

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org

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Maritime Culture of Freeport

On Sunday, March 5th we will be hosting another one of our Family Folk Arts programs at the Freeport Memorial Library on Freeport's Maritime Culture. This program will feature bayman Cory Weyant, dragger fisherman Tony Sougstad and killey trapper and boat builder John Remsen Jr. The program is free and will begin at 2pm. The program will include a discussion on issues facing commercial fishermen, the origins of their traditions, ranging from net mending and trap building to fish smoking and boat building. The participants are all recognized educators in Long Island Traditions' maritime arts-in-education programs. Director Nancy Solomon will give a presentation about the participants and the issues they face. Come join us for a lively discussion about the future of fishing on Long Island. ■

Boat Building Apprenticeship

John Remsen Sr. and his son John of Freeport have been awarded an apprenticeship grant from the NY State Council on the Arts. During the 14-week apprentice the two will focus on traditional garvey building, a traditional flat-bottom work boat used by south shore baymen to navigate the shallow bay waters, harvesting killies, crabs, eels and other species. The boat is one used most commonly by local baymen. John Remsen Sr. is one of a select few on Long Island who continues to make the boats for area baymen. The apprenticeship will focus on traditional materials and techniques, the advantages of new processes, and the boat design.

John has passed his skills and knowledge to his son John Remsen Jr. who works on the bay part-time trapping killeys for local bait shops. Both father and son participate in LI Traditions maritime education programs and festivals, hosting visitors at their family's bay house. John and his wife Grace are also active in supporting the preservation of maritime culture in Freeport, volunteering for Splash, a local environmental organization, and the "Seaport at Freeport." Where there once were many boat builders on the south shore, dominated by commercial fishermen, today there are few others who build this traditional baymen's boat. Increasingly John Sr. must work "around the clock" despite his age of 72 years. John Remsen Jr. is fully committed to continuing this tradition and teaching others the advantages of this traditional boat type. The two have instructed hundreds of school students and festival visitors on the principles of garvey design informally.

We look forward to supporting this apprenticeship, one that will insure that the tradition continues into the next generation. If you would like more information about the program, be sure to come to our March 5th program (see accompanying article). ■

Jones Beach Wind Farm

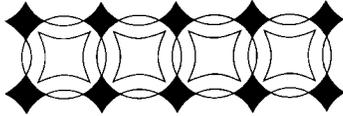
As many of you know, there is a proposal to erect an offshore wind facility near Jones Beach, in order to generate 140-megawatts of electricity that would be sold to LIPA. This is approximately 10% the size of the original Shoreham nuclear facility proposed in the 1980s. Approximately 40 wind turbines more than 400 feet tall would be placed along a 6-mile stretch of ocean approximately 3.6 miles from land, near the commercial fishing grounds that are habitat to migrating fluke, flounder, squid, cod, ocean surf clams and other species. In addition the site area is a major part of the Atlantic migratory path for a variety of birds.

There would be significant impacts to the wildfowl according to various environmental analysts, putting at risk the heritage of south shore waterfowlers and visitors to the region. In addition there would be enormous damage to the commercial fishing industry on Long Island, one that has been struggling for years to survive. Many of the boats who harvest finfish and shellfish, along with the numerous charter boats who bring

see **Wind Farm** on page 3



John Remsen, Jr.



Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

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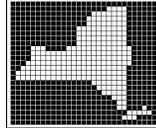
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LI Traditions is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization registered with the NY State Board of Charities.

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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State of the Arts



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Farming on Long Island

On Sunday, March 12th the East Meadow Library will host a program on Farming Traditions of Long Island at 2pm. During the past 50 years there has been a drastic decline in the number of working farms in the region. Long Island, once known for its bountiful fields of potatoes, corn and tomatoes, is today better known as a bedroom community. The remaining local farmers strive to create a decent livelihood while preserving the traditions of this time-honored occupation.

This event will feature two women farmers, Liz Grossman-Rung and Vivian Youngs. They are from two of the last and oldest working farms in Nassau County. Farming has been a part of their families for generations. In addition we will be presenting Glenn Gebhard's documentary "A Farm Picture" which has aired on local television stations. This program is free and open to people of all ages. The East Meadow Library is located at 1886 Front Street, East Meadow. For further information call (516) 794-2570. ■



Grossman Farm

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Publishing and Not Perishing

Over this summer the Long Island Traditions staff was busier than usual writing, compiling and printing a Student Ethnic Folk Arts magazine, a companion to the existing Student Maritime Magazine. These publications are used by 4th grade students in Long Island Traditions' ethnic and maritime folk arts programs in area schools.

Carolyn Thompson and Pam Maltese of the Freeport School District Administrative offices acted as consultants for this AIE magazine. Wanda Garcia, a veteran elementary educator and teacher in our Arts in Education (AIE) Freeport program incorporated her perspective as well. Designer Barbara Koelbel Bange's beautiful design made our booklet visually engaging.

The folk artists featured in our new magazine include Native American quilt and doll maker Ina McNeil, African American fiber artist Joan Hodges and Peruvian musician and composer Theo Torres. Each of these artists employs traditional techniques when producing their remarkable crafts and music. They enliven the curriculum by

telling stories about their relationship to their personal history; culture, how they continue their legacy as visual and audio artists. Ina and Joan work with the students on site specific crafts projects. Meanwhile, Theo Torres brings his talent as a musician along with several traditional wind and percussive instruments.

Our 22-page publication is packed with information about traditions and how we learn about them. There are vocabulary sections and word search games appropriate to each artist. Inside the magazine are a series of questions and exercises that prepare the students for their interviews with Ina, Joan and Theo. The magazine is again used for their subsequent writings on the presenters' school visits.

The reaction by the administration, faculty and students has been tremendously positive. Teachers remark on how the magazine further enhances each of the artists' visits. Every child seems to relish working on the craft component of the AIE program. Teachers have sent photographs and many of their students' charming thank you notes. One of the teachers sent a photograph of two of her students intently working on a paper quilt project with Ina McNeil. The image was published and distributed in the 2005-2006 Freeport Board of Education Calendar. Over the years the finished student craft projects have been displayed in hallways and during open-house and parent teacher nights. ■

Wind Farm continued from page 1

sports fishermen to these same areas, survive in their time-honored occupations because of their conservation ethic and environmental knowledge that has been passed down within their families and occupational communities. The proposed wind farm could drastically alter the region's fisheries status, one that is showing signs of improvement under the current fisheries management plans.

In addition there will be major changes in the views we all enjoy from Jones Beach. The turbines will stretch upwards for 442.5 feet, the height of a typical New York City skyscraper. The scenic qualities that we expect at Jones Beach would be forever marred.

While the energy generated from such an endeavor may be substantial, there are other ways to achieve this savings, through conservation programs, alternative scales to the turbines and their placement, and visual modifications. We hope you will consider writing letters to the Army Corps of Engineers, which is currently the lead agency reviewing the permit application by LIPA, expressing your concerns. The Army Corps is accepting comments via regular mail and by e-mail at cenan.publicnotice@usace.army.mil. The mailing address of the Army Corps is:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - New York District
ATTN: Regulatory Branch
LIPA Offshore Wind Park Application
Jacob K. Javits Federal Building, Room 1937
New York, NY 10278-0090
Phone: (917)790-8526

Please let the Corps know that the process for analysis and consideration of the wind facility must be opened to include a public review of all impacts from and all alternatives to the proposed construction site. For more information about upcoming public meetings please feel free to call us at (516) 767-8803 or visit <http://www.lipower.org/cei/offshore.html>. ■

Editor's note: This past holiday season saw an explosion of controversy over the place of holiday celebrations and decorations in public spaces. As an organization that celebrates cultural diversity, we hope you enjoy the following humorous poem written by staff education director Alice Melzer.

What's in a Tree?

Every November stores, malls and town halls put up trees with lights, bows and balls. The question, "When is it a Christmas tree, and when is it a holiday tree?"

Early peoples separated the year between dark and light.

Early Christians followed suit, much to their children's delight.

Here in the in the United States, church and government write volumes and have debates.

At times they both agree it is fundamental to gate or separate religion and state.

Many are mincing words along with holiday pie; separation of church and state oh my!

The press not to be outdone, makes putting up a public tree a media sport for everyone.

The meaning of this ritual routine begs the question, what does it really mean?

If the festooned botanical had feelings would they be bemused or confused?

A political or religious outcry let's change the name of the tree, but why?

Has the annual dispute become a topic for seasonal refute?

Sing with me now, "Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Holiday Tree, or Oh Holiday Bush."

We've got many wordy variations as decorations and if sung wrong will we get citations?

Some Jewish, Christian, and those without faith, child, woman or man,

All understand bands glitz takes our mind off winter's gray lands.

Early druids treasured the evergreen as a symbol for hope, for another spring to be seen.

Beyond all the traditional holiday confusion and sometimes pretend illusion,

The balls, snowflakes and little beacons of lights remind all of some other nights.

As all individual with disconnections aside, know it is traditions that binds us inside.

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.

- January 25:** A Feast in Song: Jewish Food Customs and Songs about Food from Around the World, featuring Rahel Musleah. 1PM Bryant Library, Paper Mill Road, Roslyn. For information call 516-621-2240.
- February 5:** Long Island Latino Music Series featuring Berto Reyes. 2 pm. Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages, 1200 Rt. 25A, Stony Brook. Call (631) 751-0066 for information.
- February 19:** Strike the Bell, featuring Stuart Markus & Judith Zweiman. 2-3:40 PM. East Islip Public Library, 381 Montauk Hwy. For information call (631) 581-9200.
- March 5:** Long Island Traditions' Maritime Folk Arts Program (see accompanying article). 2 pm. Freeport Memorial Library. Merrick Road & Ocean Avenue, Freeport. Free admission. For information call (516) 379-3274.
- March 5:** Long Island Latino Music Series featuring Amanacer Norteno. 2 pm. Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages, 1200 Rt. 25A, Stony Brook. Call (631) 751-0066 for more information.
- March 12:** Long Island Farming Traditions (see accompanying article). East Meadow Library. 2 pm. East Meadow Avenue & Front Street. Free admission. For more information call (516) 794-2570.
- March 30:** A Feast in Song with Rahel Musleah. 12:30 pm. East Meadow Public Library, 1886 Front Street, East Meadow. Call 516- 794-2570 for more information.
- April 1:** Mustard Seed: An exploration of a Buddhist myth of grief and release through Bharatanatyam. Choreography by Malini Srinivasan, music by Ilari Kaila. 4 pm. For more information visit www.m4p.org or call (631) 672-4382.

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