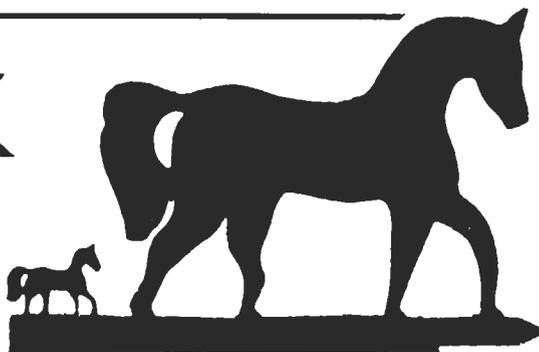


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# NEW YORK FOLKLORE

newsletter



Vol. 11, No. 2  
Summer 1990

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*Mark Stodard, Waterport, Orleans County, is a full-time hunter and fisherman who also paints unique fish and wildlife portraits. Here he works on "Steelhead Striking". (Photo by Dr. James Orr)*

## Eelskin Laces and Willow Creel: Orleans County Folk Arts

Story Inside

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# 9th Annual Irish Traditional Music Festival

## at Snug Harbor

The Irish Arts Center's annual Irish Traditional Music Festival at Snug Harbor, Staten Island, has become an institution throughout the Irish and Irish American communities in the New York metropolitan area. Directed by folklorist Becky Miller, this all-day, outdoor celebration of traditional Irish culture is dedicated to the identification and presentation of the finest musicians, singers and dancers locally, nationally, and from Ireland. The combination of Snug Harbor's grassy green meadows on a clear summer's day, performances by more than 50 outstanding Irish folk artists, and an enormously enthusiastic and supportive audience creates a very special ambience — one where the lines between performer and audience are often blurred and the entire event becomes a party for all.

This year's edition — the 9th Annual! — will take place on Saturday, June 23 at Snug Harbor, from 1 to 10 p.m. (Rain-date: June 30). As in past years, the festival will feature senior masters of Irish music, song and dance from New York's Irish music scene as well as guest artists from other parts of the United States and from Ireland.

Appearing at the festival (thanks, in part to the generosity of Aer Lingus) will be Arcady — Ireland's newest supergroup. An eight-member ensemble mostly from Galway, Arcady will be making its first U.S. appearance at the Snug Harbor Festival. The group features former De Dannann members Jackie Daly on accordion and Johnny "Ringo" McDonagh on *bodhran*; All-Ireland champion Cathal Hayden on fiddle and banjo; Patsy Broderick on piano; Brenden Larissey on fiddle; singer Frances Black (vocalist Mary Black's younger sister); flutist/*sean-*

*nos* singer Sean Keane (younger brother of Dolores Keane); and others. Arcady's music and performance style are "high-energy" to say the least. Not only are they masters of Irish music, but they are also known to throw in a few Cajun and country-western numbers as well as an occasional bit of Bach.

Other musicians appearing at the festival include one of New York's most prominent trios — fiddler Eileen Ivers, flutist/tin whistler Joanie Madden, and cittern/keyboardsist Gabriel O'Donahue. Born in the Bronx, Ivers and Madden both studied with senior masters of Irish music from the Bronx and both are All-Ireland champions on their respective instruments. Along with O'Donahue on vocals, the trio plays an innovative blend of traditional Irish music as well as Irish music merged with popular musical influences. The trio's resulting style helps forge Irish music in America into the '90s as it reflects both a deep respect for the tradition as well as a recognition of modern times and music styles.

More than 40 other outstanding folk artists will join these musicians at the Snug Harbor Festival. Throughout the afternoon, the performers will be presented in informal workshops (both participatory and demonstration), mini-concerts, and during the formal late-afternoon and evening concerts. Moreover, festival performers and other visiting musicians alike share tunes during the festival's spontaneous music *seisuns* which take place continuously in every corner of the Snug Harbor meadow.

Audience members can participate in step and *ceili* dance workshops. The *ceili* dance area will offer various workshops throughout the day and a *ceili mor* (grand *ceili*) will take place in the evening under

the stars. Live music by the area's most seasoned dance players will accompany each of the *ceilis* which are open to beginners and advanced dancers.

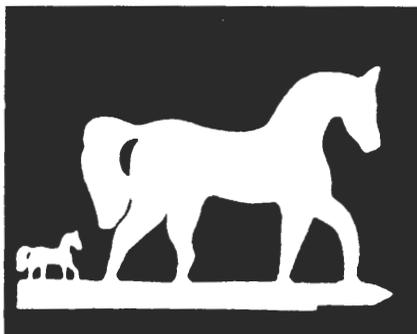
A children's area will grace the grounds of the festival once again, providing younger fans of Irish music with the opportunity to learn a few dance steps, some traditional ballads, and perhaps try their hand at the tin whistle and other instruments. Given its reputation for outstanding performances and imaginative activities, the children's area attracts nearly as many overgrown children as it does miniature adults — a testimony to the ageless nature of traditions and arts.

Festival-style food is sold at the event and picnicking on the grounds is encouraged! Delicious Irish baked goods are also available as are a variety of beverages. The perimeters of the festival are outlined with the colorful booths and stands of Irish vendors who sell everything from Claddagh rings and imported Irish teas and biscuits to balloons and stuffed animals.

Tickets for the festival are \$10 in advance and \$12.50 at the gate. Children under 12 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult. Group rates are available as well and the festival grounds are accessible to the handicapped. Public transportation to Snug Harbor is easy and fast and there is ample free parking.

Volunteers for the festival are needed! In return for working several hours during the day, volunteers are given free admission to the rest of the event.

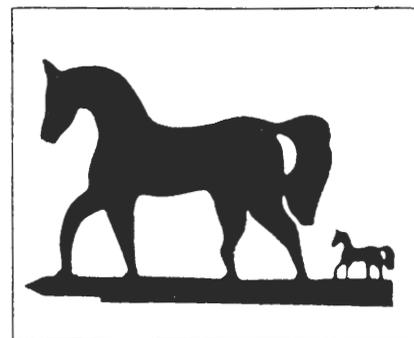
For more information about tickets, volunteering at the festival, and group rates, please call the Irish Arts Center at (212) 757-3318. Or write to the Festival Director, Irish Arts Center, 553 West 51st St., New York, NY 10019.



New York Folklore Newsletter  
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# New York State of the Arts

## MEHENDI VIDEO AVAILABLE

*Wedding Song: Henna Art Among Pakistani Women in New York City*, a 40 minute videotape directed and produced by Susan Slymovics and Amanda Dargan has just been released.

The art of painting the hands and feet of an Indian or Pakistani bride during a prenuptial ceremony called *mehendi* continues to be practiced in Muslim countries, in the Indian subcontinent, and wherever Muslim communities form. This videotape profiles Shenaz Hooda, a *mehendi* artist in her community in New York City. Among the Shia Ismaili Muslim immigrant community, Shenaz participates in the dance, music and orally-improvised songs that characteristically mock the groom, the in-laws, and the wedding ritual. Shenaz also works as a cosmetics supervisor at a large drugstore chain in Manhattan. During the filming, Shenaz agrees to an arranged marriage and the ritual artist becomes the painted bride.

A ten page interpretive booklet with photographs accompanies the videotape which is available for rent from: Susan Slymovics, Department of Performance Studies, New York University, 721 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003 (212) 998-1620, or Amanda Dargan, Queens Council on the Arts, 161-04 Jamaica Ave., Jamaica, N.Y. 11432 (718) 291-1100.

## 'MARITIME NEW YORK'

*Maritime New York*, a year-long series presenting and interpreting the traditional arts of New York harbor at the South Street Seaport Museum, continues on June 9 with a demonstration by sailmaker Gilbert Weising at the Museum Gallery on Water Street. This demonstration is open to all ages, but will be specifically geared toward young audiences.

On June 1 and 2, *Maritime New York* kicks off a series of traditional arts festivals with a "Festival of Shad Traditions." Visitors will learn how shad are caught on the Hudson River each spring using techniques rooted in centuries-old traditions. Demonstrations will include net-making, dory building, shad filleting, and shad smoking.

On July 12-14, a second festival will feature maritime traditions in wood. Demonstrations will include model boat building, spar making, and ship carpentry.

August 16-18, a third festival will feature maritime traditions in rope.

Demonstrations will include a variety of fancy ropework styles as well as traditional rigging techniques.

Fall *Maritime New York* programming will focus on the traditions of fishing, enriching the many exhibitions and programs on that theme planned for the museum this fall.

*Maritime New York* fieldworkers include Tom Walker, a folklorist and maritime specialist, as well as Marguerite Holloway, a journalist who has documented the culture of shad fishing on the Hudson.

*Maritime New York* programs are sponsored in part by funds from the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts. For more information on these programs, call Cathleen Condon, SSSM Adult Programs Coordinator at (212) 669-9400.

## GENESEE FOLKLIFE

*Genesee Folklife*, a new periodical published by Folk Arts of the Genesee (the folk arts program of the Arts Council for Wyoming County), has just been published. The newsletter extends the arm of the five-year-old program whose goal is to increase the awareness and appreciation of folk artists in the Genesee Valley Region.

The debut issue contains feature articles on the nature of folk arts, the Silver Lake Sea Serpent, and the BOCES Genesee Migrant Center as well as news of upcoming folk arts events around the state.

Geared toward folk artists and the general public, *Genesee Folklife* includes important information on artist job and funding opportunities. In addition, Volume 1, No. 1 outlines exciting long-range plans for a Genesee Folklife Center serving Genesee, Livingston, Wyoming, Alleghany, Southern Monroe, Cattaraugus, and Eastern Erie Counties.

Co-editors Kathy Kimiecik and Anne C. Humphrey welcome input on their newsletter and plans. For a copy of *Genesee Folklife* contact the editors at (716) 237-3517.

## ORLEANS COUNTY

The Orleans County Council on the Arts and the Genesee Region State Parks are pleased to announce the upcoming *Oak Orchard Creek Wildlife & Folk Art Festival*, June 28 and 29 at Lakeside Beach State Park on Rt. 18 in Point Breeze, N.Y.

Wildlife paintings, watercolors, fish decoys, quilts, fly tying, gunning decoys, Native American arts, baskets, cornhusk dolls, bluegrass music and traditional fid-

dling are among the arts to be presented at the weekend festival.

The festival will be held near the site of ancient Native American settlements and the launch for popular Lake Ontario trout and salmon derbies. July 28 & 29 is also the weekend of the Pepsi-Cola Trout and Salmon Challenge Derby at Oak Point Marina.

For further information regarding the festival, contact the Orleans County Council on the Arts, Box 465, Holley, N.Y. 14470 (716) 638-7121.

## FOLK ARTS HANDBOOK

*Folk Arts Programming in New York State: A Handbook and Resource Guide* is now available. Written by folklorist Karen Lux and published by the Regional Council of Historical Agencies, the handbook is a comprehensive resource guide and how-to manual for museums, community organizations and folklorists. With examples drawn from successful projects in New York State, the book includes case studies and photographs of exhibitions, performances, demonstrations, folk arts in education, media projects, publications and more. The handbook also contains a supplemental listing of folk arts resources in New York State including: folk arts archives, funding sources, consultants in folklore and traditional arts, and folk arts materials available for purchase.

To order, send a check or money order for \$10.50 payable to: The Regional Council of Historical Agencies (RCHA), 1400 North Cayuga Street, Syracuse, N.Y. 13208.

## The Rhythm of New York

*The Rhythm of New York: Traditional Music of the City* is the New York Historical Society's first series to focus on traditional music in New York City. These music presentations, co-sponsored by the Ethnic Folk Arts Center, are the third component of *Why History?* the society's initiative which critically examines the meaning of history and its relationship to contemporary issues in urban America.

The other two components are a film series and panel discussions running concurrently through June 1990.

Each performance includes pieces that reveal the origins of the music and how it has been transformed by American influences. For further information regarding *The Rhythm of New York* or the *Why History?* series contact the New York Historical Society's Office of Public Programs at (212) 873-3400 Ext. 246.

# Eelskin Laces and Willow Creel: Orleans County Folk Arts

As the fishing populations of Orleans County grew from the first permanent white settlements along Ridge Road in the early 1800s to the present, (now highlighted by the current and very popular ESLO, Empire State/Lake Ontario fishing derby), the popularity of fishing, both sports and commercial, has seen immense growth.

Oak Orchard Creek Gorge is the center of Orleans County's fishing activities. It is a unique natural geographic factor in the development of area fishing revenues and fishing folk arts. It is also the site and subject of intensely opinionated discussions concerning environmental conservation, profitable tourism, land and facilities development, and maintenance of its natural integrity and geography.

The Gorge is approximately five miles long with Oak Orchard Creek in its shallows. Oak Orchard Creek flows north into Lake Ontario beginning in the marshes and swamplands south of Ridge Rd., Rt. 104. Ridge Road is the prehistoric shoreline for Lake Ontario. The creek forms a natural affluent and spawning ground for migratory freshwater lake fish. Along with tributaries Otter Creek, Marsh Creek, Beardsley Creek, and, to the west, Johnson Creek, and through "Fiddler's Elbow," a three-angle crook in the basin of Oak Orchard Creek, the natural breeding grounds attract the popular spawning salmon, trout, and steelhead as well as bullhead, pickerel, pike and walleye.

The creeks and shoreline of Orleans County are visited year-round by amateur and professional sports fishermen from across the east coast who participate in fly fishing, snagging, and prize-winning money and trophy derbys. The ESLO derby, held during a three-day spring period in 1989 included a cash prize of more than \$45,000, for the largest salmon taken from Lake Ontario.

Interestingly enough, the record setting catch for the ESLO derbys, established in 1978, remains with an Orleans County catch at the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek, for a 47 lb. Chinook "King" salmon. The record Rainbow Trout, 26.93 lbs., was also caught in the area in 1985.

It is also a geographic fact that one of the deepest spots in Lake Ontario is just off Point Breeze at more than 100 fathoms, approximately 600 ft. Salmon and trout are known to "run deep."

Orleans County is a very rural territory with an agrarian economy supported by orchards, large family farms, some small industry, and a developing tourist/fishing



*The mouth of Oak Orchard Creek, Point Breeze, Orleans County, is the launching point for state-wide and area salmon and trout fishing derbies. A unique community of fisherpersons has populated the area for more than 100 years. (Photo by Dr. James Orr)*

subsidy. Within the population growth and nature of the county are living tradition bearers who have participated in fishing for sport, as well as sustenance. There are numerous individuals who have applied their special skills to individual fishing needs and can be considered folk artists. As indigenous folk arts tend to thrive in established communities and uniquely populated geographic areas it is only logical that the area of Orleans County's lakeshore, the Oak Orchard Gorge, and other creeks would be sites of fishing folk arts and artists. Many have now been documented for the first time.

Tied flies, carved lures, and spoons are basic attraction devices intended to entice fish to strike on a hidden barbed hook. When the fish is fooled successfully it bites and swallows the fly or lure and the hidden hook. The fish is caught on the hook and landed, while the fly or smaller lure is often swallowed, lost, or destroyed. A fly fisherman must have a large, varied supply of flies and lures for different kinds of fish, variable weather conditions, and stream or lake conditions.

Mark Stoddard is a fisherman who lives

along the Oak Orchard Gorge, Waterport, with his wife and daughter. He is an active hunter and fisherman, but he also paints fish and waterfowl portraits, hand-tied casting flies for various fish, and sculpts fish and waterfowl decoys. He participates in hunting and fishing year-round and explains that his extensive skills have been passed down from his father and grandfather. "I've been fishing ever since I was a little kid with my Dad, probably several times a week ever since then. I'm down on the creek every day. The best fishing on Oak Orchard Creek is right in front of our house."

Fly tying is a traditional craft that Stoddard learned from his father and he practices actively. Oak Orchard Creek is only a few moments walk down the sides of the Gorge from his home and it is along the creek banks that he experiments with flies he has tied, often offering them to friends and other fishermen in the creek for their own experiments.

Hand tied flies require intense patience and skills using a variety of dressings for the head, hackles, wings, and tail. Dressing materials include feathers, fur, string,

hair, wool yarn, synthetics, and animal tails. Stotdard started by making simple gnats, cicadas and nymphs using deer hair and crow feathers found in the woods surrounding his home. Other more complicated flies use more sophisticated and sometimes manufactured materials.

Dry flies float upon the water surface. Wet flies are more traditional and sink in the water. A streamer is designed to imitate small fish and is made of brightly colored feathers. A bucktail fly is usually made with the hair from a deer's tail.

"If you are fishing in dirty water and you use a chartreuse fly early in the season for a steelhead they kill it. If you throw it in late in the season in the clear water it horrifies them. So you have to match what (the fish) are eating throughout the seasons. You start in the early season with large, bright, gaudy flies in the dirty water and as it clears up they get smaller with more natural colors," Stotdard said.

Stotdard's flies show wide imagination and experience on the water. "The hardest ones to tie are the smallest most subtle variations that normally do not impress most people. These are mayflies. This is the smallest one that I tie," Stotdard explained. The tied mayfly is smaller than a human fingernail.

A notable fly of Stotdard's design is a mouse. Using thick fur from a bear or raccoon he imitates the shape and form of a small wood mouse. The fur is bound to the hook with heavier wrapped thread and then trimmed until the shape of the mouse is recognizable, at least to a fish. A mouse fly can be used for larger fish.

Numerous other examples of fly tying are named Baby Rainbow, Edson Tiger, Green Drake, Grey Fox, Red Quill, Grizzly King, Rube Wood, Quill Gordon, Dark Montreal and March Brown. There are many others, each with its own identifying name and purpose.

Stotdard is an avid conservationist summing up his observations by refusing to eat any of the fish he catches. "I just don't trust it," he explained. "If the fish smells fishy or like metal when you clean it, and it often does, you shouldn't eat it."

Fishermen have traditionally used specially shaped and carved lures of all kinds and materials to attract and outsmart fish with the same purposes as tied flies. But lures are larger with multiple hooks, offer more action in the water, and tend to last longer than flies. They are also used to attract larger, stronger fish.

Orleans County is in what John Pawlaczyk of Albion, calls "lure alley," an area that extends from the mountain lakes of

the Adirondacks along the shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie and into the Great Lakes regions of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan. Pawlaczyk, a retired pipefitter, is a self-taught authority on antique fishing lures and has an extensive collection of antique and contemporary fishing lures from New England and New York State and, particularly, handmade lures from the area of Orleans County.

"Here is a spoon lure from Albion made out of a silver spoon," Pawlaczyk illustrated. "Someone took a silver spoon and cut it into pieces. You see, silver won't turn black under water and when it's rubbed nice and shiny it attracts the fish." A spoon lure is used in shallower, muddy



*Fish decoys were once used to lure larger freshwater fish for spearing through holes in the winter's ice. These decoys were carved by Jim Stangland; Gaines, Orleans County. They are carved out of local basswood and finished with a variety of paint, including auto body paint. (Photo by Dr. James Orr)*

water. As it is dragged through the water it wiggles and the movement and reflection of the metal attracts the fish.

Another lure from the area appears to be carved from a broom stick. It is simply colored red and white in two jointed parts with three hooks. Pawlaczyk explained that red and white colors are the most common colors on lures, although he doesn't know why. The metal sheeting used as connections is hand cut and it has no commercial or copyright markings.

Pawlaczyk's interest in fishing and lures comes from lifelong fishing activities in the County. He ran a fishing tackle store in Albion before retiring. After selling the

commercial aspect of his interest he developed a specialty in the collections he began as an adolescent. He now pursues his collecting actively throughout New York State and New England and is very knowledgeable about makers, uses, categories and designs.

Pawlaczyk's collection includes unsigned willow fishing baskets called "creels," fishing line reels, and numerous other handmade fishing items. He also has a few handmade fish decoys, the most valuable items of his collection. Fish decoys were once used for ice fishing and may be the most traditional of all baiting and luring techniques. They were made and decorated by hand and as pieces of original American folk art command very high prices in the collector's market.

As fishing was once a year-round sustenance activity, a ready source had to be found during the winter months. Most fish decoys were used to lure pike, a larger, hardier freshwater lake fish that feeds on smaller fish.

A fisherman would first chop a hole in the ice and then put the decoys through the hole into the cold water. Held on a strong string the decoy was pulled and jerked around with the hopes of attracting the fish to the surface of the hole. When the fish was in sight, it was quickly speared and pulled directly out of the water. Spearing was made illegal in New York State at the turn of the 20th century.

Jim Stangland, a private housing contractor from Gaines, just south of the Oak Orchard Gorge, makes fishing decoys from locally cut basswood and poplar. Although spearing with decoys is against the law, Stangland carries on a carving tradition learned from years of fishing and hunting.

Decoys were often carved in the forms of frogs, chubs (a small carp) and crayfish. They have no hooks and are often painted with great detail and color.

Stangland's fish decoys will most often end up on someone's mantle or as wall decorations, but for him carving has become a useful avocation as stimulating and introspective as fishing itself. "I used to go out hunting every season, every day, for deer, turkey, ducks, everything. But it has become less important to me to go out and shoot animals. I now enjoy carving and going out in the woods with just a camera instead of a gun." Stangland also carves waterfowl decoys.

Lures, flies, and sometimes even the fish decoys, must be used in conjunction with a fishing or casting rod of some kind.

# Society Page

## New Directions

By John Suter, Director

The New York Folklore Society is at a turning point, one of many such points in its long history. It is an exciting time that, in its new sense of direction, recalls some of the spirit and purpose of the society's founders.

Established in 1944 during a time of burgeoning popular interest in folklore, the New York Folklore Society was an association of academic folklorists and folklore enthusiasts with a strong populist orientation. In his introductory essay to the 40th Anniversary issue of *New York Folklore*, published in 1985, editor Phillips Stevens Jr. reminds us that, "The Society had been formed both to encourage and coordinate the great numbers of ordinary people across the state who were probing eagerly into the rich legacy of their custom, beliefs, and traditional history, and to help legitimize an enterprise that many considered no more than a quaint pastime . . ." The political importance of strong community-based expressive traditions in a pluralistic, democratic society was also understood and articulated in the early years of the society.

The widespread enthusiasm for folklore subsided after a time, and the fortunes of the New York Folklore Society have ebbed and flowed over the years. During the 1980s, the society suffered a severe fiscal and organizational crisis that threatened its existence. But the climate for folk arts and folklore in New York State began to shift in the mid-1980s. The establishment of the Folk Arts Program in the New York State Council on the Arts in 1985 stimulated a surge of public folk arts programming throughout the state which continues to this day. During the same period, the number of folklorists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists and others working in the field of folk arts in New York State has increased dramatically, with most finding work in the public sector rather than the academy. As a result, the New York Folklore Society has seen a gradual shift in its membership, its board and its programs, embracing the public sector field as an equal partner with academic folklore. The organization emerged from its crisis in the late 1980s financially sound, with a strong and committed board, and ready to grow.

### Directions for Growth

The directions for our current growth have been set partly in response to the need for a statewide organization to provide services to the expanding field of folk arts

in New York (this newsletter, the Mentoring Project and the Upstate New York Folk Arts Forum are current examples) and to sponsor folk arts programs with statewide impact, such as Rebecca Miller's radio documentary project. The accompanying articles describe some of these programs in greater detail.

### A New Mission

At its January meeting, the society's board of directors adopted a new mission statement that reflects these concerns and sense of purpose:

The New York Folklore Society is dedicated to furthering cultural equity and cross-cultural understanding in a multicultural society through the documentation, explication, and services-to-the-field of folklore and folklife in New York State. Folklore and folklife are rooted in community tradition and are intimately linked to a community's sense of identity, self-esteem and power. The New York Folklore Society seeks to nurture folklore and folklife by fostering and encouraging folk cultural expressions within their own communities and by sharing these expressions across cultural boundaries.

In the coming months and years, the new mission will find expression in the make-up of the organization and in its publications and programs. We plan to expand and restructure the board to better reflect the state's cultural diversity. *New York Folklore* editors Deborah Blincoe and John Forrest will encourage, "work on understudied issues and groups," and are seeking, "works in all disciplines and from all sectors of the folklore and folk arts community which address current endeavors in the field as broadly defined." The upcoming issue on folklore in New York's African-American communities, guest edited by Barbara Hampton, is a case in point. And new program ideas — for services to the field, statewide presentation or documentation projects, publications — are beginning to emerge, stimulated by the new multicultural focus.

### Nuts and Bolts

The rising tide of folk arts activity — and funding — in New York State has brought increased support to the New York Folklore Society and has enabled us to assume new responsibilities for services to the field as a whole. With these responsibilities come new organizational imperatives. In the past, the Society has been run out of the homes or academic offices of its volunteer officers, editors of the journal, or, more recently, the part-time

paid administrator. Now, all that is changing. As of February 1, 1990, we have a full-time director, a part-time administrative assistance, a computer, and an office in Ithaca, New York. The office is in temporary quarters, but we expect to find a permanent location by June.

The basic operating and program budget will pass the \$120,000 mark this year, with several major grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, support for the radio documentary project from the National Endowment for the Arts, crucial membership support, and individual contributions keeping us healthy and growing.

This is a year of transition and optimistic anticipation. The staff and board welcomes your comments, questions, and suggestions about the mission, the organization or the programs of the New York Folklore Society. And we would, of course, like to welcome you as a member of the society and subscriber to *New York Folklore* as we enter the new decade.

The New York Folklore Society is also responding to a more general concern. We are living in the midst of a society in which many communities united by shared culture — especially the poor, working class and rural communities where folk arts are often most vital — are struggling to make sense of their relationships with other communities and with the enormous power of mainstream American popular and "high" culture. In his "Appeal for Cultural Equity," Alan Lomax affirms that all cultures, especially their expressive systems such as music, language and art, are "equally expressive and equally communicative," and that,

These symbolic systems are equally favorable: first because they enrich the lives of the culture or people who employ them and whose psychic balance is threatened when they are destroyed or impoverished; second because each communicative system (whether verbal, musical, or even culinary) holds important discoveries about the natural and human environment; and third, because each is a treasure of unknown potential, a collective creation in which some branch of the human species invested its genius across centuries. (*Journal of Communication*, Spring 1977, p. 126)

The nurturing and celebrating of traditional arts and culture are — or should be — part of an ongoing struggle for cultural democracy and cultural equity — and these issues are closely linked with those of social, economic and political justice.

## Presenting Folk Arts

*Presenting Folk Arts*, a showcase and conference to introduce presenting organizations to the performing folk arts, will take place June 14-15 at Cornell University's Center for Theatre Arts in Ithaca. Presented by the New York State Council on the Arts in cooperation with the New York Folklore Society and Cornell's Department of Theatre Arts, the conference will bring representatives of presenting organizations from New York State for two days of performances, workshops, and discussions that will explore some of the opportunities and challenges of presenting culturally diverse folk traditions on stage. Six outstanding folk ensembles will perform and participate in workshops, and sixteen of the nation's leaders in the field of folk arts presenting will share their experiences and insights (see sidebar).

Continued on Page 10

## CHALLENGE GRANT

Please Help Us  
Meet the Challenge

We have received a very generous matching donation of \$1000 from Phoebe Bender of Albany toward the purchase of our computer system. In order to receive all the pledged funds, we need to raise another additional \$1000 in new money. *Your contribution will be worth double its face value to the New York Folklore Society!* so this is the perfect time for you to give us your support.

If you would like to contribute, please send us your tax-deductible contribution and include the form at the end of the newsletter with your name, address, and phone number filled in. And please write "Computer Match" somewhere on the form. Thank you very much!

## New York Traditions

The New York Folklore Society was recently awarded funding from the Folk Arts Programs of the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts for the production of a new public radio series tentatively titled "New York Traditions." Produced by folklorist Rebecca Miller and a bevy of regional folklorists, this 13-part series of documentaries will examine a variety of folk art genres from

## Participating Artists

*The Apsara Ensemble* - Traditional Cambodian music and dance, led by Sam-Ang Sam  
*The Whitstein Brothers* - Old time country vocal and instrumental music from Louisiana  
*Alice Clemens and Mark Hamilton* - Upstate New York old time fiddling and calling  
*Los Pleneros de la 21* - Afro-Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena* music and dance  
*Calabria Bella* - Traditional Southern Italian Music and Dance  
*Cephas and Wiggins* - Piedmont Blues

## Panelists and Speakers

*Robert Browning*, World Music Institute  
*Anna Chairetakis*, Institute for Italian American Studies  
*Mark Cianca*, Arts & Lectures, University of California at Santa Barbara  
*Bess Lomax Hawes*, Director, Folk Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts  
*Murray Horowitz*, National Public Radio  
*Spider Kedelsky*, National Endowment for the Arts, Dance on Tour  
*Martin Koenig*, Ethnic Folk Arts Center  
*Rick Luftglass*, Ethnic Folk Arts Center  
*Mary Anne McDonald*, North Carolina Arts Council, Folk Arts Section  
*Ethel Raim*, Ethic Folk Arts Center  
*Peter Reiniger*, National Council for the Traditional Arts  
*David Roche*, Festival at the Lake, Oakland, California  
*Dan Sheehy*, Folk Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts  
*Nicholas Spitzer*, Consultant to the Smithsonian Institution and Carnegie Hall  
*Dick Van Kleeck*, Kentucky Center for the Arts  
*Vaughn Ward*, Folklorist, Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council  
*Joe Wilson*, National Council for the Traditional Arts

throughout New York State. Several of the programs will profile musicians or local musical styles; others will examine a regional folk expression — such as storytelling and narrative — and several focus on different genres of craftsmanship that translate easily to radio.

"New York Traditions" examines these folk arts as expressions of the individual artists and of the community values and aesthetics that inform them. To date, seven of the thirteen programs are planned: "Ricon Criollo: Puerto Rican Traditions in the South Bronx" (co-producer Joseph Sciorra); "A Russian Orthodox Easter in Binghamton" (co-producer Catherine Schwoeffermann); "The Cat That Swam the Panama Canal: Maritime Tales and Folklore" (co-producer Tom Walker); "Mohawk Folklore: Native American Traditions of the North Country" (co-producer Varick Chittenden); "Two Stones to Every Dirt: The Folklore of Catskills Bluestone" (co-producer Janis

Continued on Page 10

## Mentoring Project Offers Technical Help

The *Mentoring Project* is a technical assistance program of the New York Folklore Society. Now in its second year, the expanded Mentoring Project will reimburse travel costs *and* pay consulting fees for short-term consultations with folk arts professionals.

The Mentoring Project offers opportunities for professional growth and technical assistance for folk arts professionals in New York State by facilitating short-term, one-on-one consultations with others in folklore or related disciplines. Folk arts programming in the public sector requires knowledge and skills in many areas — fieldwork, documentation, archiving, promotion, graphic design, exhibit design, editing, concert production and more. If you could benefit from a one- or two-day consultation with someone who has more knowledge or experience in a particular area related to your folk arts

Continued on Page 11

# OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

## *Folklore Panels At Baltic Conference*

Several folklore panels will convene at the upcoming meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies to be held from June 21 to 23 in Seattle, Washington. The local host for the conference will be the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington.

The easing of political relations in Eastern Europe has made it possible for the conference organizers to extend an invitation to folklorists and ethnomusicologists (and, of course, scholars in all the other disciplines) from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to read papers during the meeting. There is every hope that many of these individuals will attend and share their knowledge with their American colleagues.

For a copy of the preliminary program for folklore, or for more information of a general nature, please contact Egle Victoria Zygas, division chair for folklore, at 212-977-7170.

## ETHNICITY CONFERENCE

Pennsylvania Gov. Robert P. Casey announced that the first Governor's Conference on Ethnicity will be held June 8-9 at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East.

"The goal of the conference is to highlight cultural heritage as a human resource that can contribute to social policy and problem solving," Gov. Casey said. "We already work aggressively to conserve and protect our unique heritage. We now want to take that one step further and explore the role state government can play in recognizing ethnicity and implementing culturally sensitive policies and programs."

Lt. Gov. Mark S. Singel, chairman of the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission, said the conference will provide a needed forum to exchange ideas and perspectives.

"We want to increase cultural awareness in social policies and programs at state and local levels," Lt. Gov. Singel said. "We have found there is a growing need to consider the cultural dimension of contemporary issues."

Lt. Gov. Singel said the conference has four themes: conservation of cultural heritage resources, culturally sensitive delivery of human and health services, inter-ethnic relations, and multi-cultural education.

For additional information on the conference, call (717) 783-8625.

## English Schedule Seminar On Cultural Traditions

The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language in Sheffield, England, has scheduled its Eighth International Seminar on "Perspectives on Contemporary Legend" for July 23-27.

Each summer since 1982 the Centre has hosted a seminar for scholars working in the area of contemporary legend. The encouraging response to these meetings has prompted us to host a further seminar in the summer of 1990. The seminar will enable those interested in contemporary legend to keep in touch with current research and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

For more information please contact: Paul Smith, The International Society for Contemporary Legend Research, Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1C 557.

## JOB OPENING

**Position:** Program Coordinator

**Employer:** Ethnic Folk Arts Center, a non-profit NYC-based traditional music and dance organization

**Salary:** Commensurate with experience

**Responsibilities:** The Program Coordinator is responsible for implementing EFAC programs, including all aspects of concerts and festivals, as well as folk dance classes, publications, et. al. Specific duties include event coordination, publicity (general media and community outreach), technical liaison, program notes preparation, artists liaison and contracting, worker coordination, etc. Depending on experience, the Program Coordinator may be engaged in extensive writing, editing and design/preparation of program materials, the quarterly EFAC newsletter and occasional flyers, and the writing of press releases, project fundraising narratives, etc. Program Coordinator will need to be comfortable with using computers (IBM-ATs, primarily for word-processing, plus some database work, budgeting and desktop publishing), and may also be involved in computer system management. Program Coordinator also functions as a liaison with the media and with outside organizations involved in art, folk arts, community service, education, etc.; extensive phone-

work and letter-writing are necessary.

**Skills and Experience:** Candidates should have at least two years experience in the arts. Specific knowledge of traditional ethnic music and dance is helpful, but not necessary. Flexibility, a willingness to learn and an interest and sensitivity to ethnic communities and culture is essential. Excellent writing, editing and oral communication skills are essential. We are looking for someone who likes to work as part of a team, with the initiative and responsibility to move rapidly into a very responsible and sensitive position. Candidates must be able to work under pressure of deadlines. The former Program Coordinator will be on the job through the summer, and will assist and train selected candidate.

The Ethnic Folk Arts Center, founded in 1966, is a non-profit organization that promotes — through research, documentation and presentation — traditional ethnic music and dance of urban immigrant communities in New York and throughout the United States. Among the Center's projects are programs involving music and dance of Irish, Italian, Jewish, Greek, Balkan, Central European, Latino, Scandinavian, African-American and other communities. EFAC's programs are designed both to introduce ethnic cultural traditions to wider audiences, and to strengthen an appreciation of the traditional forms within the communities themselves.

With a full-time staff of 8 and an operating budget in excess of \$500,000, EFAC is among the largest and most active folk arts organizations in the country.

**To Apply:** No phone calls, please! Please send your resume with a cover letter which describes your recent work experience, your goals and the personal qualities and skills you bring to this job. Please also include at least two work references, and be prepared to submit a writing sample of two or more paragraphs if you are invited for an interview. The position will be filled as soon as a viable candidate is found, so apply as soon as possible.

**Ethel Raim & Martin Koenig, Directors  
Ethnic Folk Arts Center  
131 Varick St., Room 907  
New York, NY 10013**



## Eelskin Laces . . .



Colored threads are used to hold fishing line eyelets on fishing rods designed by Charlie Chick, Albion, Orleans County. Charlie makes specialized fishing rods for stream and creek fly casting and deep lake salmon fishing. (Photo by Dr. James Orr)

## Eelskin . . .

(Continued From Page 5)

The image of a child cutting a stick or piece of bamboo and taking string, worms and a hook or two out to the local pond or fishing hole is a common picture. The more sophisticated fisherman will now have a different rod for each different style of fishing.

Charlie Chick, a retired plumber and steamfitter from Albion, started building his own rods as a matter of necessity. "I used to just repair my rods because I couldn't afford to buy new ones. During the winter when you can't fish anyways, I tried it using a couple of blanks (commercial purchased shafts) and I did it. I did it all by hand. I didn't have a lathe or anything, you know. I just put it on a couple of coat hangers and rolled it and that's how I got started."

Using a turning lathe designed for working with fishing rods, Chick turns wooden decorative embellishments at the holding ends of the rods and cork handles designed to suit the grip of the fisherman. The main purpose of the lathe is to wrap colorful threads along the shaft, holding line-eyelets parallel to the shaft. As the rod blanks rotate in the lathe, controlled by an electronic foot treadle, threads are guided over and around the eyelets and the rod. Eyelets properly positioned on a custom designed rod minimize the possibility of breaking the rod or tangling the fishline when a fish has been hooked.

Chick's expertise in fishing shows in the design of rods intended to be used for different kinds of fish and fishing conditions. A longer, thicker, and slightly heavier rod is intended to use for fishing salmon. Ac-

tion at the end of the rod when a salmon is hooked, is considerably less than that of a fly casting rod with a fish on it. A casting rod will bend almost 180 degrees. Chick calls the salmon rod a "lunker stick."

I fish for just about everything with a fly rod. I just caught a salmon on a fly rod. But the fellow I fish with, he says, "That's it!!" Took me about 40 minutes to land him (the salmon). He says "That will be the end of that! No more fly rods in my boat. It takes too long to land 'em."

Paintings and signage are also among Orleans County's fishing folk arts. The geography of the Oak Orchard Gorge/Point Breeze area, its businesses, and the fish themselves have been illustrated on many different canvases.

Fly-tyer Mark Stotdard, mentioned above, is also a self-taught painter. Stotdard has a unique method for painting fish portraits. "Sometimes I will take cardboard or chipboard in the boat with me. When I catch a fish that is good size, I put it on the chipboard and trace the outline directly from it. Back home I cut out the outline and paint the fish. Have you ever seen a fish silhouette like this?"

There is a good deal of humor and exaggeration associated with fishing and it shows up in Orleans County through business and commercial signage and storytelling. Al Capurso, a bait shop owner in Gaines, is now the owner of an eight-foot King salmon sculpture, made in 1986 by Charlie Wind of Medina. The salmon was originally intended for display during the annual Orleans County fishing derby, held each year in mid-August, and

was paraded through Medina and Albion as part of a community summer celebration.

The eight-foot fiberglass and steel salmon is spray painted and speckled with exacting detail. It is attached to a small trailer, but concern over safe transportation caused Derby organizers to discontinue its use. Capurso inquired over its location and purchased it from the city of Medina. This "King" salmon icon is now set up as a roadside attraction in front of Capurso's bait shop.

Harry's Bait Shop is highlighted by a handpainted sign along its side of a blonde mermaid lounging on an outcrop of rock. Harry's mermaid was originally painted by Charlie Reynolds, a Point Breeze resident, now deceased.

Fishing humor continues at Brown's Berry Patch, a large fruit stand and gift shop just west of The Bridges, Waterport. Owner Bob Brown explained, "My grandfather used to say that eels from Lake Ontario made the best shoe and boot laces ever. He said, 'You just skinned the eel and that skin rolled right over making a lace that would last forever!'"

The traditional humor of area fishing may best be exemplified by Allan Speers' scrap-art dummy of a solitary fisherman sitting on a bank of a small stream flowing along Latta Road, North Greece, Monroe County, a few miles east of Orleans County and south of Lake Ontario. Speers, a 91-year-old retired farmer, explained, "He (the fisherman) comes out on April first and fishes all summer long. He don't move until Election Day in November and then he goes into town to vote and he don't fish for the rest of the year."

Speers' dummy is adorned with yellow rain gear, coat and pants, a white hard hat, sun glasses, and mop-like hair. Local residents have said that the fisherman has appeared at the beginning of April for the past 11 years. It has become a source of local humor and pride.

Orleans County Fishing Folk Arts represent long standing skills with centuries of tradition. Only recently has it been learned that massive tourist and building speculation along Oak Orchard Creek, at the mouth of the Creek, and in Point Breeze, has been halted.

Environmental conservation is a serious concern to all resident anglers, and many have watched the pending development of Point Breeze and Oak Orchard Creek with a wary eye. The geographic and rural integrity of Orleans County and its fishing folk arts have been recognized again and it is hoped that they will be preserved as they have been in the past.

## Presenting . . .

(Continued From Page 7)

Workshop and panel discussion topics include: "The Right Choice: Selecting Appropriate Performers for Your Folk Arts Programs"; "What Should It Look Like, And How Should It Sound? Production Values and Technical Considerations"; "Bringing in the Community: Expanding and Diversifying Your Audience through Folk Arts Programming"; and "Making the Performance Make Sense: Educating Audiences for Understanding and Enjoyment."

On Thursday evening, blues musicians Cephas and Wiggins and Louisiana country musicians, The Whitstein Brothers, will give a public concert at the Proscenium Theater of the Center for Theatre Arts. Friday evening, *Presenting Folk Arts* will end with an unusual dance party — Upstate New York fiddlers and a caller will share the stage with Calabria Bella, who will play traditional southern Italian music for dancing.

There is a growing interest among presenting organizations and audiences alike in folk performing arts, and increasing numbers of folk artists are seeking opportunities to perform outside their own communities. Rooted in the lives and traditions of America's diverse regional and ethnic cultures, folk arts offer presenters new opportunities to entertain and inform existing audiences — and to develop new ones. Yet few presenting organizations have had opportunities to learn about the nature of folk arts or the resources, methods and special issues involved in presenting folk artists effectively on stage. *Presenting Folk Arts* hopes to begin to address this need.

*Presenting Folk Arts* is directed by Robert Baron, Director of the New York State Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program; it is coordinated in Ithaca by New York Folklore Society Director John Suter. This project takes its inspiration from a series of conferences called *New Works, New Audiences*, initiated by the Presenting Organizations Program at the New York State Council on the Arts. Over the past three years, *New Works, New Audiences* has successfully addressed a similar need to educate presenting organizations about contemporary performing arts. The Presenting Organizations Program staff is assisting with the planning of *Presenting Folk Arts*.

The site for the showcase and conference is Cornell University's Center for Theatre Arts. The new state-of-the-art

theater and dance facility, designed by renowned British architect James Sterling, is itself of interest to presenters.

For more information about *Presenting Folk Arts*, you may contact Robert Baron or Helen Hubbard Marr at the New York State Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program (212-614-2977), or John Suter at the New York Folklore Society, PO Box 130, Newfield, N.Y. 14867, (607-273-9137).

## NY Traditions . . .

(Continued From Page 7)

Benincasa); "The Salmon River Boys of Pulaski, N.Y." (co-producer Dan Ward); and "Every Day Will Be Sunday": The Songs of Rev. Dan Smith" (co-producer Field Horne).

After all 13 programs are completed, "New York Traditions" will be distributed via public radio satellite and tape to public, non-commercial and community radio stations nationwide and throughout New York State. A cassette edition of the 13 programs will be made available to public institutions, schools, and other interested parties at a nominal cost. For further information about this series (and suggestions for a snappier series title), please write to Rebecca Miller at the New York Folklore Society, P.O. Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867.

## SAVE THE DATES!

The fall meetings of the New York Folklore Society will be held September 14 through 16 in Corning, New York. Hosted by the Chemung Valley Arts Council and organized by folklorist Peter Voorheis, the weekend events will highlight Corning's glass industry.

Among Corning's many glass artists and technicians are individuals whose families have been involved locally with glass for several generations. Expect a presentation on the glass industry by a local historian, a demonstration at a hot glass studio and a tour of the Corning Museum of Glass.

New York Folklore Society members will receive a complete schedule and registration information this summer. For further information on the fall meetings write Peter Voorheis at the Chemung Valley Arts Council, Baron Steuben Place, Market St., Corning, NY 14830.

## Upstate New York Folk Arts Forum

This year, the New York Folklore Society is sponsoring the Upstate New York Folk Arts Forum, previously sponsored by the DeWitt Historical Society as the Central New York Folk Arts Forum.

The Forum brings together folk art professionals to informally discuss issues of common interest and concern encountered in the field. The 1990 program, funded again by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, has been expanded to include the entire Upstate region, with meetings being held in Syracuse, Rochester, the Albany area and Purchase. We will continue to reimburse costs for travel to these meetings.

This year's program will include a discussion of *Program Planning and Evaluation* and also will address *Intergenerational Programming*, *Presenting Living Folk Artists in Museums*, and *Promotional Materials and Services for Folk Artists*: the three areas of special interest outlined by the NYSCA Folk Arts Program in its current guidelines. Each program includes a more or less structured discussion of the announced topic and some time for general discussion of other subjects of interest.

The first meeting was held on April 26 at the Parke Avery House in Syracuse. It focused on *Presenting Living Folk Artists in Museums* and was hosted by Dan Ward, staff folklorist at the Cultural Resources Council. A travelling version of the Delaware County Historical Association exhibit "Quilted Together: Women, Quilts and Communities" was on display during the meeting.

The second forum will take place June 21 at the Strong Museum in Rochester from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hosted by Kate Koperski, staff folklorist for Arts for Greater Rochester, this forum on *Program Planning and Evaluation* will address a team approach to exhibit design and planning, as well as program evaluation of content and physical design.

The August meeting on *Intergenerational Programming*, will be held in the Albany area and coordinated by Ellen McHale. In October, *New York Folklore* editors Deborah Blincoe and John Forrest will host a forum on *Promotional Materials and Services for Folk Artists* at S.U.N.Y. Purchase.

For more information, contact John Suter or Linda Cruise at the New York Folklore Society.

## Mentoring . . .

(Continued From Page 7)

programming, the Mentoring Project may be able to help.

### Here's How It Works

- Write or call the New York Folklore Society and request an application form.
- Contact the person you would like to consult with — your mentor — and gain his or her agreement to participate in the project.
- Submit the application to the New York Folklore Society.
- A panel consisting of NYFS President Dan Ward, Secretary-Treasurer Ellen McHale, and Director John Suter will evaluate your proposal. We will notify you and send report forms for you and your mentor within two weeks.
- You and your mentor meet as planned.
- You submit a brief report on the form we will provide and include travel receipts. The mentor must submit a report also, including her or his request for payment.
- Upon receipt of *both* reports, we will reimburse your travel costs and pay the mentor's fee.

### A Few Guidelines

- The mentor may be from any field or discipline if the consultancy will directly benefit your folk arts programming.
- The mentor's fee amount must be included in the application, and the same fee must be reflected in the mentor's report.
- In general, we will pay mentors' fees up to \$150 per day for up to two days on a single consultancy. Higher fees may be possible under special circumstances.
- We can reimburse travel costs up to \$250 per consultancy. Transportation, lodging and meals are eligible for reimbursement.

For more information or an application, call or write: John Suter, New York Folklore Society, P.O. Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867 tel. (607) 273-9137.

### Join The Pool of Mentors

The New York Folklore Society plans to develop a roster of people from a range of disciplines who are interested in serving as mentors in the program. This will enable us to facilitate contacts between people seeking assistance and potential mentors.

If you would like to be on our roster, please send:

- Your name, address, current position, and telephone number;
- A copy of your resume;
- A brief description of your main areas of expertise;
- Your daily consultation fee or range of fees that you would accept (This is for our general information only. We will not mention specific amounts to a potential applicant — that will be for the two of you to negotiate.)
- Any special limitations, requirements or considerations that apply to your participation in the project.

Joining the roster does not obligate you to participate in the program. It simply makes it possible for us to make potential applicants aware of mentors that might be available. They can contact you if they choose, and you may participate or not as you choose.

The Mentoring Project is made possible with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### The New York Folklore Society

Enclosed is payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the New York Folklore Society, Inc. for membership in the following category:

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual, U.S., \$25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual, Non-U.S., \$30.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Institution, U.S., \$35.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Institution, Non-U.S., \$40.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Time Student (U.S. only) \$15.00 (Enclose photocopy of valid I.D.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the New York Folklore Society.

Check one: \_\_\_\_\_ New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal Membership

Total amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: New York Folklore Society, Inc.; PO Box 130; Newfield, NY 14867

**Offices of the  
New York Folklore Society**

The Society now operates offices at  
three locations in New York State:

**Business Office:**

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New York Folklore Society, Inc.  
PO Box 130  
Newfield, NY 14867  
(607) 564-9074

**Newsletter Office:**

Janis Benincasa, Editor  
**New York Folklore Newsletter**  
Box 173  
Arkville, N.Y. 12406  
(914) 586-3112

**Journal Office:**

Deborah Blincoe and John  
Forrest, Editors  
**New York Folklore**  
Social Sciences Building  
SUNY Purchase  
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Purchase, New York  
10577-1400

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For further information and tickets:

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The festival is made possible, in part, by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts,  
the National Endowment for the Arts, and with special assistance from Aer Lingus.

*New York Folklore Newsletter*

*P.O. Box 130*

*Newfield, N.Y. 14867*

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