

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

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Saltwater Series at LI Children's Museum

For the first 3 weekends in January, come join us at the LI Children's Museum for a series of programs on Long Island's maritime culture. On January 8-9 you and any children who accompany you (adults can come alone too) will be able to meet 9 traditional fishers including baymen Chuck Tekula, Cory Weyant, John Buczak, Pete Wenczel and John Remsen, decoy carver and bayman George Rigby, clamshell artists Harry Saarinen and Kenny Swaine, fishing rod maker Pete Ames Jr. and recreational fisherman and advocate Jim Hutchinson. There will be hands-on activities and opportunities to learn more about the traditions of local fishers and artists who have learned their trade through their families and communities.

On January 15-16 we'll be creating models of area bay houses, with bay house owners Ed Sheehan

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Photo by Nancy Solomon

Tony Sougstad will be on hand to teach how fishing nets are mended at the Saltwater Series on January 8-9th.

Fishing Perspectives

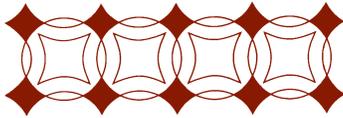
Beginning in the 19th century there has been a long but distinct tradition of fishing for sport, alongside the centuries-old traditions of harvesting fish for commercial purposes and subsistence. Local commercial harvesters worked as fishing guides, earning extra income by taking paying guests, typically from New York City, to historically productive fishing areas on Long Island Sound and Great South Bay, as well as the North Fork and East End. Frequently they hosted hunting and fishing parties at their bay houses or at local inns and hotels.

Over time sports fishermen began building their own waterfront estates or cabins, hiring guides, and forming their own clubs and organizations. Some examples included the South Side Sportsmen Club in Great River, the Merrick Rod and Gun Club, and the Hunters Gardeners Association. Eventually commercial fishers and sports fishers drifted apart, losing the common passion of catching fish together.

Fast forward to 1986. In that year the first restrictions on who could catch striped bass began, pitting the two groups of fishermen against each other for what was a declining resource at that time, and one that is still a contentious issue for both groups. However it also became a rallying cry among some environmentalists as a symbol of the region's declining fish resources. Since then the number of fishing restrictions has grown exponentially, statewide and nationally. However after decades of debate among fishers, they are now finding common ground, as the specter of "catch shares" looms on the horizon, and the debate over what is sustainable fishing continues.

What are catch shares? The National Marine Fisheries Service program attempts to regulate how many commercial and potentially recreational fishers can catch fish in federal waters. Begun on a pilot basis in New England and Pacific

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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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and Bill Powell, two longtime bay house owners in the Town of Hempstead. The educational staff at the museum will assist participants in creating the models based on floor plans and photographs from LI Traditions' archives. In addition there will be a special display of Freeport resident Jeff Blossom's bay house models.



Photo by Martha Cooper

Jeff Blossom's model bay houses will be on display at the LI Children's Museum as part of its Saltwater Series during January.

On the 3rd and final weekend of January 22-23 you can learn about the traditions connected with whaling and eeling, a unique tradition on the south shore of Long Island. Baymen Cory Weyant and John Buczak will be on hand with live eels, traps and other tools used to harvest these slippery creatures, along with members of the Shinnecock Tribe.

The programs will take place at the LI Children's Museum during 12:30 - 4 pm. For information call (516) 224-5800 or visit <http://www.licm.org/>

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Indian Dance Program January 30



Photo by Nancy Solomon

Satya Pradeep and her students will be performing and teaching on January 30 at the East Meadow library.

LI Traditions is sponsoring the 2nd in its traditional dance program series at the East Meadow Library, this time focusing on two Indian traditions: Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. The program will be led by master dance teacher Satya Pradeep. Pradeep is the director of the Nritya Saagaram Academy based in Syosset. The program will include both performance and a workshop where you can learn some of the basic steps. It's free and will start at 2 pm. For more information call the library at (516) 794-2570.

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waters, the concept is simple: the government designates “cooperatives” who then manage the quotas established by NMFS. If you do not join a cooperative then you have minimal access to catching fish. The permits are distributed to those groups that “bid” the highest amounts, which frequently are large corporations and owners who own more than 1 vessel. This effectively locks out the small family fisherman, in much the same way that agriculture subsidies go to the large agribusiness farms rather than small family farmers.

Last spring I attended a symposium where the new catch shares program was discussed and analyzed. The results were sobering. According to Food and Water Watch, “The surf clam and ocean quahog fishery in the mid-Atlantic became so consolidated that one firm controlled 27 percent of the available quota.” In Gloucester, MA more than 80% of the total allowable catch was controlled by a few small companies, while more than 70% of the family based fishing boats were no longer fishing.

Today there are a number of lawsuits challenging the Catch Shares program including two in Massachusetts, while elected officials in various states including North Carolina and Florida are writing letters to US Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and NOAA administrator Jane Lubchenco protesting the new policy. NY Senator Charles Schumer has also expressed concerns, and is leading efforts to protect New York’s fishing industry from what many consider arbitrary quotas and policies that favor restriction over restoration.

As a result of these large issues, commercial and recreational fishers have united in their opposition, and hope to prevent the institutionalization of this controversial program.

What can you do?

- We encourage you to attend a public hearing on Catch Shares scheduled for Tuesday, January 31 at 1 pm at the Holiday Inn Express located at 1707 Old Country Road in Riverhead
- Talk with our local commercial and recreational fishermen at the LI Children’s Museum on the weekend of January 8-9th (see accompanying article)
- Write Senator Schumer and thank him for protecting our fishing industry. His address is 145 Pine Lawn Road #300 Melville, NY 11747
- Visit the following web sites to follow the discussion:
Fishing United www.fishingunited.com
Food and Water Watch
<http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fish/fair-fish/>



And last but not least, go fishing!

Architecture After-School Program in Freeport

As many of you know, LI Traditions piloted a nationally recognized middle school curriculum on Long Island’s local architecture in 2005. Since then we have been involved in a number of school residencies where students and teachers explore the traditional architecture of the region. This year we’re partnering with the Freeport School District in an 8-week after-school program for Atkinson and Dodd Middle Schools.

In both schools students are making models of 3 distinct local architectural sites:

- The Jankoski bay house
- The original Holy Redeemer church
- The Freeport Historical Society

Using cardboard, popsicle sticks and plastic, they are creating 3-dimensional models with traditional elements and decorations, such as docks and walkways, stained glass windows and church pews, fireplaces and historic windows. In our next issue we’ll show you the final products!

If you know of a school with an after-school program, tell them about us, along with our other arts in education programs. And give us a call if you’d like to learn more! ■

Board Members Needed

As a non-profit organization we are always on the lookout for new board members. To be a board member means to be passionate about:

- local ethnic, occupational and maritime traditions and architecture
- talking with friends, family and colleagues about our mission
- speaking up at local gatherings and hearings about the importance of preserving tradition
- attending our events

If you are already a member we know that you like what we do. Please consider our request. We meet 3 times a year frequently at a local ethnic restaurant, and informally through e-mail’s and phone calls. We are especially interested in those with an accounting, educational or media background. Give us a call at (516) 767-8803. ■

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 June, September, December and March.

Don't forget to visit our web site and our Facebook page for timely information.

- January 8 - 9,** Saltwater Series at LI Children's Museum (see accompanying article).
15 - 16, LI Children's Museum. 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City, NY.
22 - 23: For more information call (516) 224-5800.
- January 14:** Indian classical dance program. 7:30 pm. Music Building, Room # 264, Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd., Flushing. Suggested donation \$10.
- January 29:** Mulvihill-Lynch Irish Dance Studio Annual Winter Dance Recital. 1pm Centereach High School, 14 43rd Street, Centereach. \$25.00 donation. For information call (631) 738-1242 or visit www.mulvihill-lynchschoo.com.
- January 30:** Indian Dance program with Satya Pradeep (see accompanying article). East Meadow Library, 2 pm. 1886 Front Street, East Meadow. For information and directions call (516) 794-2570.
- February 18-20:** NY Sportfishing Federation Forum and Auction. Freeport Recreation Center. 130 E. Merrick Road, Freeport.

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