

## Impressions on the Thirty-Second Toronto Festival of Storytelling

by Jack Howard

My primary venues for the thirty-second Toronto Festival of Storytelling were 918 Bathurst—the former Japanese Buddhist Church on Bathurst Street, now a centre for cultural events—and The Japan Foundation, Toronto in the Colonnade at 131 Bloor Street West. I had the honour of hosting the very first storytelling performance ever at 918 Bathurst: *From Song & Rhyme to Storytime*, with veteran tellers Carol Ashton, Sally Jaeger and Erika Webster. This was for children aged 0 to 6.

When I arrived very few people were around. I thought to myself, 'Hmm, looks like people can't find 918 Bathurst. I wonder if this will work.' *Song & Rhyme to Storytime* was attended by me the host, the storytellers and some children (mainly children of the tellers) and one woman and her young child who braved the early hour of 9:30 a.m. to hear and see wonderful rhymes, fingerplays and stories. It was a true family reunion: we felt very cosy in each other's company and enjoyed the exuberance of the children. By the end we all were great friends. Carol, Sally and Erika tell with enthusiasm and boundless energy, creating a happy time indeed. One hour passed in no time.

After a thirty-minute break for coffee and goodies nicely provided by the Tall Tales & Treats Café, I sat in on the *Circle Round the Sun* performance by Brockville teller, Deborah Dunleavy, hosted by word-smith Tasleem Thawar. All those who first came were adults, causing Deborah to remark that she was expecting some children at least and that the adults would have to



find their inner children to really enjoy the performance. Everyone nodded assent. But to everyone's surprise, once she began to tell one of her witty tales (old tales made anew), in came the children one by one, until we had adults in chairs and some dozen children sitting on the floor. Deborah took us all in with her interactive tales including the Princess and the Pea. We were moving and clapping and laughing all the way through. Deborah spiced up the telling by throwing out little phrases only adults appreciate, making us all laugh with delight. What a master of story Deborah is. We were all sad to see such a great time end—oh, we enjoyed it so, children and adults alike.

Stéphanie Bénéteau, conteuse bilingue québécoise, gagnante de plusieurs prix, nous a raconté en français de 12h30

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



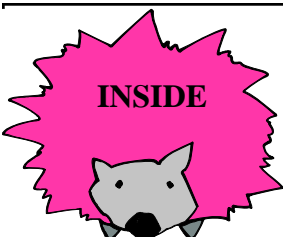
How I love those time-lapsed films where budding plants transform into beautiful blossoms in mere seconds before your eyes. Spring is a wonder to behold and this year I have had the immense pleasure of driving along the 1000 Islands Parkway several times a week to get from Brockville to Gananoque where I am storyteller in residence at a local museum.

Each trip between January and May the river scenery has slowly transmogrified

from stark bleakness to the radiant hues of springtime. The heron and the osprey have returned while flocks of ducks make brief stops before continuing northward. The cyclists and joggers, the strollers and dog walkers are all out in abundance on the riverside pathways. The time of rejuvenation is upon us.

And I wonder which season is it for the storyteller? It must be spring. Just from the news that has poured in for Pippin it looks like a lot of us are busy doing what I call "story-seeding". We are sowing events and nurturing audiences. And unlike the speed lapsed film where days are condensed into moments, it takes time to see the end results of all of our efforts to bring new life to an old tradition.

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It never seems like hard work when we are doing something we love to do but at times it can be discouraging when things don't grow as we have planned. Step by

step, and day by day we are making a difference in the hearts and minds of those who truly stop to hear the stories - or as they say - smell the roses.



**\*\*NOTA BENE\*\***



### THREE WISHES FESTIVAL Presented by Storytellers for Children

Toronto award winning storyteller and author **Aubrey Davis** shares his lively tales, poems and chants with young school children and families in two concerts Friday, June 11 from 10 - 11am and again from 1:30 - 2:30 pm. (\$5 / person)

Aubrey's books include *Bone Button Borscht*, *Sody Salleratus* and *The Enormous Potato*. Aubrey's own versions of old favorites can be found published by Kids Can Press, along with his own *Bagels for Benny*.

Saturday June 12 two workshops are offered from 10 -11:30 am. An adult workshop, *Sing A Song, Tell A Tale*, with Deborah Dunleavy who weaves chanting and singing throughout her tales is a must for anyone wishing to enhance their storytelling or even if you are a beginner! (\$25 / person)

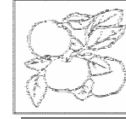
*Storytelling for Families* - Family workshop with Ruth Danziger from Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. Families will learn how to start their own storytelling tradition.(\$30 / family)

To wrap up the Festival there is **A Family Concert with Deborah Dunleavy** on Saturday from 1:30 - 2:30 pm. (\$5 / person)

There is a great market place both days featuring children's bookstore Ellaminnow (1915 Queen St. E.). Owner Heather Kuipers will bring along a great collection of Barefoot Books Folk tales and Fairy tales as well as an assortment of puppets and toys for purchase. Norm Perrin will be there with some of his books from Four Winds Library. Norm has wonderful selection of gently used books well priced for storytellers to add to their own collections. Merriweather records will also be represented with CD's and DVD's from the new label From Song and Rhyme to StoryTime.

Three Wishes Festival takes place at Pegasus Studios 361 Glebeholme Blvd ( 3 bl. N. of Danforth & E. of Coxwell) Call 416-699-2608 for information.

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.

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à 13h30 *La boîte de Pandore*. Elle a été présentée par la conteuse de Toronto Marylyn Peringer, également bilingue. Stéphanie et les auditeurs -bien que peu nombreux—ont créé un groupe intime. Elle nous a demandé de nous rapprocher les uns des autres et bien faire attention à cause du bruit venant des autres salles. Elle a utilisé *La Boîte de Pandore*, un conte de l'antiquité grecque, comme un cadre dans lequel elle nous a raconté d'autres fables dont la plus frappante pour moi était *La Madrina Muerte (La Mort Marraine)*, une fable du Mexique. Quand Stéphanie parle dans la langue des contes, on sent sa bonne foi et sa passion. Son français est formidable, clair et bien articulé (tout comme son anglais). À la fin de *La Boîte de Pandore*, enchantés et applaudissant, nous avons tous eu envie de crier «bis, bis». Pour nous, la fin est arrivée bien trop tôt ; nous désirions écouter encore des contes et des contes, sa voix si jolie et les contes si bien racontés.

[From 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Stéphanie Bénéteau, an award-winning bilingual storyteller from Québec, presented a session *en français*, entitled *La boîte de Pandore*. Bilingual Toronto teller Marylyn Peringer was host. We were small in number, but that did not faze Stéphanie; we just gathered closer to hear better (there were some voices bleeding in from the other rooms). Using

the classic Greek tale of *Pandora's Box* as a frame, Stéphanie told many tales, the most memorable for me being the Mexican folk-tale *La Madrina Muerte (Godmother Death)*. Stéphanie tells with sincerity and more than a touch of passion. Her French is impeccable (as is her English). She drew us into the world of story in a way that left us all breathless at the end. We could have listened and listened: one hour seemed too short. We could not get enough of her fantastic voice and her stories.]

With my head literally swimming with tales and stories, I made my way to the Japan Foundation, where in the afternoon I told as one of the Katari Japanese Story-

tellers group. (The Japanese word *Katari* means a tale or the telling of a tale.) Mr. Masayuki Suzuki, Director of the Japan Foundation, introduced the programme and Sharon Isac, one of the founders of the Katari Japanese Storytellers, was the host. Tane Akamatsu, a fourth generation Nikkei (person of Japanese descent) from Hawaii, told a Hawaiian ghost story, *Four Ironwood Trees*, about what unfortunate things may happen if one does not respect the tradi-



tions of other cultures. I told a classic Korea story, called *Rooster*, about a woodcutter who marries a (real) heavenly maiden, but in the end loses her. Yusuke Tanaka, the organizer of the event and one of the founders of Katari, told and sang *Ishikari Banka Elegy*, a story about family life in the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, especially about when the herring disappeared and how his family had to cope with the loss of their source of income. He interlaced the whole afternoon with his excellent guitar playing and singing, creating a thread of unity that charmed the listeners. After the intermission, Nathalie Vachon, after giving us a short, droll Japanese lan-

guage lesson, told of some engaging and humorous episodes occurring during her eighteen-month sojourn in Osaka, especially when she dressed in kimono to meet her parents at the airport—who in the end did not even recognize her! Her session was entitled *Karaoke, Kimono and Our Very Own Julie Andrews*, just from the title one can see that Nathalie was fond of karaoke singing (where she was envisioned by some as being on a par with Julie Andrews) and

Japanese traditional dress. The audience really got a hilarious look into what life of a foreigner ('gaijin') in Japan is like—they kept erupting into laughter even after Nathalie was finished. Noriko Yamamoto, a mime and silent storyteller of renown, performed her *Grandmother* story. It is Noriko's poignant story about how a grand-daughter comes to grips with the passing of her beloved grandmother. The audience was spellbound by Noriko's beautiful, bitter-sweet interpretation of this most basic of human emotions. It was a lovely way to end a superb and eclectic afternoon of stories. The listeners were very responsive throughout. I personally received a lot of positive feedback. I am sure everyone did. We all left with a feeling of having been in a special place at a special time, never to be forgotten. The Japan Foundation is one of the best spaces for storytelling in Toronto; Mr. Suzuki and his staff were most excellent

hosts, making the event a thorough and deeply satisfying success.

On Sunday, I was back at 918 Bathurst. What a change from Saturday morning! I need not have feared for the popularity of the 2010 Toronto Festival of Storytelling: the place was packed, with faces familiar and not, but all there to hear stories told. Some were sad because the session they had hoped to attend was full. But that can lead to discovery. I was hoping to attend *Tales from The Caucasus* with Lynda Howes and Celia Lottridge, two of Toronto's most respected storytellers. Full! So I attended *Monkey Queen, Journey to the East* with teller Diana Tso, hosted by Karen Blair.

What an unexpected treat I had. Mesmerized by her polished, flowing telling, captivated we the listeners listened and watched as the Monkey Queen was born of Diana's fertile imagination and grew before us into the heroine of an elaborate, poetic story of adventure across Canada towards the East (versus Monkey King's journey West from China to India), the Monkey Queen in search of her spiritual and ancestral roots. As Diana said to me in conversation: 'Monkey and I are very happy! The umbilical cord is cut; she is free and ready(!) to swing into all sorts of festivals and spaces while still learning and growing as she goes. And it was very special to have heard and seen Diane's wonderful storytelling of Monkey King and I was honoured that she was there at Monkey Queen's birth! Indeed, Diane Wolkstein was in attendance. Diane was the special guest teller at the special '1001 Friday Nights of Storytelling at the Festival,' recounting her unforgettable tale *The Monkey King: Journey to the West*. Diane congratulated Diana after the session. Another impressive time in the world of story.

With stories cheek by jowl, I had to hop over the next session with Cambridge (Ontario) area tellers Glenda Janzen and Carol Leigh Wehking. Host Celia Lottridge told us we were in for a treat. Indeed we were.

Together (sometimes telling in unison) Glenda and Carol took us into a magical and humorous world of tall tale (or were they true stories?) and devilish imagination, finishing with the tale of a competition between the devil and a housewife: who is the better fiddler(?). They are consummate storytellers and we never had a better time, laughing, wondering and just plain amazed. Memorable tales all.

How do I feel about 918 Bathurst as a venue for storytelling? The stories were without parallel, but the environment was less than ideal. The staff did an excellent

job coping and keeping order in a space too small for the number of people who came (my fears of Saturday morning were unfounded!). Everyone had to crowd into narrow corridors and many people when away disappointed because the session(s) they wanted to attend already were full. The walls were too thin: they did not stop the sound of the teller next door coming through clearly. Stéphanie Bénéteau took it in good grace, drawing us in closer, saying



this is what a teller must learn to take in her stride. But I was finding it a real challenge to stay focused on Stéphanie's stories.

The whole time at 918 Bathurst was a story in itself. It is about how storytelling is doing well in Toronto and people are really keen to listen to stories. The Toronto Festival of Storytelling has a reputation for being one of the best. Even 918 Bathurst did not disappoint.

*Jack Howard is a storytelling aficionado.*

## Reflections on the

## Chinese Hand Laundry

by Lorne Brown

I well remember a few years ago some research project or other found me in the Toronto Reference Library, looking through old street directories. I was horrified to read typical entries like: (*Names and addresses have been changed.*)

202 Spadina Avenue - Chinese laundry

204 Spadina Avenue - Irving Schwartz and family

206 Spadina Avenue - Sam Rosen, delicatessen

208 Spadina Avenue - Chinese laundry

210 Spadina Avenue - Harold Zinkerman, tailor

All other Toronto citizens were dignified by having their correct name, and business if applicable, listed. But for Chinese citizens, it was enough merely to list "Chinese laundry".

People of a certain age certainly remember Chinese hand laundries. They were ubiquitous, found in small towns and large cities all across Canada. Our earliest Chinese immigrants, long before the Chinese "navvies" worked on the railway, operated hand laundries. Toronto, for example, had two Chinese laundries eight years before the completion of the CPR. There was a Chinese laundry in Vancouver before that city came into being. The first Chinese business in St John's was a Chinese laundry in 1895. Of course, after the railway was finished,

there were many Chinese workers with no prospect for employment. No wonder that the number of Chinese hand laundries in Canada increased dramatically at that time.

This is an uncomfortable subject for just about everyone to contemplate. Racism prevented the Chinese from being employed in other jobs. Even trade unions were against them, claiming they took jobs from "white washer women".

It was almost an entirely male industry, the infamous Head Tax preventing most Chinese men from bringing their families to live with them here in Canada. The hours

were long, from 4 am to late at night. The conditions were terrible: primitive equipment, hard labour, low pay and little respect. For Chinese laundry workers in small towns, the isolation must have been unbearable.

And yet, this tale of Chinese hand laundries is a distinctly Canadian tale, almost an iconic part of the Canadian fabric. Fabric no doubt hand-washed by a Chinese hand laundry!

And so it was that when I heard, in the Toronto Festival of Storytelling, that storyteller Bernice Gei-Ying Hune was going, to tell "Third Daughter", a tale of the era of Chinese laundries, I marked the date in my calendar and dutifully high-tailed it to 918 Bathurst Street to hear her tale.

Bernice received an OAC grant to develop this story. She drew on personal recollections and interviews with relatives and others in the Chinese community to create a tale that brought to life this era in Canada. It was an effective telling, complete with a refrain "Even and straight, straight and even" recited throughout by the head of the family as he folded newly pressed shirts prior to being wrapped in brown paper ready for pickup by the customer.

Her story touched many aspects of early Chinese experiences in Canada: The Chinese soldiers who fought in the war but still could find no jobs. The high taxes Chinese paid. The fact that "Third Daughter", the title character, was finally allowed and encouraged by her father to pursue her artistic dreams. That was particularly heart-warming, especially as this was not the norm for Chinese families.

Her story certainly got me thinking, and I had a long talk with Bernice a week or so later. Her research into this topic was difficult; as she said, there were two kinds of Chinese she met: those who were too young to remember Chinese laundries, and those who did not *want* to remember Chinese laundries.

It reminded me of author/storyteller Judy Fong Bates, who wrote *China Dog and Other Tales from a Chinese Laundry* in 1997 and was told not to tell these stories in schools because the Chinese didn't want to hear them.

When I was working in the Kensington area in the 1980s, there was still a Chinese



Bruce Carmody

hand laundry. But they are all gone, now, due to permanent press fabrics, new technology, the aging of those original workers, and the changing of the times.

Should this era be gone and forgotten, as if it never existed?

Uncomfortable as it is, I think it is important to be kept alive. And it occurred to me that storytelling has an important role in keeping "inconvenient truths" alive. So here's to storytellers who can boldly go where no man has gone before, to coin a phrase, and who can keep alive the past so that we can all learn from it.

Thank you, Bernice Hune. Thank you, Debra Baptiste and the Toronto Festival of Storytelling, for letting us hear this story. And thank you to all those legions of Chinese men who toiled long, hard and tedious hours so that the rest of us could have clean clothes to wear.

*Even and straight,  
Straight and even.*

Note: Bernice Hune will tell "Third Daughter" in the Legless Stocking's "The Constable Who Couldn't Spell Roncesvalles, and Other Toronto Tales", 7:30pm Saturday, June 5, 2010 in the Butler's Pantry in Toronto.

Lorne Brown is a Toronto storyteller and ballad singer.

## Heartbeats and Other Stories

by Laurel Dee Grugler

Among storytelling sets heard and enjoyed during this year's festival, were "Heartbeats" performed by Harriet Xanthakos, "Circle Round the Sun" with Deborah Dunleavy, "ET the Mime" with Etenem Oton, and "Etienne Brule" performed by Pat Bisset.

Harriet's "Heartbeats" was, indeed, a set with heart. She told personal tales from her Greek heritage. Some stories (a wish for a Cinderella watch, and a geranium Mother's Day gift) made me smile. Light-heartedness merged with tragedy and deep emotion as the stories flowed into each other. Birth, death and the ongoing generations were key themes, threading through the various tales. Especially poignant were the generations of women whose presence is still felt. Throughout her telling, each transition was signaled by her simulated "heartbeat" (hand drumming over her heart). The listeners were with her from beginning to end. Both laughter and tears among the audience attest to the moving and universal saga that was told.

Deborah's "Circle Round the Sun" was delightful. The primarily adult audience had



Bruce Carmody

no trouble getting in touch with their "inner child" as they clapped, chanted, echoed, sang, and did the appropriate actions. Deborah is a master at adapting popular tales into highly interactive stories. Her performances are recommended not only for the sake of entertainment, but also to demonstrate methods of interactive storytelling.

"ET the Mime" was a crowd pleaser. Saying nary a word, he told stories which filled the room with laughter. Among his mimed stories were tales of getting married and hilarious driving scenes (ohmygod we're gonna crash!). ET called on volunteers from the audience (who had no trouble interpreting the stories) to help mime. Though a few declined, he had no trouble getting helpers. Most were eager to assist. ET ended with a (verbal) teaching segment on some basic miming techniques.

Pat Bisset told the tale of Etienne Brule', a servant indentured to Champlain. The first European Ontario Resident, Brule', was sent to live with Chief Iroquet in Touanche (a village near Penetanguishene) in the early seventeenth century. Using an original balled to aid in her telling, Pat led us through events of Brule's life. A scholar of First Nations history, Pat left the audience asking for more. She ably answered questions in a lively Q&A. An endearing comment by Pat as the audience lingered: "I've never before had an audience that wouldn't leave." Watch out for Pat, whose storytelling is growing. *Laurel Dee Grugler has recently presented author visits and storytelling at Northern District Library and Lilian H. Smith Library.*

## The Fiddler Played While the Farm Burned!

by Kathie Kompass

Not quite - although a Fiddler did play during the evening and the music rounded out our gathering at Gibson House Museum.



Pauline Grondin as Eliza Gibson invited about 24 people to dinner at the house her husband built after several years in exile in the US. We gathered in her living room and heard her side of the events leading up to the 1837 Rebellion. Then we adjourned to the dining room or kitchen and sitting at a table graced with white linen cloths and napkins we shared a hearty meal favoured by Mr. Gibson served on reproduction period china. Kitchen

help brought in platters of roast beef, and "Finnian Haddie". Steaming bowls of mashed potatoes, carrots and parsnip or hot turnips moved from hand to hand.

Eliza, who joined up in the dining room explained that the Gibson's were a temperance family and said that she was offering us apple cider or water with our meal. Four different pickles or relishes tickled our tongues and brightened up a winter meal.

After apple pie and tea the Fiddler once again summoned us to the parlour. Eliza continued her story telling about years of exile in the USA and the family's return to North York.

I found this mixture of food and fact, of a story told in the place where some of it happened, a most welcoming way to be part of this Festival.

*Kathie Kompass is a busy teller who loves to listen.*

## AND THEN THERE WAS MORE....

by John Bohusz

### Haitian Stories from the Magic Orange Tree

Diane Wolkstein told five stories from a collection of 27 tales in her book "The Magic Orange Tree and other Haitian Folktales". She explained that Haitian stories are about suffering and resilience. She easily summoned audience participation in various forms, singing, repetition, and responses.

With a "Crick!" and a very loud "Crack"

response, she started her first story about a mistreated but very clever young girl who overcomes a cruel stepmother with the help of a magic orange tree. It was told in French but with periodic asides in English to give Anglophones in the audience more understanding of the story.

Her second story was about two donkeys (best friends), who agree to become human for a short time. Their interactions with other humans provide an amusing lesson about choosing a marriage partner.

Diane's third story was about an owl with poor self image who, with the help of a lively rooster, spends an evening in the home of a girl attracted to him.

In her fourth story she told of an old man who attempts to trick a young girl into servitude. Learning the value of true friendship (boosted by our audience participation) the girl remains free.

In a final short tale Diane told of a monkey who humorously mistakes a complaint, "Lord why do you give me so much misery!" mouthed by another monkey as something to be desired. The foolish monkey says, "Lord, please give me more mis-



ery". The Lord obliges the monkey, who soon changes its mind about misery. The Lord has the final word, "There is enough misery in the world already".

### The Other Side of the Mirror

June Brown and Anna Kerz challenged our perceptions with stories of Rapunzel.

June set the stage by telling a familiar version of the Grimm's Brothers' fairy tale "Rapunzel". She brought alive the complicated desires, agony and disastrous consequences of a pregnant woman's desire for the rampion (rapunzel) in the garden of a neighboring witch. In an attempt to save the life of his wife, the desperate loving husband makes the horrible promise to, upon her birth, give his child to the heartless, witch. After years of isolation in the garden the witch moves the young girl into a tower. When a prince comes to rescue the girl, the witch in her full wickedness, pitilessly makes them both live separately in wretchedness until they rediscover each other many years later.

Anna told a remarkably different story, sympathetic to and narrated by the woman who owned the garden. The garden, she tells, was originally owned by her parents, but when her siblings left home and her parents died it was given to her. Eventually she started to grow medicinal herbs in the garden and soon many people were asking for them to heal their maladies. Many times these people were ungrateful to her and became suspicious of her powers. Some referred to her as a witch. One day a soldier, whom she thought of as a prince, came to the garden. Their attraction for each other made her think that her lonely days would be behind her, but soon the soldier left, never to return, and she was left with a daughter. People continued to come to the garden with their requests for herbs and their unfriendliness and suspicion. When the daughter had grown older another soldier came to the garden, this time for her. He too went away after a time and never returned. The great consolation for the woman, owner of the garden, who was certainly no witch, was that she still had her daughter for company.

### The Storyteller's Tale:

### Based on the Novella, "The Storytellers Tale" by Omair Ahmad

Geoff Mead told this captivating tale of a young storyteller in 18<sup>th</sup> century India who is devastated by the ruined but previously beautiful city of Delhi after it was invaded and plundered by warlords. He escapes and takes refuge with a caravan of merchants, but hearing them talk only of recovering their recent losses and nothing of the destruction of his beloved garden-like city, he does not waste "his words or their time" telling them stories. He leaves them and in a distant valley he comes upon the majestic house and property of an (absent) warlord. The warlord's wife and the storyteller are mysteriously drawn to each other and he spends several days as her houseguest. They tell seemingly unrelated stories to each other that eventually and surprisingly intertwine. Days later they part. Twenty years pass without comment, and the story ends in a distant city with a beautiful but enigmatic thought to ponder.

### Tales from the Caucasus

Celia Lottridge and Lynda Howes first told two stories/myths from the Narts (people



Bruce Carmody

who, according to legend, lived in the northern Caucasus in very ancient times) They followed these with two Georgian tales.

Celia told of a kingdom where unique apples, one half red and one half white, grew in a unique garden. When the apples started disappearing, the sons of the council chief are sent to catch the thief. They wait for the thief and to their surprise three doves land and prepare to take the apples. One dove is shot with an arrow but all escape. The next meeting of the wounded dove and the man who shot him changes both their lives forever.

Lynda carried on with a related story about a brave successful hunter who became sad, then angry when he repeatedly heard fellow villagers whisper about him, "Oh, he is good alright, and a good hunter, but he is no better than the rest of us... it is his wife that brings him all his good fortune". Overcome by and confused by his pride he demands that his wife leave him. She eventually proves that a wise wife truly is the good fortune of her husband.

Celia's Georgian tale was about a King who fancies himself the kingdom's greatest trickster and who invites all his subjects to compete against him. Losing to the king means eternal servitude to him. One poor man took the



Bruce Carmody



Bruce Carmody

*John Bohusz is a long time teller with The 1000 Islands Yarnspillers in Brockville.*

## ELECTRIC ECLECTRIC FESTIVAL OF STORYTELLING

by Bill Lalonde

This year's Toronto Festival of Storytelling was fantastic. The Festival had so much variety that there had to be something for everyone. To observe just the Saturday afternoon performances, at 918 Bathurst Street venue, one would have experienced an entertaining and informative mix of presentations.

### When the Devil Comes Calling

"When The Devil Comes Calling", with Kathie Kompass and Bruce Carmody, immediately brought you into a warm intimate atmosphere utilizing low soft lighting and the circular formation of the audience. Kathie opened with a good tale to introduce the Devil which began the easy going transition back and forth between herself and Bruce. Kathie was very expressive using her whole body at

times to utilize her gestures. She would relax and you could almost see the Devil relaxing and talking to you or she would lean forward and to make you feel part of the story and then slowly sit back.

Bruce had a hypnotic voice drawing you in as he spoke. As his story would unfold, he became the character. His "homey" intimate voice combined with his facial and hand gestures kept you fascinated. You felt like you were sitting in your own living room listening to him. Bruce also utilized the movement forward to be more intimate with the audience and then slowly sat back taking you with him.

The selection of tales by both tellers were well chosen from the Devil and his wine, Martin building a bridge, a rhinoceros in Hell, to an old woman standing up to Satan. I

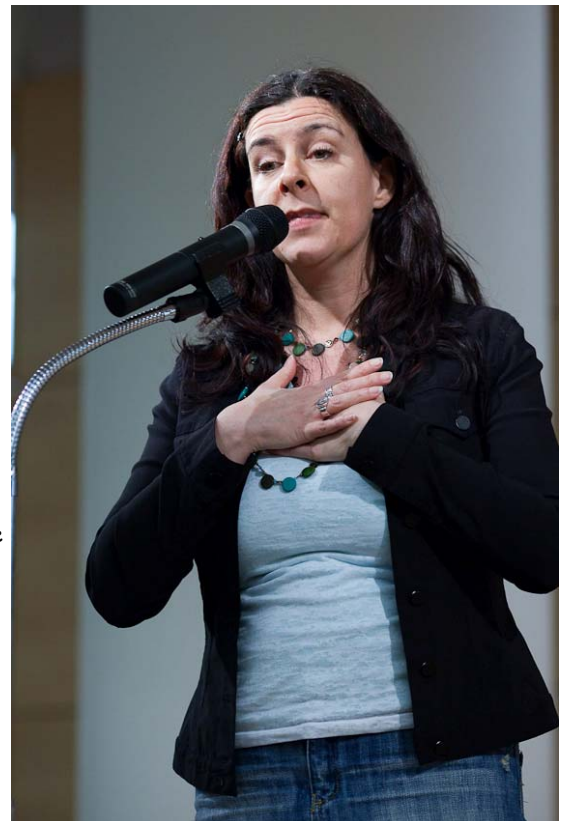
was impressed with the easy interplay between these tellers and the respect each one showed for the other when the other teller was spinning their tale.

### Mouth Open Story Jump Out

"Mouth Open Story Jump Out" with Itah Sadu, Taborah Johnson, and Sandra Whiting was electric. As soon as the women entered, the energy vibrated in that room until they left. Itah told about her daughter and the attitudes and ways of parents and teenagers that we all have experienced. She moved into funeral experiences --- a topic that you wouldn't think would be interesting but she made it amusing. Her facial expressions and body gestures fit perfectly with her tales as she kept them light and entertaining. At one point she asked for three gestures from us and sang a rhythmic song making us sing and gesture with her.

Taborah had a completely different style telling us about common everyday experiences. Her sense of humor was infectious. She would sing, make us sing a chorus and then talk to us. She had a delightful ending telling about her garlic chocolate ginger cake.

Sandra spun the tale of "Anansi and



challenge.

Lynda's Georgian tale was about a man who remarries, when his first wife dies so that his young son would continue to experience the attention that only a loving mother can give. But the stepmother is not a loving person, and, in time the boy leaves home. Later he discovers this cruel woman's horrible secret and is left to deal with it.

### Stormfools Cool Gig

Dan Yashinsky told this wonderfully tall, yet beautifully real tale about a good-hearted storyteller with an unstoppable passion for storytelling. He experiences the many frustrations of being a professional storyteller. But many wonderful, strange, and funny things also happen. One special fruit of his labors comes when he finds himself (willingly) blindfolded and taken on limousine rides to a secret mansion where he gets the storytelling offer of a lifetime.



Common Sense" and the story of the "Foolish Man". You could see that she was enjoying herself and was thoroughly engaged in telling her tales.

Itah concluded the program with first a story about her meeting and having a date with a gentleman who was visually impaired. It was hilarious. She was excellent at keeping her audience riveted by letting us finish her sentences. For her final presentation she taught us the verse and she then sang the story to a calypso beat with the audience filling in the refrain.

All three had great gestures, eye contact, energy, and the use of the Caribbean "patois" which enriched the experience immensely.

### **Noodleheads, Numbskulls and Other Foolish Folk**

The last presentation of the afternoon that I attended was "Noodleheads, Numbskulls, and Other Foolish Folk" with Bruce Carmody, June Brown, Goldie Spencer, and Anna Kerz. They proved that just because there were many children in the audience doesn't mean that these stories will not appeal to adults as well.

Bruce started with the tale of Penelope who would not laugh. He used just enough exaggeration, gesture and pause to keep a smile on your face. When he got to the part about having people try to make her smile, he described clowns, then jugglers and when he mentioned storytellers telling, he describe the first teller and there was June standing and launching into her tale. It was a beautiful transition and connection to his story. When she finished he picked up his story as if he was still telling his tale and commenting on the teller that had just told. He used this same process for Goldie, himself and Anna before concluding his tale. This was an excellent way of bringing in the other yarn spinners and keeping the whole overall tale connected.

June made strong eye contact and used positive gestures utilizing her face and whole body. She split the listeners and gave them a very simple response to keep young and old interacting with her. June's facial expressions are amazing and convey so much of her content. Her tale of the tradesman who wanted quiet was well chosen and her enjoyment of telling it was quite evident.

Goldie told the story of the man who

switched places with his wife. Her gestures, pauses and voice changes had the children (and adults) glued to her every word. Having heard the tale many times before, Goldie's presentation was fresh and made me smile and even laugh. She had a calming voice and a perfect sense of timing. She chose the appropriate words to fit the tale, and allowed her listeners time to experience the humor she is presenting.

In a slow and easy going manner Bruce's delivered an amusing tale about a man going to Dublin. One boy in the audience was so comfortable with Bruce that he lay down on his mother's lap and pulled his coat over himself as he was fixated on Bruce telling. Bruce has a gift of pulling you into his tales so that you forget about what is happening around you and enter another world.

Anna told the tale of Jack looking for

some brains. She had good eye contact, full body gestures and wonderful voice changes. She had her listeners so involved in her story that when she presented a riddle in the story one of the children yelled out the answer before anyone was asked. The use of riddles kept her audience thinking and interacting with her. Again, this yarn was a new fresh version of this old tale.

All in all, as you can tell, I really enjoyed my afternoon and a quote from Bruce Carmody sums it all up - "If you ever need to laugh or cry, what you need is a good story."

*Bill Lalonde can be found spinning tales in libraries, museums, classrooms and knitting circles near you.*



*Book Nook*

# Fish for dinner, Tales from Newfoundland and Labrador

Paul O'Neill, *Fish for dinner, Tales from Newfoundland and Labrador*, Flanker Press, Saint John's, NL, 2009, 176 pgs, ISBN 978-1-897317-35-8.

Should one peruse what just might be one of the most intriguing story collections to come down the pike in a long time, one might think of re-titling the volume *Bullfinch Meets Newfoundland-Labrador Geography* 101.

By his own admission, long time actor, CBC producer, and author-storyteller Paul O'Neill has been collecting stories from here, there and everywhere in between since he was a wee lad. These days, at the age of eighty-two, he still loves to do the same. Simply put, what O'Neill has done is to put narrative wings to myths and tales that, in some cases, maybe a thousand years old and perhaps even older, and reset them in various locales throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

These are stories that may originally have been told in places as far afield as China, India, ancient Greece, France, Ireland, Iceland and the Isle of Man just to mention a few. Here are tales of whimsy and heroic deeds, mirth and sadness, tricksters and magical confrontations, involving ghosts, witches, Faerie folk, evil water spirits, and the very devil himself. O'Neill had skillfully managed to set them amidst the very heart of a mythical Newfoundland where magic becomes reality and wishes come true at the very drop of a hat.

As stated above, O'Neill had taken these very old tales from places far away and times long past, thirteen in number, and happily plunked them down into various locales throughout Newfoundland and Labrador: Bay de Verde, Corner Brook, Fogo, Harbour Grace, L'Anse aux Meadows, Placentia, Petty Harbour, Saint Mary's, Trinity, Makkovik, Nain, Ramea, and Saglek Bay to be exact.

In the title tale, *Fish For Dinner*, a young sea captain becomes involved in a fish story with a twist, in which he discov-

ers what it means to be on the other end of the line, so to speak. Other personal favorites include: *The Hundredth Wife*, in which a Viking warlord meets his match in the person of a clever young woman who shows him that physical strength can be over come by wit; *Weasel and his Better Half*, in which the protagonist learns that pride does indeed come before a fall and that not all bargains are what they might appear to be; *The Lord of the Raven's Gift*, in which a young fisherman learns that even the simplest of ordinary gifts may bring a magic truly un-looked for and wondrous beyond belief; and *The Wisdom of Solomon*, in which an eighteenth century magistrate solves a seemingly impossible case using Solomon-like sagacity that would do the Harvard Law review justice.

Perhaps the most memorable, beautiful, and poignant tale in the entire collection is that entitled *Mam's Zelle and a Perfect Stranger*, in which a young woman discovers true love through the magical transformation of a spirit from a white elm, only to have that love taken away when the tree is cut down. The devil appears in two stories, including *How Finnbar Defeated Old Scratch*, which also tells of the origin of a peculiar physical manifestation in the vicinity of Clerner Brook in the person a human face chiseled on a cliff's face.

If there is one major complaint about this collection it is simply this: it wasn't anywhere near long enough. Though most assuredly Newfoundland-Labrador in character, locale, and temperament, these stories are most decidedly global in actual scope and origin. Students and devotees of world myth and legend will recognize many of the plots and motifs found throughout global story and narrative. Yet this is Newfoundland story telling at its very best. This should come as no surprise since given that once upon a time, in the presence of yours truly, noted raconteur Kelly Russell once stated flat out that folks up in Newfoundland sure know how to spin a good yarn or three.

In this effort, Paul O'Neill has succeeded quite nicely, *Fish For Dinner* comes very highly recommended, no brag, just fact.

*Robert Rodriguez, a regular contributor to Pippin resides in New York City.*

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

Debut novels by Jennifer Cowan and **Anna Kerz**, both of Toronto, have earned nominations for the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Awards.

There are two annual awards, each with a \$6,000 first prize, for picture books and for young adult novels. The nominees in both categories were announced Tuesday by the Ontario Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Foundation and the Ruth Schwartz Foundation.

Kerz, a veteran storyteller, has written *The Mealworm Diaries*, about a boy who moves to Toronto from Nova Scotia and is paired with the weirdest guy in the class for his science project. As if that is not problem enough, he is having strange dreams about the accident that took his father's life.

*HOME IS BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS* by **Celia Baker Lottridge** was celebrated with a book launch on April 10 at the Wychwood Barns. Celia writes, "I have been working on and talking about this book for three years or more and it is finally out. I'm so pleased with the look of it and I'm certainly hoping that people will enjoy reading about the tribulations and adventures of children who are refugees in Persia after WWI. It's a novel but my mother's oldest sister Susan is at the heart of it because she is the one who changed the fate of these almost forgotten children. The book will be in bookstores very soon and can be found on Amazon in hard cover and paperback."

# STORIES GOING 'ROUND

The Legless Stocking came to life on March 20<sup>th</sup> with a celebration of the spring equinox. Stories and songs were provided by **Joan Bailey**, **Eve Goldberg**, **Eh?! (the new fiddle trio of Emily Stam, Anne Lederman and James Stephen)** and **Lorne Brown**.

**Pauline Grondin** appeared as Queen Victoria accompanied by her lady in waiting at Ireland House museum on May 09 in celebration of Mother's Day at the museum. This event is open to the public. As well Pauline will be doing a number of presentations on the legends and traditions of tea in various locations during the month of May. Those open to the public for attendance include Appleby United Church in Burlington on May 15 and Buckingham Manor in Stouffville on May 24. On June 04 and 05 during the reenactment of the Battle of Stoney Creek Pauline will be telling the story of Laura Secord in first person. On June 06 at St. John's Anglican Church in Burlington Pauline will be telling the story of John Ireland at a tea reception following the reenactment of the wedding of John and Eliza Anne Naisbett in 1868. On June 19 and 20 the Port Dover Harbour Museum will be holding the annual Marine Festival. Pauline will be telling the story of Abigail Becker in first person aboard the tall ship the Brigantine throughout the weekend. The festival includes a reenactment of the War of 1812.

**Dan Yashinsky** writes, "I started Bread and Stories at the farmers' market, every Saturday morning at the Artscape Wychwood Barns. So far it's been a lot of fun. People

stop by our office, which now has an amazing red awning designed by Redpepper Spectacle Arts. When they come in, we break bread and do "story talk." I ask them about their personal storytellers, and the stories, proverbs and oral lore they grew up with. I've heard some amazing stories in the one month it's been running (in May I'm missing the first three Saturdays, but then I'll be around for the rest of the year). In May I'm traveling to Montreal to teach a workshop for young French storytellers who call their collective *Cantine motivée*, and also to Boca do Ceu Storytelling Festival in Sao Paulo, Brazil. I helped organize a Canadian program there, including Jamie Oliviero and Robert "Seven Crows" Bourdon."

On April 22 **Adwoa** and **Fulé Badoe** were the featured performers at an after-dinner cabaret at the Sherwood Restaurant in Brantford. Adwoa not only told stories from her native Ghana and other African countries, but she danced and sang too. Fulé greatly added to the performance with his wonderful drumming. The diverse audience of about 40 included fans who had attended many past cabarets and many others who were new, including a large group from Brantford's Immigration Settlement Services. Everyone happily joined in with movement, clapping and calling out the story interruption Adwoa taught us: Impossible! Impossible! Tell it well. Tell it true.

The evening was hosted by the **Brant Taletellers Guild**. Past cabarets have featured Dan Yashinsky, Aaron Bell, Michael Kusugak, Brenda Byers

and Ian Bell. The next one will take place in late July.

**Deborah Dunleavy** recently returned from Singapore where she told stories to over 5000 children. She continues her residency at the Arthur Child Heritage Museum in Gananoque. Deborah hosts local tellers at the Story Swapping Tuesdays. The group puts on "Sweet & Salty Stories & Songs" on May 14. Deborah has led three school visits to the museum with storytelling, drama and music. She continues to collect stories from the senior and is working on the development of an exhibition of photography and audio presentation called "Telling Hands" which features the stories from the community.

**Chris Cavanagh** hosted Storytelling and Social Justice at the Spadina Library on April 28.

Storyteller **Rubena Sinha** joined creative forces with Debashis Sinha (video/audio) and Shaun Phillips (director) for a presentation of "River" - a truth telling performance, interweaving personal history and Hindu mythology and folktales at the Fraser Studio on April 30 and May 01.

**Ruth Danziger**, **Maria Ordonez** and **Leelay Solomon** presented "Little Bird, You Are Welcome" stories for young children and their families on May 01 at Artscape Wychwood Barn.

*Pippin invites you to submit your telling adventures. Here is a place to share and maybe even boast a bit about the good work you are doing. Send your information to the editor at [kgp@ripnet.com](mailto:kgp@ripnet.com)*

# STICKMAKER MAGIC

by Deborah Dunleavy

We tellers often sit in informal circles swapping tales and sometimes the teller of the tale holds a storytelling stick, a feather, a stone or another symbolic totem. Borrowed from the traditions of the North American Indians who used it for council circles, the talking stick is now passed around the storytelling circle to bring respect and focus to the one who is speaking. The rest sit in silence with ears open to the power of the words. The magic still works.

Recently I acquired a personalized storytelling stick from a maker of walking sticks who happens to live in Gananoque, the town where I am storyteller in residence at the Arthur Child Museum. The uncanny thing is that I have known the artisan since grade one. His name is Bob McGurrin.

Bob has a passion for the outdoors and is an avid walker. It is on his many jaunts that he finds the raw sticks that he later transforms into his handsome and practical walking sticks. "Deadwood would be disastrous because it would snap," admits Bob. "Instead I look for a tree that has fallen down or been cut down and preferably with a root."

His craftsmanship is a fine balance between science and art and he is quick to point out that

he doesn't just knock these things off as tourist souvenirs. Every stick is unique to the owner and to the purpose. The length of a simple walking stick would be from the floor to the person's wrist but a sturdy hiking stick for going over hilly terrain needs to be shoulder height. As a general rule, the heavier the person - the thicker the stick - but not so thick that the stick itself becomes a burden on a long trek.

Balance is critical and so is a comfortable grip. The expert hiker wants to have a walking stick with a high grip for going up hills, a middle grip for level walking, and a low grip for coming back down. And a stick does not happen overnight. In fact Bob has a collection of forest finds that he keeps on hand for well over a year before he begins working on them. This allows for the stick to season slowly and to dry evenly.

One day Bob showed up at a storytelling circle that I was hosting. He had his walking cane at his side. My creative wheels began to spin. Would Bob consider making a storytelling stick? He was up for the challenge. We talked about how I wanted a short stick that could be passed around and a longer one to hold. I suggested that I would like to be able to add some personal totems. I mentioned the four colors

for the four directions: yellow for the sunrise (east), red for the sunset (west), white for the snow (north) and green for the earth (south).

Just like a good old story, time passed, and lo and behold, Bob came to me with a one of a kind storytelling stick. It had everything I had asked for and more. It was a young maple that had been chewed by rabbits, he told me. The patterns in the bark resembled the shape of a frog and a snake, and Bob had given them golden eyes with two pairs of shiny tacks.

I have put my stick to good use at our story swaps and whenever I go to tell it is right by my side. Bob said it wasn't meant for walking with but I do a bit of that anyway. My storytelling stick seems to have given me a deeper sense of my role as the carrier of lore. And when I have it by my side I feel a graceful sophistication and a quiet confidence not unlike that of having an old friend I have known since grade one keeping me company. The magic still works.

*You can catch Bob McGurrin out walking around Eastern Ontario or email him at [bob-walkon@canada.com](mailto:bob-walkon@canada.com)*

# The Alice Kane StorySave Project

by Lorne Brown

This is a heartwarming tale I'm going to tell.

Last year, SC-CC's StorySave committee (Lynda Howes, Gail de Vos, Ruth Danziger, Norman Walker and Linda Winham) decided that the 2010 project would be to reissue Alice Kane on CD.

Alice Kane was the well-loved and highly respected Canadian storyteller. Dan Yashinsky, borrowing a phrase from Rudyard Kipling, called Alice "Our best beloved". Edith Fowke, in her characteristically decisive way, pronounced her "the best storyteller in Canada", a sobriquet that Alice herself immediately refuted. Not true, she claimed, and besides, such a designation discourages all those practicing storytellers, many of whom Alice admired greatly. And if there were one role Alice enjoyed more than any other, it was being a mentor.

Since Alice left behind a goodly legacy of recorded material, on cassette tape, reel-to-reel tape, and even old LPs lying around the Toronto Public Library, it would be a relatively simple task to do. A lead pipe cinch, as my father used to say.

But, as the local StorySave committee (Lynda Howes, Celia Lottridge and Dan Yashinsky) soon found out, there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, and what seems simple often becomes very complicated. All that legacy of recorded material everyone talked about proved difficult to find. When, if they did find it, all sorts of permissions had to be obtained. Any of us who have ever had to track down permissions know what a tedious, soul-destroying, exasperating chore it can be.

Then, of course, there is the undeniable fact that recording tape's great characteristic seems to be its ability to quietly deteriorate even if not being used. A technician, bordering on genius, had to be found to restore these tapes.

(Thank you, David Jaeger!) Today's iPod carrying techno geeks, who consider superb sound the absolute norm, demand nothing less.

Then there are the liner notes to be written, the jewel case covers to be designed, and the 1001 many things needed to bring the project to fruition. The committee soon discovered that lots of good, cold, hard cash would be needed, cash that SC-CC did not have in its coffers.

"We need to fundraise!" announced the committee. The call went out to local storytellers and friends for donations and for house concerts or other events that would raise money for the Alice Kane Project, as people started calling it.

This is where my story becomes heartwarming.

All sorts of people responded with alacrity and dispatch. (I used to think Alacrity & Dispatch was a law firm.) Donations started pouring in. Offers to put on concerts started pouring in. Lynda Howes found herself in the role of a Sol Hurok type impresario, organizing and publicizing these events.

This outpouring of support, so very Canadian, so characteristic of our storytelling community from one side of Canada to the other, deserves special recognition. Do not take it lightly.

The first house concert, on February 7, 2010, also marked your humble author's re-entry into the storytelling world from his Dark Tower, albeit as a member of the audience. Housed in their home, Mariella Bertelli and Theo Heras, with Mary Anne Cree, Harriet Mulder, and musicians Cary Fagan and Rebecca Comay, presented a Toy Theatre performance. I found it extremely educational, learning all about the old European tradition of Toy Theatre that dates back to the 1800s. I marveled at the puppet stage they built, the imaginative scenery, props, and puppets, the

dialogue and music they put together, and most of all, their source - old Boccaccio himself, at his earthiest and most ribald. Belly laughs and food and drink for the belly as well.

Later in February, Sally Jaeger and Marylyn Peringer, with Lynda Howes, presented "Storytelling is the Shortening of the Road". Also Kathleen Bailey and Celia Lottridge presented "Rhymes by Heart". I heard great comments about these two performances, but alas was unable to attend them.

Alice's reach extended to Korea. Kim Eun Ae and friends mounted a performance in Seoul and sent \$100 to us here in Canada!

On World Storytelling Day (March 20) Glenna Janzen and Carol Leigh Wehking presented "Light and Shadow" in their Cambridge home, donating all proceeds to the project. Of special interest was the fact that no one in the audience had ever previously attended a storytelling concert of any kind!

In April "In Alice's Footsteps" was presented in the auditorium of the North York Central Library, scene of several of Alice's triumphs. Co-hosted by Mary Anne Cree and Dan Yashinsky, it featured many performers from the Toronto Public Library and Alice's old friend Eithne Heffernan and her harp. A whole new generation of young librarians participated, carrying on Alice's tradition. This concert raised almost \$1000!

Toronto's legendary 1001 Friday Nights of Storytelling dedicated a session to Alice and raised nearly \$300.

Later in April, I hitched a ride down the 401 to Mary-Eileen McClear's enchanting Story Barn in Baden, Ontario. She and Carol Leigh Wehking and Glenna Janzen performed "Alice and the Sword of Power" - to a sold-out house - one of most satisfying storytelling concerts I have ever attended. Al-

(Continued on page 14)

# TWO WOMEN PRODUCTIONS: A NEW STORYTELLING COMPANY IS BORN

Jan Andrews and Jennifer Cayley are thrilled, terrified etc. to announce that they have created a non-profit company dedicated to bringing good adult storytelling to Eastern Ontario. The emphasis will be on accessing theatre venues but all opportunities for finding and serving audiences for adult storytelling will be considered.

The core of the plan is to have three shows annually tour to three communities, Perth, Peterborough and Kingston, for three night runs. At least two of these shows would be the work of storytellers other than the founders. This initiative has an em-

phasis on artistic excellence, in conjunction with strong administrative and marketing support for the work presented. As a beginning the founders are taking their show *The Book of Spells - A Love Story* back to the targeted communities (where it toured last year), for return engagements. Next winter, funding applications proving successful, they plan to launch their first full season. Currently, they hope to present Dan Yashinsky's, *Talking You In*, a new piece by Ottawa teller Marta Singh and a new piece of their own.

The impetus for the creation of this company came from the

experience of touring *The Book of Spells* in Ontario last spring. Jan and Jennifer realized that it was difficult to impossible to draw audiences in communities where they had no personal connections because, sadly, after thirty years of revival, storytelling is still relatively unknown beyond the circles of particular local storytelling groups. They realized that the process of building awareness beyond that circle needed to begin.

If you want to know more about all this or would like to get in touch with comments have a look at the website [www.2wp.ca](http://www.2wp.ca).

## StorySave Project cont'd

(Continued from page 13)

ice's presence was very definitely felt by all.

Still to come - as of this writing - is a concert in Dianne Chandler's home on Skugog Island on Lake Skogog featuring Dianne, Carol McGirr, and musician Anne Lane. So popular has this attraction become that I believe they are offering two performances.

The final performance will be held in the theatre of the Palmerston Library Branch of the TPL, not co-incidentally where Lynda Howes first met Alice Kane lo, these many years ago! Since it has not occurred, I will quote from the program.

*We thought it the golden age, and maybe it was. The year was at the spring and the day at the morn, and the*

*rebirth of storytelling in Toronto was on the wing. We were an enthusiastic group, telling tales, teaching courses, planning concerts, supporting each other, wondering where it would all lead. And in our midst, leading us on in her gentle yet determined way, was Alice Kane.*

*Tonight we are back together, celebrating Alice in the way she would love best, in story and music and food.*

*Thank you for coming out tonight and supporting StorySave's efforts to make CDs of Alice Kane available to the public. It is a cause for rejoicing, and as Alice herself once said, "Tis a poor heart that never rejoices."*

*In order of appearance: Carol McGirr, Celia Lottridge, Bob Barton, Rita Cox, Eithne Heffernan, Lynda*

*Howes, Dan Yashinsky, Marylyn Peringer, Lorne Brown*

*Lynda Howes tells me that through the combined efforts and donations of so many people, over \$8000 has been raised!*

*Truly heartwarming. Kind of makes me proud to be a member of the Canadian storytelling community.*

*Lorne would like everyone to know that he has tried to be as accurate as possible. If there are any errors or omissions, he profusely and publicly apologizes. He did not want to submit this to the eagle eyes of Lynda Howes, a super copy editor, because he wanted her to be surprised reading it in this publication!*

# Listings — Summer 2010

## GATHERINGS



Dan Yashinsky hosts **Bread and Stories** most Saturday mornings at the Artscape Wychwood Barns, 601 Christie St. Look for the red tent on the west side of the Barns. The Spadina Branch of the Toronto Public Library offers a **Storytelling Circle** on the last Wednesday of the month at 2pm. May 26: Mariella Bertelli explains and demonstrates the Japanese Kamishibai method of storytelling. 10 Spadina Rd. Free admission. Info: Mariella Bertelli, (416) 393-7667, [mbertelli@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:mbertelli@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

**Storytelling Circle** every Tuesday at 2:15pm, 6 St. Joseph St., led by Molly Sutkaitis. Open to all.

**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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:maryeileen@thestorybarn.ca)

**The Ottawa Storytellers** meet for their Story Swap on the first Thursday of the month, 7pm. At Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St, Room 156, free admission.

**The 1000 Islands Yarnspinners** will hold a gathering on Monday, June 21 at 7pm at the Brockville Museum, 5 Henry Street, Brockville. Contact Deborah Dunleavy at 613-342-3463 or [kgp@ripnet.com](mailto:kgp@ripnet.com)

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

**The Brant Tale-tellers Guild**, welcomes tellers and listeners to its monthly gather-

ings September to June, 7pm, on the first Wednesday at the Brantford Public Library, Colborne St. . Info: [talesbizbrant.com](http://talesbizbrant.com), [tale-tellers@bizbrant.com](mailto:tale-tellers@bizbrant.com) or phone (519) 756-0727

**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. Renseignements: Guy Thibodeau, [guythibodeau@rogers.com](mailto:guythibodeau@rogers.com), [www.cceo.ca](http://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](mailto:barryrosen@sympatico.ca) or [barry\\_storyteller@yahoo.ca](mailto: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](mailto:christine-mayr36@yahoo.ca)

## PERFORMANCES



**Norse Myth: Creation to Ragnarok.** 20 committed listeners and 20 tellers from across the country and beyond gather at the edge of Taylor Lake in Lanark County to immerse themselves in one of the world's greatest stories. Friday September 3 to Sunday, September 5. Info: Jennifer Cayley, [jcayley@magma.ca](mailto:jcayley@magma.ca)

**Native Storytelling** at the Spadina Road Branch of the Toronto Public Library, 10 Spadina Road, 2pm. June 3: Melvin John, Trickster Tales; June 23, Jacqui Lavalley,

Voices of the Old Ones. Info: (416) 393-7667

**The Ottawa Storytellers** continue "Stories and Tea" every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at The Tea Party, 119 York St., 7pm. Suggested donation: \$8. May 25: Dean Verger, Stories From Moby Dick; June 8: Donna Stewart and Ruth Stewart-Verger, Things Are Not Always What They Seem; June 22, Kathie Kompass and Leah Sander, The Devil Made Me Do It. [info@ottawastorytellers.ca](mailto:info@ottawastorytellers.ca), (613) 322-8336.

**The Ottawa Storytellers** storytelling series, Speaking Out/Speaking takes place at the National Arts Centre Fourth Stage, 7:30pm. Admission \$15/\$12. May 19, 20: Gail Anglin, Tom Lips, musician Mary Gick, For the Love of Pete: Stories and Songs from the Life of Pete Seeger; June 17: Mary Wiggin and Jan Andrews, To Say Nothing of the Dog, dog stories. [info@ottawastorytellers.ca](mailto:info@ottawastorytellers.ca), (613) 322-8336.

**Storytellers for Children** presents A Barrel of Stories, May 29, 1:30-2:30pm with Sally Jaeger, Harriet Xanthakos and special guest Jack Howard. At Ralph Thornton Centre, 765 Queen St. E., Toronto. \$5 or PWYC. Info: Carol Ashton, (416) 699-2608, [www.storytellersforchildren.ca](http://www.storytellersforchildren.ca)

**The Seventh Great Big Afternoon of Storytelling** takes place at Riverdale Farm, Toronto on Saturday June 5, 1-3pm, presented by Storytellers for Children. Bring your family, a blanket, hat and sunscreen and enjoy an afternoon of stories from the farm. Info: Carol Ashton, (416) 699-2608, [www.storytellersforchildren.ca](http://www.storytellersforchildren.ca)

**The Legless Stocking**, aka Lorne Brown and Cathy Melville, presents The Constable Who Couldn't Spell Roncesvalles and other Toronto Tales, featuring storytellers Pat Bisset, Jim Blake, Bernice Gei-ying Hune and Lorne Brown, with musician Tom Melville and Friends. Saturday June 5, 7:30pm at The Butler's Pantry, 591 Markham St., Toronto.

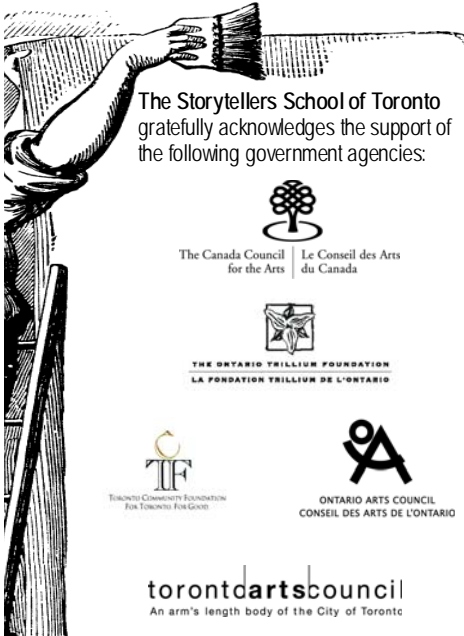
\$20, \$15 if ordered before May 27. Doors open at 6pm for dinner. Info: (416) 656-2445, [www.storytellingtoronto.org](http://www.storytellingtoronto.org); Tickets: [tickets@storytellingtoronto.org](mailto:tickets@storytellingtoronto.org) Every Sunday afternoon **Molly Sutkaitis** tells the story of an Irish Pioneer immigrant who worked at the Grange 150 years ago. 2:30, 3:30, 4:30pm. The Grange, Art Gallery of Ontario.

Info: [mollysutkaitis@hotmail.com](mailto:mollysutkaitis@hotmail.com)


**Billings Campfire Storytelling** Fridays in August at the Billings Museum, Ottawa.

Info: Caitlyn, (613) 322-8336,  
[info@ottawastorytellers.ca](mailto:info@ottawastorytellers.ca)


Moon in June Productions presents **EVE'S GARDEN** with **Dorothy Lichtblau** as part of the Fringe Festival. Performances take place at St. Vladimir's Theatre, 620 Spadina Avenue. Tickets: \$10 at the door. Some dates between July 2 and July 11. Contact [lichtblau@ualberta.ca](mailto:lichtblau@ualberta.ca) for exact dates.




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 ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION  
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### OUT OF PROVINCE

Jay O'Callahan, storyteller, author and workshop facilitator, will lead a very special 6-day workshop at Hollyhock Retreat Centre, Cortes Island, BC Canada August 14-19, 2010. Mandi Kujawa, songwriter, singer, storyteller and librettist from Banff, Canada, will co-facilitate the workshop. Workshop Description: Like Fireflies, The Art of Creative Storytelling. Everybody and everything has a story. In fact, we are filled with stories. These stories can be memories of events, characters, places and moments in our lives. These stories are like fireflies flitting around deep inside us. Call forth some of those fireflies in a simple and play-

ful way. When a memory is called forth, the storytelling is often fresh and interesting; the details are sharp, as is the sense of place, characters and the event itself. These forgotten memories are at the heart of good storytelling. To register for the workshop visit: [https://www.hollyhock.ca/cms/index.cfm?Group\\_ID=4577](https://www.hollyhock.ca/cms/index.cfm?Group_ID=4577)

### STORYTELLING TORONTO EVENTS



Info: (416) 656-2445  
[www.storytellingtoronto.org](http://www.storytellingtoronto.org),  
[admin@storytellingtoronto.org](mailto:admin@storytellingtoronto.org)

**The Magic Drum: In-Depth Exploration of a Fairy Tale**, led by Michelle Tocher. Saturday and Sunday May 15 and 16, 1:30-4:30pm. At the Pape Branch of the Toronto Public Library. Fee: \$120  
**Summer School Intensive 2010**, led by Marylyn Peringer. Thursday to Sunday, July 8-11, at the Church of St. George the Martyr, Toronto. Fee: \$375.

## 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.

Send to Deborah  
at [kqp@ripnet.com](mailto:kqp@ripnet.com)



### STORYTELLING IN THE CITY

# 1,001

FRIDAY NIGHTS  
of  
**STORYTELLING**

[www.1001fridays.org](http://www.1001fridays.org)

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*Every Friday night is unique.*

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