

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org
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Summer 2013

Bay House Tours 2013

In the Town of Hempstead 30 bay houses once stood on island marshlands, originally built by fishermen and baymen that have been passed down from generation to generation. After Superstorm Sandy only 14 remained, with many damaged. We will be visiting two of the survivors on each trip. The owners are repairing their historic houses, now considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Take a tour on the Freeport Water Taxi for the 1½ hour trip to these historic houses, led by folklorist and LI Traditions' director Nancy Solomon. Due to safety concerns space is limited to 15 people per trip ages 10 and up. Participants must be able to climb ladders and feel comfortable in a work environment. Long Island Traditions members can register beginning July 1. All others can register after August 1st. The ticket limit is 2/per person. For reservations call LI Traditions at (516) 767-8803. No children under 10 permitted. Rain and construction problems may cancel the event.

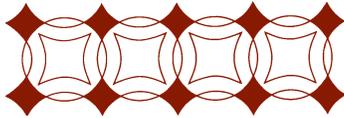
Tickets for the bay house tours are \$50 for adults, \$90/couple with a \$5 discount for LI Traditions members. ■



The Pidherney bay house will be among those featured on the 2013 bay house tour. The house was severely damaged by Superstorm Sandy.

Far Rockaway Bungalows Gain National Register Status

LI Traditions is very pleased that the nomination of the Far Rockaway bungalows on Beach 24-26th streets was approved by the NY State Architectural Review Board and will be listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. Frequently traditional bungalows are overlooked by historic preservationists and local historians because they are common and have simple architectural features. Yet this ignores the powerful cultural significance the bungalows have in communities and families. For many generations the bungalows have played an important role in the Rockaways, bringing generations of immigrants and their descendants to the shoreline, changing little in their 80 year history in Far Rockaway. The owners of today's bungalows have preserved these modest structures, for both seasonal and long term use. Although there are surviving bungalows scattered throughout Far Rockaway, the district spanning Beach 24-26th street represents the last intact bungalow community in the area. LI Traditions completed a survey of the district with funding by the Beachside Bungalow Preservation Association in August 2012 and subsequently campaigned to have this district recognized for its importance to the local history. Miraculously the bungalows survived Superstorm Sandy, a testament to the power of traditional design and construction. Let us continue to support the surviving bungalows, so that others can learn and enjoy the traditional culture of our shoreline communities for future generations. ■



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.

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From Shore to Shore: Boat Builders and Boatyards of Long Island and Westchester

July 1 – September 2nd

Port Jefferson Village Center

101 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson

9 am – 9 pm

On July 1, Long Island Traditions will open “From Shore to Shore: Boat Builders and Boat Yards of Westchester and Long Island” a major exhibition at the Port Jefferson Village Center on the traditional occupational and recreational culture of boat builders and boatyards in the region. In collaboration with ArtsWestchester and with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York Council for the Humanities and Suffolk County, this exhibition is the culmination of two years of planning and field research on the current and historical art of boat building by folklorists Nancy Solomon, the executive director of Long Island Traditions, and Tom Van Buren, staff folklorist at ArtsWestchester. The exhibition runs through September 2.

For centuries, residents of New York have built watercraft and waterfront facilities to transport people and goods locally, nationally and internationally. For the settlers of this area, boating was a way of life. It provided employment, recreation, and transportation. Dutch and English settlers crossed the Atlantic Ocean to settle in New Amsterdam, travelling up the Hudson River, along Long Island Sound and Long Island's south shore. Wooden ships and boats dominated the country's transportation system until the mid 1800s when railroads took on a larger role in transportation. Coastal towns employed shipwrights, marine carpenters, boat captains and other trades people for generations. Boatyards today still house numerous structures ranging from large barns to machine shops, some dating from the 1800s.

Contemporary boat builders continue many of the traditions established in previous generations, with notable changes including the use of fiberglass and newer technologies and tools. Yet we know little about their work and their workplaces. *From Shore to Shore* explores the worlds of over 20 boat builders and 10 historic boatyards where boats and ships are built or maintained today. Boat builders include professionals, amateurs and volunteers, all dedicated to preserving the craft of earlier generations. Featured boat builders and boatyards include Howard

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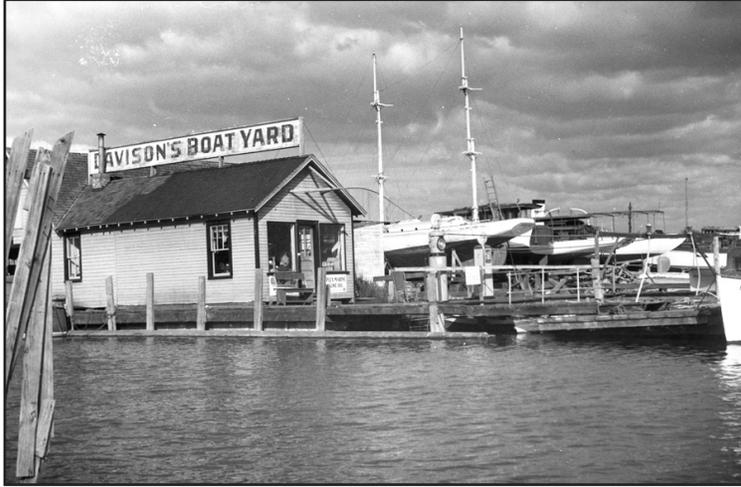
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Pickerell of Southampton, Paul Ketcham of Amityville, the Scopinich family of Freeport and East Quogue, Alan Steiger of Bellport, Donn Costanzo of Greenport, the Bayles Boat Shop workers in Port Jefferson, the Harter Brothers of Bellmore, along with Davison's Boatyard in East Rockaway, the Hanff Boatyard in Greenport, and Knutson's Boatyard in Huntington.



"The shanty" in the mid-1940s.

The exhibition will fill the Port Jefferson Village Center with graphic panels on the history of boat building in the region, profiles of area boatyards and master craftsmen, boat builders' tools, and an audio visual installation featuring interviews with master builders, restorers and historic yard owners.

Public Programs

July 11 (6 - 8 pm): Opening reception

July 16 (7 pm): Commercial boat building with Paul Ketcham, John Remsen, Howard Pickerell and Rob and Ron Harter.

July 30 (7 pm): Recreational boat building and restoration with Donn Costanzo, volunteers from the Ida May project and the Bayles Boat Shop, and Ken Budny and John Taylor.

August 3 - 4 (11 am - 4p m): Boat displays by Rocking the Boat, Ken Budny, George Combs Jr., Chris Hale of Weeks Boatyard and the Long Island Maritime Museum.

August 20 (7 pm): Preserving Boatyards with Charles Balsamo, Kevin Weeks, Dan Knutson, Ted DeGarmo and John Costello.

The programs are free. We invite all to come and explore the world of boat building, and help us preserve these places and practices for future generations.

For further information on the exhibition and public programs visit www.longislandtraditions.org or telephone (516) 767-8803.

Profile: Davison's Boatyard, East Rockaway **Davison's Boatyard** **Dan Schmidt owner** **East Rockaway, Long Island**

In 1932 Russell Davison founded a yard that specializes in boat building, restoration and service along the shores of East Rockaway. The yard is well known for building and servicing commercial fishing boats and luxury yachts, Coast Guard skiffs and police boats. It is among the oldest working boatyards on Nassau County's south shore. *"Years ago there were painters, welders, different levels of carpenters. We had fine carpenters who did varnish work. Then there were 'nuts and bolts' carpenters— they had to put seams together, caulk a boat, and put lap strakes and rivets back in. The wood workers came from Scandinavian countries"* recalls Dan Schmidt.

Over time the yard expanded its services to include dealer training on Mercruiser motors, and maintaining "party" fishing boats such as the Commodore, the Genie May and the Captain Tom. While motorboats were more common during the yard's beginnings, sailboats were also part of the yard. *"Oliver and Russ were sailors – they would buy sailboat hulls – bring them here and would put them together. They would sail the boat, use it, sail it and build another one."*

Superstorm Sandy flooded all of Davison's buildings, swept boats off their stanchions, and damaged small and large vessels alike. *"In the winter we were trying to figure out how to fix everyone and get them out boating again. One thing we didn't do was to set the anchor off in the canal and tighten it up, so as the tide came up it would pull the boat away from the dock. That would have proved to help us out – but we missed that on this storm. But having the buildings saved us."* ■



"We went from being six feet under water to within days having equipment and trucks running."

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.

- July 11:** Opening of "From Shore to Shore: Boat Builders and Boatyards of Long Island and Westchester." (see accompanying article). Port Jefferson Village Center. 101 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson. 6 - 8 pm. For directions call (631) 802-2160.
- July 16:** Commercial fishing boat builders. Port Jefferson Village Center. 101 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson. 7 pm.
- July 30:** Recreational Boat Building and Restoration. Port Jefferson Village Center. 101 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson. 7 pm.
- August 3-4:** Traditional Boat Display. Port Jefferson Village Center. 101 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson. 11am - 4 pm.
- August 13:** "Songs of Pirates, Sailors & Whalers" by Strike the Bell. West Islip Library. 3 Higbie Lane, West Islip. 7 pm.
- August 20:** Preserving Historic Boatyards. Port Jefferson Village Center. 101 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson. 7 pm.
- August 24:** Scottish Games at Old Westbury Gardens. 71 Old Westbury Road, Old Westbury. 8 am – 5 pm. \$15/adults and \$10/seniors. For information call (516) 747-7589 or visit www.liscots.org.
- August 31:** "Songs in the Key of Sea" by Strike the Bell. Long Beach Public Library. 111 W Park Ave, Long Beach. 2pm.
- September 8 & 22:** Bay House tours (see accompanying article). Contact Long Island Traditions at (516) 767-8803.

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