

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org

Vol. 12 No. 4 Winter 2005

A Red Letter Day

10 Years of Honoring Traditions

On Sunday, November 13th at 2 p.m. Long Island Traditions will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary of Honoring Traditions Programs. Throughout this event we will celebrate 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 our featured honorees will perform.

The celebration will take place at the Long Island Children's Museum in Garden City, conveniently located at the Museums of Mitchel Field, next to the Cradle of Aviation and Nassau Community College. Tickets for this event can be ordered by filling out the registration form and mailing your reservation to Long Island Traditions, 382 Main Street, Port Washington, NY 11050. Tickets are \$20/person with children under 10 attending free. We will be holding an auction of Long Island folk art and other special items, along with a raffle contest that includes some wonderful prizes relating to Long Island's culture.

The Workmen's Circle is a national Jewish cultural organization that was established in 1892 by a group of cloak makers who gathered in a tenement on New York's Lower East Side. As new immigrants, the founders sought to create an organization that would "unite by a ring of friendship every worker in the land." As more American-born children moved into the Long Island suburbs, a small group of local residents formed a Long Island branch in 1955. They offer classes in Yiddish, music, history and other topics to those age 6-adult.

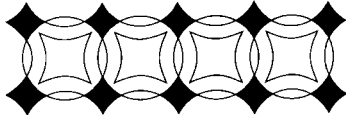
Ken Corsbie grew up in Guyana on South America's Caribbean coast. He describes Guyana as "very multicultural, multiethnic, multi-class. Everybody lives

close together." In this environment he absorbed the storytelling and humor that are an important part of everyday life. Ken was always telling stories and jokes as a child, and as an adult his talents landed him a spot with the Theater Guild of Guyana, where he worked for many years. Later he moved to Barbados, where his storytelling talents came in handy in his work as a tour guide. Ken moved to Long Island in 1996. He has produced four CDs of both original and traditional stories and poetry, narrated a TV documentary series on Caribbean life for UNESCO, and travels around the world performing.

Also being honored are Cory Weyant (see fall 2005 newsletter) and the Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island (see accompanying article). 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. Join us as we honor the traditions of Long Island. ■



The Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island will be among those honored.



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: litrad@i-2000.com or visit us on the web at: www.longislandtraditions.org

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Artist in Residence: Pete Ames Fishing Rod Maker

With our new expanded office space, we are now offering an artist in residence program where you can meet, talk and observe a master traditional artist at work. On Friday, November 18th and December 16th fishing rod maker Pete Ames will be demonstrating how he makes traditional sports fishing rods, as well as answering your questions about fishing on Long Island. Pete recently completed an apprentice program funded by the NY State Council on the Arts where he taught his son Pete Ames Jr. the many skills necessary for making custom fishing rods. We invite you to stop by and visit with Pete. The program takes place at 11 am - 4pm. Our ground floor handicapped accessible office is located at 382 Main Street, Port Washington, across from the scenic Town Dock. ■

Family Folk Art Series Program: Quilting With Seeds of Heritage

On Sunday, November 6th at 2 p.m. Long Island Traditions will present a program on traditional quilting in the African American and Native American communities, with master traditional artists Ina McNeil and Joan Hodges of Hempstead. The program will take place at the Freeport Recreation Center in Freeport. This free program will provide cultural enrichment and entertainment for the entire family and their friends. Native American quilter Ina McNeil and African American fiber artist Joan Hodges are part of Long Island Traditions' folk arts-in-education programs in the Freeport Elementary Schools, where 4th grade students learn about folk art traditions that are part of everyday life. The Freeport Recreation Center is located on 130 East Merrick Road in Freeport. Their phone number is (516) 377-2314. ■

Lecture-Demonstration Program with Charlie and Theo Torres

Sunday, November 27

After a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner, we hope you will have room left over for an afternoon of entertainment by master Peruvian composer Theo Torres and his son Charlie, who have recently completed an apprenticeship awarded by the New York State Council on the Arts, sponsored by Long Island Traditions. This free program will take place at the Brentwood Public Library at 2 p.m. The library is located at Second Avenue and Fourth Street in Brentwood. For information and directions you can reach them at (631) 273-7883. Charlie and Theo will explore the history of their country's music, performing melodies that have been passed down from generation to generation. Theo Torres is one of Long Island Traditions master educators. Charlie spent the summer learning these melodies, and will perform a select few at the program. The program is free, and families are especially welcome. ■

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Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island (CCALI)

Chinese Folk Dance, Kung Fu, calligraphy and Chinese Knotting are just a few of the classes offered by the Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island. For over 25 years CCALI has proven itself as a place for learning and for enjoyment. Students of all ages study the traditional Mandarin language, while learning about the cultural traditions practiced by many Chinese families, past and present. With immigration many of these traditions have faded from daily practice, as hardworking families establish their new homes in the United States and Long Island. Where there once were only a few Chinese families on Long Island, now there are thousands in both Nassau & Suffolk Counties. According to the 2001 census there were approximately 26,338 persons of Chinese background living on Long Island.

Started by a group of 5 families, CCALI first met in a basement office in West Hempstead. "We were all volunteers" remembers Alice Liou, one of the original founders who later became the school's 3rd principal. They focused on language classes because many American born children had few opportunities to practice the language of their parents. Parent teachers also taught traditional crafts including calligraphy, developed traditional dramatic presentations based on historic myths such as the Monkey King and "The Legend of the River God", and celebrated traditional holidays including the Chinese New Year.



By 1985 CCALI had outgrown their office space and moved to their current home at the New York Institute of Technology in Brookville. The school operates on Sunday afternoons during 1:30 - 5 pm from September to June. Each afternoon students study the traditional Mandarin language according to their grade level. CCALI offers a college preparation language class for high school students. In addition CCALI has 5 levels of bilingual classes (English and Mandarin) to meet the demand of families who don't speak Mandarin at home. Afterwards students attend cultural arts classes. They stage various performances based on traditional stories, demonstrate traditional Kung Fu, learn to use the traditional Chinese Yo Yo, master the traditional art of calligraphy, learn to play Chinese Chess, and learn traditional dances. The school year culminates in a series of performances by the students and a graduation ceremony in June.

The programs are valued by students and parents alike. One student commented "it's fun, you learn a lot of new things like Chinese Chess." A parent stated "It's not just about the language;

my son learned that we respect our elders, and not to take things for granted." A newer parent to the school said "They understand why they're here - otherwise they know they'll lose the tradition." At the same time CCALI fosters a family friendly environment, one where parents establish close enduring relationships. A parent with several children in the school put it simply: "It's like a big family," a feeling shared by students as well.

In addition to the school CCALI also sponsors events that are open to the public. They sponsor a Chinese Cultural Festival, participate in area Chinese New Year celebrations, perform at parades and celebrations, and offer classes to adults interested in learning Mandarin, Mandarin Conversation, Flower arrangement, Ballroom Dances (Beginner, Intermediate & Advance), Aerobic Dance & Chinese Knotting. In this way the general public can learn that these traditions continue to play an important part in Chinese families.

CCALI invites you to visit them by calling (516) 526-0549 or by visiting their web site at <http://www.ccali.org>.

In recognition for these and other tireless efforts Long Island Traditions will present the Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island with its Honoring Traditions' award on November 13th. See accompanying article for more information and to order tickets. ■

Faces of India Program

On Sunday, December 11th Long Island Traditions will be presenting a program on Indian music, dance and storytelling at the East Meadow Public Library. The participating artists include Bharanatyam dancer Malini Srinivasan, Jewish singer and storyteller Rahel Musleah, and storyteller Rathi Raja. These three women will perform dances, songs and music that have been passed down within their families from generation to generation. For the uninitiated, Bharanatyam dance is a classical Indian dance form characterized by two key features: the *nrtta* (non-representational movements or techniques) and the *abhinaya* (representational expressions or gestures). Linguistic and non-linguistic meaning in the music is ornamented by body and facial gestures during performances. These symbolic meanings in the dance illustrate and detail a state of anticipation between a dancer-devotee and her desire for union with her beloved, who has divine as well as human qualities. Malini Srinivasan and Rathi Raja will perform several dances including epic stories learned by Raja during her childhood in India. Musleah will perform several songs that are part of traditional Jewish observance in Iraq, where Musleah's ancestors originally settled, and India where her parents were born. This program is free and open to families and children. The 2 pm program will take place at the East Meadow Library, located at 1886 Front Street, East Meadow. For more information call the library at (516) 794-2570. ■

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.

- Oct. 28:** Strike the Bell will be performing sea chanteys at the Long Island Maritime Museum's annual Halloween Boat Burning. 6:30 p.m. 86 West Ave., West Sayville. Call (631) HISTORY for information.
- Nov. 2:** A Feast in Song: Jewish Food Customs and Songs about Food from Around the World with Rahel Musleah, Great Neck Library, 159 Bayview Ave, Great Neck, NY, 2 pm free admission. (516) 466-8055
- Nov. 6:** Quilting program with Ina McNeil and Joan Hodges. Freeport Recreation Center, 130 E. Merrick Road, Freeport. 2 pm. Free admission. See accompanying article. For directions call (516) 377-2314.
- Nov. 13:** Honoring Traditions program (see accompanying article). Featuring Cory Weyant, Workmen's Circle of Long Island, the Chinese Cultural Association of Long Island and Ken Corsbie. 2 pm. Tickets \$20, children under 12 free. Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City. For directions call (516) 224-5800.
- Nov. 18 & Dec. 16:** Artist workshop with fishing rod maker Pete Ames (see accompanying article). 11am - 4pm. Free admission. Long Island Traditions. 382 Main Street, Port Washington. Call (516) 767-8803 for information.
- Nov. 27:** Lecture demonstration program with Peruvian composer and musicians Theo & Charlie Torres (see accompanying article). Free admission. Brentwood Public Library. Second Avenue and Fourth Street. For directions call (631) 273-7883.
- December 11:** Faces of Indian program (see accompanying article). 2 pm. Featuring performances by Rahel Musleah, Rathi Raja and Malini Srinivasan. East Meadow Public Library. 1886 Front Street. For directions call (516) 794-2570.

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