

# Long Island Traditions

## NEWSLETTER

longislandtraditions.org  
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### Family Maritime Programs

**L**ong Island Traditions is participating in several maritime family events. On Saturday and Sunday, February 18-19, see us at the NY Sportfishing Federation show at the Freeport Recreation Center. Hours are 8am – 6 pm on Saturday and 9am – 2:30pm on Sunday.

On Wednesday, February 22 at 11am – 3 pm we'll be at the LI Children's Museum with baymen Tom Jefferies and George Rigby. There will be hands-on activities for people of all ages including parents and grandparents. You can learn to carve a decoy and learn what lives in our surrounding waters. Free with museum admission.

On Saturday and Sunday, March 11 and 12, from 11am – 3 pm we're back at the LI Children's Museum with several people including North Shore baymen Bill Fetzer and Craig Oddo, boat builder and model maker Chris Hale, and decoy carver George Rigby. Free with museum admission. The museum is located at 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City on Museum Row next to the Cradle of Aviation. ■

### Luis Cordero y Los Amigos del Amargue Concert February 5

**O**n Sunday, February 5, join us at the Freeport Memorial Library at 2:30 pm for a free concert featuring Luis Cordero and his family, the recipients of a NY State Council on the Arts apprenticeship grant. In this live program you will see the Cordero family in action as they share how they've learned many of the elements of composing bachata and merengue songs! ■

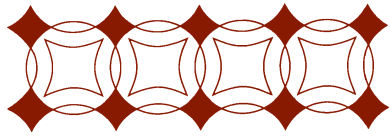
### NYSCA Artist Grants Announced

**L**ong Island Traditions is proud to announce that it has been awarded five \$10,000 Artists Grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). The grants will be used to sponsor five artists, fisherman Chuck Tekula, Steelband musician Ian Japsi, fiber artist Joan Hodges, author and musician Rahel Musleah, and Tabla teacher Sejal Kukadia. LIT is thrilled to receive this grant from NYSCA, as it will allow them to continue their work of documenting, presenting, and preserving the traditional culture and architecture of Long Island, as well as supporting and uplifting

See **NYSCA Artist Grants** on page 2



Iraqi-Indian Jewish singer and storyteller is one of the recipients of the NYSCA artist grants for 2023.



## 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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Council on the Arts

## NYSCA Artist Grants continued from page 1

the musicians, artists and craftspeople who continue to serve important functions within their communities.

The artists chosen by LIT each proposed unique projects rooted in their personal identity and ethnic heritage. For example, fisherman Chuck Tekula will create a series of songs and poems, Ian Japsi will develop new arrangements for the Steel Sensation steel band ensemble, African American fiber artist Joan Hodges will create a women's themed quilt, Iraqi-Indian Jewish author and singer Rahel Musleah will create a memoir in words and music and master tabla player Sejal Kukadia will develop new works that explore traditional melodies and contemporary rhythms. These projects showcase their diversity and highlight the important role that traditional arts and crafts play in preserving their heritage.

Throughout the year we'll keep you up to date with these amazing artists and their progress. In this issue we invite you to read one of Chuck Tekula's blog posts from 2007. Chuck lives in Center Moriches and is a full-time commercial fisherman. ■

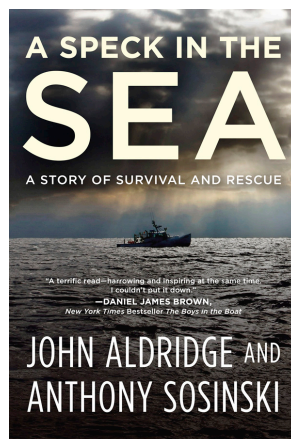
## Speck in the Sea Events

The Long Island Library consortium has selected "A Speck In the Sea" written by Montauk fishermen John Aldridge and Anthony Sosinski as its Long Island Reads selected book for 2023. In partnership with the authors, we're cohosting two events:

East Meadow Library  
Tuesday, April 18 at 2pm.  
Located at 1886 Front St.

Freeport Memorial Library  
Sunday, April 30 at 2:30 pm.  
Located at  
144 W Merrick Rd.

All events are free but registration is encouraged. Visit the library web sites to register! ■



## First Save The Worms

by Chuck Tekula 2007

One sunny summer afternoon I was out in our yard tilling the little victory garden that I had enhanced with the carcasses of otherwise underutilized sea robins and summer dogfish. Our second child was pensively dangling from a swing on the swing set I had erected not twenty feet from me. I noticed her head turned to the ground below her, her dirty blond curls hanging in front of her round, angelic face. As her feet slowly scraped along the eye-shaped brown bald patch of hard packed soil surrounded by lush green grass that is typical under heavily used swing sets, I readied myself for what was surely to come. Rebecca's four-year-old mind had begun to notice worlds beyond her own little one, and she was in the habit of asking remarkably insightful, and exquisitely and delightfully uninformed questions. She had recently inquired of her mother if they had to kill cows to get milk.

“Daddy, could you raise the swing?” she called.

“Sure, Honey. Why?” I asked, playing the good straight man, as all loving fathers must from time to time.

Without looking up, she said wistfully, “Because I can’t stand the sound of the worms screaming.”

Becky has always thought and acted “out of the box”; she is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Switzerland, having achieved a master’s degree at Oxford, where



Horseshoe crabs.

women make up about five percent of the student body. But, today, reflecting on this cherished memory after having read the latest proposals to come down the fisheries policy pike, I realized that she had the makings of a good marine environmentalist back then. In particular, local environmental scientists seem to be responding to the anguished cries of the dwindling numbers of sandpipers known as red knots, cries they alone can hear, as they starve to death for want of horseshoe crab eggs. Their own numbers put adult horsefeet (as we local Long Island bayman are fond of calling them) in the millions while the particular pigeon sized endangered fowl has dwindled down to less than ten thousand individuals. I guess they need lots of horsefoot eggs.

But, as with my little girl on the swing, they have no classical science to back up their theory. There is no physical evidence that the disappearance of these red-breasted shorebirds is at all linked to the numbers of horseshoe crabs in our estuaries. In fact, the evidence would normally indicate the contrary, since it has been reported that while the numbers of these above-the-high-tide-mark egg-laying helmet-shaped crustaceans are booming, the red knot is still in dangerous decline. We can only assume that these concerned environmentalists must be hearing subliminal — and quite specifically detailed — SOS’s

from these wide ranging tundra breeders.

From my own experience the problem may not be that there aren’t enough female horseshoe crabs. Their numbers have increased exponentially in the few years since the promulgation of “emergency” horseshoe crab measures, enacted to ensure that shorebirds of all kinds would continue to come and populate our shores. I suppose they may have gone to the mountains or our city streets in search of this all-important food source. But, not to worry. There are so many horsefoot trains — large egg laden females always followed by one to three males attached boxcar-like — of these extraordinarily prolific creepy-crawlers along our beaches from early spring through the Fourth of July that if they suddenly acquired a taste for human flesh, all those within a mile of the water would be skeletons by morning.

May I submit that it may be that there are too many land birds living near our waterways that is causing the suffering for the cherished knot of red. I can always tell when there has been a horsefoot orgy on the overnight high tide on the sand spit next to the town dock where I launch my boat, this by the hordes of sparrows, starlings and blackbirds



Photo by Nancy Solomon 2007

Chuck Tekula with his gill net.

feverishly flailing away at the sand with their stout beaks designed to pick bugs and seeds from fields, and shrubs. The environmentalists are right — there are no red knots among them.

Come to think of it — in my nearly half century of fervent and studied bird watching along Long Island’s shores, I’ve never seen a red knot. Those damned sparrows and starlings. Aren’t they in this Country illegally??

# 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.

*Visit our website and our Facebook page for more events and information!*

- January 25** Boat Builders and Boat Yards lecture by Nancy Solomon. 7 pm. Connetquot Library, 760 Ocean Ave, Bohemia. Free admission but registration is suggested.
- February 5** Concert by Luis Cordero and Los Amigos del Amargue. 2:30 pm. Freeport Memorial Library. 144 W. Merrick Road, Freeport. Free admission but registration is suggested.
- February 18-19** NY Sportfishing Federation Show. Freeport Recreation Center. See article for details. 130 E. Merrick Road.
- February 22** LI Children's Museum program. 11 am – 3 pm. 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City. See accompanying article.
- March 11 – 12** LI Children's Museum program. 11 am – 3 pm. 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City. See accompanying article.

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