

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

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TravelStorys Self-Guided Cellphone Tours

Long Island Traditions is proud to announce the release of TravelStorys; a series of self-guided cell phone tours focusing on Long Island's historical and contemporary sites of cultural significance. The Long Island Back Story section featured on the TravelStorys app offers users the chance to hear unforgettable stories of hurricane survival, tales of rum running, stories of boat building for the coast guard and many other legends of local lore that are often left unheard. The TravelStorys self-guided cell phone tours allow those curious to hear these tales a chance to tap into these invaluable resources of Long Island history at the time of their choosing and also while following proper spacing guidelines during these pandemic times.

TravelStorys offers self-guided cell phone tours that allow users to hear narratives as they travel through the regions or remotely if located in other regions. Each tour stop includes a story about the place from a local resident along with historic and contemporary photographs. Using first person narratives to introduce visitors to our region, LI Traditions developed its first tour that focus on the region's south shore maritime and cultural heritage and traditions. "Travelstorys offers a platform in order to connect those who are interested with stories that are often lost or forgotten over the years. These stories need to be shared and celebrated and we hope to do so with TravelStorys." said Nancy Solomon, Executive Director of Long Island Traditions.

Long Island Traditions has gathered these stories over the years in an effort to preserve the back story that is not always heard. The stories were chosen for their compelling content and their deep connection to Long Island. Examples of Long Island tour stops include the Weeks Boatyard in Patchogue, a multigenerational boatyard that has outlived

neighboring boat builders that formerly filled the area. Listen to Kevin Weeks tell stories of his grandfather and how they built their yard to withstand hurricanes after the devastation from the hurricane of 1938. The bulkhead that they built was not breached until hurricane Irene in 2011. Listen to these stories and more with TravelStorys.

The TravelStorys project was funded and made possible by the Robert W. Lion Gardiner Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts. ■

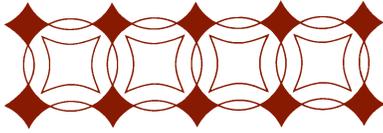


LIT Website Redesign

By Ann Latner, Program Manager

We are pleased to announce the launch of our newly redesigned website, located at www.longislandtraditions.org. The new site is easy to use with clear navigation, and the homepage showcases our latest events, videos, and media coverage. You can find information about our artists and programs, as well as take a deep dive into our South Shore Portal. In our shop, you can securely purchase books, movies, raffle tickets, and more.

In addition to our new website, we are pleased to announce that we now have a Facebook page in addition to our Facebook group. Please visit <https://www.facebook.com/longislandtraditions/> and "like" the page to see our latest updates. Like Instagram? We are there too: <https://www.instagram.com/longislandtraditions/> We look forward to connecting with you. The new web site was designed by Dan Sokolow, the son of world-famous klezmer performer Pete Sokolow. Thank you Dan! ■



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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Editor's Note: One of our facebook friends is Rick Scott, who grew up in Baldwin and now lives in Florida. Here is a story he wrote last year that we hope you enjoy!

“The Canals of Long Island’s South Shore and Beyond”

I have always enjoyed the canals of the South Shore, especially in those days past when they were less groomed. I can understand the desire for homeowners to improve their waterfront properties. However, from my perspective, the more diverse and slightly ramshackle the better.

Cedar, asbestos shingle, and tar paper summer cabins with their collections of hodgepodge additions converted into year-round multi-angular homes. The mismatched mix of odd sized windows, dormers, and doors, the style of those organic homes offer more visually interesting perspectives than those carefully planned by architects.

Images like these come to mind: rusted and hole peppered bulkheads slowly being pushed away from the land. Encrusted ropes of crab and baitfish traps tied off to spikes in splintered pilings. Half-submerged hulks surrounded by floating rings of oil slick rainbows disturbed by the wakes of passing boats and the slapping of those wakes against the docked boats as they groan against their lines. Weathered docks all askew and coated with fish scales. Sandy gravelly lots with weeds poking up through old boat planks laying in “pick-up sticks” piles. The mixed odors of marine fuel and outboard exhaust and creosote and fish and marshy low tide mud. Fishing for snappers with bamboo poles and bobbers. Crabbing with nets and flashlights. And those beckoning views of waving cordgrass marsh beyond, glowing gold in the setting sun---these were the scenes of the canals when I was growing up in the 50’s and 60’s. The delightfully unkempt canal areas were the transition zone between the fussiness of suburbia and the capriciousness of nature; where civilization fights the sea; the embarkation where adventure begins.

My Dad used to launch his outboard-driven varnish-decked boat in Wantagh and we would gunkhole up and down the canals and around the marshy islands between the mainland and Jones Beach--fishing, looking for sandy beaches to land and swim,

See **Canals of LI** on page 4



Baldwin Bay

Photo by Nancy Solomon

Surviving Covid-19: Theo Torres, Joan Hodges and Bill Fetzer

By Nancy Solomon

Editor's Note: We know that all of you are responding to Covid-19 with courage and grace, and we do hope you are all okay. Feel free to ask us about our artists and presenters, what programs we have planned, and anything you would like to share with us. We are in the office regularly and hope that we will see you in person soon, with safety precautions. Here are three stories of coping that we thought would provide some brightness in these scary days.

Theo Torres

Theo Torres is a well known traditional Peruvian singer and composer who has performed in area restaurants, libraries and museums for over 30 years. He is married and has several adult children including his son Charlie, a professional opera singer. Theo Torres was born in 1952 in Lima, the capital of Peru. His family originally lived in Cajamarca in northern Peru, but they moved to Lima in search of greater economic opportunities. One of nine children, Theo attended school and college. By the age of 15 he was also playing a variety of percussion instruments, as well as writing songs for local groups. He learned to play both traditional indigenous music and popular Latino songs by listening to the radio and from friends and neighbors.

In 1984 Theo Torres emigrated to Wyandanch, NY from Lima. There were few Peruvians in Long Island at the time, but Theo's music helped to keep him going. He composed songs based on his loneliness and the difficulties he faced. Like other traditional musicians Theo plays a wide variety of music styles common in Central and South America in order to satisfy diverse audiences. Torres plays salsa, techno cumbia, Peruvian música criolla, Mexican rancheras and Dominican bachatas together with Vientos del Sur (Winds of the South), a group he founded in 2000. Theo became an American citizen in 2000 and resides in Brentwood. In 2005 Theo was awarded an apprenticeship grant by the New York State Council on the Arts as a master composer and musician. He is also a master teacher in Long Island Traditions' arts-in-education programs.

The Covid-19 crisis has hit Theo hard. He and his group Vientos del Sur were playing regularly at restaurants, libraries, museums and social gatherings on Long Island. Now he spends his time in Georgia where he plays solo at Sangria's Mexican Grill & Tequila Bar, in Lawrenceville. Theo broadcasts his performances live on Facebook every Sunday at 1pm. We encourage you to like him on Facebook and catch his performances!

Joan Hodges

Joan Hodges is an African American fiber artist who has taught classes in senior centers and elementary schools alike. Born in Brooklyn, she often visited her grandmother in Virginia, where she first experienced segregation in the 1950s and 60s. Joan's family later moved to Malverne, Long Island, where she encountered de facto segregation. Although some parts of Long Island were open to equal opportunity for all, Joan saw racist feelings emerge as protests erupted to keep blacks out of Malverne schools and to deny busing for minority students. She was there in 1965 at a rally in Lakeview, Long Island in which

Martin Luther King showed his support of school integration. "We have come a long way," she recently said, "but we still have a long, long way to go."



Photo by Nancy Solomon
Joan Hodges doll

Joan began quilting at a young age, and began making dolls when she could not find African American ones for her young children. She makes quilts that reflect her commitment to social justice and to recognizing the African American experience. Hodges is recognized as a master artist, and won the Judge's Choice winner of the LI Quilters in 2016 for "Freedom: Free at Last" quilt. As a Hempstead resident, she is dedicated to helping her neighbors through her artistic gifts. Not surprisingly she began making face masks for her friends and family, using cloth she had originally planned to use in other projects.

Joan and Theo were recipients of New York Folklore's Covid Relief Fund grants which will help them cope with the economic effects of the crisis.

Bill Fetzer

One of the groups deeply affected by the pandemic are fishermen, whose product is generally purchased at restaurants, with some income derived from local fish markets. When the restaurants closed, many fishermen and baymen lost their primary customers. At the same time some realized that local residents were cooking more than ever before, occasionally buying fish and shellfish for their families. Those who had food fish licenses quickly announced on social media and through word of mouth that they could sell to individuals, announcing what they had and taking orders for their catch. As Bill explained, "for the first time in my life I am essential" referring to the designation of fishermen as essential workers.

Bill Fetzer is a bayman working in Oyster Bay, seeking to make a living and also raise awareness of how the bay has changed over time. Bill is one of LI Traditions' educators and part of our Waterfront Heroes group. When the schools shut down, Bill invited us to take the students of the Wheatley School in East Williston on a virtual field trip, an idea Dr. John Staudt, the students' teacher, quickly approved. On board his garvey, we harvested dozens of clams of different sizes, which ordinarily he would have sold to those placing

See **Surviving Covid-19** on page 4

Maritime Film Festival

We unfortunately had to postpone our film festival due to the closures of all movie theatres and businesses during the Covid-19 crisis. We will reschedule the event hopefully in 2021 so stay tuned for details. For those who can't wait, you can buy our new DVD "A World Within a World: Bay Houses of Long Island" produced and directed by Barbara Weber and Greg Blank, on our web site. The film will also be aired on WLIW Channel 21 at a date to be determined. We will announce this on our website and on Facebook. ■

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.

October 23:

Virtual presentation of A World Within a World: Bay Houses of Long Island, film by Barbara Weber and Greg Blank. 1 pm. Contact the Freeport Memorial Library at <https://www.freeportlibrary.info/>

Sundays at 1 pm:

Theo Torres live concerts on Facebook. Go to Theo Torres Entertainment.

Stay tuned on our web site and our Facebook feed for more events!



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Canals of LI continued from page 2

and exploring the carcasses of abandoned boats. I remember one night, when I was young, watching screaming teenagers laying on the roof of an old car, fingers curled tight around the windshield rain gutter molding, white t-shirts flapping in the wind, while the driver sped down the road alongside the Wantagh canal, stopping short at the end of the road near the Sea Breeze Inn to see who could hang on. Like a scene from Rebel Without A Cause. In later years my buddies and I would do full day bicycling adventures along the canal roads, launching makeshift mini-rafts out to sea, searching for flotsam treasures in the sea grasses, and ending with a bag of zeppoles at Sandy's which used to be located on Wantagh Avenue at Merrick Road. ■

Enjoy!
Rick Scott

Surviving Covid-19 continued from page 3

orders. However, he was much happier to give them to me since he would not have to sort them according to size and did not have to arrange to meet his customers or worry about whether there would be enough buyers for his clams. As Bill explained "meat is more affordable than clams."

Like other baymen and fishermen, Bill is devoted to working on the water. While many of us have felt cooped up in our homes or apartments, fishermen are free to go to work and make a day's pay. However, there is uncertainty as we all wait for restaurants to be safe for reopening. Like other fishermen Bill is somewhat philosophical: "we always take it day by day. But we only have one shot to keep the bay alive." We encourage everyone to support their local fishermen! ■

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