

NEW YORK
**FOLK
LORE**
NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1990

What Meets The Eye

Designed by Diane Ghisone, who specializes in graphic design for arts and cultural organizations, the new look of **New York Folklore Newsletter** reflects the current progress of the organization as a whole. With a new mission statement, a full time director, administrative offices in Ithaca, and ongoing statewide programs, the society's quarterly newsletter is dressed for success. And what meets the eye includes an expanded format. Our features, society news, and notices of upcoming events will be joined in the next few issues by new departments and columns. We would like you, our readers, to contribute to the newsletter with your letters to the editor, columns about foodways and other folklore genres, profiles of artists, reviews, and "local color" clipped from your hometown paper. Newsletter submissions generally do not exceed 1000 words and should be typed double spaced. We will also accept 3.5" microdiscs accompanied by hard copy.

The Newsletter design was made possible, in part, by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program.

Janis Benincasa
Editor

Year End Reflections

As 1990 draws to a close, we can look back with satisfaction on a year of exciting programming and solid organization building. The Presenting Folk Arts Showcase and Conference, a NYSCA project at Cornell University which we helped coordinate, was an exciting event of national importance for the field. The Upstate New York Folk Arts Forum and Mentoring Project have provided valuable stimulation and growth for people engaged in folk arts programming around the state. Beginning with this issue, the newsletter, with its new look, is being distributed much more widely than before, and the journal *New York Folklore* is thriving under the bold and imaginative editorship of Deborah Blincoe and John Forrest. (The first 1990 issue will be out to our members in a few weeks; the second, a special issue "Through Afrocentric Prisms" and guest edited by Barbara Hampton, is due out in early 1991.) Three of Rebecca Miller's radio documentary profiles of New York State folk artists will be completed by the end of the year.

Much of our effort this year has been on internal affairs—establishing an office, hiring staff, and managing our expansion. At our annual meeting in October, we bid farewell to board members Mary Barile, Varick Chittenden, and John Eilertsen. We are grateful for their years of service on the board and welcome their continued involvement with the Society. We want to pay special tribute to Varick Chittenden. Chitt has been a member of the board for many, many years and has provided leadership, steady support, wise counsel, and good humor throughout his tenure. Thank you, Chitt, and best wishes as you build Traditional Arts in Upstate New York, in the North Country.

We are honored to welcome four new board members: Folklorist Todd DeGarmo who is Director of Folklife Programs at the Crandall Library in Glens Falls; Earlene DeLaPerriere, a faculty member at SUNY Brockport with interests in African-American literature and the blues; David Quinn, an attorney and judge in Albany who also holds an M.A. in folklore from Cooperstown; and Diosa Summers, an artist, museum educator, and consultant on American Indian programs.

Our plans for the coming year include continued growth in our ongoing programs and several exciting new ideas. But projected red ink in the state's budget to the tune of almost one billion dollars, and the Governor's freeze of 1991 funds pending further major cuts in state agency budgets, add up to an

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New York Folklore Newsletter
Janis Benincasa, Editor
PO Box 173
Arkville, NY 12406
(914) 586-3112

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New York Folklore Society, Inc.
John Suter, Director
PO Box 130
Newfield, NY 14867
(607) 273-9137

New York Folklore
Deborah Blincoe and John Forrest,
Editors
Social Sciences Building
SUNY Purchase
735 Anderson Hill Road
Purchase, NY 10577-1400
(914) 251-6616

Board of Directors: Daniel Franklin Ward, President; Kate Koperski, Vice President; Ellen McHale, Secretary/Treasurer; Deborah Blincoe, Janis Benincasa, Edgar Betelu, Jackie Day, Todd DeGarmo, Earlene DeLaPerriere, John Forrest, Kathryn Kimiecik, David Quinn, Diosa Summers, Peter Voorheis

By Ted Lind

Adapted from a presentation at the New York Folklore Society's August Upstate New York Folk Arts Forum held in Troy, NY

As a museum educator, I see a need for quality family programming in museums. More and more family groups are visiting museums, and the effective design of educational programs can change the ways in which participating families utilize them. The learning that takes place in a museum should not be random or accidental, but the result of well-planned and meaningful encounters with museum objects.

My working experiences have allowed me to develop some definitions and make observations about family interactions with exhibits. In this context I define a family as a group of individuals that includes adults and children who have a strong and continuing relationship that goes beyond a museum visit. I have observed that families often do not have the background experiences or knowledge, the language or educational support to use the museum visit as a learning activity on their own. Finally, a family visit to a museum is often social in nature, but some "informal" learning is expected to take place.

Ideally, the museum environment presents opportunities for focused viewing that includes observation, perception, satisfaction of curiosity, associations with or clarification of personal observations and experiences, and incidental learning as well as direct efforts to collect or offer information. Family visitors are usually very willing to engage in teaching and learning activities in a museum setting. The traditional museum setting, however, may not offer enough. Families prefer interactive, hands-on experiences. Moreover, a hands-on approach places the responsibility for learning on the visitors themselves and uses the participants' thoughts and responses as resources for their own learning. Such educational activities should help prepare a family audience to experience the museum as a learning resource in the future on their own.

Learning is an idiosyncratic activity; the means to successful learning are different for each individual child or adult. All of the educational activities that are offered in museums should begin or end with the museum objects and should use varied approaches that allow for different ways of learning. Object-centered learning is special—dependent upon a certain willingness and responsiveness that can be fostered through well developed activities.

Drawing families into object-centered learning requires a reliance, to some extent, on what they already know. Each individual adult or child has a lifetime of experiences, skills, and memories. As a museum educator, I endeavor to tap these personal associations so that newly introduced information can be integrated with what the individual already knows. Educational activities for families, then, are more appropriately conceived as guidance—leading family visitors to personalize new learning without obligation. Creating situations that allow adults and children to share experiences as a family is the most natural and effective method of fostering museum learning.

In my experience, it is essential to provide families with open-ended situations that encourage discussion. Too often, children participate in museum activities while parents sit back and watch or act as readers. The interaction that occurs among family members often ensures that effective learning is taking place. "Talking to learn" allows each member of the family to offer something in conversation. All family members must make a personal investment in the learning process—the motivation occurs naturally if the situation engenders group interaction.

The ultimate goal of an educational program or activity for families is to teach a limited number of specific skills in ways that inspire visitors to use museums independently. This promotes the successful transfer of learning and ensures that the learning is relevant to everyday life. I suggest that family museum programs use entertain-

Families and Museums: Some Thoughts on Programming

ing and engaging materials—materials that offer moderate challenges and evoke curiosity in the subject, concept, or skill to be learned. Interest and motivation are key and can be accomplished by introducing concepts that require family members to to apply presented ideas in an active rather than passive way. With programs



Adults and children play the ancient game of "Senet" at the Egyptian Day Festival, held at the Albany Institute of History and Art, January, 1989. The festival was held to highlight the museum's Egyptian room. The day's events also included music, gallery talks, films, and art-making activities.

designed for participation, families make an effort to use and elaborate upon the presented materials. Finally, families should be encouraged to practice skills and concepts. Practice increases the learner's familiarity so that each future learning experience is enriched.

Families are important to museums. As we approach the next century, museums are faced with the challenge—and opportunity—to bridge generations. An intergenerational museum experience is a means of transmitting knowledge and values from one generation to another through well-planned, interactive, hands-on programming.

Ted Lind is the Director of Education at the Albany Institute of History & Art.

Farm Work & Fair Play

*In 1986, the director of the Delaware County Office for the Aging asked the Delaware County Historical Association to help interview older residents about their memories of the Delaware County Fair for its upcoming 100th anniversary. Hundreds of slides, hours of interviews, and hours of videotape later, one phase of the project came to fruition in 1990 with the exhibit and publication, **Farm Work & Fair Play**, curated by Joyce Ice (former DCHA staff folklorist and present Assistant Director of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, NM) with photographs by Drew Harty of Treadwell, NY. A second phase of the project—a one hour video documentary, is currently in post production. **Farm Work & Fair Play** examines the ways in which farmers and other community residents transform their daily work skills into performances and presentations at the county fair and the ways in which changes in agriculture and community help transform*

those presentations. The following excerpts from the exhibit catalogue explore the fair's meaning.

In the faint light before dawn, people stir in the livestock barns at the fairground. They lead cattle—Holsteins, Jerseys, Ayrshires, Guernseys, and Brown Swiss—from decorated stalls to the milking parlor. Their shapes disappear as they move quietly through the mist rising from the nearby West Branch of the Delaware River. On a typical day when dairy cattle shows are being held, exhibitors get up as early as 4:00 a.m. to wash, feed, water, and groom their animals, clean out stalls, eat a hurried breakfast, and quickly change into the white pants and shirts exhibitors wear in the show ring. At the fair, everyday farmwork becomes the basis for play and competition. Caring for livestock, milking, cooking, baking, sewing, gardening, driving a tractor, and repairing an engine—all ordinary activities at home—are transformed into displays, contests and performances at the fair....

These displays illustrate two intertwined characteristics of county fairs: a nostalgic portrayal of yesteryear that exerts a strong appeal through the display of traditional rural lifestyles, coupled with an outlook that values progress and technology and promises a better tomorrow. Perhaps nothing at the fair conveys the feeling of the past

in the present as the draft horse show.

Draft horses seem almost anachronistic in today's world but some farmers, like William Gifford of Deposit, remember what it was like to work a farm team. Others watch the various hitch classes at the fair and imagine what it must have been like before farm machines replaced farm animals. Both draft and riding horses have undergone a shift from work to play, becoming what some term a "rich man's hobby." Aside from the costs of feeding and transporting animals to shows, ornate harnesses and wagons are expensive items. The draft horses represent more than just an investment to the owners and to the audience. The majority of the exhibitors, say Bill and Marjorie Rockefeller of Delhi, do it because it's in their blood.

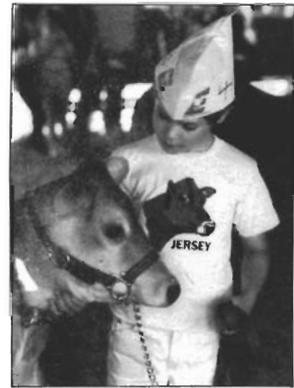
Visually, the draft horse show communicates to audiences certain expectations about animals' looks and behavior which reflect assumptions about gender. In halter classes, explains Sharon Crane, 1986 Draft Horse Queen, "You want your mare to have a nice refined neck and you want her to look ladylike." A mare's mane is left down while a stallion's mane is braided to emphasize the muscling in his neck. Refinement is associ-

ated with femininity as strength is linked to masculinity. Similarly, horses in lady's cart classes should be quiet and, in the announcer's words, "mannerly enough for a lady to drive." Costumes worn by drivers in the lady's cart classes suggest feminine ideals from other times and places; Southern belle gowns, Grecian robes, and tartan plaids all imply a genteel femininity.

Like the fair itself, the draft horse show appeals not only to tourists of the region but tourists of the past. Tourists, as well as area residents, come to experience a feeling of the past and to share a common heritage, whether real or imagined—at least during the time they spend at the fair. The fair both is and isn't ordinary time. In this festive context, an awareness of past and present is heightened.

Participating in the fair requires certain skills—a knowledge of how to prepare one's exhibit and an understanding of the standards used by judges. Judges must apply standards and make choices among exhibits that may be very similar. In canned goods categories, judges score entries according to color, appearance, uniformity, neatness, but not taste. Candy Russell observes that judges pay attention to details, such as "the jar that the woman has taken a little extra time and put a fancy label on... a very neat label—you can tell she's got her kitchen well-organized."

Baked goods are tasted and judged on flavor as well as appearance. Four judges sit around a card table sampling and comparing foods within many classes: breads, drop cookies, rolled cookies, bar cookies, cakes, pies, and candy. Sometimes the judges must decide which is important—looks or taste. In one instance, the judges were agreed that one entry had the best flavor, but one judge voiced her doubts. "Look at the cookie itself, though. It's not a nice-appearing cookie. I don't know whether that makes a difference or not. I certainly would go for looks." Another judge disagreed, "Chocolate chips are supposed to stand out like that, I



First time showman Matt Davis with his calf at the Delaware County Fair

think." Judges do not take their responsibilities lightly....

Exhibitors can appreciate each other's entries because they share an aesthetic of what is good, or beautiful, or true to form in a particular category, whether the animals are ducks, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, or sheep, goats, cattle, and horses. The aesthetic is shaped in part by tradition passed on from one generation to another; it is also affected by market demands and influenced by the policies (and politics) of state and federal breeders' organizations such as the Purebred Cattle Association, which agree upon the desirable characteristics of specific breeds....

Progress and change are recurring themes throughout the history of agricultural fairs, which are essentially festivals celebrating the work of farming. In order to survive, both farmers and fairs have had to adapt to changing circumstances. By promoting change on the one hand, the Delaware County Fair helps people make transitions. At the same time, it reinforces a sense of tradition and continuity. Modern-day exhibits and activities at the fair, in many cases, have evolved from similar and related ones in the past. In earlier times, farmers entered teams of horses and oxen in pulling contests. Today's farmers compete in tractor pulls with everything from garden and homemade tractors, to superstock and modified tractors—machines that were never intended to do work. By combining novelty with elements of the past, fairs meet people's needs for stability and familiarity while also encouraging them to keep pace with new developments....

The fair is a setting where children can observe role models and absorb lessons about competition, values, and community identity. On Children's Day, small girls and boys pedal toy tractors on the same track where tractor pulls for adults are held. Grown-ups and children alike enjoy these games that give young people an opportunity to imitate roles they may some day play as adults. Tractor driving contests for teen-agers emphasize

the importance of skill and safety in farmwork. Activities like these illustrate what for many people is the most important function of the fair: the passing on of skills, values, and traditions from one generation to the next.

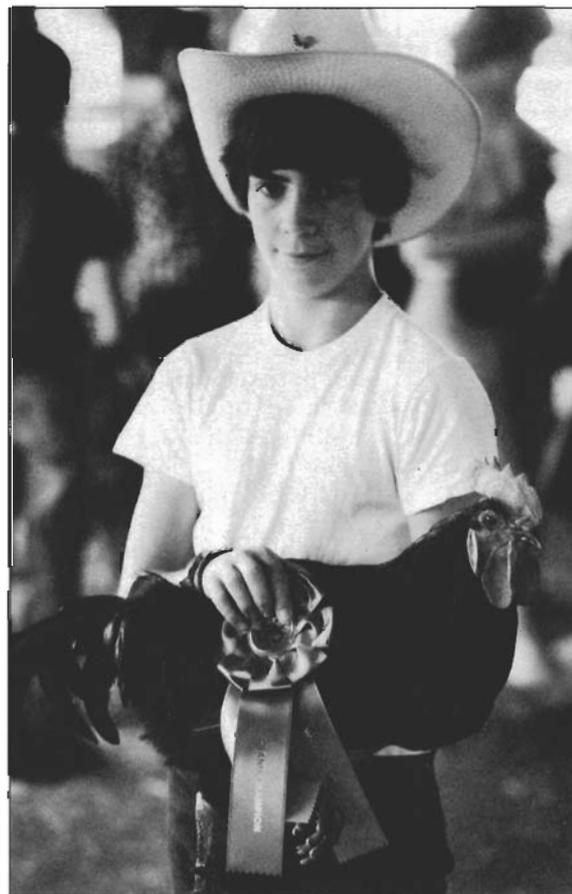
Around the livestock barns, it is not unusual to see three generations of a farm family helping with chores. Parents and grandparents instill responsibility as they work with their children to care for the animals. The stall decorations that identify families and farms often express through humor their sense of values and pride in their way of life. In 1988, the theme for stall decorations was "Welcome to the Real World." The Post family used photos and sayings to contrast a make-believe world with the real one they know. One sign read, "It's not a Dolly's 9-5 world. It's a real world 5 a.m. to 9 p.m." ...

Tioga County 4-H Agent and beef cattle judge Frank Wiles reflected on this responsibility to help young people. "I was a 4-H'er once and I know what it meant to have somebody be very careful and thorough with my project in the judging and the showmanship, and I feel I should do the same now for this generation." He continued, "Whether we like it or not, when [young] people bring animals to a county fair,... the World expects them to be representative of...the vitality of rural America, the breadbasket of the world. So when they go into the ring, whether they like it or not, they have this extra bit of responsibility. So therefore, I think, they should use this as that much more incentive...."

By continuing to keep the Delaware County Fair focused on agriculture, the board of directors has been able to ensure its continuity, involving families and tourists, balancing contemporary needs with an understanding of the fair's traditional meaning. Doretta Rich sums up the reason for the fair's success: "Everybody thinks of it as their fair. You go across the grounds, they'll all say, 'Well, how are *we* doing?' And I think that's the thing....Everybody feels it's their fair."

What direction county fairs will

take in the next century remains to be seen. Although agriculture continues to play an important role in the economy and lifestyle of Delaware County, it is undergoing rapid change in the face of increasing development. The next generation may find it more diffi-



The 1987 Grand Championship in Poultry went to Wes Sparling, shown with his favorite rooster.

cult to continue living and working on the farm.

All of these changes may mean that county fairs will not continue in the same form. Fairs have survived, however, because they have responded to change. Tomorrow's fast-paced world may experience an even greater need for a setting like a fair where people display and celebrate the values they hold dear, a place that presents a perception of the past both as it was and as we want to view it, that expresses rural identity, and that voices concerns about contemporary issues while transmitting traditional knowledge to future generations.

Farm Work & Fair Play is a 72 page publication, featuring 36 color photographs and 13 black and white historic photographs as well as an essay by curator Joyce Ice. It is available from the Delaware County Historical Association, RD #2, Box 201C, Delhi, NY 13753 for \$10 plus \$2 shipping and handling (New York State residents please add 6% sales tax).

TAUNY

TRADITIONAL ARTS IN
UPSTATE NEW YORK

Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY) was organized in 1986 to document, preserve, and present the traditional culture of Upstate New York. With emphasis on the fourteen-county region north of the Mohawk River known as the North Country, TAUNY was created as a successor to the Center for the Study of North Country Folklife housed at SUNY Canton since 1977. Until recently, TAUNY's primary concern has been in developing plans for several large, original projects and consulting with other arts organizations in the region about their folk arts programming.

Under the direction of Varick Chittenden, Professor of English and Folklore at Canton College, TAUNY has been developing a major exhibition of contemporary New York State folk art and a slide/video production on folk art in New York State's public spaces. The four year old organization has successfully curated and toured an exhibition of the memory dioramas of Vietnam veteran Michael Cousino in both New York and Vermont and has completed several collaborative projects with other organizations. These include a thirteen-part series of modules on traditional regional foodways with WSLU-FM, North Country Public Radio in Canton. The series is soon to be sent over National Public Radio's satellite link for affiliates all over the nation. A second series of programs on foodways has recently been funded by the Folk Arts Program at NYSCA. In addition, TAUNY has co-produced an extensive Adirondack storytelling documentation, performance, and publication project in cooperation with the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. Research and presentation was conducted by board member, storyteller and pack basket maker, Bill Smith, and folklorist Robert Bethke acted as consultant and

author of a special issue of the historical association's magazine devoted to the subject.

TAUNY's low key efforts, however, will soon give way to the many plans for expanded activities being undertaken in the current year. With NYSCA support, Joan Barrick has been employed as a part-time administrative assistant to help develop and stabilize the organization. Board membership will

opment. Additionally, TAUNY is committed to create a number of projects which will contribute substantially to its own earned income. These include a regional foodways and recipe book, a revolving fund for publishing a series of booklets on specific folk traditions in the region, and the production of audio cassettes from the radio series. Long range plans include some ventures into tourism and eco-

This new section provides organizations doing folk arts programming an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns, or descriptions of their programs, with our readers.



From *City Play*, boys playing in a clubhouse.
Photo by Martha Cooper.

now include a number of prominent business and cultural leaders of the region; incorporation and tax exempt status are both forthcoming. As a result, new initiatives to publicize TAUNY's potential for folk arts programming in the region, to raise funds for administration of daily activities, and to develop plans for a wide variety of new folk arts programs are in effect.

Chittenden has announced TAUNY's plans to stabilize the administrative assistant's position over the next two to five years and to rent office and exhibition space in the Canton area. To enhance publicity, the organization will undertake the publication of a brochure about TAUNY services and projects and a book of resumes of folklorists, cultural specialists, and technicians who will act as Affiliate Staff—consultants to a variety of collaborative projects between TAUNY and regional organizations.

A number of new initiatives are currently underway with regional foundations and corporations to help subsidize new project devel-

opment. Additionally, TAUNY is committed to create a number of projects which will contribute substantially to its own earned income.

During the next few months, TAUNY anticipates collaboration on two significant projects regarding the 1992 Centennial of the Adirondack Park. WCFE Public Television in Plattsburgh will co-produce a documentary on Adirondack storyteller Harver Carr of Blue Mountain Lake and the Crandall Library in Glens Falls will help to produce a video on traditional Adirondack craftspeople. Teams of TAUNY consultants have been asked to help plan a woodsmen's museum at Tupper Lake and a German-Mennonite folklife museum on an original farmstead in Lewis County. And a series of workshops and dance parties featuring regional musicians and dancers will be presented in the Crary Mills Community Center under the direction of Sue Grimm, a part-time staff member.

For further information about TAUNY, please call or write Varick Chittenden, PO Box 665, Canton, NY 13617-0665, (315) 386-2398.

CityLore

After almost seven years of work, CITYLORE is pleased to announce that *CITY PLAY* is now available! The book was beautifully designed and printed by Rutgers University Press and includes almost 200 photographs, many of them by the outstanding documentary photographer, Martha Cooper. *CITY PLAY* is co-authored by Steve Zeitlin and Amanda Dargan with an afterword by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimlett. In a review in their October 22 issue, *The New Yorker* writes: "While they caution against romanticizing urban street life, the authors also make it clear that any true sense of community is nourished by children at play—and diminished where play is restricted. Some of the photographs are breathtaking, and most make a point of their own about the emotional polarities of play: they capture excitement and joy at one extreme, and, at the other, convey the gravity of complete absorption."

In *CITY PLAY*, words and photographs express how it feels to grow up in New York City, and how that experience has changed over time. *CITY PLAY* draws on two centuries of images by New York's great photographers and artists as well as oral histories and diaries, and reminiscences and interviews with children, teen agers and adults. By exploring the traditional games children play, Zeitlin, Dargan, and Kirshenblatt-Gimlett seek to understand the inner world of the place. They chronicle the relationship between play and the urban environment over the last century and a half, exploring how city streets, stoops, vacant lots, waterways, brick walls, hydrants, and lamp posts are built into the play activities—and memories—of city residents. The contours of the city become the gameboard. The cast-offs of city living—bottlecaps, broomsticks, and tin cans—become the pieces on the board.

CITY PLAY was produced, in part, with funding provided by the

New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation. The book is available from CITYLORE for \$24.95 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling, 72 East First Street, New York, New York 10003. The project was co-sponsored by the Queens Council on the Arts and the Museum of the City of New York.



ETHNIC FOLK ARTS CENTER

Today's atmosphere is thick with anger and tension. It seems that wherever we look, be it our own backyard or any corner of the world, we find prejudice, misunderstanding and resentment. Yet when we make the effort to speak to people, one-on-one, we find that we are all searching for the same things—freedom from uncertainty, peace in our neighborhoods and families, joy and creative expression in our lives. We at the Ethnic Folk Arts Center feel a great responsibility today: to encourage harmony and understanding among people who may have very different ways of looking at life; to demonstrate respect for the diversity of cultures among us; and to work in partnership with the communities we serve as we seek a broader audience for their music and dance traditions.

The mission of the Ethnic Folk Arts Center is "to promote cultural understanding and empowerment through research, documentation and presentation of community-based traditional performing artists." For twenty-five years, the Center has been a public advocate of cultural equality for the many immigrant communities of greater New York. Historically, these communities do not have access to funding and other resources, and so they remain invisible to the public eye.

The folkways of a people—music, dance, language, foodways and

customs—are an important source of pride and self-identification for all societies, and particularly for immigrant communities. Their traditional music is shared with others in the community, but it faces a continuing struggle for survival. The overwhelming message to the immigrant is: "The music and dance you brought here—the culture you have brought here—have no real place in America. If you *really* want to be American, and if you want access to the stages, the airwaves, the recording studios here, you must either abandon your music or dilute it for public consumption."

The pressures on the children to assimilate are immense. Their peers, their educators, the media—all are telling them to become homogenized, pasteurized "American," and to leave their family's culture behind. Imagine, then, the impact on a child of seeing traditional dance and music of his or her community presented in a formal concert setting. What a positive experience for that child to realize that listeners have paid for the privilege of attending the concert, to see the audience respond enthusiastically, and to hear the warm applause for the performance of a father, grandfather, aunt, or sister! What a tremendous demonstration that the family's traditions are of value, both within and outside of their community.

This is what we try to do at the Ethnic Folk Arts Center: To help build a bridge between communities, and to help provide access to a wider audience. When this happens, we see something truly wonderful and thrilling—we see many people from diverse backgrounds actively participating in each other's traditions, making music and dancing together, learning to appreciate and enjoy the differences among them, and growing to understand and respect each other.

We take comfort in seeing just this type of exchange take place at our annual Queens Ethnic Music and Dance Festival. At Bohemian Hall, an early 19th century Czech community hall, a day of concerts

From the Field

THE LEAD BELLY LETTER

The Ithaca-based Lead Belly Society announces the premiere issue of the *Lead Belly Letter*, a quarterly publication dedicated to legendary musician Huddie Ledbetter. The *Lead Belly Letter* hopes to engage your participation in knowing more about Lead Belly: the music, the man, the myth. Lead Belly expressed in eloquent poetry of love and death the life and times of people he knew and loved and respected. He stated his principles, to which he always remained steadfast, protesting racism and social injustice throughout his songs. Lead Belly's work embodies much of the 19th century as it changed into the 20th as



Lead Belly Society Collection,
courtesy of Berenice Abbot

the old ways of the rural south sought out a modern, industrialized, urbanized lifestyle. Lead Belly chronicled these times during his 50 years of playing and singing and, as such, his work is a social record.

The non-profit Lead Belly Society is dedicated to developing a greater appreciation of Lead Belly and celebrating his music. Your \$15 membership provides you with four issues of the *Lead Belly Letter* annually, and possible discounts on Lead Belly music and LBS activities.

If you are interested in becoming a member or contributing to the *Letter*, contact Sean F. Killeen, Editor, The Lead Belly Letter, PO Box 6679, Ithaca, NY 14851.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

An excellent, informal and inexpensive source of information about issues and programs in public folklore around the country is the *Public Programs Newsletter* published twice a year in the spring and fall by the Public Sector Section of the American Folklore Society. Edited by Steve Ohrn at the State Historical Society of Iowa, the PPN includes a section of "Opinions, Issues, Queries and Announcements" followed by "News from Public Sector Folklorists," the latter organized by state.

The submissions receive minimal editing and are three-hole punched and stapled for looseleaf binding. Recent issues have been about 100 pages long. They offer valuable glimpses into the activities and thoughts of people active in folklore programming and give an overall picture of the field nationwide.

Submissions should be sent to Steve Ohrn, Editor, Public Programs Newsletter, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, Iowa. 50319 (515) 281-5111. To subscribe, send \$10.00, payable to American Folklore Society, to Marsha MacDowell, AFS Public Programs Section, MSU Museum, East Lansing MI 48824-1045 (517) 255-2370.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

RENSELAER COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

This Governor's Arts Award recipient organization located in Troy, NY, seeks a Director for its Folk Arts Programs.

Responsibilities: The Folk Arts Program Director is responsible for the documentation of folk arts traditions, services to folk artists, and program conceptualization and implementation. Programs include folk arts programming at the RCCA's annual Riverfront Festival, a summer folk artists-in-residence series at Grafton State Park, arts-in-education residencies, and a series of workshops and classes in traditional arts. Other programs may arise from individual interest. The Folk Arts Program Director is one of three professional staff who report directly to the Executive Director.

Skills and Experience: Candidates should have a graduate degree in folklore or a related discipline (ethnomusicology, anthropology, etc.). They should be familiar with the skills of fieldwork documentation including photography and tape recording. Flexibility and the ability to work with diverse communities is essential.

The RCCA, founded in 1962, is a private, not-for-profit organization which serves as an arts council and arts center promoting and coordinating cultural events and programs in Troy and Rensselaer County. RCCA has supported an active folk arts program since 1985 as an integral part of the mission and programs of RCCA.

Salary: Competitive and commensurate with experience.

The RCCA is an equal opportunity employer. Applications from multicultural candidates are encouraged.

To apply send resumes and names of three references to:

Search Committee
Rensselaer County Council
for the Arts
189 Second Street
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 273-0552

STATEN ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY/RICHMONDTOWN RESTORATION

Historic village and museum complex seeks a registrar. The registrar prepares and maintains records of the Society's diverse artifactual collections focusing on vernacular domestic furnishings, household accessories, tools and equipment, c. 1700 to present; oversees computerization of collections records; assists with collections inventory; assists with reorganization of storage facilities; oversees loans, shipping, and insurance. Minimum one year museum experience; B.A. required; M.A. in Museum Studies, American Studies, or related discipline preferred or two years of registration or curatorial experience. Experience with computerized databases required.

Send letter and resume to: Personnel Department, SIHS, 441 Clarke Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10306.

Public Programs

IROQUOIS INDIAN MUSEUM

The American Indian Dance Theater will perform at Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady on Sunday, February 10, 1991 at 7:00 p.m. as a fund raiser for the Iroquois Indian Museum.

The Iroquois Indian Museum, founded in 1981, is devoted exclusively to the Iroquois people and their culture. Displays emphasize the contributions of living Iroquois artists and craftspeople to the continuation of Iroquois traditions. Archeological and historical exhibits detail the development of Iroquois culture. Hands-on exhibits, crafts demonstrations, lectures, festivals and story hours help make Iroquois culture real to museum visitors.

The American Indian Dance Theater, composed of 26 members representing a number of native nations, is the first national American Indian dance company. They strive to create performances that maintain the authenticity of the traditional dances within the context of theatrical staging and lighting.

For more information, contact the Iroquois Indian Museum, Box 158, Schoharie, NY 12157 (518) 295-8553.

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT

The South Street Seaport Museum's winter events continue to focus on fishing traditions in New York harbor. On December 15 at 1 p.m., John Cioffi, a Fulton Fish Market fillet man, will demonstrate his craft as part of "Maritime New York," a program sponsored in part by the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts. While open to all ages, this program will be specifically geared toward young audiences. Commercial shad fisherman Tom Lake will present endangered fishing traditions in a slide-illustrated lecture on December 5 at 12:30. The folklore of New York harbor pilots will be featured in a lively storytelling session, *Averting Disaster: New York Harbor Pilots* on January 9, at 12:30. Two lectures are also of interest: *Disaster, Race, and Class in New York City* (December 13, 6 p.m.) and *Root and Branch: African-American Life in Early New York* (February 6, 12:30).

For more information on these programs, call or write Kathleen Condon, SSSM Education Department, 207 Front Street, NY, NY 10038 (212) 669-9400.

FIRST FRIDAYS AT EFAC

On November 2 the Ethnic Folk Arts Center launched *First Fridays*, an intimate, eclectic, music and coffee concert series offered the first Friday of each month at the EFAC Performance Space, 179 Varick Street in New York City.

Each *First Fridays* concert will present several acts ranging from bluegrass bands to gospel singers, Latino bands, Irish musicians, Asian ensembles, or world musicians passing through the city. Each evening features dance music, and light refreshments are available.

The Ethnic Folk Arts Center's *First Friday's* program premiered with a lineup that featured *uilleann* piper Jerry O'Sullivan and cittern player Pat Kilbride, the *norteño* sounds of Los Conquistadores del Sur, Zlatne Uste Balkan Brass band, and The Wretched Refuse String Band with Citizen Kafka.

A highlight of December's concert was the debut performance by Lillie Butler, age 76, originally from Ninety-Six, South Carolina, and now a resident of Brooklyn. Mrs. Butler is the first major artist to be uncovered in EFAC's African-American Senior Citizen's Project. Her complex singing style, as she accompanies herself on electric guitar, reflects an old-time gospel tradition documented in the 1920s, '30s and '40s through recordings of such artists as Blind Willie Johnson and Sister Rosetta Thorpe.

According to EFAC's Executive Director, Peter K. Siegel, the idea behind *First Fridays* is to offer New Yorkers a diverse and stimulating range of music at an affordable price. "These are powerful, generous musical traditions," said Mr. Siegel. "Each of the groups brings a world of rich, complex, hard-hitting musical substance, and we need that today. I feel that when we give a platform to several ethnic music groups in an evening, they can really make a difference in people's lives and in the life of the City."

FOLK MASTERS AT CARNEGIE HALL

"Folk Masters: Traditional Music of the Americas," a Carnegie Hall Centennial festival in Weill recital Hall, is featuring more than 150 musicians from regions throughout North and South America and the Caribbean in 12 concerts of music from Native American, European and African-rooted communities in the Americas. Each of the concerts, which take place on Tuesday and Saturday evenings from November 3 to December 15, has a focus which brings together musicians from geographically separated areas but musically related traditions, and range from Black gospel styles to French-American dance and song, from cowboy songs and mountain ballads to Hispanic music from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Louisiana. The concerts are being recorded for a radio series to be distributed nationally by American Public Radio in the spring of 1991.

The festival artists include the Harlem-based McCullough Sons of Thunder Brass Band; the Maine French Fiddlers; New York's Los Pleneros de la 21 performing Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena*; Appalachian ballad singer Doug Wallin of Sodom-Laurel, North Carolina; the White Cloud Hunters Mardi Gras Indian Tribe of New Orleans; Western longbow fiddler Alison Krauss; the Ardoin Family of Louisiana performing zydeco; and the Original Liberty Jazz band.

The Artistic Director and host of the "Folk Masters" Series is Nick Spitzer, formerly Louisiana State Folklorist and folklife consultant to the Smithsonian Institution.



McCullough Sons of Thunder Brass Band

NEW YORK FOLKLORE— NEW DIRECTIONS

The first 1990 issue of the NYFS journal New York Folklore, Vol. 16, No. 1-2, will be out very shortly, edited by Deborah Blincoe and John Forrest. Their introductory essay outlines their vision and their plans for the journal over the next few years. A brief excerpt follows:

As editors, we have several aims for the journal in the coming years. One of the most significant to us is the encouragement of writing from all sectors of the interested public. We particularly welcome submissions by newer scholars and writers; and we are eager for material which comes from outside the academic community. We work closely with authors to develop publishable manuscripts....

While the format of the journal remains in large part the same as in previous volumes, readers will note the inclusion of a new section, entitled *The Voice*

of Tradition. This section opens a direct channel for the written, verbal, and visual productions of tradition-bearers. The form of the works included in the new section will vary....

Any form of work which might practically be published is sought. Transcriptions of spoken narrative, autobiographic essays, and explanations by the traditional artist of artistic technique or style (illustrated with photographs or line drawings), are some of the forms the contributions might take. The editors hope that *The Voice of Tradition* will carry the communications of tradition-bearers to a wider, more diverse audience than would perhaps receive them otherwise.

REFLECTIONS

(from page 2)

ominous forecast for all the arts statewide. We won't know our 1991 level of support from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) until January. We are bracing for significant but not

life-threatening cuts this year; the prospects for 1992, the budget that the state will enact this coming spring, are potentially worse, but completely unpredictable at this time. Our response to this crisis will be threefold: we will spend with restraint and care; we will redouble our efforts to secure funding from other sources; and we will join with the arts organizations and concerned citizens throughout the state in an energetic advocacy campaign in behalf of the arts in general, and folk arts in particular.

You will be hearing from us on two of these counts. Your membership support is going to be more critical than ever before, so we will be asking you soon to join us — of course, you could join now, using the form on page 11, and save us the trouble of asking again. And we will need your participation in the advocacy effort; we'll let you know how you can help when the time comes.

Despite the likelihood of hard times ahead, we are very optimistic about the future of the New York Folklore Society. The organization is getting stronger and more vital, and we are confident that we will be able to marshal adequate resources to weather the storm.

Daniel Franklin Ward
President

John W. Suter
Executive Director

MENTORING PROJECT

A Technical Assistance Program of the New York Folklore Society

The Mentoring Project offers opportunities for professional growth and technical assistance for individuals and organizations engaged in folk arts programming in New York State. The project provides funding for 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 than you have in a particular area related to your folk arts programming, the Mentoring Project may be able to help. Here's how it works:

- ▼ Write or call and request an application form.
- ▼ Contact the person you would like to consult with.
- ▼ Submit the application to the New York Folklore Society.
- ▼ A panel will evaluate your proposal and notify you
- ▼ You and your mentor meet as planned.
- ▼ You and your mentor submit a brief report and we will reimburse your travel costs and pay the mentor's fee. The mentor may be from any field or discipline as long as the consultancy will directly benefit your folk arts programming.

For more information or an application, call or write:

New York Folklore Society, P.O. Box 130,
Newfield, New York 14867 (607) 273-9137.

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

ETHNIC FOLK ARTS

(from page 7)

and workshops, topped off by an evening dance party, brings together a delightful blend of cultures: Puerto Rican, Calabrian Italian, Greek, African-Caribbean, Balkan, Central Asian Bukharan Jewish, Polish, Irish, Columbian...all come together to celebrate the music and dance of their own and other cultures.

It's easy to get discouraged when the news is full of international tension, failing economies, crime and drugs, and a host of other ills. Fortunately, there are bright spots that give us joy and hope. One of these is seeing crowds of people dancing to the diverse rhythms of many cultures, learning to respect and enjoy, not just the music, but the people who gave it birth.

NYFS PUBLICATIONS SPECIAL OFFERS

We are offering complete sets of available back issues of the Society's journals *New York Folklore* (1975 to the present — 25 issues as of November 1990) and the *New York Folklore Quarterly* (1946-1974— 79 issues as of November 1990) at special discount prices.

Our usual single-copy price for back issues is \$10. If you take advantage of the complete back issues offer, your price per copy will be \$1.20! We are making this remarkable offer because the vital and stimulating articles in the journals need to be available to people who want to know more about their own cultures and traditions and those of their neighbors. These journals belong on your shelves, not ours!

To order, indicate your preference on the line below and enter the amount, along with your name and address, on the form below right. Back issues of certain numbers are in short supply. The sooner you order, the more complete your set will be.



Here are the options (shipping and handling are included!):

- _____ New York Folklore Quarterly, (1946-1974), and New York Folklore, (1975-1989),
104 issues **\$125**
- _____ New York Folklore, (1975-1989)
25 issues **\$60**
- _____ New York Folklore Quarterly, (1946-1974)
79 issues **\$100**

For a complete list of available issues and other NYFS publications, call or write us at the address listed on the order form.

The New York Folklore Society is dedicated to furthering cultural equity and crosscultural understanding through its programs serving the field of folklore and folklife in New York State. The Society seeks to nurture folklore and folklife by fostering and encouraging folk cultural expressions within communities where they originate and by sharing these expressions across cultural boundaries. ▼ The New York Folklore Society publishes the scholarly journal *New York Folklore* and the *New York Folklore Newsletter*. The Society provides technical assistance to organizations engaged in folk arts programming and produces conferences and other programs with statewide scope that address issues concerning folklife. ▼ Members of the New York Folklore Society include folklore enthusiasts, historic preservationists, school teachers, folklorists, librarians, anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, local historians, folk artists, museum curators, students, photographers, arts administrators, and writers, among others. ▼ Our regular membership fees for 1990 are still only \$25.00 for individuals, \$35.00 for institutions, and \$15.00 for full-time college or university students. Foreign members pay an additional \$5.00 over the regular membership fee. Members receive a subscription to *New York Folklore* and to this newsletter. We welcome your involvement and support. To join us, return the membership form below with your check payable to New York Folklore Society, P.O. Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867. ▼ (607) 273-9137 Thank you!

Please Join Us

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND ORDER FORM

The New York Folklore Society

I would like to become a member, or renew my membership in the New York Folklore Society, Inc.

- _____ 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 copy of valid I.D.)

Check one: _____ New Membership _____ Renewal Membership

Membership dues \$ _____

I would like a set of back issues of NYFS journals (see offer at left) \$ _____

I enclose an additional donation to support the work of the New York Folklore Society \$ _____

Total amount enclosed, payable to New York Folklore Society: \$ _____

Name/Title _____

Organization _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please return to: **New York Folklore Society, Inc.**,
PO Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867 (607) 273-9137

NYFS in Corning

The lore of glass was the theme of the recent annual meeting of the New York Folklore Society, organized in Corning by board member Peter Voorheis and hosted by the Chemung Valley Arts Council and the Corning Museum of Glass. Following the Society's annual business meeting in the morning, participants were treated to several presentations concerning the historical, technical, and sociological dimensions of Corning's glass industry. ▼ Local historian and teacher Thomas Dimitroff provided the group with an overview of Corning's history in capsule form, from its beginnings as a canal town, through its development as a railway shipping hub—12,000 trains passed



**Thomas Buechner III,
master glass
craftsman,
at Vitrix studio.
Photo by
Jamie Stillings**

through Corning in 1891—to its current status as an industrial and cultural center. Amusing and often telling anecdotes and superb slides contributed to a cogent and engaging introduction to the area. ▼ John Hoxie, a former Corning Glass Works employee for many years, brought with him a remarkable collection of objects, from a huge, red railroad signal lens to tools of the glass blowing trade, to an easel-mounted relief map of New York State with a moveable overlay representing the glaciation responsible for much of the topography and recent geology of the area. The objects served as points of departure for segments of history, lore and anecdote from the Ice Age to the present. He showed a transfixing silent film of the first casting, in 1934, of the giant Mount Palomar lens, now on display at the museum as the largest piece of glass ever cast. ▼ Later, Thomas Buechner III of Vitrix Hot Glass gave a glass-blowing demonstration at his independent studio in town, and in the afternoon Society members toured the Corning Glass Center, which is devoted to both the artistic and technological aspects of the glass industry. It was a stimulating day and an excellent introduction to the Corning area.

New York Folklore Society
P.O. Box 130
Newfield, NY 14867

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