Saltwater Weekend at Long Island Children’s Museum

January 11-12, 2014

Join us on the weekend of January 11-12 at the Long Island Children’s Museum where we will be presenting a variety of family and children’s programs examining Long Island’s fishing traditions culture. On both days there will be 8 master artists who will have hands-on activities for children, ranging from net mending, trap building, learning to clam and other activities that examine how fish are harvested, both recreationally and commercially. Guest presenters will include John Buczak, George Rigby, Tony Sougstad, Chuck Tekula, Tom Jefferies, Joey Scavone and other area fishermen and baymen. Also on hand will be Collin Weyant, Cory Weyant’s son, who will show how young people are carrying on the tradition.

The program will take place on January 11 & 12, from 12 – 4 pm at the Long Island Children’s Museum, located at 11 David Avenue, Garden City, next to the Cradle of Aviation. For information and directions call (516) 224-5800. Adults and children alike are welcome!

Cautionary Tales
A Memoir by Tony Sougstad

Editor’s note: Following Superstorm Sandy, we began talking with fishermen, bay house owners, and others with clear memories of traumatic weather events, who have survived with knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. One of the first people we spoke to was fisherman Tony Sougstad of Freeport, former owner of the “ET” and currently a full time baymen. Tony learned about past storms from fishermen that he worked alongside of. Some survived, some did not. We ask you to read this article so that hopefully you will learn how to survive a storm, should you find yourself in one. This interview took place in July 2013.

On the offshore charts of Long Island, south shore, there’s a spot that says “Tower Ruins.” Every one of the marks on the chart is a fishing wreck that went down on the same night that the tower went out. The only person who made it out unscathed was Dick Abbot from Freeport. Fishing in winter is much more volatile than in the summer. Those guys got into trouble because they didn’t heed their barometer. In those days – the barometer was the be all and end all for fishermen’s information. Dick saw the barometer glass go down, one whole point in one hour. He was constantly tapping the glass. Every morning before he would go out he would tap the glass – to see what it’s going to do. He saw the glass go down. Richie Iseman was on the boat with him.

They hauled back their gear immediately and started home. By the time they reached Jones’ Inlet –
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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Islamic Calligraphy Exhibit and Program

January 25-26 East Meadow Library

Reem Hussein of Farmingdale, a recognized artist and calligrapher, will be showcasing her traditional art work at the East Meadow Library. Join us to learn more about the traditional arts of the Islamic world. There will be a weekend exhibit of her work. On Sunday, January 26 at 2 pm there will be a lecture demonstration program with the artist. To make reservations call (516) 794-2570. The library is located at 1886 Front Street, East Meadow.

Recent Grants & Donations

Long Island Traditions is primarily funded through grants and contributions. We thank you for joining or renewing your membership so that we can continue to document, present and preserve the traditional culture of families, communities, and local architecture that makes Long Island special. Your recent response to our annual membership drive was our best ever, and we thank you for being supportive and generous.

We’re also proud to announce that 2013 was a very good year for grants that will help us produce meaningful events and programs in 2014. They include a $50,000 from the NY State Council on the Arts/Empire Development program and a $20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to help support our maritime programs including “Boating with the Baymen” which will return later this year, our participation in the Tobay Boat Show, and our Bay House Tours. We’ve also received a $7,000 grant from NYSCA for our maritime arts in education programs in the Freeport and East Williston School Districts. NYSCA also renewed our multi-year general operating grant that funds our organization.

If you would like to help us maintain our programs, ask your friends, coworkers and family members to support Long Island Traditions. As always, membership is fully tax deductible. And if you would like to join our Board of Directors, give us a call. We have fun, enjoyable meetings, and best of all, we meet at area restaurants.
a north east maelstrom, a heck of a north easter, they got stuck in. My friend Neil Jacobs from Hampton Bays, who is gone now, was running a 110 foot converter sub chaser – the waves knocked the cabin off of it. They didn’t heed the barometer. They said “we’ll finish the tow, we’ll make one more.” Greed got them.

Making another tow is being a fisherman. Sometimes you have to because you are a fisherman – but in this case it was deadly. It was a bad decision. The fellows in the “perfect storm” made the same bad decision. But Dick Abbot didn’t. When they got to Jones’ inlet it was barely passable. When they got in - they kissed the ground they walked on.

Going back years and years – the best tool we had at the time was local knowledge passed down from other fisherman and the barometer. If the glass is rising – it’s going to be fair. Glass rises too fast we’re going to get a westerly wind, and if the glass goes down fast we’re going to get strong easterlies; if it goes down slow and steady– we’re not going to get as bad a storm as if it dropped like a rock. How far it goes down depends on how fair the weather is going to be. Our best tool is barometric pressure.

There are sayings – “red skies in the morning” but it’s true – I don’t know what causes the red sky in the morning – I’m not a meteorologist. When it comes red in the morning – you know you’ll get a breezing wind. You can tell what direction the wind is going to be by humidity – can be a north wind if air is dry can be a southerly if the wind is a little on the damp side – or could be easterly. So you watch what directions it comes up and that’s the direction it’s going to blow hard in. They say red skies at night, is forecast for a good day – that’s pretty true also.

Summertime – thunder storms are very predictable if you’re going to get it or not. In order to have a thunder the storm wind has to come out of the cardinal point. Which means north, south, east or west. Here on Long Island our wind is out of the south. Wind is coming straight south and you see dark clouds in the north – be careful – you might get a severe thunderstorm or a squirrel line might come through. If the wind is south west or westerly – don’t worry about it – it’s going to pass you even though you can hear the thunder. Don’t worry it’s going to go by.

But out of a cardinal point, you worry. Once that criteria has passed and you see dead calm and see the black coming – better head for cover, because you’ll get it especially if it’s a squirreling wind. What will happen – you’ll feel a chill in the air and the wind will blow north and it will come up 60 – 65 miles an hour with hail and heavy rain – we call it white out conditions. And if you’re caught out in the bay – I’ve been caught with a few out in the bay – the very best thing is to find a north shore – get to the north bank of anything and put the boat on the beach and wait it out. Do not try to go anywhere with a wind that strong in white out conditions – you will kill yourself.

That’s a few of the things I know about weather.

The Manor – Book Discussion Programs

L andscape historian Mac Griswold has written an excellent book, The Manor, which explores the history of the Sylvester family’s mansion on Shelter Island. Among her findings, based on historical research, oral histories and archaeological field studies, was the long history of African slavery at the site. As some of you may know, Long Island had a long history of slavery until it’s abolishment in 1789 by the New York State legislature. The Manor is part of the “Long Island Reads” program sponsored by the Nassau and Suffolk County library systems. Accompanying this program, LI Traditions’ director Nancy Solomon will be giving two presentations on African American history and architecture in the ante bellum period this February. The dates for these programs are:

**February 11:** Port Jefferson Library, 7 pm. 100 Thompson Street, Port Jefferson. (631) 473-0022

**February 27:** Amityville Library, 7 pm. 19 John St, Amityville. (631) 264-0567

Libraries do require advance reservations so be sure to call ahead. And take the opportunity to read this fascinating book.

Sylvester manor was built in the early 19th century following the destruction of an earlier home built by Nathaniel Sylvester in the 17th century.
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.

January 11-12: LI Children’s Museum Saltwater Series (see accompanying article)

January 25-26: Islamic Calligraphy program (see accompanying article)

February 11 & 27: The Manor lecture programs (see accompanying article)