

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org

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West Meadow Beach

As of mid-October, the fate of the cottages is gloomy. Despite a determination by the National Park Service that the cottages are eligible for the state and national register of historic places, Assemblyman Englebright refuses to consider a compromise plan developed by the cottage owners that would both preserve the cottages, allow more public access to the beach, and offer Town residents the opportunity to rent a cottage during the summer season. Legal proceedings have determined that the cottages will be torn down imminently.

Obviously we feel that the demolition of this historic community is a sad chapter in Long Island's history. Not only are we losing the last remaining summer bungalow community in our region, but we are losing a piece of Long Island's traditional culture. Where thousands of summer bungalows once populated Long Island's shorelines, today there are only a handful of bungalows that follow the same design principles as embodied at West Meadow Beach. Allegations that the cottages were the homes of well-connected Republicans have always surrounded the community, despite evidence to the contrary. Tragically, this theory has persuaded elected officials and editorial boards to dismiss the cultural significance of this community. We hope that one day people will recognize the injustice that has been served on this community. ■

Latino Festival at Suffolk Community College

On Saturday, December 4th the Student Latino Club at Suffolk Community College in Brentwood will be hosting a festival featuring Colombian vallenato group Los Macondos and Puerto Rican gourd maker Juan Francisco Torres. The festival is free and open to the public. Hours are 12 - 6 pm. Los Macondos will be performing at 3 pm and Juan Francisco Torres will be there at 1- 4 pm. For more information call (631) 851-6798. ■

Juan Francisco Torres makes decorative gourds from scratch. ▶

Photo by Sydney Hutchinson 2002.



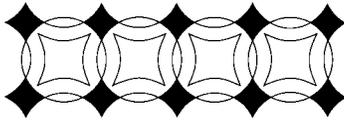
Folk Art is Alive and Well in Freeport Elementary Schools

Alice Melzer

Every autumn, yellow school busses stop in front of the Freeport Elementary Schools of Archer, Bayview, Giblyn and New Visions. Students wrap their fingers around pencils and their minds around ideas.

Before the writings of American Educator John Dewey (1859-1952) the prevailing idea regarding the education of public school children was to learn via rote memorization and punitive discipline. Dewey proposed when teachers acted as guides for the students they would be more stimulated and the scope learning would be broader. Additionally, Dewey proposed the idea of learning by doing. Long Island Traditions follows Dewey's concepts by introducing crafts persons and musicians to Freeport's fourth grade students.

see **Folk Art is Alive and Well** on page 3



Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

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For more information call: (516) 767-8803, fax: (516) 767-8805, write to us at: 382 Main St., Port Washington, NY 11050, E-mail: litrad@i-2000.com or visit us on the web at: www.longislandtraditions.org

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Alice Melzer Joins Long Island Traditions Staff

With this issue we welcome Alice Melzer as our Program Coordinator. Her unique, varied and broadly based background provides fresh outlook onto the rich mix of ongoing programs developed by Long Island Traditions.

For over ten years Ms. Melzer taught several courses in the arts including art appreciation, cultural awareness, history, marketing and advertising. She has taught every grade level in public and university schools. Her most recent college teaching includes Hofstra University's Continuing Education Program, Fashion Institute of Technology's Professional Studies, Katherine Gibbs' Design Center, Dutchess Community College and a Saturday Enrichment Program at Brooklyn College.

Ms. Melzer holds a Masters of Science in Education from Pratt Institute. She is also pursuing a Masters degree from New Jersey City University.

Commercial and fine arts are Ms Melzer's personal forms of creative activity and these are expressed primarily through photography and writing. In both these areas she has won many awards. She is committed to arts and education, a goal she will fulfill through Long Island Traditions' programs. We welcome Alice and look forward to an exciting year. ■

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Freeport Memorial Library Programs

Alice Melzer

We are joyful to note and offer both culture and family entertainment at the Freeport Memorial Library. The following folk artists will present aspects from their ethnic traditions: Ina McNeil, Joan Hodges and Theo Torres. Each has performed extensively throughout Long Island. Families are encouraged to attend these free library events.

Since 1999 these artists have been working with the Freeport Elementary Schools of Archer, Bayview, Giblyn and New Visions. Classroom visits by these artists have been eagerly anticipated and received with enthusiasm because these folk artists are engaging, entertaining and professional.

Program dates are:

- Ina McNeil: Native American Educator and quilt maker on Sunday, November 7, 2004 from 2:30-3:30 pm.
- Joan Hodges: African American doll maker on Saturday, April 23, 2005 from 1:00-2:00 pm.
- Theo Torres: Peruvian music on Wednesday, June 5, 2005 from 7:30-9:00 pm.

The library is located on Merrick Road and Ocean Avenue in Freeport. We look forward to seeing you there. ■

The folk artists in this program are Ina McNeil, Joan Hodges, Theo Torres and bayman Cory Weyant with other maritime artists. These excellent tradition bearers integrate ethnic and folk arts into the fourth grade social studies and ELA curriculum. As a result of the programs students learn about traditional music, doll making, quilting and Long Island's maritime culture. Students gain the positive experience and opportunity to ask questions about the life and the heritage of North and South Americans, as well as local maritime trades.

Stories and songs peak the children's interest. Over a two-day period they practice listening, writing and conducting interviews. Field trips imprint some of concepts upon the growing minds and hearts of students. Even after the programs are concluded students are encouraged to continue this process with their families and share what they have learned with their classmates.

Ina McNeil shares stories passed down through the generations of her American Indian ancestors including Chief Sitting Bull. The moral of her stories provide wisdom while her skillfully sewn quilts serve to stitch the past into the present. Students realize part of creativity involves lessons in measures of math and visually ordering blocks of colors.



Photo by Martha Cooper 1999.

Ina McNeil will be among the featured artists in LI Tradition's arts-in-education programs and at the Freeport Memorial Library.

The "pied piper" of the visiting folk artists would be Theo Torres. Strains of Peruvian music brightened even a rainy day. He takes his opportunity to gently encourage students on the value of education while helping them understand the experiences of Latin immigrants.

Many children have dolls. The hand made ones created by African American doll-maker Joan Hodges are more than toys. What is it like to be a descendant of a slave? What is it like growing up in a family of share croppers? These are some of the questions students ask while creating their own dolls in the classroom.

The South Shore waters provide fish and with them a bounty of related activities, experiences and of course, local color. Bayman Cory Weyant and Jones Beach lifeguard Reggie Jones among others explain the art, architecture and professions of our coastal region.

Together our folk artists link the past to the present and enliven the history of America. They share their cultures and wisdom through interacting with the youth. The fourth grade curriculum becomes alive as the students participate in a variety on hands on activities. Students develop listening and learning skills through hearing songs and stories. Additionally students interview the folk artists and improve their writing. The English Language Arts (ELA) skills are strengthened while students expand their cultural awareness about Peru, American Indians, African Americans as well as the local maritime culture encompassing Freeport. With interaction students can see reasons to overcome stereotypes.

This program is made possible through funds provided by the New York State Council on the Arts, the D'Addario Foundation and the Gilder Foundation. This year this practical and engaging program will run from October 2004 through June 2005. If you know of a school that would be interested in these programs please contact us at (516) 767-8803. ■

JFK Middle School joins Architecture Project

The social studies department at Comsewogue's JFK Middle School in Port Jefferson Station is joining Long Island Traditions' architecture curriculum program, an initiative that began in 2001 under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Joining in the program are teachers Chuck Carron, Justin Seifert, Mallack Walsh, Maureen Coppola, Jay McGinnis and Joe Bienz. The teachers will be developing class projects including model making and student inquiry based projects on traditional architecture of the Native American period through the mid-19th century on Long Island. Subject areas will include Dutch and English building practices, African American slave and free housing, grist mills and general stores, as well as places of worship. The project will culminate in a teacher resource guide with model lessons, document based questions, primary source materials and curriculum resources. The project is expected to be completed in 2006. ■

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. The deadline is the 1st of October, January and April.

- November 7:** Ina McNeil at Freeport Memorial Library. Merrick Road & Ocean Avenue, Freeport. 2:30 pm. Free admission. (see accompanying article). (516) 379-3274.
- November 7:** Kapelye concert with Cantors Nathan Lam, Jacob Mendelson and Abbe Sher in an all-star concert of Klezmer and Cantorial music. 7 pm. Temple Or-Elohim, 18 Tobie Lane, Jericho. (516) 681-2820.
- November 9:** Rahel Musleah's "The Jews of Iraq: Antiquity, Inheritance and Escape." 2 pm. Hewlett-Woodmere Public Library, 1125 Broadway, Hewlett. (516) 374-1967
- November 13:** Chulrua featuring Paddy O'Brien and Pat Egan. 8 pm. The Searing-Roslyn United Methodist Church, 134 I. U. Willets Road, Albertson. 516-561-3157.
- November 20:** Diwali Celebration. Young Indian Culture Group. Herricks Middle School. 7 Hilldale Avenue, Albertson. 3:45 pm. Call (516) 365-4859.
- November 22:** Rahel Musleah's "Jewish Calcutta through Music & Memory." 8:30 pm. Temple Judea, 333 Seasingtown Rd. Manhasset. (516) 621-8049.
- December 4:** Latino Festival. Featuring Los Macondos and Juan Francisco Torres. Suffolk Community College, Brentwood campus. Free admission. 12 - 6 pm. (631) 851-6798.
- December 8:** Scottish traditional ballads with Ed Miller. 8 pm. The Searing-Roslyn United Methodist Church, 134 I. U. Willets Road, Albertson. 516-561-3157.
- December 12:** Dave Sear "The Life And Times Of Woody Guthrie." Great Neck House 14 Arrandale Ave. Great Neck. 3 pm. (516) 482-0355.
- December 15:** Indian Cultural Traditions with Rathi Raja. Clark Botanic Gardens, 193 I. U. Willets Rd, Albertson. (516) 484-8600.
- January 29, 2005:** Mulvihill-Lynch School of Irish Dancing Annual Fundraiser Dance. 1 - 4pm Patchogue Theater for the Performing Arts. Main Street, Patchogue. Admission: Adults \$20.00, Children under 12 \$15.00. (631) 738-1242.

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Long Island Traditions
382 Main Street
Port Washington, NY 11050