

A Passion for Stories

An Interview with Bruce Carmody

By Deborah Dunleavy

We have seen him hidden behind the lens of his camera at numerous events and we know him as our web designer and coordinator of the SITS programs. We have also heard him spin his web of magical tales. In this interview we discover the passion that inspires Bruce Carmody to continue along the storyteller's pathway.

DD: Who do you remember first telling you stories?

BC: I don't think that I came from a storytelling family. Certainly I was read to as a child and so stories are a part of my earliest memories, but most of these were not "told" stories. When stories were told, it was usually by my mother and usually these were "family stories" - stories about her life in Scotland or about her brothers and sisters. (She came from a big family.)

Perhaps the most interesting part of these stories is that some years ago I was asked to create the story of an immigrant living in Toronto in the 1930s. In creating the story, I became my grandfather and sprinkled into my story all the anecdotes that I could remember my mother telling me about her parents and her brothers and sisters.

DD: When did you realize that you were a storyteller?

BC: My background is in education and I first became interested in storytelling as it relates to literacy development. All of the research suggested that being read to as a young child had a profound impact on early literacy development; I wondered about the



importance of hearing "told" stories. I began attending some workshops and seminars on storytelling. Probably one of the first was a full day workshop with Helen Porter, but there were others with folks like Bob Barton, and, of course I had hired storytellers to come into my schools so I had seen some fine tellers in action.

At about the same time that my interest in telling began to grow, I was transferred to a small, alternative school. It was the custom in this school that everyone would gather in the gymnasium on Friday afternoons for "assembly". I was told that the various classes in the school each brought something to share at the assembly - older students made presentations about their science experiments, younger ones showed their paintings or

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



The squirrels are getting chubby and furry, and they are chasing each other in a mad frenzy to prepare for the long winter ahead. My car mechanic tells me I need new tires. I'm avoiding the task. All I want to do is curl up with a good book and hibernate for several months or at least until the days grow longer again.

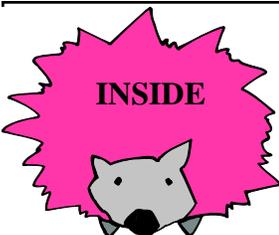
In olden times these were the days when myth tellers called a circle of people to gather around and hear the wisdom of

the ancestors. Now we cuddle up on a couch and allow ourselves to be put into a television trance. Yet, somehow the true magic of the storytelling circle seems to have disappeared.

How do we get back to the interconnectedness of teller and listener? Do we go to cafés and eaves drop on the people who are telling their personal stories to one another. Do we go to a church, synagogue or mosque to hear the religious stories? Do we meet with other tellers trying to preserve and relive the wonder? Perhaps we find a good book to inspire us to keep telling, to keep listening, to keep searching for the meaning of stories in our lives?

While preparing Pippin for press I have had to take a break from reading Wade Davis' book, "The Wayfinders". I'm

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half way though the work he presented on the CBC Massey Lecture Series. Davis discusses the loss of language and culture as it pertains to our relationship with nature and the losses we are experiencing daily both in terms of our creation myths and our understanding of the inseparable relationship between man and nature.

I wonder - how are the tellers of today capturing the ancient myths in contemporary situations. How are we becoming the

new myth carriers and what changes will we make in the hearts and minds of the listeners we are blessed to meet along the way?

Winter stands at the doorway and I, for one, would much rather ponder the philosophy of telling tales while sipping a hot cup of cider, rather than change the tires on my car. Call me impractical but content. Have a safe and secure season filled with the wonder and joy of storytelling.



****NOTA BENE****

AROUND THE OFFICE

JOURNEYS:

We bid a fond farewell to Jody James who saw Storytelling Toronto go through a number of changes including our name change and the change of location to the Artscape Wychwood Barns. We look forward to seeing Jody at many of our gatherings in the years to come. Thank you Jody.

Taking over the helm as Office Manager is playwright Gail Nyoka who, by the time Pippin comes to your door or computer, will have recently returned from Mumbai. Gail's new play had its first public performance there as part of the Women Playwrights International Conference. Welcome Gail.

NEW HOURS:

The office will be open **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

NEW MAILING ADDRESS:

It's official! We no longer have a post office box. Please make a note to send your mail to:

Storytelling Toronto
601 Christie St., Suite #173
Toronto, ON, M6G 4C7

STORYTELLING TORONTO LIBRARY:

The collection will soon become available to members.

PIPPIN is the newsletter of
Storytelling Toronto



The Storytellers School of Toronto is a registered, non-profit organization that provides a creative home for a community of storytellers,

listeners, and story-explorers. Our mission is to inspire, encourage and support storytelling for listeners, tellers and those who have not yet heard. Since 1979 we have been providing courses and workshops; holding gatherings, festivals and events to celebrate and present the art of storytelling; supporting the creative work of storytellers; and producing publications about storytelling and storytellers.

Pippin Editor
Deborah Dunleavy
kgp@ripnet.com

Design/Layout
chris cavanagh

Listings
Marylyn Peringer

Program Leaders
Festival Director: Debra Baptiste
Resident Teachers: Marylyn Peringer, Lynda Howes
Directory: Bruce Carmody
Legless Stocking: Lorne Brown, Catherine Melville
STORYFIRE: Catherine Melville

Website: Bruce Carmody
webmaster@storytellingtoronto.org

Board of Directors 2009-2010
Karen Blair June Brown
Jacqueline Nuwane Cesar Polvorosa Jr.
Paul Robert Hildy Stollery
Molly Sutkaitis Tasleem Thawar

Office Director
Gail Nyoka

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(formerly Storytellers School of Toronto)

Ph: 416-656-2445 Fax: 416-656-8510
www.storytellingtoronto.org

601 Christie St., Suite #173
Toronto On M6G 4C7

admin@storytellingtoronto.org
www.storytellingtoronto.org

June & Goldy Hit the Road

by Goldie Spencer

As co-reps of SC-CC for Ontario, June Brown and I decided to visit some of the telling groups outside Toronto. We started by attending a regular session of the Durham Folklore Society one Thursday evening. We were delighted with the setting, a charming room bathed in candlelight, over-

looking a lush wooded area in the local community centre. Many of the members come a fair distance to attend, some travelling over an hour, and it is all for the love of stories. The tales that were shared were most entertaining, and what a pleasure it was to hear new voices. The Durham Folkloric Society was a most hospitable group and we were welcomed warmly.

Our next visit was to the FOS - Festival of Storytelling in Brockville, which is a delightful little city nestled on the shores of the mighty St. Lawrence. And what a festival it was! We could hardly believe the calibre of this Festival which was spearheaded by Deborah Dunleavy and The 1000 Islands Yarnspinners. It was held in the Brockville Museum on September 25 and 26, and both days were those glorious autumn days, sunny with brilliant blue skies and the fall colours painting the trees gold and crimson.

We started out with an afternoon per-

formance by Mary-Eileen McClear. She took us on the marvelous and eventful journey of a young, Irish lass who travels from Ireland to Paris to New York and back again. Afterwards we were treated to an old-fashioned tea served in beautiful bone china cups and saucers.

The evening concert, Kiss of the Vam-

movement and music for storytelling. We were moving and singing and chanting right along with her and having a great time. Later that afternoon Adwoa presented Pot of Wisdom - African Folk Tales, an engaging performance which had the whole audience participating.

Many of us gathered for a sumptuous



June Brown, Goldie Spencer and Mary-Eileen McClear enjoying FOS

pire and Other Bloody Tales was ghoulishly delightful as many in the audience and tellers were dressed in Goth attire and the tales were suitably gory. We met later at a local pub where a lively band entertained us to the point that a bevy of gothic beauties were lured onto the dance floor by the strains of Mustang Sally.

The next morning there were back to back workshops with Mary-Eileen McClear giving us Once Upon the Truth, a workshop on how to bring history alive through storytelling. We found ourselves brimming with new ideas. Adwoa Badoe presented Rhythm of the Storylines, providing us with dance,

dinner at The Mill Restaurant, which was right beside the museum, and then the final evening's entertainment, which was a true delight. There were a dozen or more musicians, Fiddlers Plus, at the front playing everything from fiddles to harmonicas, and in between each story they

played a ditty. At intermission we were feted with wine and all sorts of sumptuous nibbles. At the end of the second part of the evening the final reel lured many of the audience to come forward and do their versions of step dancing. And so it was over, and a good time was had by all!

As we wended our way back towards home, June and I discussed how impressed we were with the whole event and how much can be accomplished by a relatively small group, a group that pulls together to bring it all together. Kudos to The 1000 Islands Yarnspinners for a splendid festival. What a pity more of you did not attend.

All Tongues are Red

Storytelling and Social Justice

Recalled by Heather Whaley and Deborah Dunleavy

On Saturday October 24 an eclectic and diverse group of people met at the Artscape Wychwood Barns to attend a

workshop led by storytellers Dan Yashinsky and Chris Cavanaugh in the exploration of social justice and storytelling.

Chris and Dan made the participants feel welcome, whether they were veterans of the spoken word or curious newcomers. Everyone was encouraged to participate with thoughts, suggestions and stories in a relaxed and inviting approach to the workshop.

From the onset Dan gave reminded us that all the stories that would be told during this session could be taken by any one person and be told again. This, as he explained, was the essence of the oral tradition. What we tell, we pass on to others.

Chris and Dan explained the sensitive process of social justice stories and how stories help with confronting bullies. They then shared personal encounters.

Dan recalled an occasion where a group of intoxicated young men started name calling him and how he chose not to be confrontational yet stood up and did not let it just happen without a response. The message here is to stand up against abuses of power. Speak up! Don't let them get away

with it.

Later Chris recalled a disturbing event in Central America when he was held a gun point for what seemed an eternity.

The workshop leaders explained that

played a part in shaping our social consciousness.

We discovered that recalling proverbs is a way of making connections with memories in a language that is clear and concise

and passes on wisdom. Proverbs and stories are prosaic or poetic. It helps one remember and is a powerful way of carrying knowledge to others by giving people a potent sense of history. Chris and Dan told a number of folk tales with teachings, messages and thought provoking inspiration. We were then invited to take one of the short stories we had heard or one that was on a hand-out. We formed two concentric circles and told to the person we were facing. Then we listened to our partner. The circles moved in opposite directions until we faced a new partner. Once again we told and to one another. This is a great way of deepening and experimenting with one's telling.

This was a rewarding workshop where, through listening and telling, we gained a deeper appreciation for the power of the spoken word. We were being slowly, carefully, tactfully conditioned to think in a certain way in order to help us dig deep into understanding why it is so important to tell social justice stories, and their importance in society.



stories provide a language of the imagination, an expressive vocabulary that allows the teller to hide our usual language and that there are many great themes that arise out of stories.

The circle was invited to recall family proverbs and share them with a partner. Everyone then had a chance to tell a family proverb and with that came the stories of their families and the familial values that

F.O.O.L.-ing Around



d'bi.young

Lisa Pijuan-Nomura and Dan Yashinsky played organizers and hosts of the first-ever F.O.O.L. - festival of oral literatures from October 22 - 25. The Saturday evening a performance was held at the Theatre Direct space at the Barns. Ivan Coyote and Regina Machado were two of the tellers that night. Ivan is a terrific writer/teller from Vancouver, and Regina comes from Sao Paulo, Brazil. F.O.O.L. was made possible with the support of Theatre Direct, The Loop Centre for Lively Arts and Learning, The Stop Community Food Centre, Storytelling Toronto, Festival interculturel du conte du québec, Productions littorale, and Sagatay (Na-meres).



Lisa Pijuan-Nomura



Chris Gibbs



Regina Machado



Ivan Coyote

Soulful Seoul Reveals Close Kinship of Korea and Japan

by Yusuke Tanaka
(Excerpt from "Nikkei Voice")

"Storytelling is way beyond just learning English. It's a creation of new culture and in my case, it's the creation of my new self," says Kaitlyn Kim. As a storyteller myself I thoroughly agreed with her, and I felt like we are soul mates. In Seoul where people are dressed in the modern clothes but lined by the ancient tradition, I felt like I was standing at the doorway of a time tunnel that connects Korea, China, and Japan.

Back in March, at this year's Toronto Festival of Storytelling, Kaitlyn showed up as a guest storyteller from Seoul, South

Korea, and delivered folktales like "a tiger and a bear." I was impressed. Our group, The Katari Japanese Storytellers, have been part of the festival for the past 15 years, but her performance was much more articulate and charming. I introduced myself and asked if she would be interested in performing together with us. I said, "There must be a lot of stories in common between Japan and Korea." She agreed.

Kaitlyn is the leader of an English storytelling class in her home town of Seoul. She and her friends started up a website called *Excovey: experience and discovery*, and holds the *1001Nights* storytelling event on the last Wednesday of the month. This summer, I flew to Seoul to join her at this

event and stayed there for five days.

On July 28 and 29, 2009, at the two day storytelling event that gathered around 20 people each day, I presented the classic Japanese story of *Urashima Taro* and explained that its origin is from ancient Chinese folklore. After my story, one by one, the participants came up and told their stories. They were excellent English speakers and were not as shy as the Japanese.

As we parted, I hugged Kaitlyn and promised to welcome her as a special guest to our next storytelling show in March 2010 in Toronto. It will become a uniquely woven program of folklore from two close but different cultures.

Love From Russia

By Molly Sutkaitis

In 1947 I was in my third year at a Catholic girls' high school in Glasgow, Scotland. A wonderful history teacher entered my life. Josephine had spent the World War Two years in a Nazi concentration camp. Prior to that she had worked at the Comedie Francaise in Paris, France and before that she had done her Ph D. Josephine was an extraordinary woman. One day she approached me to say that she was planning to celebrate United Nations Day with a debate. The topic was to be: "Communism Is a Better Form of Government than the Democracy under Which We Now Live."

When I learned that I was chosen to defend the argument, I bought the "Daily Worker" the Communist newspaper and based my argument on the articles therein. On the day of the debate the upper school was informed that the vote was to be on performance, not on content. My side won.

Josephine was transferred to the College of Education in Liverpool England. She spent the rest of her days revolutionizing the methodology of the teaching of history. Not long afterward I went home and told my mother that I wanted to go to Russia. Mammy replied that I'd better

start saving up as she had no intention of sending me there.

Recently these memories came back to me when I spotted a poster advertising a tour of Russia on board the M.S. Tolstoy. I thought - "Up the Volga on a boat...Why not go on a Moscow to St Petersburg cruise?"

So, on August 23, 2009 I arrived in Moscow with twenty-three other curious travelers. There were 150 passengers altogether on board this luxurious ship that had been built in the 70's for the top brass members of the Communist party.

During our four days in Moscow we toured the Kremlin grounds and the Armory, Russia's oldest museum. As I looked across the vastness of the Red Square I felt a breath of fear come over me as images of soldiers and armaments came to mind.

We traveled outside of Moscow to an area known as "The Russian Vatican", the headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church. We gazed at the art work in awe. "Sergiev Posad" is a place of pilgrimage for thousands of Orthodox believers and has been designated as a World Heritage Site. "Sergiev Posad" is 70 km. away from Moscow. During the hour and a half bus ride we

saw countless little settlements which still preserved their rural appearance.

We toured the State Tretyakov Gallery which holds a national treasury of fine art and is one of the greatest museums in the world. We took a hydrofoil to Peterhof Park, a magnificent park full of monumental cascades and gilded fountains. The Great Palace rises like a golden curtain at the far end of the Marine Canal which flows through Peterhof's Lower Park. Leading down the hill from the Palace to the sea is the terrace containing the Grand Cascade. This wonderful park has 176 fountains, four cascades, majestic palaces, and amazing collections of sculpture and paintings that make Peterhof an art experience that is unique in the world.

My dream had come true. I went up the Volga on a boat. The company was great, the scenery magnificent, and the food superb. I used to think that Edinburgh was my favourite city, the one that I'd return to, to breathe in its' beauty. Now when I let my imagination roam, I return to St Petersburg. St Petersburg I love you, not just for what you are, but for what I feel when I remember you.

Book Nook

Review by Robert Rodriguez

Sheila K. Adams, *My Old True Love*, Algonquin books, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, first published in 2004, reissued in 2008., pp.--289.,Isbn--1-56512-407-3.

Many adjectives can be used to describe this extraordinary book, *My Old True Love*: haunting, poetic, beautiful, heart-rending. But perhaps the one overall word that touches the many aspects and meanings of this narrative is musical. One of America's finest storytellers and singers of traditional ballads, Sheila K. Adams has also gained a deserved reputation for being a true wordsmith. Through this rivetingly beautiful oral history, written in the form of the historical novel, traditional music (the storyteller's art) and actual history come vividly to life. A bearer and preserver of both ballad and storytelling tradition that has existed since the mid seventeenth-hundreds, Ms. Adams is uniquely qualified to re-tell a narrative so rich and colorful in both words and music, while at the same time offering a down home approach as folksy as the North Carolina mountains where her ancestors settled.

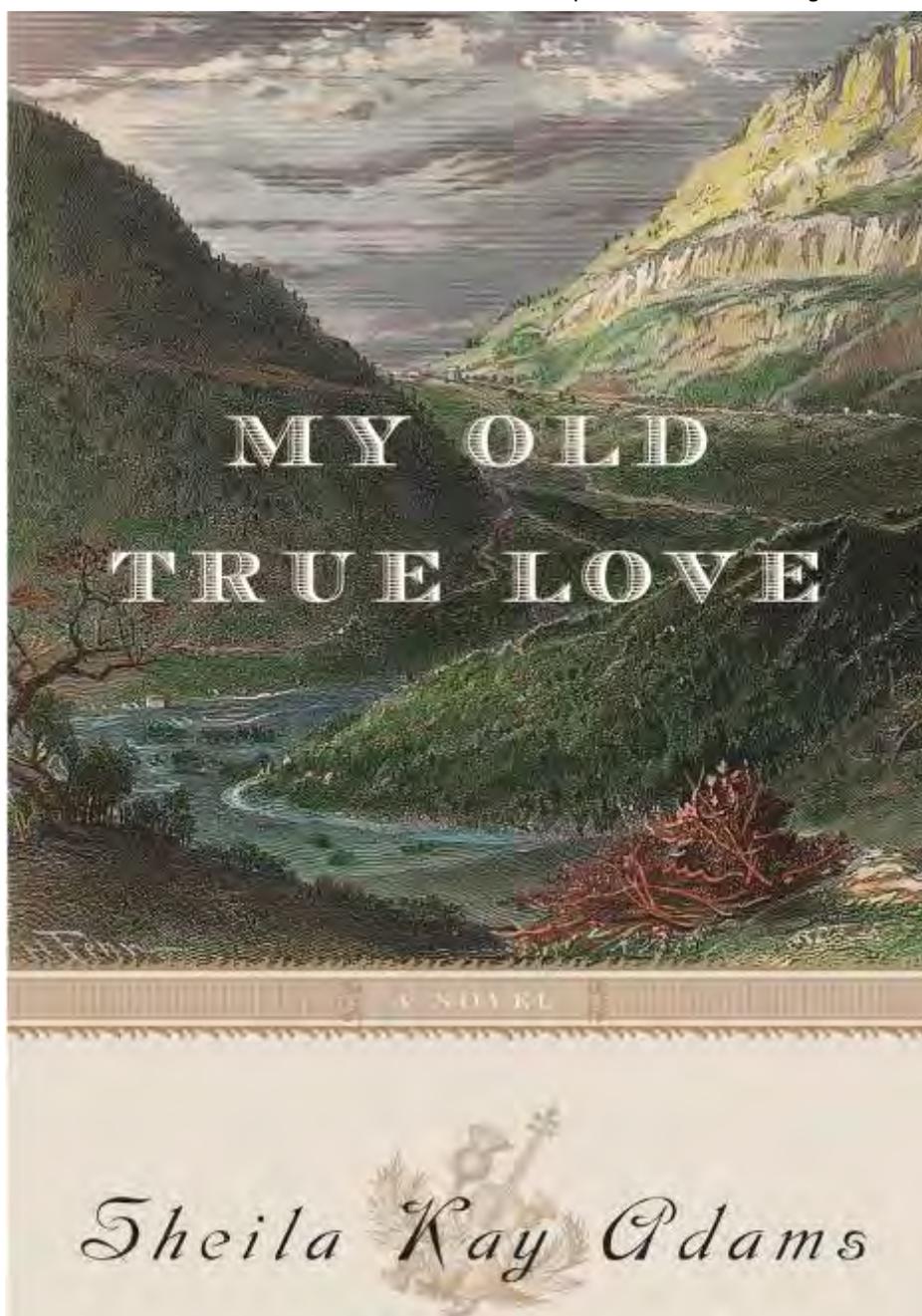
The novel covers a period of over twenty years from the mid 1840's until after the Civil War, and follows the very

history of Ms. Adams' family in the area of Madison County in Western North Carolina, centering particularly in and around her home community of Sodom. In the words of narrator Arty Norton, a direct relative of Ms. Adams herself, we hear the extraordinary tale of Larkin Stanton (who, in the teller's own words, learned to sing before he ever learned to speak) and his cousin Hackley Stanton, the teller's own brother, and how their rivalry was central to both their lives. This rivalry extended

to everything from singing, women, and everything else in between. Many voices speak in the narrative, including the singers of Sodom past and present, and their ballads and songs are liberally sprinkled throughout this book. The family's saga comes to full life and breadth, set against the backdrop of the momentous and often horrific events of the Civil War, which thrust into their lives with all its deadly and somber consequences. Many emotions and images roll across the pages: joy and

sorrow, laughter and tears, the spirit of the ballad-maker's art and the ever present touch of life and death and all it can hold. But what comes across again and again is an authentic feeling of tradition and continuity as rich and deep as the very southern soil upon which this story occurred.

This is truly living history that can never be found within the pages of any conventional textbook, and that only a storyteller with the talents of Ms. Adams is capable of bringing to life. Ms. Adams has given us a memorable verbal portrait that feeds the ear, the heart, the soul, and the very meaning of verbal magic and poetry, and we all are the better for it in the end. Music, story and history all come to life and the results are truly wondrous indeed. This musical narrative comes very highly recommended.



STORIES GOING 'ROUND

(We know that you are busy spreading your love of the lore, but unless you tell the editor at Pippin what you have been doing we won't be able to celebrate your accomplishments.)

Mary-Eileen McClear performed at FOS - Festival of Storytelling in Brockville this September, and returned to Baden in time to host "The Talking Pot" for Canadian Association of Storytellers for Children. This November Mary-Eileen travels to Newfoundland to perform in schools and at the Festival in St. John's.

Dan Yashinsky performed Talking You In, the piece he does with guitarist/composer Brian Katz,. The event took place on Oct. 23 at a wheelchair-accessible house concert at Vaughan Rd. and St. Clair.



Vermont's Crabgrass Puppet Theatre told Anansi - Spiderman of Africa to 450 students at FOS. Here they are with Artistic Director Deborah Dunleavy

Canadian Association of Storytellers for Children

The Talking Pot, 3 October 2009
Review by Sally Jaeger

Twice a year, The Canadian Association of Storytellers for Children hosts a professional development gathering, called The Talking Pot, for storytellers, teachers, librarians, authors, parents, grandparents and anyone who is interested in storytelling for children and youth.

In the early years of our organization, The Talking Pot was an all day affair, with a catered lunch. Nowadays, with all the busy schedules, we are more likely to meet for a jam-packed half a day. We encourage participants to bring material to share, and resources too. We often have a focused presentation to start

us off, followed by a general swap. This is a good time to problem-solve and discuss the finer points of storytelling to very young children, school age children and

youth. And it is inevitable that we learn many new rhymes, stories and songs in a group like this.

Our fall Talking Pot has taken us to The Story Barn, in Baden, Ont., for the past two years. Storyteller Mary-Eileen McClear has graciously hosted our gathering, and

shared her library with us. We even had an opportunity to buy some of the books from her collection.

October 3rd was a beautiful autumn day! Participants arrived from Barrie, New Hamburg, Kitchener/Waterloo, Strathroy, Stratford, Aurora, Mississauga, Toronto, and Whitby. The Toronto contingency set out very

early and included a visit to St. Jacob's for sightseeing and lunch on the way to Baden.

Kathy Reid-Naiman, from Aurora, was our special guest at The Talking Pot. Kathy

presented her workshop "Sing the Cold Winter Away" based on the new CD she just released by the same name. We spent two hours singing a wide range of repertoire about Christmas, Hanukah and winter weather! Kathy provided us with lots of



Break-time discussion between Beverly Wilhelm & Kathy Naiman & CASC's Autumn Talking Pot in Baden



Host Mary-Eileen McClear & Donna Dudinsky prepare snacks at CASC's Autumn Talking Pot in Baden

opportunity to participate and also with handouts to aid us in remembering when we got home.

Hope you will get a chance to check out Kathy's new CD and to try some of her great material in your own programs! And check out her website at

www.merriweather.ca.

A Passion for Stories: An Interview with Bruce Carmody—cont'd

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sang a song. It was also expected that the principal would have something to share. I would often bring my guitar and lead a sing-song, but I began to test out my new skills as a storyteller. So my earliest storytelling experiences, apart from tales that I might have told as a boy to stay out of trouble at home, were told to an audience of a little over 200 children ages 3 to 14 plus one English Spaniel dog. When I saw how all responded to a story, I knew there was something special going on here and I was hooked! That was more than 25 years ago and I have been telling stories ever since.

DD: At what point are you conducting the story and at what point is the story conducting you?

BC: I do believe that in many ways a story has a life of its own. When I am telling authored tales, I try to stick very close to the story as it was written. I don't memorize, but still, since the story is not mine, I wouldn't feel right changing it in any significant way. Even with the telling of traditional folktales, I think that it is important to respect the essence of the story as it has been handed down to us. The language is mine, but the story is not.

With original stories, I feel freer to improvise, usually in response to the audience or in response to my own muse. I will often try out different ways of expressing parts of the story, especially those designed to draw the audience in. Usually you can see whether or not the language has an impact on the listeners.

I have several times had the experience of new stories coming to me almost whole. Some of these are so startling that I am reluctant to say, "Oh, this is an original story," or "I wrote this story". It seems to have come out of the ether. Often I write these stories down and I find that they seldom change in any significant way after this first recording. Sometimes when I tell these stories, I will say, "Here is a story that came to me one day."

Perhaps it is true that stories exist somewhere "out there" and choose a teller when they need to be told.

DD: When do you know that your storytelling is having an effect? Perhaps recall a special moment or two.

BC: Watching the listeners and reading their faces is very important to me as a teller. Body language is also important, though it can fool you sometimes. I recall an incident when I was telling in a church at a Sunday service. I was a stranger to these people, but someone in the community had heard about my storytelling and asked me to come and tell some stories.

As I told I was especially aware of a man sitting near the front, his arms crossed over his chest. Throughout the telling he never smiled or nodded. Fortunately there was a woman on the other side of the congregation who was smiling and



nodding - responding to the story - and she really helped me to keep going when, it seemed, in my mind, that this gentleman was hating what I was doing - the whole notion that someone would tell stories in church! Yet after the service, it was this same man who sought me out to tell me how much he had enjoyed the stories; he thought they were wonderful! I remember thinking to myself, "Why couldn't you have shown me your enjoyment while I was telling?"

Body language, facial expression, nods, smiles and tears, all provide feedback to us to help us judge when the story is reaching

someone.

I do recall telling a personal story once to a rather large adult audience. There were two of us asked to tell stories at a concert of local choirs near Christmas. We were to tell while the choirs changed on the stage behind the curtains. The other teller went first. As she came onto the stage to tell, I heard someone near me whisper, "They're going to tell stories to us?" Then I watched as the listeners became engrossed in the story.

Later, as I told my story, it was very hard to see reactions as there were too many people, and the lighting was on the stage. After the concert ended, a man approached me. Saying, "I really enjoyed your story, but you forgot a part of it." He then went on to relate his experience in a similar context.

My first reaction was, "What do you mean, I forgot a part of it? It was my story!" But then I realized that at some point, it became his story and I had left out something that was an important part of his own experience though not to mine. As storytellers we invite the listeners into the stories; we give the story away so that it becomes someone else's story. So, after I had a minute or two to think about his reaction, I knew that the story had worked for him.

DD: How do you keep inspired and renewed as a teller?

BC: Workshops, reading, seminars all help to inspire or renew me as a teller. I am not a good story listener; one or two stories and I want to go off and reflect on the story or talk about it with someone else, at least if the stories are good ones, well told. Sometimes I find that an evening concert or a whole festival is just too much for me to take in.

Working with other tellers is one of my favourite ways to grow as a teller. I used to do a lot of tandem telling with another Newmarket teller, Janice Turner. When we were developing a new story we would get together and rehearse, giving each other feedback, and exploring how to divide the story effectively between the two voices. Unfortunately Janice is doing less telling these days, so I have lost that collaborative relationship.

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Taking on new challenges is another way to grow as a teller. I do a number of historical stories, some of them first person tellings, others in the third person. Researching the history, finding the story that is within the material so that what I am telling is truly a story and not a history lesson, all make the process rewarding, if more time consuming and challenging than telling folktales - though I always return to folktales as the foundation for my work as a storyteller.

DD: Where do you find your stories and how do you know which story works best for you?

BC: I am a reader and love to find new collections of stories. I cannot pass a bookstore without going in and, usually, buying something. So my personal library keeps growing. When I can, I will borrow the book from the public library, read it and assess its usefulness to me. If I think there are a number of tellable stories for me, I will try to buy a copy. I have often had good luck buying used books through the on-line bookstores.

As I have mentioned some of my stories come from historical material, others from personal experiences. Sometimes I am able to weave personal experiences into historical stories. I think this can make the story seem more "real" to the listener. For example, I tell a story about the end of the Avro Arrow airplane in which I tell as the son of a man who worked as a machinist for Avro in the 1950's. The father is based on my own father who was a machinist - though he never worked for Avro.

I am drawn to stories that touch me emotionally in some way and generally find that, if the story really speaks to me on some level, I can convey that to my listeners.

DD: What book has inspired you in your work as a teller?

BC: I suppose that the first book on storytelling that I read was Bob Barton's book *Tell Me Another* and it convinced me that I wanted to continue to work at becoming a storyteller. There are others that have been important to me and to which I return regularly, but Bob's book stands out.

DD: Is there a teller who has had a profound effect on you or one whom you

admire? Why?

BC: It was Helen Porter who really got me started. I had arranged for Helen to lead a full-day workshop with a group of church school teachers in my area. That really got me going. I also respected Helen's work for pushing the envelope, trying new approaches, combining her theatre background with her storytelling. When you attended one of Helen's performances, you were never sure what you were going to get.

Bob Wilhelm is another teller whose work I admire. I have attended a couple of workshops led by Bob and always come away with some new learning about story and the art of storytelling.

DD: What do you do to keep on top of your craft?

BC: The challenge for me is balancing the comfortable - the stories that I love and have told many times - with the development of new materials and with telling to new audiences.

As storytellers we generally work alone, and I suspect that this hurts the development of the art form. But, because we work alone, we have to be self-motivated and challenge ourselves to try new materials and new styles. I have been fortunate that I have been given opportunities to tell and to develop stories in a wide variety of contexts from schools, churches, museums, art galleries, festivals, and nursing homes.

Last December my mother went into a nursing home. Since then I have volunteered once a month to tell stories to the residents and their families. The storytelling sessions are in the evenings so that families can share the experiences with the nursing home resident. I try to treat these volunteer evenings as seriously as I would any other performance and organize my stories around themes. What a great way to keep some of my favourite stories for adults fresh in my mind!

This year I participated in the Cape Breton Storytelling Symposium and had the opportunity to meet other tellers as well as a number of people whose interest in story is more academic. I believe that we need to know much more about the story than just the part we tell. When I was studying to be a teacher, I remember being told that the teacher should know ten times as much as he/she wishes to teach the students. I

think the same thing is true in storytelling. In my mind I need to have a clear picture of the hero, the setting of the story, the weather etc in order to tell the story in a convincing way. It's not that I will tell many of these things to the listener, but having a sense of them in my mind will influence how well I tell the tale.

DD: Is storytelling performance art or a literary art?

BC: Storytelling is both of these things. In fact I would embrace all forms of storytelling - filmmaking, writing, reporting, interviewing as all being forms of storytelling. What I do emphasizes the performance aspect more than the literary, though sometimes, when I create an original story, I am more on the literary side of the balance, at least when I am creating the story. I have on a couple of occasions made presentations to writers groups about developing stories for telling. I call it writing for the ear. I suspect I heard that term somewhere, but it makes sense to me that when I am creating a new (old) story, I am always aware of how this might sound. As I write, I seem to be able to hear the words spoken. I'm not sure if other writers work the same way. But keeping in mind that the listener will have only one chance to hear these words as they contribute to the story, I need to make them clear and concise and avoid extraneous verbiage.

Recently at F.O.O.L we heard a number of diverse approaches to telling - from dub poetry to stand up comic. Please talk about the future of storytelling as you see it evolving.

To me the exciting thing about all these diverse forms is to realize that each has its roots in storytelling - the traditional kind of storytelling that many of us practice. Do I like all of it? No! But I can see that each form has its roots in traditional storytelling; each is one form of storytelling. The challenge for the future will be to maintain a place for traditional storytelling while allowing these and other diverse branches to grow and flourish. Some may not last, but if the roots of the plant that is storytelling remain vibrant and healthy, new tellers will learn from the art form and go on to develop more new, exciting branches - new ways to tell stories.

StorySave: A Program of Storytellers of Canada/ Conteurs du Canada

We are pleased and excited to announce that the next project of StorySave will result in the preservation of the voice of our beloved storyteller, Alice Kane, by transferring the stories she recorded on cassette to a CD format. The cassettes are getting very fragile and the sound reproduction is no longer good. The CDs will bring Alice's magical storytelling to new life and give all of us and other story lovers far and wide an opportunity to hear her voice and stories again and again.

The Alice Kane CDs will be the 2010 StorySave project of SC-CC, joining the StorySave catalogue of recordings by Canadian storytellers with unique repertoire which the program has produced in the last seven years.

Since Alice Kane was a Toronto storyteller and one of the founders of the organization now known as Storytelling Toronto, we in the Toronto area have the responsibility of raising a substantial part of the money needed to produce a three CD set of recordings in a well-designed case.

We would like to invite you to join us in endeavoring to raise at least \$5,000 in a way that would please Alice and honor her love of simply sitting down with others to tell and listen to stories. Rather than organizing a big concert with high-priced

tickets, we propose that you and other members of our community think of holding and/or attending house concerts during this fall of 2009. Anyone wanting to take part in this effort could hold a house concert or help someone else organize one in a suitable living room or other location. The tellers would volunteer their storytelling and all proceeds would be added to the fund that will enable us to produce the Alice Kane CDs.

We hope that these house concerts will take place all across the Toronto area and beyond, and that many tellers who had the pleasure of hearing Alice tell or who know her work through the cassettes or her wonderful book *The Dreamer Awakes* will have a chance to take part in one of the concerts. All of this telling and listening will culminate in a grand party honoring Alice and the things we remember about her and learned from her. We will have a chance to share anecdotes, music, and food in a way that Alice would have truly enjoyed.

If you would like to let us know that you are thinking about hosting a concert or if you have questions please contact us at the following email address: lyndaand-james@sympatico.ca

Lynda Howes, Dan Yashinsky, Celia Lottridge: The Committee for the Story-Save Alice Kane Project

TD BOOK WEEK TOUR

Going on tour this November are three tellers from across Canada.

Wendy Berner of Calgary comes to Ontario while Ontario teller **Carol Leigh Wehking** travels to the Northwest Territories. **Deborah Dunleavy** from Brockville, Ontario will be hosted by several groups in Labrador including two remote Inuit communities. To learn more about the TD Book Week Tour visit www.bookweek.ca.

ALICE KANE AWARD NEW DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: January 15, 2010

Regular and professional members of Storytelling Toronto and members of Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada (SC/CC) are eligible to apply to this award for professional development. Application forms and guidelines are available on line at www.storytellingtoronto.org.

Barrel of Stories Concert, 17 October 2009

Review by Joan Bailey

The Canadian Association of Storytellers for Children held its 'Barrel of Stories' concert for children and their families on 17 October 2009 at the Ralph Thornton Centre on Queen Street, Toronto. The event was hosted by Joan Bailey and our Special Guest Teller was one of our favourite children's storytellers, Sandra Carpenter-Davis. Donna Dudinsky who was to have been co-host was unfortunately very sick with 'flu and she was unable to be there. We missed her wonderful voice and energy.

This concert came between Thanksgiving and Hallowe'en so in the introduction the performers gave a nod to both holidays with riddles and rhymes. Sandra has a huge repertoire of tales, songs and rhymes full of action and participation and those that she shared were enthusiastically received by the audience of under-fives and their

parents. Sandra's tales included 'The Talking Pot' and her own version of the Ashanti story 'Why Frog has no Tail' and she also taught everyone lots of rhymes and finger plays which were just perfect for this age-group. 'Fooba Wooba John' and 'As I went into Town' were two of the longer rhymes which are really also stories and the children loved them. One funny little rhyme which was new to many of the audience was:

Mr Frog jumped out of the pond one day
And found himself in the rain.
Said he, "I'll get wet and I might catch cold!"
So he jumped in the pond again.

Joan told the African tale of 'The Lion on the Path' and sang a British Music Hall song called 'Father Papered the Parlour' - the children enjoyed the actions to the song and the parents laughed at the lyrics.

The only thing that marred the day was that the elevator was out of order and so we all had to climb up to the third floor by the stairs! We are looking into using a different room on the ground floor if the elevator refuses to co-operate in future.

The next Barrel of Stories concert will be held on Saturday November 28th at our usual venue at Ralph Thornton Centre from 1:30 - 2:30. Our hosts for the event will be 'The Kitchen Party' (Wendy Tinkler & Carol Ashton) with Sally Jaeger and our Special Guest will be Erika Webster.

Our association supports storytelling for children and youth from babies up to high-school age and, while our first year of concerts has concentrated on pre-schoolers and their families, we are hoping to encourage elementary school children to attend concerts next year. Please spread the word. www.storytellersforchildren.ca

Listings — Winter 2009-2010

GATHERINGS



1,000 Friday Nights of Storytelling continues every Friday evening at 8pm at the Innis College Café, Sussex Ave. and St. George St., Toronto. Suggested donation: \$5. Open to all who wish to listen or tell. (416) 656-2445, www.1001fridays.org

The Story Barn meets the 1st Friday of the month at 8:00pm, 89 Snyders Rd. W. Info: Mary-Eileen McClear, maryeileen@thestorybarn.ca

Storytelling Guild meets in Baden once a month on the third Friday, 7:30-10pm.

89 Snyders Rd W., Baden. Info: Mary-Eileen McClear, maryeileen@thestorybarn.ca

The 1000 Islands Yarnspinnners meet November 9 at 7 pm at the Brockville Museum, 5 Henry Street, Brockville. Gatherings will be held in January, March and June. For more information contact Deborah Dunleavy (613) 342-3463 or kgp@ripnet.com

The Ottawa Storytellers meet for their Story Swap on the first Thursday of the month, 7pm at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St, free. Stories and Tea takes place at The Tea Party, 119 York St., every second and fourth Tuesday, 7pm. Stories begin on the hour and half-hour with conversation and treats in between. Donations accepted. Info: (613) 322-8336, info@Ottawastorytellers.ca

The Dufferin Circle of Storytellers meets the 1st Thursday of the month, 7:30pm. Info: Nancy Woods, (519)925-0966.

The Brant Taletellers Guild, welcomes tellers and listeners to its monthly gatherings September to June, 7pm, on the first Wednesday at the Brantford Public Library, Colborne St. Info: taletellers@bizbrant.com, email: taletellers@bizbrant.com or phone (519) 756-0727

St. Mary's Storytelling Guild meets the 4th Thursday of the month at the public library, 7-8:30pm. The Storytelling Circle

for children 10 and older meets on the 2nd Friday at St. Mary' United Church, 85 Church St., 7-9pm. \$2. Info: Nancy Vermont, (519) 284-2698, nvermond@sprint.ca

The Durham Folklore Society meets every 3rd Thursday, 7:30-9:30pm at the Oak Room, Northview Community Centre, 150 Beatrice St. E., Oshawa. Info: Dianne Chandler, (905) 985-3424.

Cercle de conteurs de l'Est de l'Ontario (CCEO) se réunit aux soirées de contes libres une fois par mois dans diverses communautés de l'Est ontarien: le mercredi 25 novembre à 19h à Club Amicale Belle Rive, 2950 rue Laurier, Rockland; le mercredi 9 décembre à 19h au Centre Communautaire de Sarsfield, 3583, chemin Sarsfield. Renseignements: Guy Thibodeau, guythibodeau@rogers.com, www.cceo.ca

The Hamilton Storytelling Circle meets monthly on a Monday, usually the third Monday of the month, 7:30-9pm at Temple Anshe Sholom, 215 Cline Ave. N., Hamilton. Info: Barry Rosen, barryrosen@sympatico.ca or barry_storyteller@yahoo.ca

The Guelph Guild of Storytellers meets the 1st Wednesday of each month, 7:30pm at the Cooperators Building, MacDonnel St., and the 2nd Wednesday at 8pm for Stories at the Boathouse, a tea room on the river, Gordon St. Info: Sandy, (519) 767-0017

The Montreal Storytellers Guild meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at the Westmount Library. Info: Christine Mayr, christine-mayr36@yahoo.ca

PERFORMANCES



The Toronto Public Library's Sunday Family Storytelling Series is featuring a number of Storytelling Toronto members at branches throughout the city on Sunday afternoons this fall. All performances at 2pm unless otherwise noted. At **Albion**, 1515 Albion Rd., Nov. 15, Rukhsana Khan, Nov. 22, Gail Fricker; at **Flemingdon Park**, 29 St. Dennis Dr., Nov. 15, Bruce Carmody, Nov. 22, Heather Whaley; at **North York Central**, 5120 Yonge St. Nov. 15, Sally Jaeger, Nov. 22, Goldie Spencer; at **Northern District**, 40 Orchard View Blvd., Nov. 15, Marylyn Per-

inger, Nov. 22, Laurel Gugler; at **Parkdale**, 1303 Queen St. W., Nov. 15, Noriko Yamamoto, Nov. 22, Rukhsana Khan; at **York Woods**, 1785 Finch Ave. W., Nov. 15, Gail Fricker, Nov. 22, Pauline Grondin; at **Maria A. Shchuka**, 1745 Eglinton Ave. W., Nov. 15, 3:30pm, Ariel Balevi, Nov. 22, 3:30pm, Aubrey Davis.

The Durham Folklore Society presents Tellabration 09 on Tuesday, Nov. 17, with two performances: 4-5:30pm for families, school-age children and adults, 7- 8:30pm for children over 9 years and adults. Storytellers George Blake, Dianne Chandler, Doris Cherkas, Enid DeCoe, Graham Ducker and Heather Whaley, with guest musician Anne Lane. Rotary Room, Ajax Public Library, 55 Harwood Street. Admission free. Registration requested. (905) 683-4000, x8813, Info: Dianne Chandler, storyteller@explornet.com, (905) 985-3424.

PJ's and Pillows presents "Sing the Cold Winter Away", a CD launch plus concert for families with young children, on Saturday, Nov. 21, 6:30-7:30pm, with Kathy Reid-Naiman. At Pegasus Studios, 361 Glebeholme Blvd. \$5/person. Come in your PJ's! Info: (416) 699-2608.

CASC (Canadian Association of Storytellers For Children) concert series, A Barrel of Stories, presents "A Kitchen Party" with Carol Ashton, Wendy Tinkler, Sally Jaeger and special guest Erika Webster. Saturday Nov. 28, 1:30-2:30pm, at the Ralph Thornton Community Centre, 765 Queen St. E. \$5/person or pwyc. Future concerts scheduled for Jan. 30 and Feb. 27, 2010, details TBA. Info: (416) 699-2608, www.storytellersforchildren.ca

Storyteller **Dianne Chandler**, harpist Debra Northey and vocalist Herb Vine present Yuletide Tales, a candlelit evening of Christmas music and stories for the whole family, Saturday, Nov. 28, at Nestleton United Church, 3991 Proutt Rd., Port Nestleton. 7pm, beverages and treats; 8pm, concert. Adults \$10, children under 12 \$5. Tickets: (905) 986-5598 or (905) 986-0657, also at door. Info: Dianne Chandler, storyteller@explornet.com

Spectacle de **Danièle Vallée**, **Jean Cloutier** et **Laurent Glaude**, le samedi 28 novembre, Centre des arts Shenkman, 245, boulevard

Centrum, Orléans. Renseignements:

www.cceo.ca

Ottawa Storytellers have four performances coming up on the Fourth Stage of the National Arts Centre: Dec. 3, Old Frost: Tales From a Nordic Hearth, with Jennifer Cayley, Ellis Lynn Duschenes and Ruth Stewart-Verger; Jan. 21, The Jaguar Lives: Tales of the Mayan People, with Marva Blackmore and Anne Nagy; Feb. 18, Let the Games Begin: Stories of The Canadian Athletes, with Kim Kilpatrick and Sherri Yazdani; March 18, A Thousand Welcomes: Stories of Ireland, with Mike Burns. All performances 7:30pm. Info: (613) 322-8336, info@Ottawastorytellers.ca

Spectacle "Contes de Noël des quatre coins du monde" avec **Aurore Alessandra, Michel Farant, Laurent Glaude et Lucie Roy**, le samedi 12 décembre à La Basoche d'Aylmer, 120 rue Principale, Aylmer. Renseignements: www.cceo.ca

Storyteller **Dianne Chandler** is featured in Christmas Eve on Scugog, a concert at Scugog Island United Church, 19100 Island Road, Thursday Dec. 24, 7-8:30pm. Info: Dianne Chandler, (905) 985-3424, storyteller@explornet.com

The **Morningside** branch of the **Toronto Public Library** celebrates Family Literacy Day with Heather Whaley performing "Lingo of Language!" on Saturday, Jan. 23, 10am, 4279 Lawrence Ave. E. Info: Ruth Cameron, (416) 496-8881, rcameron@torontopubliclibrary.ca

Musical Story & Song Theatre's new Rattlings & Rhythms Series presents Love Voices in the Wind, a mostly music concert for adults and youth featuring storyteller and singer-songwriter Heather Whaley and musician Kim Michele. Wednesday, Feb. 10, 7pm at Fitzpatrick & Sons Irish Pub, 75 Consumers Rd., Whitby. Tickets: (905) 668-2174, Info: Heather Whaley, heather@heatherwhaley.ca

The **Durham Folklore Society** gives two presentations for World Storytelling Day on Wednesday, March 17: a family concert for adults and school-age children accompanied by adults at 4-5pm, and a concert for children 9+ and adults, 7-8:30pm. At the Northview Branch of the Oshawa Public Library, 250 Beatrice St. E. Register at (905) 579-6111. Info: Dianne Chandler, (905) 985-3424, storyteller@explornet.com

STORYTELLING TORONTO EVENTS



Info: (416) 656-2445
www.storytellingtoronto.org,
admin@storytellingtoronto.org

Storytelling I: First Steps Into the Art of Storytelling, taught by Ruth Danziger.

A foundation course designed for newcomers to the art of storytelling focusing on traditional stories such as folktale, myth and legend. Friday, Nov. 20, 7-10pm, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 21 and 22, 10am-4:30pm. At Lillian H. Smith Public Library, 239 College St. Fee \$232. Info: (416) 656-2445, www.storytellingtoronto.org

Storytelling III: Master Class taught by Celia Lottridge, giving experienced storytellers the opportunity to work intensively on a story and receive useful feedback. Participants should come with a story they wish to work on. Thursdays, January 15 to February 25, 7-9:30pm, location TBA. Fee \$350. Info: (416) 656-2445, www.storytellingtoronto.org

STORYTELLING IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Pauline Grondin is the storyteller selected by lottery to tour the Near North District Board of Education November 23 - 27. Renfrew County Catholic District School Board hosts a teller yet to be selected by lottery from January 25 - 29, 2010.

The Storytellers School of Toronto gratefully acknowledges the support of the following government agencies:

The Canada Council for the Arts | Le Conseil des Arts du Canada

THE DRYANIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO

TORONTO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
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Toronto Festival of Storytelling



A Program of Storytelling Toronto

2010

March 25 - 28, 2010

The dates are set for FOS – Festival of Storytelling 2010. Mark September 24 and 25 as the perfect autumn days to come and enjoy the spectacular scenic Thousand Islands.

Plans are underway to host **La’Ron Williams** and **Esther Osche** as the featured performers. You won’t want to miss an opportunity to hear them and attend their workshops.

The Friday night at FOS is an open mic night geared to teens. The theme for 2010 is *Urban Legends*. We can accept four out of town tellers on a first come request to tell that evening. Contact Deborah Dunleavy at kgp@ripnet.com if you would like to attend.

WHATS UP?

What's new in your storytelling circle? Have you discovered a gem of wisdom in a story that relates to your own life? Did a child share some wisdom and wonder at one of your telling events? Do you have a new book or CD to celebrate? Do you have a gripe to pick with unethical presenters? PIPPIN is your sounding board and we'd love to hear from you.

Next deadline for submission is February 01 and anytime sooner!
Send to Deborah at kgp@ripnet.com



STORYTELLING IN THE CITY

1,001
FRIDAY NIGHTS
of
STORY
TELLING

www.1001fridays.org

Every Friday night since 1978 storytellers and listeners have been gathering in downtown Toronto. Each evening is hosted by an accomplished storyteller. Anyone is welcome to tell a story.

Every Friday night is unique.

Suggested donation: \$5.00

Time: 8:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Innis College Café

2 Sussex Street, Toronto.

(corner St. George, one block south of Bloor St. W.
St. George Subway - St. George St. exit)

www.1001fridays.org