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From the Director



I am pleased to introduce this issue's guest editor, Sarah Shultz. Sarah holds a MA in Folk Studies and Anthropology from Western Kentucky University and a PhD in

Folklore from Memorial University, Newfoundland. As a foodways scholar, her research focuses on connections between foodways, personal narratives, and expressions of individual and group identities.

In early 2023, New York Folklore put out a Call for guest editors for our journal. Each potential guest editor proposed a special issue with a specific theme or focus. Two talented folklorists are being featured for the 2023 issues of *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore*. This issue, by Sarah Shultz, has its focus on foodways. The first of the two guest-edited volumes that we will be bringing out in the next several months, we are working to bring *Voices* back on schedule, having been slowed during the COVID pandemic.

This volume marks another departure. When *Voices: the Journal of New York Folklore* was designed in 2000, the original intent was to eventually print in full color. Now, printing technology, (with the attendant lowering of costs), allows New York Folklore to realize that vision. We are pleased to offer a full-color volume for the first time. We hope that you enjoy reading about the different folklore and folklife expressions of New York State in all of their details—including color.

Programmatically, New York Folklore continues to respond to artists and community organizations within New York State. Our website was expanded to include notice of our folklore and education programs and projects, and we have received funding for a new microenterprise project to specifically assist “newcomer” folk and traditional artists residing in the greater Capital Region of New York. It is a busy and exciting time at NYF, and we hope you'll follow our activities on social media and the web.

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From the Editor



I developed a research interest in foodways while doing my Master of Arts in Folk Studies & Anthropology at Western Kentucky University in 2015, but

my cultural interest in food dates back much further, to when I was 18 years old and living in New York City for the first time as an undergraduate student. I remember that first semester vividly—the classes, meeting new friends, adapting to living in a city after having spent my entire life in a quiet college town. What I remember most of all are the tastes—meeting up with classmates for sushi during study breaks; sipping an egg cream for the first time at a diner at three o'clock in the morning; biting into a knish outside of Lincoln Center in the freezing February wind.

After eight long years away at graduate school, it has been such a delight to be back in New York and to connect with so many brilliant and creative folklorists, cultural workers, tradition bearers, artists, and writers based in the state. I was ecstatic to have the opportunity to edit this special themed issue of *Voices*, and in thinking about what my theme for this issue would be, I knew I wanted to focus on the diversity and complexity of foodways in New York State—a place that includes both rural and agricultural areas, the largest city in the United States, and everything in between—with rich cultural and culinary traditions that are constantly being modified and adapted to better serve their communities in both the urban and rural parts of the state.

The theme for this issue, “Food, Identity, and Home: Exploring the Culinary Traditions of New York” investigates connections between foodways and conceptions of home, belonging, and conservation. New York is a state of great diversity of cultures, ways of life, and culinary traditions. Contributors were invited to think about how, in this great collection of

differences, do New Yorkers use food to help negotiate issues of identity: In what ways does food help people to create or contest ideas of home, self, and cultural identity? What are the distinctions between the foods understood to be “home” foods—those we share with family and friends—and those we present to visitors?

The articles, memoirs, reviews, research notes, and field reports that make up this issue tackle these questions and many others from a variety of perspectives. The diversity of cultural traditions, academic traditions, and points of reference represented in these pages are a testament to the multiplicity of voices in New York. Claude Lévi-Strauss's oft quoted adage that food is good to think with, perhaps, can be modified here, and we might also say that food is good to listen with, as well. Focusing on foodways makes it possible to hear the voices of the diverse groups of people who have made New York their home across time and space in new and timely ways, and to pick out common themes that echo through this multiplicity of voices.

These eight pieces explore several issues related to the cultural significance of food in New York State, and while in their different approaches and subject areas they accurately portray the diversity of New York, they also address many similar themes, and they speak to one another across time, region, and cultural context. Issues of memory, comfort, and nostalgia are center stage here. In “Grilled Cheese,” Amanda Gordon provides snapshots of a life lived in Long Island diners, reflecting on how memories of specific foods and restaurants can provide comfort during uncertain times and the quiet joy of returning to our favorite culinary haunts after a long absence. Maryann Caputo's excellent memoir of growing up in the working class, Italian American community of Pigtown, a neighborhood in Brooklyn that no longer exists but is well remembered, looks back on a

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Traditions are built through language, music, food, dancing...and as much of that we can keep going, I think we owe it to the generations that are coming to keep those traditions alive.

—Sonya Gregian (From “Resilience & Nostalgia: An Ethnography of Armenian Foodways in Western New York” by Edward Y. Millar, p. 26 in this issue).

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