

From the Director



On September 17, 2014, Henry Arquette received the highest award that this nation offers to folk and traditional artists. A maker of utilitarian baskets held in high regard by his Haudenosaunee Mohawk community, Henry Arquette was one of nine award honorees for 2014, and the only artist from New York State to receive the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award for 2014. In a gala ceremony and banquet, Mr. Arquette received his award surrounded by three generations of his family members. This is the first time in the history of the award that a representative of the Mohawk Nation has been honored in this way. (See photo of Henry on p. 45)

Begun by the founding director of the Folk and Traditional Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, Bess Lomax Hawes, the National Heritage Awards have a 32-year history of awarding excellence within folk and traditional arts. During this time, New York artists have been well represented (see www.nyfolklore.org/tradarts/neafellow-ny.html), and Henry joins this group as the 33rd recipient from New York, out of the 386 so honored since 1982.

My colleague, Steve Zeitlin has mused that our actions as folklorists often create ripples, which reveal themselves long after the project or program has faded in people's memories (personal conversation, n.d.). Like traditional arts themselves, the ramifications and outcomes of traditional arts learning and exposure sometimes take years, if not generations, to germinate and become apparent.

Henry's nomination was supported by several folklorists and folklore organizations, and it was promoted by members of his Mohawk community, in recognition of his importance not only as a traditional artist but also for his prominence in teaching others to carry on the tradition. One can't say with certainty what the effect of this award will have for the future. The youngest members in attendance, great grandchildren of Henry Arquette, made the nine-hour journey from Akwesasne to Washington, DC, to witness the ceremony. Their wide-eyed look at the ceremony and its trappings of splendor will without doubt remain in their memories for years to come. Will it inspire them to follow in their great grandfather's footsteps?

In her remarks, NEA Chair, Jane Chu said, "These individuals are just a few examples of exemplary artists in this nation worthy of distinction; the makers of incredible music, dance, and crafts, who are passing the arts forward, to make sure that the next generations will have the same opportunities to experience these traditions, and find meaning in their practice." (National Heritage Awards Program, 2014). I would hope that Henry Arquette's honor would have a beneficial effect towards the continuation of traditional Mohawk basketry, utilitarian and fancy baskets alike.

*Ellen McHale, PhD, Executive Director
New York Folklore Society
nyfs@nyfolklore.org
www.nyfolklore.org*

From the Editor



What a blow to hear of Peter Seeger's death on January 27, 2014 at the age of 94.

I thought the man would live forever. What a champion of so many causes over the decades of his life, and a master of weaving music into this activism.

I'm so glad to have joined recent celebrations of his life's work. At last year's benefit concert at Proctors Theater in Schenectady, I enthusiastically sang along with Pete, as did a full house of supporters. In 2007, I joined the American Folklife Center's symposium and concert in honor of the Seeger family, at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, where Pete Seeger had been employed 67 years earlier by the Archive of American Folk Song. What a treat to be a part of the conversation, and, of course, to sing with Pete Seeger, his sister Peggy, his brothers Mike and John, his wife Toshi, and other family members.

As a college student, I first experienced Pete's power of music to fuel all his causes in a live, sold-out concert at Harvard University. It took place on Saturday, January 12, 1980, my weekend off from a somewhat boring Gloucester fisheries lab internship. I took a train into Boston and hoped to get tickets from someone by hanging around the hall. My notes from the time say, "No luck at all but it gave me a chance to go back stage and watch Pete put the finishing touches on an audience-participation sign, chat with some people, and smile a lot. He seemed genuinely nice." I remember the excitement of waiting with other folks hoping that, despite the announcement of a full house

continued on page 2

***"If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning, I'd hammer in the evening,
All over this land. I'd hammer out danger, I'd hammer out a warning,
I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters, All over this land."***

—Pete Seeger and Lee Hays, "If I Had a Hammer" (1949).

From the Editor (continued)

standing room, we'd finally get in. At intermission, a fellow college student and usher took pity and slipped me into the hall. He had me climb a ladder to a wooden platform holding spotlights above the hall, and from this perch, I sang along with the entire hall led by this extraordinary man. I was energized by the concert. I was energized by his message that *every voice can be heard, everyone can take a part*. What a good feeling!

"Pete," someone mentioned, "is the closest thing we have today to an American Folk Hero. His message is passed on in his song. A powerful tool."

I must admit, I love the Huffington Post's take on the man in a recent blog, "30 Things You Need to Know About the Hudson Valley Before You Move There": #20: "Pete Seeger is the unspoken king of Beacon. If you don't know who Pete Seeger is, prepare for a master class. The wildly influential folk singer-songwriter made the Hudson Valley town of Beacon his home for most of his life, until his death in January. These days, he's treated as a demigod around the area."

And why not, I could nod a bit smugly as a resident with eight-generation roots in the Hudson Valley. Pete Seeger was on the front lines of cleaning up our beloved Hudson River in the 1960s and '70s. His *Circles and Seasons* (1979) was a rallying cry for the youthful charter members of Ecology House at Colgate University. I especially love his "Sailing Down My Golden River" on this album (see insert). And fresh out of college, what a thrill for this member to join the volunteer crew of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater (which Seeger co-founded in 1966) to teach environmental education and later use his songs and techniques to awaken environmental activism in our young campers at Wildwood, in neighboring Massachusetts in the early 1980s.

Yet even years before becoming a folklorist or a budding environmentalist, I was touched by Pete Seeger's power of song, without even knowing it. I was in elementary school in the 1960s, a bit young to be a part of his earlier causes. Nonetheless, Pete activism found its way to us in our rural, somewhat

conservative village. I now see his hand in the technique used by my enthusiastic fifth-grade music teacher, Mrs. Raycraft, who got a bunch of unruly rural fifth-graders to "stand up" and "sing out like we meant it," while she pounded out on the upright piano, Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer." In my rural Methodist Church, we all sang his "Turn, Turn, Turn" and "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"—understanding both the message and the underlying encouragement that each of us could make a difference.

I must admit. Pete Seeger's passing has been hard to take. But his song reminds us, "To everything (Turn, Turn, Turn) there is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn). . . . A time to be born, a time to die. . . . A time to laugh, a time to weep. . . . A time of peace, I swear it's not too late."

Thank you Pete Seeger. Music moves the message. You may be gone, but your message lives on: Lend your voice. Sing out. Participate and make a difference.

Todd DeGarmo

Voices Acquisitions Editor

Founding Director of the Folklife Center at

Crandall Public Library

degarmo@crandalllibrary.org

"Sailing Down My Golden River"

Sailing down my golden river,
Sun and water all my own,
Yet I was never alone.
Sun and water, old life givers,
I'll have them where e'er I roam,
And I was not far from home.
Sunlight glancing on the water,
Life and death are all my own,
Yet I was never alone.
Life to raise my sons and daughters,
Golden sparkles in the foam,
And I was not far from home.
Sailing down this winding highway,
Travelers from near and far,
Yet I was never alone.
Exploring all the little by-ways,
Sighting all the distant stars,
And I was not far from home.

Originally titled: "Sailing Down This Golden River" Words and music by Pete Seeger (1962)
TRO - ©1971 Melody Trails, Inc. New York, NY

Voices

Fall-Winter 2013 · Volume 39: 3-4

Acquisitions Editor Todd DeGarmo
Copy Editor Patricia Mason
Administrative Manager Laurie Longfield
Design Mary Beth Malmsheimer
Printer Eastwood Litho


Editorial Board Varick Chittenden, Lydia Fish, Hanna Griff-Sleven, Nancy Groce, Lee Haring, Bruce Jackson, Christopher Mulé, Libby Tucker, Kay Turner, Dan Ward, Steve Zeitlin

Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore is published twice a year by the New York Folklore Society, Inc. 129 Jay Street Schenectady, NY 12305

New York Folklore Society, Inc.
Executive Director Ellen McHale
Folklorist Lisa Overholser
Administration and Gallery Laurie Longfield
Web Administrator Patti Mason
Voice (518) 346-7008
Fax (518) 346-6617
Web Site www.nyfolklore.org

Board of Directors
President Gabrielle Hamilton
Vice President Christopher Mulé
Secretary Puja Sahney
Treasurer Jessica Schein
Ellen Fladger, Anna Mulé, Gregory S. Shatan, Connie Sullivan-Blum, Kay Turner, Thomas van Buren

Advertisers: To inquire, please call the NYFS (518) 346-7008 or fax (518) 346-6617.

 *Voices* is available in Braille and recorded versions. Call the NYFS at (518) 346-7008.

The New York Folklore Society is committed to providing services with integrity, in a manner that conveys respect for the dignity of the individuals and communities the NYFS serves, as well as for their cultures, including ethnic, religious, occupational, and regional traditions.

The programs and activities of the New York Folklore Society, and the publication of *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*, are made possible in part by funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore is indexed in *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* and *Music Index*; and abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

Reprints of articles and items from *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* are available from the NYFS. Call (518) 346-7008 or fax (518) 346-6617.

ISSN 0361-204X

© 2014 by The New York Folklore Society, Inc. All rights reserved.