

The Mission of the Down Jersey Folklife Center is to research, document, and present traditional cultures in New Jersey's southern eight counties.

We explore and relate the activities and international perspectives of those people whose creativity has informed the cultural wealth of our region; and of those who inform it now.

We support communication through the languages of the traditional arts (narrative, music, dance, craft and ritual expressions), and invite wide varieties of artists and audiences to participate in an ongoing exploration of the creative process.

The Mission of WheatonArts
*WheatonArts Engages Artists And Audiences
In An Evolving Exploration Of Creativity*

DOWN JERSEY FOLKLIFE CENTER



wheatonarts.org

1501 Glasstown Rd. Millville, NJ 08332

856.825.6800 x131 or 132



WheatonArts strives to make its programs, events and exhibitions accessible to all visitors. Please call us at least two weeks in advance so we can accommodate your needs.

Large Print

The Down Jersey Folklife Center is a division of Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Funding has been made possible in part from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

WheatonArts has also received grant support from the NJ Historical Commission, a division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State and from the NJ Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.



Ringing In The New—In Autumn

By David Iams

It's hard to imagine ringing in the new year in mid-autumn, when daylight is dwindling, tree leaves are falling and the only bell likely to be heard is tolling near a church graveyard.

But in the past, cultures both in the Middle East and in the West celebrated a new year around the time of the Harvest Moon. Although it had no formal link to lunar or solar cycles, it was both a religious and secular occasion, and traces of it persist to this day, beginning with the academic calendar.

And then there is Halloween.

It is not just educational institutions such as schools and colleges that begin in the fall. So do cultural ones. Think of opening nights at the orchestra, the opera, and the ballet.

Even political institutions are affected. Congress and the president begin their new terms on Inauguration Day, the third Tuesday in January. But the Supreme Court session begins in October.

We may dismiss the autumn beginnings as purely pragmatic, necessitated by pupils – and sometimes their teachers – who had to get the crops in before they could turn to their books; or of other professionals who take advantage of the summer's warm



In some ancient cultures the new year began at the time of the Harvest Moon.

weather for travel and vacations at the beach.

But in the Middle East, the idea of a mid-autumn new year goes back 3,000 years to the Babylonians, who referred to the time as “the minor new year.” As a religious festival, the autumnal new year survives today in Judaism, where it is celebrated as Rosh Hashanah. It occurs 163 days after the first day of Passover, meaning that in terms of the Gregorian calendar it falls between September 5 and October 5.

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From The Director

FOLK ARTS IN EDUCATION INITIATIVE 2010

By Dr. Iveta Pirgova

This year the center was actively involved in the first phase of a state-wide project "Folk Arts in Education" whose primary goal was to prepare folk artists, folklorists and educators for in-school teaching through residency programs. This is a partnership project involving all regional folklife centers in New Jersey, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and Arts in Education Consortium.

The New Jersey folklife partners' efforts were initially focused on fieldwork. The goal of the fieldwork was to identify artists who would be willing to participate in school residency programs - long-term and short-term ones - and who would be invited to the artist training program scheduled for September 14 and 15 of 2010. Fieldwork and documentation is part of each of the center's ongoing work. It is done on the premise that the folk arts are the core of the traditional cultures and that folk artists could be identified in each community and in each area of the state.

The fieldwork is also done taking into account cultural value priorities, aesthetics and criteria for mastership relevant to each community we study and with a full awareness that notions of artistry and uniqueness, which are significant to many of the contemporary arts do not always apply to the traditional art forms practiced by the folk artists.

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South Jersey Traditions

Autumn 2010

Published three times a year
by the
Down Jersey Folklife Center
1501 Glasstown Rd.
Millville, NJ 08332-1566

856.825.6800, ext. 131 & 132

Download pdf format of this
publication at

www.wheatonarts.org

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South Jersey Traditions Editor

David Iams

Newsletter Design Janet Peterson

Submit articles, letters to:

djfc@wheatonarts.org

Deadline for next issue:

February 15, 2011

Down Jersey Folklife Center Story

Permanent Collection Display Expanded

With the close of its exhibition devoted to the dance costumes of Cambodian artist and performer Chamroeun Yin, the Down Jersey Folklife Center had the opportunity to expand the display of items from its permanent collection, including some that had never been displayed before.

Back on view are Merry May's East Point Lighthouse quilt, which also graces the cover of the "Folklife in New Jersey" brochure published by the New Jersey Folklife Partners; wooden birds and duck decoys by various artisans including Ralston "Hop" Edwards and Harry Shourds, Sr.; wooden Santa Clauses made by Lee Ayars and the late Fusaye Kazaka; a turned wooden bowl by Bob Broschart; the tinwork implements of Fred Rechsteiner; a woven oak basket made by the late Alexander Gustavis; and miniature ceramic works made by Mary Resnick.



Miniature ceramics by Mary Resnick, part of the DJFC permanent collection. Photo by Ed Bobrow.

Some ethnic items are also freshly back on display, including a pair of Greek dance costumes, Lithuanian woodwork, a Finnish *Ryja* made by Elise Uiga, and a Romanian rug from Moldavia donated to the Center by Margaret Mukherjee.

From The Director

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The culminating event of this project (the two-day artist training) brought together a diverse group of artists, folklorists and educators who shared knowledge and experience with one another and became aware of concepts, behavioral differences and art forms related to a variety of cultures in New Jersey. They learned to redefine beauty and artistry in a way that would

allow them to adequately teach folk arts in a multicultural school setting. Workshops-demonstrations were built-in the training sessions so that artists could observe first hand the work of a guest artist (visual arts) and the work of a lead artist (performing arts).

Next year we will continue with phase two of the project, which will include more training programs and the launch of the pilot residencies throughout the state.

45 Years Of Folk Music Broadcasts

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and recordings sent to me by performers from all over the country as well as some places beyond. In this regard, I have been exposed to some artists that I may miss in my normal travels. An interesting feature of my program is a regular house band that opens each show. This band is the Snake Brothers which I consider the best eclectic style band in South Jersey. They also are featured in some of the outreach programs at local venues like Cumberland County College Performing Arts Center and concerts at Ocean City Music Pier and the revived folk festival at Historic Cold Spring Village in Cape May.

A few more policies favored by the Down Jersey program are promotion of local concert events, holiday themed programs and introduction of new artists on the scene. Many programmers post a complete play list on the internet. I like to send performers direct notices that I will be playing them on a certain date. The artists usually have time to post notices to their contacts which brings new listeners to the show. It is also nice to receive messages of thanks and offers to send out new recordings to air. Some of the old timers take the time to write messages like old fashioned letters rather than the few brisk lines of the standard e-mail messages.

And so, even though I cannot see the audience, I know they are there and I try to give them the best of my taste in recorded music which runs strongly toward the traditional side of the folk music spectrum. And if they learn something or meet a new artist like Ali Hoffman or Red Molly or Dan



Gene Shay, "dean" of folk music radio.

Godbey, one of the best all around song writers and instrumentalists I have ever heard and he is right here in Millville, or hear a style they have not heard before like early old time fiddle tunes, then I am delighted each time I say, "Here We Are...Down Jersey."

When The Beatles "Played" The Levoy

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Paul, George and even Ringo were a thousand miles away being fab somewhere else.

Meanwhile, in a tiny office somewhere inside the Levoy Theatre, Millville's favorite "Uncle" was counting the day's receipts and planning the next big thing.

The Levoy Theatre is currently under renovation. It's scheduled for a summer 2011 grand re-opening. If you have good memories of the Levoy (or are looking to make new ones) and want to contribute or get involved, contact Ivanembden@levoy.org. Donations can be made to support the Operating Fund in any amount and are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to: LTPS and mail to: P.O. Box 678, Millville, NJ 08332.

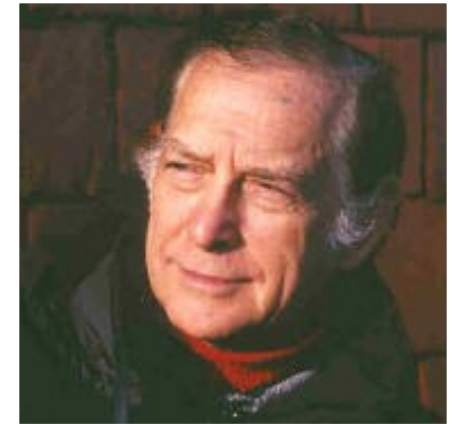
Music, Dance, Performance

45 Years Of Folk Music Broadcasts

By Jim Albertson

"Here We Are...Down Jersey." That was the opening from the "Git Go" back in 1965 on the first Down Jersey Radio Program from radio station WFPG-FM on the world famous Steel Pier in Atlantic City. Forty-five years later, "Here We Are...Down Jersey" still opens the Down Jersey Radio Program but now from WVLT FM "Cruisin' 92.1" from Vineland, New Jersey, on Thursday evenings from 9 to 10 p.m. and on the internet at www.wvlt.com throughout the Delaware Valley.

Folk music over the airwaves is not new at all. In addition to having more recording titles than any other performer, Oscar Brand has the longest running radio program in the history of broadcasting. As a well known singer and musician, Oscar not only plays recordings but also performs himself and interviews many of his fellow popular presenters of Folk Song on his program from New York City Public Radio. If Oscar Brand is the king of folk music radio then Gene Shay is the dean. He started out as a jazz DJ then moved toward folk after getting involved with the Philadelphia Folk Song Society and becoming one of the founders of the annual Philadelphia Folk Festival where he has served as MC from the very first festival to the present. On his radio program, Gene specializes in live guest interviews and performances on WXPN his current station. For a complete list of folk music radio programs, go to www.singout.org, then to their "Radio Partners" column. One thing you'll



Oscar Brand

notice is the overwhelming number of college and other public radio stations listed.

Down Jersey has followed a different track from its inception. First of all, Down Jersey has been broadcast on commercial stations in Atlantic City, Ocean City, Cape May Court House and more recently over WSNJ in Bridgeton to its present home on WVLT Vineland. Down Jersey features primarily Southern New Jersey performers recordings of folk, old time, bluegrass, Celtic, blues and early country music. My extensive collection of live performance recordings from New Jersey folk festivals including The New Jersey Folk Festival at Rutgers University, as well as Cold Spring Village and several events at WheatonArts, forms the bulk of my recorded presentations on the air. Additional material is drawn from *Sing Out Magazine*, Oasis radio samplers, The Smithsonian/Folkways collection

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Artist In Profile

Lace Making Recalls Childhood In Italy

By Larry Ericksen

Cesarina Croce cherishes her Italian heritage in all she does. In relating her life story, from traditional crafts to the language arts, Cesarina gives to South Jersey an appreciation of Italian culture.

I was born Cesarina De Cesero in 1939 in the town of Plezzo in northern Italy near the borders of Austria and Slovenia, but the region where we lived was given to Slovenia after World War II. So I initially went to an Italian school in Slovenia; and after school my sisters were taught bobbin lace-making by a lady in Plezzo. In 1947, before the American troops departed from the area, my family crossed the border to the little mountain hamlet of Rio Freddo in the north-eastern Italian region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia where my father had found work at a mining company.

In Rio Freddo we had lots of snow starting in early October, we didn't see the ground until May. In the winter, we went sledding; and in the summer, we went into the woods. When we went to the woods we always sang songs, one was called A Little Bouquet of Flowers. We picked mushrooms, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries; and we took care of our three goats.

During Carnevale, young girls dressed up as fairies or Snow White. As part of the Catholic youth organization, we girls went to a convent where they had a party room with little stage. Once I dressed up as a Spanish lady, with my hair up in braids. Using my mother's large green

scarf as a shawl, I wore a black skirt and white blouse on which my mother had stitched crepe paper flowers.

There were seven of us children; I had three brothers and three sisters, and I was the youngest. In my case, I always wore my sisters' castoffs; by the time I got them, they had to put on



Cesarina Croce with bobbins and lace made with them.

a pocket over each hole. In home economics class at school, I liked design, drawing and embroidery; and we made baby clothes, table cloths and nightgowns. At home we had a pedal-powered sewing machine, and we did a lot of stitching by hand. I liked embroidery, so I did a lot of that.

We came to America in 1956 and moved to Vineland, NJ, where we had

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When The Beatles "Played" The Levoy

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"Uncle" Simon's "plants" in the crowd. It was a pretty safe bet that the same bicycle was given away a dozen times during any particular summer.

A trip to the Levoy's mezzanine lobby afforded many a youngster with an education in consumerism. Along with the Zagnuts, Sno-Caps and Beech-Nut Gum displayed for sale in the lobby's vending machine was a spot on the right side with a crudely-drawn sign that said "SURPRISE." For 25 cents, any kid brave enough to drop a coin into the slot and pull on that magic lever below the mystery offering would receive a prize that would be theirs forever. Absolutely nothing. Thanks for the quarter, sucker!

But the biggest scam ever perpetrated on the unsuspecting kids of Millville was that the Beatles were coming to town.



Levoy owner and former Millville mayor Simon Cherivtch.

Monday morning, the marquee at the Levoy was changed to say: OPEN SUNDAY 'DR LAO' and 'BEATLES COME TO TOWN' BIG SATURDAY AND SUNDAY MATINEE. Just the word BEATLES could send teenage girls into squealing, screaming maniacs during the summer of 1964. Seeing it big as life on the Levoy's marquee generated a lot of attention from fans. Who or what "Dr. Lao" was did not matter. THE BEATLES WERE COMING TO TOWN!!!

A few days later a converted school bus with curtained windows and a luggage rack pulled up and parked at the curb in front of the Levoy. Who was inside? It was whispered that a certain quartet from England were aboard. "How did you find out?" "My brother's friend's sister's babysitter told my cousin at Tri-Y last night."

And so it went. By Friday, the town was practically vibrating with Beatle excitement. "Uncle" Simon was coy about the whole thing. He neither denied nor confirmed the rumors passed around at every school, every soda shop and every burger joint in town. By Saturday, it was sheer mayhem at the theatre's ticket booth. Every kid was sure that the Beatles had come to town and were going to put on a show at the Levoy.

The sound of disappointment that rose up from the expectant crowd as a Pathé newsreel flickered on screen and a thousand kids realized they'd been had, is today still echoing somewhere in outer space. They were presented instead with the consolation prize of eight glorious Technicolor Cinemascope minutes of Beatle goodness and then it was 100 minutes of an average Tony Randall comedy-fantasy. John,

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Artist In Profile

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cousins. I was 16 and wanted to go to work to be an adult part of the family. If you didn't know the language, however, the only work for a girl was in the clothing factory. For ten years I worked at the Rose Brothers clothing factory in Vineland making men's suit jackets. I learned 52 operations from sewing buttons on sleeves to cutting lapels.

My whole life I had wanted to be a teacher. While I still worked at the clothing factory, I took classes at Glassboro College, now Rowan University. At two classes per term, it took me five years to get my bachelor's degree in elementary education. Then I decided I wanted to reacquaint myself with my native country, so I enrolled in the Italian Language Program at Middlebury College; but this time I would go full time to get my master's degree. Middlebury's study-abroad program allowed me to be immersed in Italian culture for a year, where I studied in Florence, Italy. As part of the Italian cultural experience, I studied Italian literature and art appreciation.

While I was still in Florence, I received word that the Italian language teacher at Vineland high school had retired; so when I returned from Italy, I had a job waiting for me. In the fall of 1971, I started at Vineland Senior High School teaching Italian 1, 2, 3. I'm an enthusiastic person, and I had a lot of ideas. I rewrote the curriculum, changed the books, and organized student trips to Italy. Usually our trips began in Verona, the setting for Romeo and Juliet which we read with our third year class. Afterwards we would travel to Venice, Florence, Pisa,

Rome, and Naples. I arranged these student trips from 1977 until my last trip in 1997 when I retired.

During the Italian Festival at WheatonArts in 2006, Laura Friesel from Ewing, NJ, gave bobbin lace lessons, and I made a little lace heart with her. In 2007 I took a multi-week workshop in Italian bobbin lace with Laura. My next piece was a little Madonna in profile, showing her head and veil and praying hands. Then through the fellowship program at the Folklife Center, Laura Friesel became my master teacher for instruction in Italian bobbin lace. I have donated my lacework piece of a butterfly with raised wings to the Folklife Center's permanent collection.

Italian bobbin lace began at an early Renaissance convent. I still have lace my mother made.

Italian bobbin lace began at a convent in the early Renaissance in northern Italy around Milan. The nuns needed to decorate vestments for the priests and tablecloths for the altar. Wound on small wooden baton-shaped implements called bobbins, the thread is linen which is sturdy and strong, so the lace stays on the vestments without crumbling.

I still have lace that my mother made. When I was young, I would take it from her nightgown, pin it on my clothes and play the grand dame. Now I'm preserving that lace and will probably frame it. So few people make lace today that it has become a precious work of art; now we frame our Italian bobbin lace in order to preserve it, display it, and treasure it.

Stories, Memories, Legends



When The Beatles "Played" The Levoy

By Amanda Page

In the summer of 1964, at the height of BeatleMania, The Beatles played the Levoy Theatre in Millville, NJ. What do you mean you don't remember that? It's true! Would I lie to you?

Of course I would if I were a theatre owner and it got you to buy a ticket to a Saturday or a Sunday matinee.

The owner of the Levoy Theatre in 1964 was "Uncle" Simon Cherivtch. He was the colorful former mayor of Millville who garnered the nickname "Uncle" Simon, because he knew that the way to success in show business—and sometimes politics—was through kids. Kids loved "Uncle" Simon not only because he gave away free candy during election time, but he gave away great stuff during kiddie matinees at his Levoy Theatre.

Around election time, "Uncle" Simon could be found handing out bubble gum and penny candy to kids at the Culver School playground and

other places kids congregated. Today, that sort of behavior would get you locked up, but it was no big deal in 1964. In fact, it could get you elected mayor.

At the Levoy, Simon would give away all sorts of stuff that would excite kids and often fill parents with dread. Imagine sending junior off to an afternoon at the movies and three hours later he comes home with a live rabbit. Rabbits and other livestock were commonly given away – especially during Easter. They were cheap and the kids were besides themselves with excitement anticipating that their ticket stub would be pulled.

Occasionally, kids would be offered really big prizes like a new bicycle. Anticipation would grow as the hundreds of kids waited for the winner to be pulled. And the winner is... always some kid who was unbeknownst to the audience, one of

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Material Culture

Painting Shells, A Craft For Christmas



Bob Fagan at the Sheep Farm craft show with some of his wares.

He sells sea shells from the seashore, but first Bob Fagan paints them – as Santa Claus faces. He’s been doing it now for 15 years, continuing a South Jersey tradition. Mostly his figures are oyster shells, but he also decorates conch as the white bearded red-hatted gent.

Fagan was aware of oyster-shell painting from his many years living and working in South Jersey, including stints with the Atlantic City Expressway and as a glass designer at Wheaton. One reason he got involved in the activity himself was the availability of working material.

“Our house is in Sea Isle City. We’re right on the beach,” Fagan said

recently at a pre-Christmas craft fair and sale in Belleplain, where he was among a dozen or so vendors.

Painting oyster shells evidently goes back to the 18th century, along the Eastern seaboard, anyway, where they were long in such abundance that residents doubtless spent time figuring out uses for them. (The struggling oyster shucking business in Port Norris generates piles of them; and at least one entrepreneur used to sell them by the truckload – at competitive prices – for use as driveway gravel.)

Last spring a Massachusetts viewer of Antiques Road Show wrote to the

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“Minor New Year” Sight: Harvest Moon

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axis and the plane of the ecliptic along which the sun, moon and planets are located is narrowest at the equinox, moonrise, normally 50 minutes later each day, is reduced to 30 minutes.

Less convincing is the Harvest Moon’s reputation for size, brightness and color. It’s no different than any other full moon. It is orange at moonrise for the same reason the sun at sunrise and sunset looks red. Both are seen through a greater thickness of Earth’s atmosphere than at their zenith.

Why Is The Jewish New Year - Not?

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or Day of Atonement, and its significance is encapsulated by four interconnected themes: Creation, Judgment, Remembrance and Divine Kingship. It is the beginning of the High Holy Day period when Jewish reflect, repent and renew. According to Jewish tradition, God created mankind on the first day of the month of Tishri, and the New Year, therefore, commemorates the creation of the human race.

The theme of judgment stems from belief that the course of one’s life in a given year is defined by one’s willingness to make amends through repentance, prayer and charity for the misdeeds or mistakes of the previous year. In this way, the holiday celebrates free will: when one makes the conscious choice to reflect and make amends; he or she is worthy of mercy.

If, at the New Year, the creation of human beings is celebrated, then God’s kingship over them is also cele-



Depiction of Prayer at Yom Kippur as published in Wikipedia.

brated, which is why the shofar, or ram’s horn is blown: to reaffirm God as ruler of the universe and to awaken the human race to reflection, prayer and repentance. Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement, is the culmination of the ten days of introspection introduced by the New Year, and is characterized by prayer and fasting for 25 hours in anticipation of God’s decree for us during the year to come.

It’s important to remember that January 1, although traditionally the most important Day of Obligation for Roman Catholics, is for most a secular holiday to celebrate the end of one year and the start of the next. For Jews, however, Rosh Hashanah has nothing to do with the calendar and everything to do with spiritual awareness and how this shapes our relationships with each other and with the Creator of the universe.

Kirk Wisemayer is chief executive officer of the United Jewish Council of Greater Toledo (OH) and president of the Jewish Historical Society of Rural Southern New Jersey.

Ringling In The New - In Autumn

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All Souls Day, here portrayed by William Bouguereau, is a time to honor the departed.

the “shelter and safety of the stall.”

Frazer concludes that the two festivals went back to the days when the Celts were mainly a pastoral people

and the “celestial division” of the year was preceded by “terrestrial division” that was of “remote and purely pagan origin.”

Of the two, Frazer contends Halloween was the more important since the Celts seemed to have dated the beginning of the year from it rather than May Day. On the Isle of Man, he notes the first of November was regarded as New Year’s Day down to recent times.

And in ancient Ireland the New Year’s function of Halloween was reflected in the re-kindling of a sacred fire from which all other fires were kindled, an annual event, Frazer contended that “takes place most naturally at the beginning of the year.”

The fires of purgatory would have fit right in. And the prayers of the living on behalf of those enduring them may have led to another Halloween tradition. In the Middle Ages, some say, poor people would undertake to pray for departed souls in return for “soul cakes” – the root of the modern day trick or treat.

“Minor New Year” Sight: Harvest Moon

By David Iams

While autumn’s “minor new year” does not seem to have had any celestial origins, it fell near one of the night sky’s most vivid sights: the full moon nearest the autumnal equinox, the longest-lasting, biggest brightest *orange*st of them all, some say: the Harvest Moon.

Like Rosh Hashanah, the Harvest Moon occurs in either September or October. Like other full moons it rises as the sun sets.

But because of the equinox, there is no long period of darkness between the two events. In the days before tractor lights (and tractors themselves for that matter) the light of the Harvest Moon gave farmers added time to bring in their crops.

Some sky watchers say that the moon also seems full for several days at the equinox because of variations in the time of successive moonrises. Because the angle between the earth’s

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Folklife Lexicon

Folklife...When the Down Jersey Folklife Center opened in 1994, the term “folklife” had emerged only a few years before.

Folklife was introduced as an addition to the earlier term, “folklore.” The word “lore” alone simply means something learned and some scholars felt folklore was too restrictive, limited to verbal expressions such as stories and songs.

The 1976 American Folklife Preservation Act defined the new term as “a traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups” that it listed as familial, ethnic, occupational, religious and regional. The act broke expressive culture down into creative and symbolic forms such as “custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, place dance, drama, ritual, pageantry and handicraft.”

These expressions, it continued, “are mainly learned orally, by imitation, or in performance, and are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction.”

While the categories of participants and their activities still apply, the term “folk” is being less used by specialists in favor of “traditional.”

Part of the reason may be the greater precision of “traditional” as spelled out in the final sentence of the passage above. In addition “folk,” meaning “of the people,” could be misconstrued to mean simple or primitive. Neither is so.

Painting Shells

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show’s web site asking for information about an old basket of seashells among his late father’s belongings that included one shell with the quill drawing on its inner surface of what appeared to be an early 18th century gentleman.

One local oyster artist, the late Al Huber who was associated with the Cumberland County Historical Society, painted his Santas on the shell’s exterior which occasionally can look like faces even without the painted white beard and twinkling eyes. But

Fagan, and several other oyster shell artists advertising their wares on the internet, use the shell’s smooth interior.

He paints over 300 a year, selling them not only at the Sheep Farm craft sale but also at a half dozen shops, including Bogart’s books in Millville. The going rate for both his and others online is \$5.00 apiece.

Fagan also was selling another homemade product at the Sheep Farm show and sale: pickled tomatoes that he started preserving 30 years ago. There’s no connection between the two, he said. “I just happen to do both.”

Ringling In The New—In Autumn Continued from Page 1

It's hardly a time for popping Champagne corks, however. As the Wikipedia entry for the occasion notes, in Jewish liturgy Rosh Hashanah is described as "the day of judgment" and the "day of remembrance."

Some Judaic descriptions, the Wikipedia article continues, depict God as sitting upon a throne, while books containing the deeds of all humanity are opened for review, and each person passing in front of Him for evaluation of his or her deeds. These judgments are symbolically written into a Divine book where they hang in balance for ten days waiting for all to repent after which they will be sealed on Yom Kippur.

The idea of a new year as actually being a time to look back, not forward, finds an echo in liturgical Christianity, which since at least the second century has observed All Saints Day on November 1 and All Souls Day on November 2. The All Souls Day tradition of praying for the departed dates to the beginning of Christianity and, according to Catholic doctrine, actually has its roots in Judaism, as indicated in 2 Maccabees 12:41-42.

Such prayers were believed to have a positive effect on the souls of departed believers, who, Catholic doctrine teaches, may have died with God's grace and friendship but were not yet ready for full fellowship in the Communion of Saints. These souls must be purged of "lesser fault" in a location – or perhaps as Pope Benedict XVI suggests, a state of mind – called purgatory.

Also interceding with God on behalf of the salvation of humanity are the saints themselves, beginning with the

patriarchs and prophets and continuing with the apostles and winding up with the countless Christian martyrs who died for their faith.

The bond between the living and the departed is widespread. When Spanish Catholic missionaries came to the new world in the 16th century, they discovered, particularly among the Natives of southern Mexico and Central America, elaborate celebrations of the *Dia de los Muertos*, the Day of the Dead. While earlier celebrated in mid-August it was, like All Saints and All Souls, a two-day event that the missionaries rescheduled for November and claimed for their own.

The Minor New year draws on another cultural tradition that goes back even further than the Babylonians: the semiannual fire festivals of the Celts.

While most European fire festivals were linked to mid-summer, James Fra-

zer writes in "The Golden Bough," first published in 1922, "it appears not to have been true of the Celtic peoples." Their fire festivals fell six months apart, Frazer wrote, Beltane on the eve of May Day, Samhain on the eve of All Saints Day, Allhallow Eve or Hallowe'en "seemingly without reference to any position of the sun in heaven."

Not only are the two festivals unrelated to the equinoxes, the solstices or the mid-season days known as quarter terms, they also have nothing to do with the agricultural seasons, sowing in the spring and reaping in the fall. Instead, Frazer cites a "learned and ingenious" writer's hypothesis that while the two dates are not important to the European farmer, they "deeply concern the European herdsman" who, with the coming of summer, drives his cattle to the open and when winter nears drives them back to



All Saints icon shows them assembled in heaven.

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Why Is The Jewish New Year – Not?

By Kirk Wisemayer

Rosh Hashanah, commonly referred to in English as the Jewish New Year, takes place not in Nisan, the first month of the Jewish year, but in Tishri, the seventh month: "In the seventh month, on the first of the month, there shall be a Sabbath for you, a remembrance with shofar blasts, a holy convocation" [Leviticus 16:24].

The start of the Jewish calendar year takes place seven months before Rosh Hashanah for one reason: Literally translated as 'head of the year', Rosh Hashanah is not a New Year as is the

case with January 1 on the Gregorian calendar. Rosh Hashanah is the anniversary of the creation of the human race, not the beginning of the calendar year. It is not the change of year celebrated, but the birthday of mankind.

Although it may seem strange, Judaism has several New Years. In addition to Rosh Hashanah, Nisan 1 (March/April) is the New Year for the purpose of counting months on the calendar; Elul 1 (August) is the New Year for the tithing of animals; and Shevat 15 (February) is the New Year for trees, determining when first fruits can be eaten.



The shofar, the ram's horn that is blown at Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanah begins the ten-day period commonly referred to as the Days of Awe, which culminate on Yom Kippur,

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