy Jacobs & Wayne Wink

**Newsletter Designer:** Barbara Koelbel Bange

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

For more information call: (516) 767-8803  
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or visit us on the web at: [www.longislandtraditions.org](http://www.longislandtraditions.org)

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**Council on the Arts**

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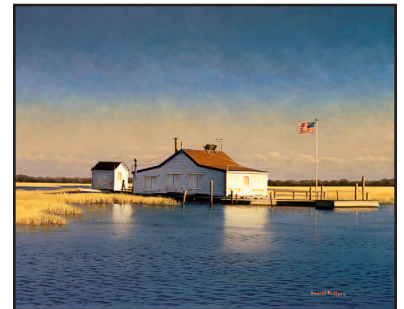
## Blueway Trail Launch

June 4<sup>th</sup> 10 am – 2pm

The South Shore Blueway Trail is an effort by local waterfront paddlers on the South Shore to coordinate trails and explore the natural and historical highlights of the South Shore estuary in Nassau County. On Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> the trail will officially launch at Bay Park in East Rockaway, located at Harbor Road & Marjorie Lane. A festival will take place featuring area paddling groups, Long Island Traditions and other organizations. The event will take place from 10 am - 2 pm. LI Traditions will be launching a series of videos on our YouTube channel to acquaint paddlers with the historic and cultural sites they will see in their travels. ■

## Pollera Bay House Print Raffle

Artist Daniel Pollera has been painting scenic landscapes of the South Shore for many years, including the Byrne-Van Wilken Bay House. We are raffling off one framed print to the public, in order to support our work in preserving the maritime traditions of Long Island. The winner will be picked at 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 12 at our Boating with the Baymen tour. Buy your chance to win this beautiful framed print: Each chance is \$10, 3 chances for \$25, and 5 chances for \$40. If you can't join us, we will make arrangements to deliver it to you, but only if you live on Long Island. You must be 18



Dan Pollera's painting print will be raffled off on June 12. Raffle tickets can be purchased online. Tours of the bay houses are scheduled for July 24 and August 21<sup>st</sup>. See article for details.

years or older to purchase raffle tickets. You can buy tickets online at [www.longislandtraditions.org](http://www.longislandtraditions.org) or send in your check payable to LI Traditions. ■

## Recent Interviews

Each year LI Traditions conducts ethnographic interviews of tradition bearers for our programs and to capture the traditional way of life for Long Islanders. During 2016 we have conducted 6 recorded interviews that will become part of the LI Traditions' collection at the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University. These recordings can be listened to at the Institute, which is located in Axnin Library. No appointments are necessary but they can be reached at (516) 463-6411. You can also come to our offices with a prior appointment.

The interviews of 2016 include: Ken Makes, Jerry Maresca, John Remsen Sr., Reed Riemer, Jon Semlear, Doug Sheer. ■

## Working and Watching the Waters: Jack Combs

*Editor's note: I first met Jack Combs in 1988 when I began researching the bay houses for my book. He shared some wonderful stories with us and will share them with you on our upcoming Boating with the Baymen cruise June 12. These are just a few of the stories Jack shared with me that day.*

I grew up in Freeport on Gordon Place. My parents' house was built on scallop shells. Father was a bayman and duck hunter. They used to catch a lot of concks at night where they laid on the sand bars. They also caught rock crabs in the mud in January and February. Tremendous sized flounders would also come into the bay. When we had them in a bushel basket their head and tail would stick up out of the bucket they were so large. They would come in to spawn. We always used to tread for clams and scallops. You would get 10 bushels of chowders and 10 bushels of cherrystones every day. We used inner tubes to make our shoes for treading. You could feel a dime with those booties."

"I'd go down with Dad as a kid in icy weather and snow. In the wintertime we never went out early in the morning because it was too cold and the ducks never flew. I was taught to have extra gear, and to have candles and a container of kerosene because grandpa would say "if you have these things you'll be able to keep warm."

I was probably 13 or 14 when I learned to carve decoys. I learned it from dad. You have to carve when the weather's right – if it's warm and humid the last thing you want to do is carve. When I was down in the bay I always carved because there was no television. I started going to the bay house when I was 5. We always had potatoes and salt pork and you could live off the bay since there were clams, eels and fish.

Jack's grandfather ran a bait station on Meadow Island from 1940 – 1950. He would give the nuns free spearing and killies. Once he took them on his boat and they asked if the boat was safe. He replied "this is the safest boat on the water. The captain is too old and the mate is too young."



Photo by Nancy Solomon 2004

**Jack Combs is a master decoy carver and storyteller. Meet him on Boating with the Baymen on June 12.**

Like other baymen and duck hunters, Jack and his father trapped ducks instead of shooting them, using a traditional duck trap made from wood. When the ducks were

delivered to their customers, some owners couldn't understand "why there were no shot marks. So on the next order "the old man (my father) took an ice pick and puts a few holes in the breast and it looks like shot marks. My father came back a few weeks later and the owner said he didn't understand why there were shot marks but no shot. The owner couldn't figure it out."

Jack is a well-known decoy carver and storyteller. He has participated in many festivals including the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and at LI Traditions' events. He also demonstrates decoy carving at the Hallockville Museum in Riverhead. Stop by sometime and learn about his adventures! ■

## Long Island Traditions on YouTube

For those who like to watch videos, LI Traditions has a channel on YouTube. Here you'll find all of our productions from the following projects, past and present:

- From Shore to Shore: Boat Builders and Boatyards of Long Island
- Freeport Waters: Maritime Heritage of the Nautical Mile
- Blueway Trail: Explores the heritage of the South Shore Blueway Trail

In addition there are videos from our public programs including:

- Boating with the Baymen 2014 – present
- Arts in Education programs including maritime and ethnic programs

The site is located at <https://www.youtube.com/user/LongIslandTraditions>. ■



## Welcome New Board Member Pat Healy

LI Traditions welcomes our newest board Pat Healy of Freeport. Pat is a retired science teacher from Far Rockaway High School and an active member of SPLASH, a volunteer group that helps remove debris from the waterways of Freeport. Her interests include boating, swimming, deep water running, yoga and Tai Chi. Welcome to LI Traditions Pat! ■

## Bay House Tour Update

**B**ay House tours are being scheduled for July 24 and August 21. **LI Traditions' members will be able to register for the tours beginning on June 13th until June 18<sup>th</sup>.** After June 18<sup>th</sup> the general public can register for the tour. There is a 2-ticket limit per person/member. Please call (516) 767-8803 after June 13th for reservations. Thank you! ■



## 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.*



- May 15:** From Shore to Shore: Curator's Talk by Nancy Solomon. Oyster Bay Historical Society, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay. Admission is free. (516) 922-5032.
- May 21:** Tideland Sessions Program at the Parrish Art Museum. 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY. For information call (631) 283-2118.
- June 12:** Boating with the Baymen tour. 2 pm. Miss Freeport. 85 Woodcleft Avenue, Freeport. Call (516) 767-8803 for information and reservations.
- July 24 & August 21:** Bay House Tours. Call (516) 767-8803 for information and reservations.

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