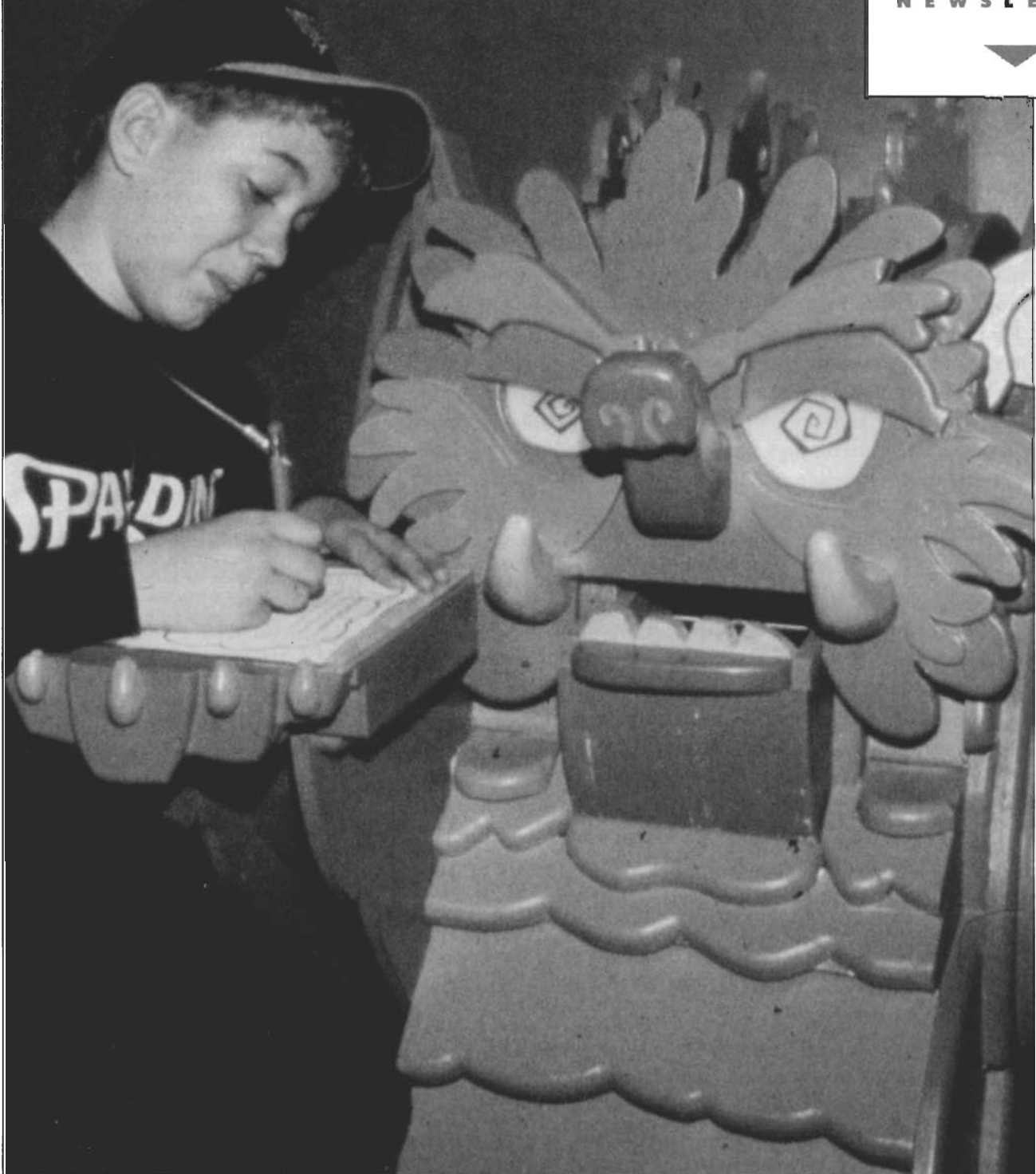


**M** *Meet Baku. t*  
Baku is an imaginary Japanese cr  
dreams. When children have nig  
up and call out, "Baku, eat my b  
Instantly the nightmares are gobb

NEW YORK  
**FOLK  
LORE**  
NEWSLETTER



## *Crisis and Confidence*

Last May, Dan Sheehy, director of the Folk and Traditional Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, took a day off from his embattled agency to speak to the New York State Folk Arts Roundtable in Syracuse. None of the news he brought was good. The NEA was facing draconian cuts and a complete restructuring whose details were still being worked out. The Folk and Traditional Arts Program would be no more, and many staff would lose their jobs; that much was certain. But Dan's tone was challenging and encouraging. He urged us to think in new ways about our work, examine our considerable skills and assets as a field, establish alliances and partnerships beyond our usual circle of friends, and find new ways to work. In short, he encouraged us to take this crisis as an opportunity for renewed creativity and vigor.

The forecasts from last spring have proven reliable. NEA funding has been cut 40% from last year's level. The structure under which staff and peer panels evaluated and funded projects by discipline (folk arts, music, theater, and so on) has been eliminated; in its place, all grants will be grouped into four categories: Heritage and Preservation, Education and Access, Creation and Presentation, and Planning and Stabilization. Each arts organization will be allowed to submit only one application per year to the NEA. (In the past, organizations could apply for several projects each year in different categories, and many did, including the NYFS.) The guidelines call for emphasis on projects of regional or national scope, so small, local projects will probably not be supported. Dan Sheehy and Barry Bergey, the two remaining staff from the Folk Arts Program, who along with the laid off Terry Liu and Norma Cantu have lovingly and effectively shepherded folk arts applicants through the grants process in recent years, are now in the Heritage and Preservation division, the likely new home of most folk arts grants. The level of funding for that division, and the prominence of folk and traditional arts within it, remain to be seen.

In addition, at the state level, the New York State Council on the Arts receives an annual block grant from the NEA that supports both programs and staff salaries. This grant is likely to be dramatically reduced.

By the time you read this, Governor Pataki will have released his proposed budget for next year, a month earlier than usual. We can expect further cuts to the New York State Council on the Arts, both for grants and for their already reduced administration. NYSCA is working hard to find ways to maintain the current structure of discipline-based programs and panel processes with meager resources, but the outcome is by no means certain.

So as soon as the situation at the state and federal levels becomes clear and the areas of potential restoration are identified in the next month or so, we will be asking you again to contact the governor, your state legislators, and your congressional representatives.

In the meantime, we at the New York Folklore Society are taking up Dan Sheehy's challenge with confidence. We are very fortunate to have a one-year cushion of funding from the NEA and NYSCA before the wave of cuts hits us. That means, we have a year to change the ways we think and work. The board,

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# NEW YORK FOLK LORE NEWSLETTER

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The New York Folklore Society Newsletter is published quarterly and provides information and services to individuals and organizations involved with folk arts.

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## **Archives Project RCCA Collection Donated to New Home**

The Rensselaer County Council for the Arts (RCCA) donated its collection of folk arts documentation to the Rensselaer County Historical Society (RCHS) on October 10. The documentation, including slides, photographs, audio tapes, and reports represents ten years of fieldwork by RCCA staff folklorists Ellen McHale and Mary Zwolinski. The transfer was marked by a reception at the Society with short remarks by Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education Carole Huxley, Documentary Heritage Program Director Kathleen Roe, RCHS Director Anne Ackerson, and RCCA Director Raona Roy.

The event marks the first such donation to occur as a result of the NYFS Archives Project. RCCA Folk Arts Program Director Mary Zwolinski and RCHS Curator Stacey Draper worked with Suzanne Etherington and Karen Taussig-Lux of the Archives Project, as well as Ellen Garrison, Capital Region DHP Archivist, to negotiate the transfer. Zwolinski said, "I wanted the Historical Soci-

**The New York Folklore Newsletter invites contributions of articles, notes and reports on folklife, folklore, folk art, vernacular architecture, oral history; public presentation of these topics; the intersection of folk culture and public policy; and related subjects. Do you have an excerpt from an interview you have done? A description of a community event in your area? A memory of your own of some aspect of traditional life? Reflections on or analysis of a folk arts project with which you have been involved? Send it to us or give us a call about it — even if it is still in the idea stage — we'd love to talk to you about it. Contact Karen Taussig-Lux, Newsletter Editor, 518-272-7899.**

ety to have these things because I was no longer using them. It wasn't in our mission to care for these materials, so we needed a long-term repository that could make them accessible. I had worked with the Historical Society before, and I knew Stacy Draper would be a good person to take care of the collections. The Folklore Society got us all together and helped facilitate the transfer."

## **NYFS Announces New Program Director**

We have recently hired Karen Taussig-Lux, current editor of the New York Folklore Society Newsletter, to fill the position of NYFS Program Director. The position was made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts grant that was announced in the Fall issue of the Newsletter. As Program Director, Taussig-Lux will remain editor of the Newsletter and in addition will supervise the Archives Project, the Mentoring Project, and the Folk Arts Forums. She will also work on developing alliances and collaborations with other organizations in the state.

Karen holds a M.A. and a Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. She has eleven years experience in public folklore work in New York State, having worked on projects in many parts of the state, including Central New York, the Adirondacks, the Southern Tier, and the Capital Region. Karen says, "I am delighted to have been chosen for this position, and I am looking forward to working with John Suter and the NYFS board."

## **NYFS Receives Award and Commendation**

The New York Folklore Society was awarded the second Brenda McCallum Prize by the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society for its publication, *Working with Folk Materials in New York State: A Manual for Folklorists and Archivists*, at the 1995 AFS meeting in Lafayette, LA. The

prize is awarded "for exceptional work dealing with folklife archives or the collection, organization, and management of folklife materials." The \$100 award "commends the New York Folklore Society for creating a bridge between folklorists and archivists." We are honored to receive such recognition for the hard work of the many people who collaborated to make this manual a success.

At the same meeting the Society received a special commendation for Prejudice and Pride (New York Folklore 19:1-2) from the Gay and Lesbian Folklore Section. The announcement reads as follows:

"The Gay and Lesbian Folklore Section awards a special commendation for New York Folklore's groundbreaking publication of *Prejudice and Pride: Lesbian and Gay Traditions in America*, the first folklore journal issue devoted exclusively to gay, lesbian, and bisexual culture. We want to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the editors, Deborah Blincoe and John Forrest; the authors of the essays, and the New York Folklore Society and its executive director, John Suter."

Many thanks to the Gay and Lesbian Folklore Section and congratulations to all those who contributed to the issue!

## **NYFS Director Elected to Board of Arts Alliance**

John Suter, executive director of the New York Folklore Society, was elected to the board of the Alliance of New York State Arts Councils at the Alliance's yearly meeting in Albany held October 24 and 25. The Alliance is the parent organization of the New York State Arts and Cultural Coalition (NYSACC), the state-wide advocacy program for arts in New York State in which New York Folklore Society has been very active for several years. The Alliance is now expanding in scope beyond arts councils to include other state-wide organizations such as the Folklore Society, art centers, and other cultural organizations.

# African-American Quilting

Gloria Battle

*Gloria Battle first came to our attention in 1992 when she applied to our Mentoring Program to have an African-American actor teach acting skills to her African-American youth theater group in rural Sodus, near Lake Ontario. In our discussions about that application (which we couldn't fund because it didn't deal with folk arts) Gloria realized that she, herself, is a folk artist, a quilter who learned from her grandmother and mother-in-law. As a result, the sewing circle at the Upper Room Church, of which she is a member, applied for Gloria to be their mentor. Their subsequent mentoring sessions were very successful and have stimulated ongoing quilting as one of the activities of the circle. Since then, Gloria has again organized mentorships, first teaching quilting in her community to at-risk youth, and later with an African-American hairdresser teaching traditional styles. [J.S.]*

**M**y husband took me to Alabama to meet his family soon after we were married. When I arrived there, the first thing I noticed was the pile of brightly colored quilts. I pleaded with them to give me a quilt, but my mother-in-law and sisters-in-law replied that they would teach me to quilt. Most of the women in that area of Alabama quilted, and they felt that all women should know how. They told me that they had used all the old clothes and scraps that they had available and that they had been getting new scraps from a dressmaker in town. We took a trip into the town of Eufaula. The dressmaker was selling her scraps for \$1.00 per bag. I bought 4 bags. When we got home, they went to work demonstrating the art of quilt making. They used no pattern.



**Gloria Battle's school mat made for her two younger children, 1982.**

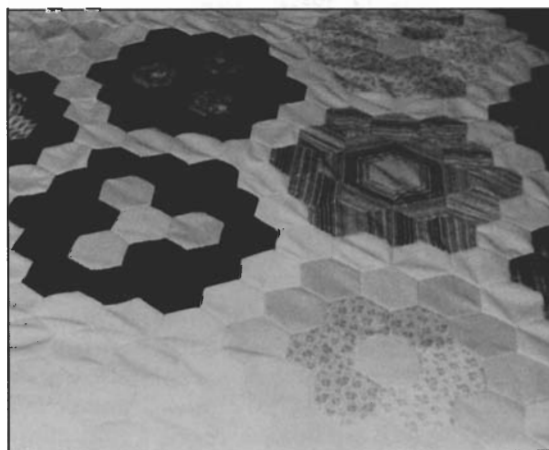
They just knew how to cut several pieces at one time. After I saw how it was done, I joined. We cut pieces until they felt we had enough to make the quilt. Then everyone began to sew, all by hand. In 3 days I had a quilt to take home with me. This quilt was made of polyester materials only.

My maternal grandmother taught me to sew when I was very young. One day I visited her in Syracuse. She was now elderly, suffering with arthritis and poor vision. She asked me to look in one closet and pull out her quilting box. She had pieces cut, blocks finished and quilt tops made. She had used a variety of materials, ranging from cotton to silks. She even used both light and heavy weight materials. She asked me if I would finish a quilt for her and one for my grandfather, combining squares that she had made and squares that I had made. The quilts were beautiful. My sister, whom my grandparents raised, claimed them when they died.

My paternal grandmother always made quilts. When I visited her in '72, she had a stack of about 20 quilts. She was not willing to give any away. Her quilts were made from old clothing.

Many of them were faded out, but the material and the stitching was quite strong. A few were torn apart and the inside was lined with old clothing including old underwear. When she died at the age of 90, I was able to obtain a couple of her quilts.

In the late 60s I took a class in sampler quilt making. This full size quilt used 20 different blocks. This class taught quilt making from all new materials, preferably cotton or cotton blend. After quilting so long with 100% polyester, usually scraps, it took some getting used to.



**"Grandmother's flower garden," made by Gloria Battle for her sister, 1973.**

I really enjoy scrap quilting because it takes less planning, you don't really know how the end product will look, but it always comes out beautiful. Besides you can use old clothing, buy remnants, find materials at yard sales, get pieces from relatives and so on. Sometimes when I look at my quilts, I can point to pieces and remember the history behind it.

I visited my cousin Corrine, in Florida. She was making one of the most beautiful, no-quilting quilts I had ever seen. It was called star burst. I asked her to teach me. She showed me and gave me a sample square to take home with me. This quilt took a long time to make. I gave it to my mother when it was finished because my brother had taken the first quilt I gave her.

Continued on Page 10

# Aunt Betty and the Life-Saving Cow Manure Remedy

Edith Bills

*Edith Bills was born and raised on a farm on Roaring Brook Road outside of the town of Stony Creek, NY in the Southeastern Adirondacks. Her grandfather, Randall Combs, and his first wife settled land "over the mountain" in remote West Stony Creek in the early 1860s. His second wife, Edith's grandmother Harriet Twiss, was half Mohawk Indian. Harriet and Randall raised ten children there, including Edith's father, Tifney, and aunt, Betsey. Aunt Betty (as she was called) was the only one of the children to learn her mother's home remedies, and she served as the family's physician her entire adult life. Only if Aunt Betty could not cure you did you call the doctor. What follows is Edith's affectionate tribute to her Aunt Betty. In addition to being a wonderful account, it contains valuable information about the composition of nineteenth century home cures and cultural attitudes about health and healing in that region of the Adirondacks.*

*This is one of a series of articles that Edith began writing on a weekly basis in 1982 for the Adirondack Journal/Warrensburg-Lake George News, which relate stories about local residents collected from her family and neighbors. She writes in a style that reflects the rhythm and pattern of her own speech and of the oral tradition of her region. Each article focuses on different aspects of rural life in the Adirondacks, offering readers details about foodways, work and other aspects of daily life. Edith corresponds with numerous fans who have written her in response to her articles and often includes their reminiscences in her pieces. In 1985, Edith won first place in the New York Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest for the article that appears below.*

**S**he was born Betsey Ann Combs on August 23, 1871, the second child of Randall and Harriet Twiss Combs. She was born in West Stony Creek in a log cabin. She married Melvin Harrington who was related to the Harringtons of Warrensburg. She had 11 children. We called her Aunt Betty instead of Aunt Betsey. She was my father's sister. She weighed about 100 pounds soaking wet. I remember her wearing too-large felt bedroom slippers because her feet had such big bunions on them

I never saw her when she was not working. Her house was spotless, and she always raised a big garden up on the hill, and her cellar was always full of jars of food of all kinds. She lived in the big white house in Stony Creek next to what is now the Stony Creek Lodge. She outlived most of her children, dying at a ripe old age at the home of her daughter, Eva Baker.

Aunt Betty was the nurse and doctor in the Combs-Harrington families. She cared for her son and husband in her home until they

died. She cared for Uncle Harvey Combs, her brother, until he passed away. She brought her mother into her home and cared for her until her death. In our home, Aunt Betty was called to come to see if she could cure you. If not, then you got a doctor. She was a soft-spoken woman who made you feel better just being there. She walked the five miles from Creek Center to our house on the Roaring Branch Road many times. Dad sometimes would pick her up and take her back with the horse and wagon. But night or day, she always came. She was always up at 4:00 in the morning and worked into the late hours of the night. I sometimes wonder if she ever slept. And Betty saved my life once, probably more than once, but this time I remember very well. It's quite hard to forget something like this.

As I have told you before, as a child I always went barefoot because I liked to. One day, barefoot as always, I went into the chip yard. This was where Dad



**Edith Bills, holding a photograph of her late husband Lang, in the living room of her home in Athol, New York.**

chopped and split his wood before cutting it in the shed. There were little sharp pieces of wood and sticks all over the place. I was running through the chip yard and stuck a sharp piece of wood in between my big toe and my other one. I hollered out to Ma, and she pulled the stick out and washed it good and poured turpentine on it so I would not get an infection. But there was a small piece of the wood still in my foot, and I did get one. My foot swelled up like a balloon and did it ever ache. Red streaks started to go up my leg. Dad put pine pitch on it, but even this did no good: I started running a high fever. I was really sick. I heard Ma tell Dad, "Go get Betty." So Dad took the horse and wagon and went to the Center and came back with Aunt Betty. Now here is the part where all the medical doctors are going to have a heart attack or say it is not true. But so help me God, this is the God's honest truth. Aunt Betty took a look at my foot and said to my father, "Tip, go get fresh cow manure—the fresher the better." So Dad started for the pasture. While he was gone Aunt Betty and Ma made a sack out of an old pillow case. Then they got out the ball of string. In a short time, Dad was back. He had fresh cow manure. This cow manure was so fresh that it was still steaming! They dumped it into the sack that Ma and Aunt Betty made. I was supposed to put my foot into this sack of fresh cow manure! "No way!" I cried, I fought, I pleaded, I begged, but to

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# Beyond the Multi-Cultural Approach:

## *Improving How We Serve Communities and Audiences*

Kathleen Condon



Visitor feeds "bad dream" to figure of Baku, a mythical Japanese gream-eater, in "Night Journeys," a Brooklyn Children's Museum exhibition exploring scientific and cultural aspects of sleep and dreaming. Photo courtesy of the The Brooklyn Children's Museum.

**B**eing asked to talk about "New Ways to Serve Communities and Audiences" has given me an opportunity to think about a few things I have learned by doing or by watching other cultural specialists work over the years. In the past decade I have experienced a growing frustration with the limitations of the multi-cultural frames within which I and many of my colleagues have often worked. In this article I would like to suggest two broad practices which can help us move past the limitations of standard multi-cultural approaches that present diverse cultures side-by-side as equivalent and parallel phenomena.

While these suggested practices are not new or unique to the projects I will describe here, they are less often employed than one might hope. This is understandable, for we work in environments which may not reward these time-intensive methods which, if well executed, are often invisible to administrators and funders. Our work is by necessity product-driven,

ates the interests, concerns, preferences, and learning styles of the audiences we serve, and is nationally acknowledged for quality community cultural programming. Working at this institution has given me the opportunity to examine these audience issues, and conversations with my colleagues there have forced me to directly confront the limitations of standard multi-cultural approaches.

In pointing out the limits of these standard methods I would also like to emphatically state that I am not suggesting we "throw the baby out with the bath water." There remains an important place for programs in these formats—both for exhibits and for multi-ethnic performing arts and crafts demonstrations series. I have seen the good these programs have done over the years, and yet I also have grown concerned with the lack of cross-over attendance and with the lack of sustainability of many of these programs we create. To move to that next level of truly cross-cultural, sustainable programming, we must create events with frames which will live on after our initial involvement—frames which are meaningful and which would be chosen by those whose arts we represent. To truly and effectively serve diverse audiences, we must



World War II-era merchant seaman and raconteur Robert Higginbotham shares stories at a Veteran's Day storytelling session in 1992. Photo by Martha Cooper, courtesy of the South Street Seaport Museum.

and often we barely have time to produce the message, with little time left over to think about how the message is being received. The Brooklyn Children's Museum where I now work seriously evalu-

do more than "fill in the ethnic slot" programming—an approach which says more about our agenda than the agendas of the people we are trying to serve.

My first suggested practice is to

frame programs around universal themes which are compelling and accessible to everyday people. This approach might sound easy—to focus on one universal theme rather than many cultures, but I want to caution you that if you do it right, and don't lose track of the diversity within the universal theme, it is just as difficult as more traditional multi-cultural approaches. You still have to do all the niche publicity to reach those specialized audiences whose cultures are featured in the exhibit,



Knut Olsen's models were displayed in the "memory" section of the "Twelve Ties to Tradition" exhibition along with other family keepsakes and photos of family roots in Norway and Staten Island. Photo by Martha Cooper, courtesy of the South Street Seaport Museum.

and you still have to do fieldwork in a wide variety of communities. But the pay-off is, you are more successful; you are ultimately more compelling to more people.

A wonderful example of the use of a universal theme is "Night Journeys," an exhibit at The Brooklyn Children's Museum which recently opened in its traveling version at the Minnesota Children's Museum. While exploring universal scientific aspects of sleep, the exhibit also incorporated a broad diversity of sleep-related cultural behaviors and expressions. An Egyptian bed, African head-rests, Baku, a Japanese mythical creature who eats bad dreams, all became part of the human sleep tapestry presented in the exhibit, framed in a way that made them at once universal and culture-specific.

Another illustration is "Twelve Ties to Tradition: Model Making in New York City," an exhibit featuring twelve model builders from diverse racial, ethnic, occupa-

This article is adapted from a slide talk presented by Kathleen Condon at The New Jersey Governor's Conference on the Arts: Arts in Focus III in Trenton, New Jersey, September, 1995. She would like to thank Rita Moonsammy and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for inviting her to take the time to think about these ideas. Kathleen is Community Project Coordinator/Developer at The Brooklyn Children's Museum.

tional, and class backgrounds which I curated at the South Street Seaport Museum. But rather than focus directly on this rather obvious diversity, I organized the exhibit instead around a number of relatively universal artistic motivations—memory, identity, market, skill, and imagination. These categories arose from extended conversations with these artists, and made sense to them. They also made the artists' diversity accessible to the audience.

A current project at the Museum taking this universal approach explores the diversity of ways and reasons people gather together in urban settings. This project will culminate in an exhibit opening in spring of 1997. Another museum project, planned in conjunction with BACA/ The Brooklyn Arts Council, will present diverse New York City artists who all practice art forms which involve botanical materials. The series has the potential to draw not only audiences from the ethnicities of the arts presented, but also those with ecological and botanical interests.

My second suggested practice to push beyond standard multi-cultural models is to do more in-depth programs with specific cul-



**Modelers and audience gathered around the pool at the 1991 New York Ship and Boat Model Festival. Photo by Michael Francese, courtesy of the South Street Seaport Museum.**

tures. By that I mean programming which respects and uses the presentation frames and meanings attached to the art forms within the cultures whose arts are presented, that acknowledges diversity within ethnic groups, and that does not employ a frame where a single art form is made to

represent the collective aesthetics of an entire community. An example of this approach is "Mahrajan al-Fan," an annual fall event at The Brooklyn Museum which brings in over one thousand people from the New York area's Arab populations. The Ethnic Folk Arts Center (EFAC), the organization which acted as a co-sponsor and initiator of the event, was thrilled to participate in an event showcasing such excellent traditional music and dance. EFAC staff did, however, find themselves presenting cultural forms they might not otherwise have presented if they were doing the program on their own, for instance, multi-media performance art, contemporary poetry, and a fashion show featuring young woman in traditional costumes. What the event might have lost in strict focus on traditional artistry, it gained in contextualized meaning for the community participants.

Sometimes you can't plan an event with an elaborate advisory council—funds, timing, or staff might not allow it. But you can still incorporate this approach by getting out there and getting to know your target audiences and their events and by respecting their preferences when you plan for them.

When we featured World War II-era merchant seamen telling their stories at the South Street Seaport Museum, we were interested in drawing on former merchant seamen for audience as well as storytellers. To do this, we attended events held by organizations of merchant seamen and observed the components which seemed to make them successful. To the initial storytelling session we added demonstrations of wireless apparatus and riveting, a narrated harbor boat tour, and most importantly, a luncheon. The storytelling portion of the event lost some of its central place. It became more a part of the day, as reminiscence is a part of life. But those stories were heard all the same, and probably by more people than would have heard them if they were presented

out of context simply as "verbal art."

In closing, I'd like to say a few words about the New York Ship and Boat Model Festival I pro-



**Spirited audience dancing accompanied musical performance at the 1994 Mahrajan-al-Fan. Photo by Martin Koenig, courtesy of the Ethnic Folk Arts Center.**

duced at the South Street Seaport Museum. In planning this festival, I visited model shows produced by the hobbyists. I observed their display techniques and presentation frameworks, and I enlisted model builders as partners in planning. I recruited model builders by publicizing the event broadly, not just within the standard model hobbyist channels, but also within the newsletters and organizations of ethnic groups and occupations known for model building traditions. Most importantly, I provided water for those modelers who run their models in water on battery power, for I had found that this component was essential to the success of a summer show for this portion of the group.

The diversity of race, ethnicity, class and occupation represented in the event was phenomenal. Part of this was luck, part hard work, and part keeping the entry rules very, very simple. Anyone who had ever made a model boat was allowed to participate, as long as they brought both themselves and one of their models to the festival. To do this amazingly inclusive, surprisingly exciting event, I had to loosen up on my communication goals for the event and be open to collaborating with a diversity of other agendas. I also had to throw away my organizer's pre-

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# Folklore Loses One of its Greats

Karen Taussig-Lux

Just as this issue was going to press we heard the sad news of the death of Dr. Kenneth Goldstein, one of the giants of the field of folklore. His funeral is taking place today, as I write this. A number of the folklorists working in New York State, including myself, studied with Kenny in the Folklore and Folklife Department at the University of Pennsylvania, where he taught from 1965 until last year. Others in the state may know him through his collecting projects, record productions, or work as a founder of the Philadelphia Folk Festival. It is hard to believe that this man who played such a big role in all of our lives could really be gone.

As a professor, Kenny was noted for his American folk song and ballad course which every graduate student took. Some of the students were already accomplished musicians familiar with the contents of the course. But for many of the students this was our first systematic exposure to the traditional music of this country. Kenny also taught our required field work class, having written the definitive book on the subject, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore*, in 1964. We pored over that manual, and it shaped all of our first tentative experiments with field work.

Kenny was an active collector as well as a teacher. His field work began in the 1950s with trips to upstate New York, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Scotland. The department archives where I worked as a graduate student was filled with the reel-to-reel tapes he made of ballad singers in Newfoundland, where he spent so much of his time from the 70s on. One semester I had the job of accessioning them. Listening to those beautiful songs for hours at a time hardly seemed like work to me.

It was in Kenny's folk song and ballad class that I first heard the haunting "Queen Jane" sung by Sara Cleveland of Brant Lake, NY in the Adirondacks, whom Kenny had recorded extensively in the 1960s. Sara, for those who don't know of her, was a tremendously important conservator of her Irish-Scots family musical tradition. She kept a note-

book of over 400 ballads and songs she had learned from her family, many of them centuries old and some never recorded before in this country. She collaborated with Kenny to make a series of recordings of her music, one of the most important collecting projects ever conducted in this state, if not the country.

In the next issue of the Newsletter I would like to remember Kenny Goldstein by publishing people's recollections of him — from school (both Penn and Memorial University in Newfoundland), from the festivals he was so instrumental in founding, from his collecting projects, and from other facets of his life. I invite our readership to send in their stories and memories of this formidable teacher and friend.

## NEW BOOKS

### *You Should Have Been Here Yesterday: A Guide to Cultural Documentation in Maryland*

Edited by Elaine Eff  
The Maryland Historical Trust Press  
Crownsville, MD  
89 pages, \$10.00

"You should have been here yesterday" is the all too familiar refrain that cultural researchers hear when seeking out old-timers or artifacts. Too often we are alerted to the perfect "informant" through death notices in the local newspaper. Or we learn about a family album or work of art that went out with the attic clean-up the day before. Only through living memory can we begin to reconstruct a past which might otherwise be forgotten.

This book originated as the course guide for a series of cultural documentation workshops held in Maryland sponsored by the Office of Cultural Conservation Programs at the Maryland Historical Trust. It offers a start-to-finish overview of a folklife/oral history project, from the initial mission statement to archiving the documentation products at the end. "Because grassroots efforts are most effective when they are of, for, and by the people they present," writes the book's editor, "we have assembled this volume to jump-start the urge to document with proper skills and information."

## Books for Review

We are seeking qualified individuals who are interested in reading folklore-related books and writing reviews for New York Folklore. Books currently available are listed below. Address your request to the Editor, New York Folklore, P.O. Box 48, Lenox Hill Station, New York, NY 10021. Please specify which book(s) you are interested in reviewing as well as your area(s) of special interest. Requests will be filled on a first-come first-served basis. Book reviews are due two months after receipt of book.



Roger D. Abrahams, ed., *Fields of Folklore: Essays in Honor of Kenneth S. Goldstein* (1995)

Carl Carmer, *Listen for a Lonesome Drum: A York State Chronicle*, reprinted. (1995)

———, *My Kind of Country: Favorite Writings about New York*, reprinted. (1995)

Martha Cooper and Joseph Sciorra, *R.I.P.: Memorial Wall Art* (1994)

John K. Crellin, *Home Medicine: The Newfoundland Experience* (1994)

Ruth Finnegan and Margaret Orbell, eds., *South Pacific Oral Traditions* (1995)

Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones, *Folkloristics: An Introduction* (1995)

Michiko Iwasaka and Barre Toelken, *Ghosts and the Japanese: Cultural Experience in Japanese Death Legends* (1994)

Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (1994)

Brian Scott Sockin and Eileen L. Wong, *CARE Treasury of Children's Folklore: A Collection of Traditional Stories from around the World* (1995)

Katherine Young, ed., *Bodylore* (1994)

Jack Zipes, *Creative Storytelling: Building Community, Changing Lives* (1995)



# Reports From The Field

## MAFA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Middle Atlantic Folklife Association will be held May 3 - 5 in Millville, New Jersey, and will be hosted by the Down Jersey Folklife Center at Wheaton Village. Millville, historically important as a center for glassmaking, is located 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia on the edge of the Pinelands National Reserve.

The conference will focus on the role of traditional arts in immigrant communities, and will feature a field visit and roundtable discussions conducted in cooperation with local Mexican American community leaders and social service organizations. By providing technical assistance sessions for local communities, extending outreach to social service agencies, and offering curriculum applications for local teachers, the meeting format will maintain well-received innovations of recent MAFA meetings and will carry forward objectives of last summer's "Refugee Arts and Community Stability" conference in Philadelphia.

The conference will begin at 1:00 p.m. Friday with the field visit. Saturday will include three roundtable sessions at which conference participants and community leaders will discuss various aspects of cultural conservation, and the association business meeting. Special events will include a Friday evening local/ethnic foodways dinner with Mexican music, and a Saturday tour of the Museum of American Glass, with a demonstration of the making of a traditional "Millville Rose" paperweight.

For further information on meeting plans, contact Jack Shortlidge, Wheaton Village, Millville, NY 08332 or call Rita Moonsammy at (609)268-2309.

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ART EXCHANGE AT IACA

The International Arts and Culture Association (IACA) World Awareness Children's Museum announces its ninth annual International Youth Art Exchange Program theme: Fun in My Country—Games, Pastimes, Toys, Hobbies, etc. Elementary and Middle Schools are invited to participate by

submitting up to 35 student works per school in any two dimensional medium.

All students submitting receive a certificate. Selected work will be sent to participating schools in 37 countries. U.S. schools have a choice of matted shrink-wrapped foreign work on loan. Deadline is April 1, 1996, but loans of foreign work are available as soon as schools agree to participate. For details contact Dr. J. Touba, IACA, 227 Glen St. 3A, Glens Falls, NY 12801, 518-793-2773.

## ESCA OFFERS SERVICES TO CRAFT ARTISTS

The Empire State Crafts Alliance, a statewide organization dedicated to supporting New York State craft artists and their work, announces a wide range of programs and services for members and non-members including seminars and workshops for artists and the general public; Grants to New York State Craft Artists, a grant program that awarded \$8500 to 10 artists this year; craft shows in Corning and Syracuse; and Inform, a quarterly newsletter providing information on upcoming competitions, shows, exhibitions, gallery consignments, and sales opportunities. In addition, ESCA offers access for individual artists to group rates on health, dental, and studio insurance. For membership and other information contact Sue Kadilak, Empire State Crafts Alliance, 320 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202, 315-472-4245.

## SMITHSONIAN OPPORTUNITIES

### Research Fellowships

The Smithsonian Institution announces its research fellowships for 1996 in the fields of History of Science and Technology, Social and Cultural History, History of Art, Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Earth Sciences, and Materials Analysis. Smithsonian Fellowships are awarded to support independent research in residence at the Smithsonian in association with the research staff and using the Institution's resources. Applications are due January 15, 1996. Awards are based on merit and includes sti-

pend.

### Minority Internship Program

Internships, offered through the Office of Fellowships and Grants, are available for students to participate in research and museum-related activities for periods of ten weeks during the summer, fall, and spring. U.S. minority undergraduate and beginning graduate students are invited to apply. The

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Conference on New York State History

Individual paper abstracts, panel proposals, and other program suggestions are now invited for the 1996 Conference on New York State History at New Paltz. Presentations may consider any aspect of the history of New York over the past 400 years. Diverse theoretical perspectives and innovative methodological approaches are welcomed. The deadline for proposals is December 31, 1995.

Interested parties are encouraged to discuss proposals and any conference-related ideas with the conference organizers: David Brumberg, Cornell University; Wendell Tripp of the New York State Historical Association, and Stefan Bielinski of the New York State Museum, conference coordinator.

A proposal must include paper and/or session titles, names and telephone numbers of all participants, and a one or two page description of each presentation. Special scheduling and equipment requests also should be noted. All program participants are expected to register for the conference. Address proposals to Stefan Bielinski, Conference on New York State History, 3093 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230, (518)474-6917. Participants will be notified by mid-February.

## CLASSIFIED

Oral history recordings transcribed. Send SASE for information. Lydia Simpson, P.O. Box 305, North Creek, NY 12853-0305.

## CRISIS & CONFIDENCE

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under the able leadership of our president Ellen McHale and our new vice-president MaryKay Penn, is engaged in a strategic planning process that will help shape our direction for the future. Our new program director Karen Taussig-Lux is exploring relationships with people and organizations active in other fields including the exciting heritage movement in New York (see the articles in the last issue of the newsletter). Perhaps most importantly, we are thinking afresh about you—about the many hundreds of people who read this newsletter or have other contact with the New York Folklore Society but who are not yet actively involved with our programs or as members. We want to know what you would like us to be doing, what we could do that would be useful to you. And of course, we need your membership support more than ever. So you will be hearing more from us in the coming months, and I hope we will hear back from you, with your ideas and your support.

Have a happy holiday season and a rewarding new year.

John W. Suter  
Executive Director

## AUNT BETTY

continued from page 5

no avail: Dad held my leg, and Aunt Betty and Ma stuck my foot in that bag and tied it on around my ankle. Not only did it stink, it felt like a bag of half-melted jello! I will never forget it as long as I live! They propped my foot upon a pillow, and I had to lay there. I felt like two cents, even less. Aunt Betty went home. My fever rose, and my foot ached. Every hour Ma gave me two teaspoons of spirits of niter and water for my fever. She gave me baths of baking soda and cool water. She rubbed me with rubbing alcohol, and every few minutes I could hear the old pump outside my window and another cold cloth was placed on my head. Dad kept the cold water coming all night long. Ma and Dad sat with me all night. I was in a fog from having such a high fever, but I remember them both being there. At four in the morning—I heard

my mother tell Dad that my fever had broke. I was soaking wet from all the sweat. Dad picked me up and held me in his lap while Ma changed the sheets. They put a dry night gown on me. But still my foot was in the bag of cow manure. I then drifted off into a peaceful sleep. I remember when I woke up I looked at the clock and it was eight o'clock in the morning. The first thing I wanted to do was to get that stinking bag off my foot. Ma said, "No, wait for Betty." About eleven o'clock, Aunt Betty came. She had walked the five miles. She looked at me, felt my forehead to see if my fever was gone, and then she took the bag off my foot. My foot was stuck in a basin of water and washed. My foot was snow white and looked like a prune. More turpentine was poured on the foot. And then Aunt Betty inspected the contents of the bag. Inside was a small sharp piece of wood. The fresh cow manure had drawn the piece of the wood from the wound. Now I don't suppose this was a pleasant task for her, but as the old saying goes, "Someone had to do it." She told Ma to keep me in bed for a couple of days and not let me step on my foot, patted me on the head, gave me a kiss, and Dad hitched up the horse and wagon and drove her home.

There is no doubt in my mind that Aunt Betty saved my life. She knew all the old remedies and how to use them. She helped deliver babies. She could cure a sick horse or cow as good as a vet. I loved my Aunt Betty. She was a great lady. God didn't make too many people like my Aunt Betty Harrington. By the way, I hate cows.

## MULTICULTURAL

continued from page 7

rogative to assure that only those models above a certain quality or those of certain aesthetics were allowed in the festival. Flashy neon plastic fast-electric kit model boats with names like "Awesome" sat beside awe-inspiring examples of woodcarving craftsmanship. Ultimately, I felt I was being more honest for having presented the audience with the widest range of work to look at, think about, and value. When it came to quality, I felt comfortable trusting the audience to be the judge.

## SMITHSONIAN JOBS

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appointment carries a stipend of \$250 per week for undergraduate and \$300 per week for graduate students, and may provide a travel allowance. The deadline for all 1996 applications is February 15.

For information and application forms for both programs, please write: Smithsonian Institution, Office of Fellowships and Grants, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7000, Washington, D.C. 20560, or e-mail: siofgr@sivm.si.edu.

## QUILTING

continued from page 4

I started making quilts on my own, after my grandmother taught me to sew. I would always give them away. My husband said he didn't see much sense in making quilts and giving them away. To get him off my back, I said, "perhaps they will throw them over my casket." I now take pictures of the quilts I make. All of the children who graduate receive a quilt. I had presented quilt making in classrooms for primary children, taught in teen centers (both males and females took the class), and the Folk Art Session for women in Upper Room Church. When friends have been upset or discouraged, I have said, "Let me show you how to make a quilt, you can't be discouraged making a quilt." It is therapy and relaxing to me.

One of the greatest success stories in my quilting career happened when my son was given a psychological test. His teachers apparently felt he was not ready to move to first grade. On most of the test he had been average. So the psychologist had later told me that she had expected the matching part of the test to really stump him. Using black and white blocks, the psychologist made patterns that my son was to match. According to the psychologist, my son stood up from the table and said, "Oh that's easy," and he quickly matched her pattern. After repeating this task several times, the psychologist asked him how he was able to do that task so quickly. My son, grade K, replied proudly, "I watch my mother put her quilt pieces together," and he was given a score of "Exceptional" on this part of the exam.

# PUBLICATIONS

**Working With Folk Materials In New York State: A Manual for Folklorists and Archivists**

Edited by John Suter, with contributions by Bruce Buckley, David Carmicheal, James Corsaro, Ellen McHale, Susan O'Brien, Paul Rapp, Kathleen Roe, and Frederick J. Stielow.

Produced in an attractive looseleaf binder, *Working With Folk Materials in New York State* includes the following chapters: Introduction; Fundamentals Of Folklore; Fundamentals Of Archives; When Folklorists And Archivists Meet; What To Do Now; Forms And Guidelines; Glossary of terms; Resources; Supplementary Readings.



## NYFS JOURNALS SPECIAL OFFERS

We are offering complete sets of available back issues of the Society's journals *New York Folklore* (1975 to the present — 30 issues as of 1995) and the *New York Folklore Quarterly* (1946-1974—75 issues as of January 1992) at special discount prices. Our usual single-copy price for back issues is \$10. If you're a member and take advantage of the complete back issues offer, your price will be only \$1.43 per copy! (Domestic shipping and handling are included!)



Use the form at right top order any of these publications. For a complete list of NYFS publications, please contact our office.

## HELP US MEET THE CHALLENGE!

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**MEMBERSHIP** – Benefits include this newsletter and *New York Folklore* plus discounts on NYFS publications and activities.

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### PUBLICATIONS

*Working with Folk Materials in New York State: A Manual for Folklorists and Archivists*  \$25/members  \$35/non-members \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*New York Folklore Quarterly* (1946-74) 75 issues  
 \$110/members  \$125/non-members \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*New York Folklore* (1975-94) 30 issues  
 \$85/members  \$95/non-members \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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## FEATURES

- **Crisis and confidence**

*on the funding scene*

- **An African-American quilter's story**

- **Life-saving cow manure**

- **New ways to serve communities and audiences**

*alternative approaches to multiculturalism*

## Folk Archives Project Successes

*NYFS Archives manual is honored by the American Folklore Society, and an important folk arts collection in Troy finds a new home in an archives down the street.*

*See below and on page 3.*



**L-R: Rensselaer County Historical Society Director Anne Ackerson, Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno, and RCHS Curator Stacey Draper look over display of folk documentary materials from the recently transferred Rensselaer County Council on the Arts collection. Photo by Mike McMahon/The Record.**

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