

President's Report

Stephanie Bengler

sbenger@shaw.ca

My, how the time flies by. Just a couple of weeks ago we flew (well, drove actually) to this year's TALES Storytelling Retreat at Sylvan Lake. Kathy Jessup was in the driver's seat, as is often the case, in our little community, taking on the tough jobs, such as the big WSD event in Edmonton, *Water for Life* featuring Harmony and Sienna Simon, Naz Uppal, Billy Joe Laboucan, Dawn Blue, Bethany Ellis, Kathy Jessup, and Tololwa Mollel with musician Robert Kpogo. I had the good fortune to be sitting almost behind a 3-year-old who got so excited whenever Robert Kpogo would start to play *The Donkey Song* that she finally turned to her mom and said, "He's going to play the honky donkey song!" When I told Robert he laughed out loud and began to retell the story to others around us. That pretty much captured the spirit and atmosphere of *that* event.

Once in Sylvan Lake, we met our Youth Scholarship winner, Jonathan Nelson, a bright, polite, and enthusiastic young man who just graduated from the Library Technician program at SAIT. We wish him all the best as he goes forward in the world to find his way (and, we hope, a job) in a library or school where he can hone his new found storytelling skills in work with children. Then we were treated to the Yellow Ribbon Dancers who not only sang, danced and drummed divinely, but also transported us away on cedar, tobacco and sweetgrass smoke in a smudge ceremony. It brought to mind the story of *The Bear Who Stole the Chinook*, wherein the little boy hero lulls the ferocious grizzly off to sleep by blowing smoke into the cave where the bear holds the life-giving Chinook winds captive. TALES Vice President Mary Ann Lippiatt did a fantastic job of pulling the entire retreat together. We thank her for the memorable experience.

Speaking of children, for once I find myself in a job where I am *not* working with them. Instead I am the newly minted (not to mention newly graduated from the MLIS program at the University of Alberta) Library and Information Services Administrator at Golder Associates, here in Edmonton. While it's an honour and a privilege indeed to run a library for this great company, I wouldn't want to lose touch with kids, especially as our own are getting so advanced in years (8 and 10). So a few months ago when grad school was winding down, I offered to tell for our daughter Ada's grade 2/3 split class at Garneau Elementary. Wasn't I surprised to be asked, a couple of days later, to work up a storytelling the whole class could perform at the assembly less than a month later!

//Continued top of Page 2

Contents

President's Report	1
Calgary	2
Edmonton	3
Strathcona	3
Fort Edmonton Festival	4
Youth Storytelling Scholarship	5
Stories Are Not What They Seem	6
Storytelling: From Folk to Fine Art? ...	7
Storytelling: Find, Lean, Tell	8
Post Storytelling Retreat	9
Retreat Discussion Topics	10
Workshop Presentation	12
Grettir's Saga Tales Retreat 2012	13
Anticipating Grettir's Saga	14
International Women's Day Award ...	14
Trees for W. S. D. 2012	15
Midnight in the Cemetery	16
AGM Conference Call	16
Come Away CD Launch	17
CC Book Centre New Membership ..	17
The Show Must Go On!	18
Coal in the Valley	21
Sean Buvala Festival Presenter	22
Publication Information	23

New Voices

Calgary Stephanie Bagan
 Charma Cattleman
 Larry Cromwell
 Rowena Cromwell
 Dorothy Jones
 Jonathan Nelson
 Herald Wong
 Strathcona Diane Charles

\\Continued from page 1

I said yes, because teaching kids to storytell is something that I love to do. I knew I'd better get it together quickly, so I chose Margaret Read McDonald's *Roly Poly Rice Ball* as a story that I know well and that was a good fit with the World Folklore theme at the school that month. The kids rose to the challenge at once and by the third session had rewritten the entire story on giant sheets of paper! I had to remind them to stay focused on the telling of the story, advice which they took to heart. After that it was about the theatrical aspects of the performance: casting, character, blocking, gesture, and voice projection (though we eschewed props and costumes).

Ada's class was not the only group performing at the assembly that day, but they were the youngest. I am proud to say that they came across as both the most polished, and the most enthusiastic of any of them, I still talk to a parent who tells me *Roly Poly Rice Ball* is still being "rehearsed" at home!

Going forward, I want to report that my application to hold a SPOOKY STORYTELLING EVENT at the illustrious old Edmonton Cemetery during the Edmonton and Northern Alberta Historic Festival has been APPROVED! If you are a teller of fine and frightful tales, don't be surprised if I phone you sometime soon. Summer is short and comes on suddenly in our fair(ish) province... may you all enjoy it while it lasts ☺

TALES Calgary Chapter

Contact Cassy Welburn

403-283-9489 catherine_welburn@hotmail.com

Tellarounds at the Nose Hill Public Library on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM have been attracting some interest. A special guest presentation precedes each session coordinated by Cathie Kernaghan and Anne Lidgren of the Calgary Public Library. Themes of seafaring Celtic history, and fools, for March and April were presented by Anne Cowling and Cassy Welburn. May featured Maria Hopkins on mothers. We are building a community of people that want to learn more about storytelling.

Story Cafes on fourth Wednesdays of the month gather at ShelfLife Bookstore on 13th Avenue and 4th St. SW where owner, Joanne McCaig, has been very supportive in attracting a group of interested listeners. March 23rd Jilliane Yawney hosted our very own StorySlam, which was well-attended, and featured five tellers in competition telling their own true stories. April 27th, Karen Gummo and her Wise Fools, Gordon Churchill and Louis Soop shared the evening with authors from the Alexandra Writers' Society in a new Double Bill. We attracted a whole new group of listeners and enjoyed the camaraderie of these two groups—storytellers and authors. The owner helps us to serve wine & cheese during the break. May 25th, Jan McLean and Betty Hersberger will do a Tandem Storytelling event in word and song.

We look forward to setting up more events at the bookstore next year. We plan to coordinate our first Tellaround as a Storytelling Workshop, introduced by Jilliane Yawney and follow it up with a Story Slam at the StoryCafe. We even plan a "swap" with tellers from Edmonton in April.

We have had a reporter from The Calgary Herald visit both the Tellaround and Story Cafe. He interviewed Cassy Welburn about TALES, and we are looking forward to an article in The Neighbours section. The Herald also interviewed Mary Hays and featured an article about our *1001 Arabian Nights* dinner theatre events, in March, April, May and June at the Sultan's Tent Moroccan Restaurant (14 St and Kensington Rd. N.W.) This is our second year of presenting the *Nights*, and the owner would like us to perform on a regular basis.

We also contribute to First Thursdays as part of Art Central's celebration of the arts in downtown Calgary every month. Karen Gummo and Maria Hopkins have been organizing a group to tell stories at the Central Library from 5 to 6 in the evening. We often meet with many new Canadians and always have a good time. We may continue over the summer.

Ginger Mullen's workshops for telling stories to young children, *Listen, Learn and Tell*, this year at Thorncliffe Community Association, 5600 Centre St. N.W. Saturdays from 9 – 11 AM are winding down in May. Information: ginger.mullen@shaw.ca

-March 19th Theme: No! I Don't Want To! Everybody needs to say no sometimes, so it's great fun to practice this little word in the big group.

-May 7th Theme: What's For Lunch? Whether it's fresh mosquitoes, summer berries or tender leaves, everybody needs and loves to eat.

TALES Edmonton Chapter

Contact: Renee Englot

780-932-4409 talesedmonton@hotmail.com

Edmonton storytellers were desperately desiring some fun, some sun, and no snow in April! To help with that we got together and told some stories as our desperate desiring was not enough.

Story Café:

The April Story Café was titled *Horsing Around*. The tellers for the evening were Marie Anne McLean, Stephanie Bengler and Pearl-Anne Gooding led us in an audience participation number.

In May, once we did get some fun, sun and no more snow so our Story Café was Wild Women with Laura O'Connor, Bethany Ellis, and Kate Quinn.

Keep June 2nd open and join us at Rosie's Bar and Grill 10475 – 80 Avenue, cover charge \$6.00. There is always an open mike and that is an opportunity to explore your inner storyteller.

Tellaround:

The Tellaround in April featured Helen Lavender. Helen is a longtime treasured member of TALES—she belongs to the Strathcona County chapter. Helen has recently released a book based on her childhood recollections of growing up on a farm, and her relationship with a particularly loveable piglet. Our April Tellaround, heard Helen do a short presentation on how the book came to fruition...her memories that prompted the book's creation, and she told us a few anecdotes, you will have to ask her to hear them for yourself!

In May the Tellaround topic was *Freeing the Natural Voice*. Stephanie Bengler and Wendy Edey were the leaders. Many voices were freed that evening and we thank Stephanie and Wendy for their work.

The Tellaround happens on Wednesdays so keep your ears open for the next one! Expressions Café, 9938-70 Avenue at 7 PM.

It needs to be said that all who attended the Alberta TALES Retreat were happy and full of story. Mark May 5th, 2012 in your calendar for next year's retreat so you can come and join us.

The Festival is now the Edmonton Chapter's major focus. *River of Dreams* the 23rd annual TALES Fort Edmonton Storytelling Festival is happening September 4th to 5th. We encourage you to attend and we need volunteers. Volunteers are the lifeblood of all events and you can do as much or as little as you can. We would be so pleased to have you join us at Fort Edmonton Park. Contact, Marie Anne McLean to offer your support mamclean@shaw.ca

Thank you's:

A big thank you, in the shape of an Excel spread sheet, goes to TALES Calgary Anne Cowling. TALES Edmonton needed help with our book keeping and Anne brought her knowledge, skills and good humour to help with the books. Thank you Anne!

For all of you at the retreat tip your hat to Mary Ann Lippiatt. She worked tirelessly on planning, preparing for, and organizing this year's retreat. She also has agreed to be TALES vice president – wow, endless energy and capacity. Thank you Mary Ann we so appreciate your work.

It is now lovely in Edmonton with sunshine, warm weather, new green and no snow! Just goes to show that telling stories can bring both listener and teller to a new place.

TALES Strathcona Chapter

Contact Helen Lavender

780-400-3547 lavenders@shaw.ca

TALES Strathcona enjoyed presenting our first concert at the new Strathcona County Library this March. Seven tellers told stories relating to the theme of *Water*, including both true stories from here in Alberta and folktales from around the world. It seemed appropriate to the theme that more of the stories than usual were of the sort to bring a tear to your eye, though there were laughs to be enjoyed too.

We intend to continue our tradition of holding our June meeting at South Cooking Lake Park. We will begin at 7 PM on June 22nd, and enjoy a long midsummer evening of stories. Potluck snacks will be shared, and we also recommend bringing lawn chairs or blankets to sit on.

Work continues on the collection of local heritage stories. Helen Lavender reports that she has researched two stories: She says, "*One is about Pearl Griffith who lived and ranched at Cooking Lake and Bill and Vi Roddick who lived on a farm southeast of North Cooking Lake. Bill worked for the County for 24 years most of it as a grader and snowplow operator.*" Other interview subjects include one of Strathcona County's early schoolteachers, and the former Fire Chief of Sherwood Park's first fire station.

Stories will be shared at our upcoming event: **Strathcona County - The Early Years.**

TALES Strathcona presents an evening of heritage stories. Join storytellers and listen to

stories of pioneers, which help us to remember the history of our area. Learn about the lives of some not so ordinary residents. They built a solid foundation for life in Strathcona County. This will also take place at the Strathcona County Library, on **Tuesday, July 12th**, from 7:00 until 8:30 PM.

The event will be wheelchair accessible, is free to attend, and is intended for adults and children accompanied by adults.

TALES Fort Edmonton Festival

Marie Anne McLean – Festival Coordinator

talesedmonton@hotmail.com

Our theme, *River of Dreams*, brought in a range of interesting proposals. We have gone through them all and had to make some difficult choices. The schedule for each day is done and we are now beginning to prepare the program. Letters have gone out to the performers.

This year Kathy Jessup developed a performer's contract. This provides the festival tellers with necessary information about their performance times and gives us the means for quick communication as we get close to the festival date. It seems that each year we learn more about streamlining the work.

We have distributed the contracts and they have sent them back signed. We are now about to send the signed copies back.

We have engaged Sean Buvala, professional storyteller from Arizona to lead us in two valuable workshops. He has been commended for his workshops on communicating your message with new clarity and strengthening your business. Be sure to keep checking the web site for descriptions of the workshop specifics that he will be offering at the festival.

WORKSHOP ONE: *Fidget, Flicker, Finesse: – Improve Your Storytelling with Focused Gestures and Movement.* For storytellers and speakers of all levels of experience. *You will leave this workshop with new skills that you can use immediately at your next presentation to "wow" your audience.*

WORKSHOP TWO: *The Five Keys to Energize Your Artist Marketing.* For Artists who derive (or want to derive) any part of their income from their storytelling work. *In our session you will experience the five essential tools for marketing your artistry– from Quick Fire to Social Media.* Develop your niche plan in a time where the old marketing rules almost never apply.

Maria Dunn will be back to add a musical aspect of storytelling. Chris Allen of CKUA has happy to agree to return as our emcee.

Our local members have begun to put in offers to billet out of town festival tellers.

We are now hoping to have many people sending in offers to assist as volunteers during the festival so that no one will be overburdened and we can all enjoy our weekend of stories.

This year we are reinstating the story swap as the last set of the festival on Monday at 4:00 PM. It is a great time for us to all get together and share some short and funny tales. That swap sometimes has some magic results bringing bright sparks of story from strangers who are visiting the fort.

We are also arranging to put festival information on the TALES web site.

See Page 22 for more about Sean Buvala, featured storyteller at the Festival



Did you know??

Tales has a website at

www.talesstorytelling.com

Chapter news and events can be found there. Check the Directory listing – Storytellers.

Click on Storytellers, and scroll to the bottom, where you will find a Biography Form. Fill it out and send it back to Anne Cowling. She will get your biography on line!!

Isn't that Great?

Launch Of The TALES Youth Storytelling Scholarship

Mary Ann Lippiatt

lippiatt@mailhub.ca

TALES Alberta is pleased to announce the launch of the TALES Youth Storytelling Scholarship. The selected candidate of the Scholarship will receive:

- A one-year membership with TALES
- Free admission to attend the 2011 weekend retreat at Sylvan Lake
- An established storyteller to act as a mentor to provide guidance and support in getting started as a storyteller

Youth aged 18-30 interested in using storytelling in their respective fields (i.e. education, psychology, museum work, environmental education, healing arts, law, religion, business theatre or freelance storytelling) were encouraged to apply.

During our recent TALES April 29th - May 01st, 2011 storytelling retreat at Sylvan Lake we were pleased to announce and

introduce our successful candidate (drum roll)...

Jonathan Nelson, of Calgary! A TALES Alberta thank you is extended to Jonathan for his application and to Mary Hays, for accepting Jonathan under her mentorship.

Jonathan enjoyed participating in WSD, Calgary events in March and actively participated in the retreat as both storyteller and facilitator (together with Charma Cattleman) during the Saturday night storytelling circle.

Here's a little about Jonathan from his application: *"I'm new to storytelling but I've been an avid reader all my life. In the fall of 2010 I took a storytelling elective in the Library Information Technology Program from Mary Hays at SAIT. I don't know if I've ever had more fun in school. Of course, I was nervous delivering my first program but the children enjoyed it and I gained enough confidence that I could do it again. Currently, I'm planning to present a storytelling session to a group of grade 5/6 children at Belfast Elementary. I've worked with their teacher to integrate the program into the social studies curriculum so that not only will the students be entertained but hopefully they will learn a fact or two. I am confident that this isn't the end of storytelling for me."*

Editors note: This program was successfully delivered and well received by the children, the teacher and the library manager.

I would love to meet storytellers and to learn from their experiences. I've never been to this kind of event (storytelling retreat) before and I think it will be a great place to make new contacts and perhaps discover other opportunities for storytelling. I've heard great things about TALES from Mary Hays so I am eager to learn more.

I hope to gain some skills that I can use in my own storytelling programs and perhaps to pick up some new stories that I have never heard before. Also, I hope that I have a good time and that I'll take happy memories home with me.

As a soon to be Library Technician I do hope to be

able to use my storytelling skills at some point in my career. I think the ideal job for me would be a children's librarian because I love working with kids and I know how powerful storytelling can be for them. I think it's an essential part of literacy and learning and I know that everyone loves a good story well told."

Congratulations and welcome Jonathan! May your story journey be full!



Orunamamu and Jonathan Nelson

Note from Mary

Hays – TALES Calgary is mentoring Jonathan. He has enjoyed volunteering at the World Storytelling Day Concert, the TALES Retreat and at Ginger Mullen's storytelling workshop. He has attended tellarounds, story cafes, First Thursday, and dinner theatre at the Sultan's Tent. He is looking forward to attending the TALES Fort Edmonton Storytelling Festival workshops and story sessions.

***Take note of this awesome opportunity new storytellers and make sure to apply for the TALES Youth Storyteller Scholarship in January of 2012.

*** Special thanks to Vice-President Mary Ann Lippiatt, President Stephanie Benger and their committee for working on this great project.

Stories Are Not What They Seem.

Gordon Churchill

gchurchi@telus.net

In 1876 Joel Chandler Harris began publishing a weekly column in *The Atlanta Constitution* about an elderly ex-slave named Uncle Remus. The stories were wildly popular and by 1880 *Uncle Remus: His Songs And His Sayings* began to be published as a collection of stories. Other volumes of Uncle Remus stories followed. In the stories Uncle Remus tells stories to the white son of his former master.

Harris, as both a reporter and an editor for the *Constitution*, wrote these stories, he said, as records of the stories that he had heard as a young boy and of stories that he had collected from various storytellers of colour. Harris was, perhaps, also making comments about his society through the stories that he allowed Uncle Remus to tell.

An example of this is a story that many of us grew up with, and which I always called, *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Harris chose rather to call it, *Mr. Rabbit Finds His Match At Last*. Now, in the version that I remember, the tortoise wins the race because he is slow, dogged and persistent and the hare is lazy, cocksure, and vain. The hare lies around, plays around and loses the race to the determined and consistent tortoise.

The version that Harris tells is very different. In his version, Brer Rabbit boasts to Brer Tarrypin (a terrapin being a swimming turtle from the swamps in the South) that he is the fastest. A wager is made, and the race is on. However, Brer Tarrypin has a wife and three children who, as Uncle Remus says, "*an dey wuz all de ve'y spit en image er de ole man. Ennybody w'at know one fum de udder gotter take a spy glass, en den dey lible fer ter git fooled.*" Mrs. Tarrypin starts the race, each of the children show up in the route of the race, and Brer Tarrypin is waiting when Brer Rabbit is ready to cross the finish line, as if he has already finished the race ahead of him.

The white boy complains to Uncle Remus that this was cheating. Uncle Remus replies, "*Co'se, honey. De beastesses 'gun ter cheat, en den fokes tuck it up, en hit keep on spreadin'. Hit mighty ketchin', en you mine yo' eye, honey, dat somebody don't cheat you 'fo yo' hair git gray ez de ole nigger's.*"

Now all this provides a challenge to the storyteller, first because of the dialect, but even more so because this well known story does not turn out the way most people know it. Of course in telling it, one wants to decide if you can use words like nigger, or if you need to alter the text a bit for today's audience. When it comes to the basic story, perhaps it helps to remember the expression, still common in

the South: "*The North won the civil war in 1865, and the South won the war in 1877*". Of course the forces of the South were finally overcome in 1865, but in 1877 the Union Armies were finally withdrawn from the South and the people of the South were free to proceed with managing their own affairs.

Black ex-slaves were emancipated, but if they wanted land they had to buy it from their former owners. In partial payment they were still expected to work on the plantation. If they purchased a house on the land, there was a charge for that, and supplies were available from the white business and plantation owners. What was legal freedom was only another form of economic slavery.

By 1890, the United States Supreme Court ruled, in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, that blacks and whites were equal but different. Therefore, if blacks wanted schools, they were separate schools for which the white community had no responsibility. All other manner or services were to be separate. The segregation that remained in place, until Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks challenged segregation in the 1960s, became the social order.

Considering this setting, Joel Chandler Harris' story takes on a very different cast. Uncle Remus is pointing out that things are not fair, and are perhaps not as they appear. Perhaps Harris is sending a message, in story code, that while legal freedom is at hand, real freedom remains elusive. These stories are not just simple children's stories, but very complex social commentaries, and socially disruptive stories. It could also be argued that Harris was telling his mostly white readers, that they need not worry about emancipation because nothing was going to change anyway. However to call such a thing, a *cheat*, is itself a disruptive message to those who deeply believed that black and white were equal but different.

It seems to me that a storyteller needs to work on the context of an original story, carefully considering whether that context needs to inform the way he or she tells the story. Is perhaps the loss of context why those who told me the story, when I was a child, turned the story into a meditation on the Protestant work ethic, instead of a story about tensions, and intentions in a deeply divided society. Perhaps the story that I was told was the white, laundered version of a story with which my parents and society felt very uncomfortable. I would love to hear from others who would reflect on this story, its context and how to tell it.

Anyone involved in storytelling, as a listener or teller, will have no difficulty in acknowledging it as an art form but there are still many members of the public who have no concept of what is involved when they hear of a storytelling event. Many assume we read our stories, others are sure our audiences are made up of toddlers and small children. I've even heard people say that they wouldn't attend an adult program because they'd fall asleep if all they had to do was sit and listen to one story after another!

We can preach to the converted and we can work at making ourselves more visible as performers but don't we also need to define and qualify storytelling as an accepted art form with its many styles, approaches and beliefs? This question has been in my mind for some time especially with my recent experiences in training volunteer storytellers for small communities. Have any of you noticed that it is always those newest to storytelling that have the strongest opinions about what is involved? The more experienced and skilled we become the more aware we are of the diversity in skill levels, presentation and expectations.

Coming home from a local studio tour following a recent visit to a friend's show at a well known gallery I began to compare the competent visual artist to a master storyteller. They both approach their subject, whether it is a story, landscape, portrait or idea, as a creative challenge. Through personal interpretation and technical skill, using their chosen medium they create a finished product to be experienced by those exposed to it. The visual artist uses materials to create the visual and the storyteller uses voice, vocabulary and phrase to create sensory images in the mind of the listener. A gallery shows the accumulated work of a visual artist whereas a well planned program can feature the work of the storyteller. In both instances monetary value varies according experience and talent.

I am aware, however, that not everyone wants to be a master storyteller. I am also aware that identifying the many skills required to reach that stage could be off-putting to those just learning to 'tell'. As we refine and define this art form it is important to keep in mind that most of us are quite happy to stay within the realms of *folk* rather than *fine art*.

"As a folk art storytelling is accessible to all ages and abilities. No special equipment beyond the imagination and power of listening and speaking is needed to create images ... (stories) support daily life skills in our fast paced, media driven world

Storytelling can be a nurturing way to remind children that their spoken word is powerful, that listening is important and that clear communication is an art." – Quote from www.storyarts.org/classroom/index.html (an interesting web site for those working in schools)

I run a folk farm and give courses in several of the folk crafts which have evolved over time into creative and sophisticated forms now shown in galleries and on studio tours. The basic skills are still the same just as the folk tales of the world contain the wisdom of the past and the thread of humanity that joins us all. They are the stories of the ordinary people and those basic skills have evolved into the performance storytelling of today's world.

So, when taking the first step in this quest to define today's storytelling as an art form we have to ask, *"What is art?"*

The dictionary defines art (briefly) as *'human skill as opposed to natural agency' 'skill acquired by study and practice' 'learning as opposed to natural ability.'* This, then, directs us to identify a series of skills required by our art form.

Next we need to look at the other accepted and recognized fine arts to see how storytelling relates to music, dance and theatre as well as visual art and it is interesting that they all use story as the basis or as a component of their work. Investigating the history of these art forms we find primitive cave paintings, stone carvings, chants, percussion and rhythmic movement with reed and string accompaniment so let's make it clear that we've been telling stories ever since humans first used words to communicate!

Just as other art forms have evolved so has storytelling. We, too, have a history. I often use it in brief outline on family literacy nights or for events such as *'Where the Words Are'* just to show our place in the literary hierarchy.

So as the folk tale evolved and changed around a basic plot as it traveled from place to place and journeyed through generations, in the same way storytelling and other art forms have evolved and changed over the millennia. First books then film brought the oral tradition of story into our media driven world yet the old ways remain as long as human beings use words to communicate. *"You'll never guess what ..."* or *"Did you hear about ...?"* are part of everyday life and those of us who practice the skills required will carry the storytelling torch to the level of any of today's performing arts. Just think about it and you'll realize that as we

recognize the various approaches to music – classical, folk, rock, jazz, etc., so we can identify genres in storytelling – classical, folk, ballad, cultural, historical, and so on. Styles vary from the casual to the formal and can include the ballad and theatrical monologue.

It is to be hoped that this preamble will start some thought and discussion as it is the lead in to a more comprehensive study designed to be sent out in monthly segments for criticism, suggestion, comment and/or general response so that the result, including skill requirements will be representative of our group.

If you are interested in receiving these segments please e-mail Micki at bumbleberry@sympatico.ca with your e-mail or postal address. Unfortunately mailed material will require a basic cost for postage. All who provide comments will be acknowledged in the final publication. Group workshops to examine this subject matter will also be available.

Micki Beck is a storyteller of some 55 years experience and has been a professional for 25 years. A mother, grandmother and, soon to be, great-grandmother, she has 30 years experience in education as a teacher and resource librarian. She claims to have 'told' in just about any venue you can think of from the haunted orchard to the theatre stage, her least favourite being the middle of a busy shopping centre and telling to a camera while taping in a TV studio. She is a trainer for Spellbinders of North America and presently serves as jury chair and coordinator for the TD/CCBC annual book week tours.



Storytelling: Find, Learn, Tell

Mary Hays

storymary@hotmail.com

FIND

Listen to the stories around you. The storyteller is the hunter and gatherer of the details that colour the fundamentals of life: birth, death, love, faith, dreams, courage...

Personal stories draw the listener into their lives and their relationships with others.

If you are developing a personal story or historical story - How will the story connect to other people? Why will they want to hear your story?

What **universal message** does it develop that all people can relate to?

Hunt and gather the details of personal and historical stories.

Keep a file of story ideas.

Map the story:

- ★ Where – setting
- ★ Who – characters
- ★ What – climatic events
- ★ Why – motivating factors
- ★ When – time frame
- ★ Keep it simple with a few key characters and straight forward, sequential time frame.
- ★ Develop a strong beginning and ending.

LEARN

- Think, remember, research.
- Visualize the details.
- Live the story in your imagination.
- Shape the story:
 - somebody, wanted, but, so
 - hook, line, and sinker
- Map the story to memory.
- Find your emotional connection to the story.

TELL

- Tell and retell the story out loud to three different audiences.
- Refine and polish the story.
- Keep the story spare and to the point.
- Is your language clear and concise?
- Is your vocal use interesting? Tell the story with direct eye contact.
- Do your gestures enhance the storytelling?
- Use the story to connect with the listener. Engage them in active listening - they will see the story in their own imagination.

Post - TALES 2011 Storytelling Retreat - Celebrate Cultural Connections

Mary Ann Lippiatt—Retreat Coordinator

lippiatt@mailhub.ca

The afterglow of the April 29 – May 1, 2011, storytelling retreat is a reflection of the gift exchange of personal sharing and discovery: a celebration of stories and cultural connections. For some it was an introduction, for others a total immersion, but for all it was an opportunity to experience diverse cultural and spiritual beliefs, points of view and the stories that bind us together to sustain us in our individual celebration of life.

Friday Welcoming Circle Celebrations began with a First Nations traditional smudge and prayers. Bringing this intentional focus to our thinking was Debbie Oostindie, an advocate for social justice and Métis educator currently instructing at the *Red Deer Aboriginal Centre for the Urban Aboriginal Integrated Training Program*. Debbie and her husband Ian, also an educator but of Dutch heritage, shared alternative points of view regarding Aboriginal perspectives including the story of, *The Moose People*. Yet another gift to us on our opening night was Debbie's student, Lyle Twohorns from the Siksika First Nation who shared his singing, drumming, personal stories and language. In closing, Debbie, Ian and Lyle invited all to join in a round dance in a circle of friendship.

With *food for thought*, evening snacks for sustenance and a keen kick off to the Silent Auction, our Friday night story circle celebrated an introduction of each person *giving place*. As the story stick was passed around, it quickly became a common agreement how much could be learned about someone just by them sharing their full name, their parents' names, where they are from, and the cultural connection to a favorite family food.

Before heading off to celebrate some dream-stories, each person selected a small rock or pebble. This symbol of *Grandfather Rock* was to be carried and considered throughout the weekend as one took time to walk and wonder outdoors, listening for the *stories that come to us*.

Saturday Celebrations greeted the day with Yoga lead by Karen Gummo, followed by a breakfast that was indicative of a weekend of feasting thanks to our Chef Chris! Not only did Chris meet every individual dietary restriction, he offered a great selection of choices.

Food is a vital social component of any celebration and Chris went above and beyond to prepare traditional foods in

keeping with our cultural connections theme.

Our morning presentation gifted us with Rocky Dumais and The Yellow Ribbon Dancers.

This group of 5 adults and one wee promising drummer brought a kaleidoscope of First Nations color and dance; vibrant singing; a whirl of energetic dancing feet and jingling bells; intricate dance moves depicting sacred animals; stories of personal experiences, family, customs, hunting and humor; the significance of dance regalia (outfits); explanations of cultural protocol; an opportunity to celebrate in a circle dance and perhaps most importantly, instructions for life from the Medicine Wheel. The rhythmic pulse of the drum brought us together and for those who continue to listen with an open mind, the resonating heart beat of our connection to each other will continue to be heard.

After an extended lunch of friendship, stew and traditional bannock, TALES President, Stephanie Bengler facilitated the TALES Membership meeting, which by all evaluation reports was interesting, inclusive and compact. We were able to celebrate the presence our very first TALES Youth Scholarship recipient, Jonathan Nelson. Jonathan is a graduate Library Technician, and promising storyteller currently under the mentorship of Mary Hays with TALES Calgary. A second celebration was a request of membership from a first-timer to TALES retreat, Diane Charles of New Sarepta, who joins TALES Strathcona. Welcome!

Mary Hays oversaw the initial brainstorming for and the conclusion of the small group discussions: TALES Website, the World Storytelling Day *Trees* theme and storytelling venues/networking. As



Kathy Jessup, Maria Hopkins, Mary Ann Lippiatt, Sylvia Hertling

discussion topics were based entirely upon participatory interest, thanks to the small group task masters who kept everyone involved in the enthusiastic dialogue on time!

Throughout the weekend we were gifted with the presence and participation of both Charma Cattleman and her mother Geraldine of the Montana First Nation. Charma with the help of her mother as translator recently completed a Library Information Technology project at SAIT on the Cree storytelling of her 88 year old grandmother. After a *time of choice* and a fabulous supper our group came together for the Saturday evening story circle. Charma, together with Jonathan, facilitated our story circle celebration and what a celebration of diverse stories it was! To welcome first timers yet accommodate the multilayered levels of storytellers, the telling of each individual was limited to five minutes. Not surprising then, was the comment that followed: *“What a wonderful inclusion and great mix of stories but I need more story sharing where we can have more than five minutes!”*

Sunday Celebrations began with Tai Chi lead my Mary Ann and a hearty Icelandic breakfast. Licking the last of the Icelandic pancakes and whipping cream from our lips we made our way back to our final presentation and gift from our very own Karen Gummo of Calgary.

Moving in free style to a recording of traditional singing and instrumental music to join in a circle dance, thus we began our journey back to the ancients of *Rotten Calf Skin: Sagas in the Icelandic Tradition*. Karen’s knowledge of the Icelandic culture and her extensive research and preparation to offer us both an introduction and summary of the cultural background and *Gettir’s Saga* was a huge undertaking! Undaunted by the task, Karen whet our appetites on word pronunciation, interpretation, singing songs and more dancing! Enticed with insights into the ancient text of outlaw and lover, power and struggle, tyrant and hero, we became captivated by the complexity and challenge of individual tellers joining in preparation for an epic weekend Icelandic saga.

Under Karen’s direction and the help of many, we look forward to the masterful performance of *Gettir’s Saga*, during TALES retreat May 4,5,6 - 2012.

Parting words: *A warm, welcoming, wonderful weekend with a creative approach with a moving First Nations component and an engaging Icelandic saga epic weekend introduction.*

Tell your own story and never be afraid to dance your dance!

TALES Retreat, 2011 Discussion Topics

1. 2012 World Storytelling Day Theme “Trees,” Recorded by Debbie Woiken

Ideas for using WSD theme - Trees:

- Encourage people to identify a tree of significance in their life and then to tell a story about it. Stories could be recorded by video, audio, or photograph for a photo contest.
- Work on a family tree and then tell stories about family members.
- Create an art sculpture exhibit - a tree formed from wood objects or wood instruments attached together. Also collect stories told about the objects and the people.
- Display of the art form of *birch bark biting*.
- Paper making or paper folding & an event with stories.
- Exhibit of what trees can offer for nourishment and healing, for example: use of sap, bark, berries, fruit, nuts, etc.
- Drama production of the story called *The Name of the Tree*.
- Music production with the use of wooden instruments and storytelling: harp, guitar, flute.
- Link with Storytellers of Canada, their logo is a tree.
- 2011 is the *International Year of the Forests*.
- Resource: Book – *Heritage Trees of Alberta*, and Website – *Our Roots*.

Types of stories to tell:

- Tribal stories or historical stories relating to totem poles or poles in the centre of a Sundance Lodge.
- Trees and magic - a portal to other worlds. Tree of Life.
- About trees in relationship to animals (shelter), people (hiding place for those escaping and offering protection) or products (ships, canoes, instruments).
- The World Ash Tree (Norse mythology).
- Story of the *Tree of the Forbidden Fruit* (apple or pomegranate).

Places that Tree stories can occur around WSD:

- Calgary area - Calgary Outdoor Centre, Calgary Zoo, Libraries, Memorial Forests, Science Centre, Olds College Horticultural Dept., Faculty of Forestry Dept. of University of Calgary, parks, garden centers, videoconferencing...

- Edmonton area - Faculty of Agriculture & Forestry at of University of Alberta, John Janzen Nature Centre, Edmonton Zoo, Elk Island National Park, Strathcona Wilderness Centre, parks...

Places or events for *Tree* storytelling to occur during 2012:

- Under the canopy of a large tree, any outdoor venue
- Story Cafes - an exchange of storytellers between cities of Calgary and Edmonton
- Festivals especially TALES Fort Edmonton Park Storytelling Festival Schools
- Libraries - Calgary Public Library celebrating 100 years in 2012
- Festival of Trees in Edmonton or Sherwood Park in Nov./Dec.
- Aboriginal Days celebrated in June
- 100 Anniversary of the Calgary Stampede in 2012

2. *What's Going On In the World and How Do Storytellers Fit*, Recorded by Serena Kaba
It quickly became clear that our original topics during the discussion time for this year's retreat were dissimilar enough that it took us a bit to organize and focus ourselves. We were trying to combine networking with ideas of where to take our stories.

We brainstormed a list of places where storytelling could be integrated in some fashion or another: business retreats or learning lunches, professional groups, schools, hospitals, hospices, extended care, children's wards, toastmasters, linking with reminiscence therapy facilitators, libraries, senior centres, and cemeteries. Museums and cultural centres were two other ideas where the telling of themed specific stories could be used. For example, telling aviation and war stories at the Aviation Museum. Telling cultural tales at new immigrant associations or newcomer societies was another idea. One idea that has worked in the past is to have storytellers of different nationalities telling tales of their culture in a shared venue like a café. Universities and colleges could also be approached; specific disciplines discussed were the Psychology and Elementary Education departments, but there are various areas to explore here. More ideas included conferences, as keynote speakers or for a workshop session, Raging Grannies, the group Bridges, children focused events or groups like La Leche League, cafes, mediators and lawyers, real estate agents, festivals, and Kaleidoscope Children's Literature Conference 2012. Partnering with musicians and other artists and art galleries was another area we began to explore.

Advertising packages were where we left off. It was suggested that an advertising package of what storytelling is and what it can offer may be very helpful. A general overview package might be a good addition to our TALES website.

In our wrap up, we felt that storytellers need to think outside the box and investigate the prospects that are there, out in the world. Like our stories, we need to grow and be dynamic and realize how valuable we can be beyond the typical classroom or concert settings. Whether they know it or not, there are many areas where people and groups could use us. We just need to figure out what we are willing to provide, see what those unsuspecting people and groups need, and find a way to sell ourselves to them!

3. TALES Website Recorded by Caroline Stuart and Sylvia Hertling

What a visitor to the website would need:

Information:

- Who – organization, members, listeners/audience
- What – events, names of storytellers – directory
- When – calendar, dates, entered on time
- Where – place
- Why – why tell stories, mission statement, resources, why attend TALES events, what you can hope to get out the organization and events
- Links – storytelling organizations, story sources

Concrete things:

- Storytelling tutorial
- Link to U-tube storytelling videos, make TALES Facebook channel
- Links to Facebook, twitter, U-tube, email, podcast
- TALES app

Design:

- Branding TALES
 - Plan for long term maintenance

What a TALES member would need:

- online bulletin board
- TALES chapter event listings – calendar of events
- opportunity to advertise personal storytelling events
- opportunity to sell storytelling merchandise and CDs through online shop
- ability to contact other members regarding stories, networking
- membership information
- directory - personal storytelling bio, contact info etc
- common forms: contracts, photo permission, FOIP statement, GIG group contracts
- event guidelines for house concerts, tellarounds, cafes, retreats
- online newsletter – google docs
- types of shared documents, facilities
- photo bank, video clips

Retreat Workshop Presentation by Rocky Dumais and the Yellow Ribbon Dancers

Anne Cowling

cowlinga@telus.net

"We will present a cultural experience and dance performance that will forever be in your memory. The story of the dance and the meanings of the dance will create a strong sense of cultural awareness and understanding. We will speak of the roles as a fire keeper and do a smudge ceremony with tobacco to teach the story of our value system as First Nations People."

This very powerful presentation was given by Rocky Dumais, who is the leader of the Yellow Ribbon Dancers. He is also a social worker who works with an outreach organization helping (usually) First Nation troubled teens.

Rocky opened the workshop by giving a summary of his history; how, as a young man, in an abyss of despair, he had, for many years, sought a teacher who could help him find wisdom and harmony in his life. Eventually he found such a teacher who not only shared her knowledge, but sent him on quests so that he could come to understanding on his own. He described to us some of the quests and the teaching he had learned.

He then showed us the Medicine Wheel, which is the core of their belief system. This Wheel contains four aspects:

1. Mountain

Mountains represent the Bones of the Earth. They teach us about Strength.

2. Trees

Trees represent the Lungs of the Earth. They teach us about Honesty. The belly button of the tree is found on its trunk. It represents the energy of the tree. One needs to find the belly button and connect to the energy of the tree.

3. Grass

Grass represents the Hair of the Earth. Grass teaches about Kindness. No matter what happens to grass, it comes back. No matter what happens to us, we always show kindness.

4. Animals

Animals represent the Flesh of the Earth. They teach us about Sharing, for an animal gives its flesh as the ultimate sacrifice.

Through the Medicine Wheel is the Sweet Grass path. Rocky then gave some examples from his life and his discoveries, and how his connection with the Earth and the understanding from the Medicine Wheel had guided him in his life.

He then discussed Dance and the meaning of Dance. The circle is an important part of the First Nation Culture. What happens in the circle stays in the circle. The purpose of Dance is for teaching, to tell stories, to celebrate an event, or to pay tribute to another person or their deeds. When Dances are performed for other groups, it is to create an awareness of culture, not to feature it.

The clothing a dancer wears is called a Spiritual Dress or sometimes an outfit, but *never* a costume. The dancer is involved in the design of the Spiritual Dress, or he makes his own. If someone else makes it, it is given by the maker to the Dancer. It has a personal, sacred meaning, and one should never touch a dancer's dress or ask the meaning of any aspects of it. The meaning is usually kept private, unless the dancer wishes to share it.

Rocky showed us the women's Jingle Dress. It is used for the Day of Healing Dance, traditionally danced by women. There are 365 Jingles on the Dress; one for each day of the year. This is an Ojibway tradition.

Similarly, the design of person's hair, jewellery and painting of face and body, also has meaning. Rocky shared with us that the Red paint on his face meant power. Black means the unknown. The design on his face represented a bear's claw, which meant Strength.

The drummer of the group shared some information about the drum. One may not play a drum unless the owner gives permission to do so. The four colours of the drum represent race, and all are welcome in a Circle. Designs often represent aspects of Mother Earth, and can vary from tribe to tribe. For instance, a triangle represents a mountain, and a square represents the prairie.

Women do not drum or carry weapons of hunting or war. These are men's tools. This is because women otherwise have much power in the tribe. They have the power to destroy with words. It would be wrong for them to take over the important things that belong to the men.

During the workshop, Rocky and the Yellow Ribbon Dancers performed dances at intervals, in illustration of his discussion. He also showed us how to do two simple circle dances.

GRETTIR'S SAGA - TALES Retreat Epic Storytelling - May 4 – 6, 2012

Karen Gummo, Artistic Director

karengummo@shaw.ca

Do you want to immerse yourself in an ancient text? Gain insights into another culture that has deeply influenced our literary arts? Form community with fellow storytellers to share a performance of an expansive story? Take this opportunity to participate in an epic weekend of Icelandic Saga.

Grettir's Saga is the tale of a mighty yet tragic Icelander loved by some and feared by many. A hero and a tyrant, we can find ourselves in his indomitable spirit.

This story summary and background is drawn from *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders*, General Editor Vidar Hreinsson, Copyright 1997 Leifur Eiriksson Reykjavik, Iceland, Translated from the Icelandic by Bernard Scudder:

"This saga, written in the 1400s, ranks with the depth and characterization of the classical 13th century tragic sagas. It is a fusion of the classical saga in style and highly varied content of diverse origins: folk tales, adventure motifs, (one showing close parallels with Beowulf), local tales from the Book of Settlements, ghost stories and slapstick comedy. This colourful tapestry forms the background to the portrayal of Grettir which stands out from other sagas for its psychological depth.

Grettir the Strong becomes an Outlaw - an outcast of Icelandic Society cast out into the world to find his way. Loved by his mother, he is misunderstood by his father. He is a great man physically, this brings him both power and struggle. When faced with combat, he comes out the victor every time until he nears his dying days. Repeatedly he is accused of violence toward others when he is most often acting in self-defense.

We see the character of Grettir which encompasses a hero, an outlaw, the peasant society's defender against outside threats, a picaresque rogue, a villain, an implied womanizer and a victim of fate whose only flaw is his fear of the dark....

This saga is a conscious literary composition by an unknown author which draws upon an entire tradition of writing and storytelling and points toward the modern novel.

No other saga hero has held such appeal to the Icelanders and is widely seen as personifying the national character. As the clergyman Matthias Jochumsson said around the end of the 19th Century, 'You Grettir are my nation.'"

What will TALES do with this saga?

We will divide the saga into segments and share the telling. We will prepare by reading, reflecting, dreaming, practicing and coaching each other. Together we will perform it at the TALES Retreat May 4 – 6, 2012.

We will sing, dance, feast and be immersed in this story of the human condition. We will invite listeners to come to the weekend at Sylvan Lake to absorb the story and the Icelandic culture. All are welcome.

How can you get involved?

Contact Karen Gummo of your interest in this story and plan to come and listen. Story segments are mostly spoken for by 20 storytellers.

Let Karen know if you would like to support the weekend celebration with your talents. This could include storytelling, dancing, music, food preparation and serving, decorations, sound system set up, promotion, etc. Gather May 4 – 6 for Grettir's Saga! For more information contact Artistic Director Karen Gummo karengummo@shaw.ca or Mary Hays storymary@hotmail.com

The Story of Grettir The Strong, by Allen French, Nabu Press

-Reproduction of a book published before 1923. Large print edition told a style suitable for older children (easy to understand and read). \$20.00, Paper Back available at Chapters On-line

The Story of Grettir The Strong, By William Morris, Bibliolife

Quality historical reproduction. Descriptive preface and complete indexes. \$21.00, Paper Back available at Chapters On-line



Karen Gummo

ANTICIPATING GRETTIR'S SAGA

Jennie Frost

mjfrost@shaw.ca

Why would I want to take part in the TALES project to present *Grettir's Saga*? It is a piece of literature I know absolutely nothing about from a long ago, foreign culture. What little I know about Iceland is a mixture of a vague recollection of Carol McGirr's stories heard at a Winnipeg solo concert and on her StorySave CD set, plus bits culled from a fantasy series set in the *North*. It amounts to a jumble (probably highly inaccurate) of sheep farming in rather inhospitable terrain, women spinning and weaving wool or cooking over smoky peat fires, plus impossibly macho men heading off on long sea voyages in search of booty. Hardly a sympathetic project, you'd think.

My very ignorance is one thing that draws me strongly to this project. I have learned through participation in six epic weekends that grappling with such strange material is a marvellous introduction to a new culture. The great epics are central to their societies. They are the stories everyone in the society knows in some fashion and venerates. They shape their people's values and beliefs. They do this because they are *stories*. They don't say *should*. They invite us to enter a world, meet new people, and get involved with those people through our minds and hearts. What is so valuable about an epic weekend is that we get the story complete. We accompany the hero through his whole journey, so we understand his end.

Tackling the big stories whole is usually too daunting for a single teller. Who has the kind of energy or time to take on a story that requires whole days to tell? Dividing the story among a group makes it doable. It also creates an amazing synergy—multiple imaginations and particular talents combine to give the story a life only the most highly talented and wholly immersed teller could achieve on her own. Then too, knowing I am part of a team and that the team needs my best effort is a useful prod to quit procrastinating and settle down to the necessary work.

Yes, preparing for an epic presentation is hard work. I have to start by reading the whole story so I see its general shape and why its central characters are

considered heroes or villains. I have to consider how my part fits in: is some important theme showing here? Does some apparently minor action have significant results later on? Is some important trait in my character(s) begun or developed here?

I usually start with simple versions—modern retellings for children or a general adult audience. That's where I fit, for now. Then I look for more scholarly versions—translations (more than one) of the texts by people fluent in both the original language and in English. I read all the explanatory notes and the translators' prefaces as an aid to understanding more about the culture or the significance of details in the text.

This process eats time and effort insatiably and is never quite enough. At some point I have to stop reading and put together my own version, and it has to keep to the time limit set by the artistic director. I make sure I know what comes immediately before and after my part, then craft my bit. Once I have the shape, emphasis, and length worked out, I work on language. Language shapes thought as much as thought shapes language. The more I can get a feel for the original language and what lifted the daily language into the realm of literature, the more, I hope, I can give my telling a flavour of the original, make it more authentic.

I have twice gone off to an epic weekend with my part well prepared but still wondering why I had bothered. The story hadn't especially grabbed me. It still felt foreign and unsympathetic. I didn't much like the characters or consider them especially heroic. Fortunately by then I had learned to have faith that *hearing* the whole would fix that. Indeed, every epic I've been a part of has come to life with the actual telling and swept me up into its magnificent adventures. We all know a good story can do that. Epics are still around because they are *really* good stories!

Helen Lavender Gets International Women's Day Award

Helen Lavender of Sherwood Park, received an International Women's Day Award on March 6 for her strong volunteer connection to the Strathcona Country Library. The award is given to women who have made a difference in their community as leaders in agriculture, industry, business, politics, and community service.

Congratulations to all who celebrated World Storytelling Day in March of 2011. We were flooded with events from across Alberta, Canada and worldwide. *Water* was the theme that linked us with each other and with storytellers all around the globe. There were tales of floods, sea monsters, drownings, gardeners, rivers, lakes, oceans and waterfalls, births, deaths, and countless events in between. Remember that the water theme was suggested by wise folks at our TALES retreat! Events were held at Outdoor Centres, Art Galleries, Libraries, Restaurants, Bookstores, in schools, churches, and local shops.

What's next?

Through an informal world-wide network of storytellers (that you are invited to join by signing up to the listserve storytellingday@pytte.net) the theme for 2012 has been chosen.

Vanessa Bower of Johannesburg South Africa suggested *TREES* and it was swiftly and heartily embraced by storytellers all around the globe.

Think about the Bodhi Tree where Buddha was enlightened, the three trees of Christ, Yggdrassil, the World Ash Tree that stands at the axis of Norse Mythology. The first schools were held under the shade of great trees. What about family trees? There is almost no end to the variety of stories that will flow from the theme and dream of Trees. Check out Debbie Woiken's summary of our brainstorming session from our TALES retreat. Take a look at the Storytellers of Canada logo and celebrate this connection!

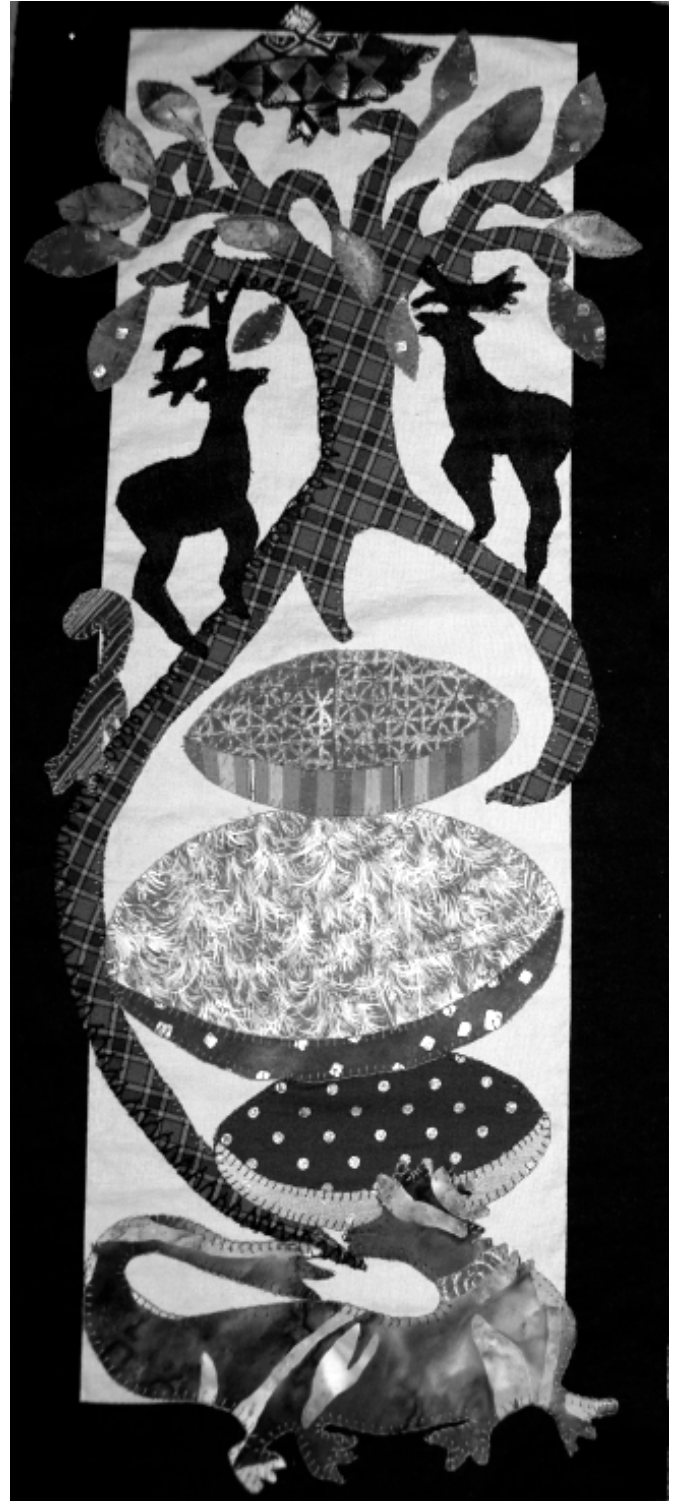


Roger Jenkins, a storyteller from Singapore has already noted that 2011 is the international year of forests. He has made a video featuring a small tree story. Ulf Arnstrom of Sweden is creating a tree film as well. Dale Jarvis of Newfoundland maintains the World Storytelling Day website. Check that out and see what you can add to it. Think about inviting schools, libraries and other arts groups to take part. This is a good way to spread the joy and power of storytelling.

My dream is that each of us will find our favourite tree and listen to it. Find the belly button as Rocky Dumais tells us. Discover the story of the *Tree*. Call upon someone to make a video recording of you telling your story under the tree. Help us post it somewhere! Be prepared to gather in March of 2012 to regale audiences with your tree stories. March 20th is the official day but all the days of March are fair game to create more events.

See if you can find the rest of this song!

Shaking the Tree, by Peter Gabriel and Youssou N'Dour
Souma Yergon, Sou Nou Yergon, We are shakin' the tree
Souma Yergon, Sou Nou Yergon, We are shakin' the tree



MIDNIGHT IN THE CEMETERY

Pearl-Ann Gooding

goodtell@telusplanet.net

The count down is on for the Third annual Midnight in the Cemetery in Wainwright, Alberta. I am really excited about this year's event as there will be some great additions.

The town of Wainwright is very supportive and for the first time I have been receiving donations to sponsor the tellers. I sent letters out to various businesses and organizations and they responded!! So far I have 3 tellers fully sponsored!! I am excited about this as it ensures that the tellers will receive the full payment for their performance no matter what the financial situation is – this is a big relief to me as I always want to make sure that talented artists are paid well.

Next on the list of firsts for the event is that I held auditions for a youth ghost storyteller and have selected a fantastic 17 year old young man. He is amazing and did a really dramatic and creepy story called 'The Barn' for his audition. He will open the event with a 5 minute story. This is so great as the event is a fund raiser for the SC-CC Youth Scholarship and it is very fitting to have a youth to open the event!

Sitting in the cemetery in the middle of the night, no matter what the day time conditions are, is COLD!! Each year I promise to chill and thrill people, and without fail, mother nature plays her part well. So this year the Wainwright Improv Team (W.I.T.) will be selling hot apple cider as a fund raiser for their group and a service to freezing audience members. This is going to be a fantastic addition.

My high school has recently bought a tremendous sound system that works for up to 8 hours without being plugged in. It has sound capacity of 400 people, so we should have some wonderful sound this year. Maybe not enough to drown out passing trains, we had a few during the show last year, but

good enough for great listening over the breeze, leaves mingling, cars passing on the nearby highway and squeaky lawn chairs.

Lastly and still up in the air waiting for confirmation are tent tops from the military base. Last year we had a huge rain storm and those without umbrellas got soaked. So I am hoping to secure the tent tops as well as the set up and take down of them. Military tent tops are huge, heavy and hard to put up. If they come in, then wahoo!!! This will be the greatest event ever.

I am so thrilled about it and hope to see some of the TALES Alberta members come out for a creepy evening that will leave you shivering in your beds and afraid to close your eyes for days!!! That should give you food for thought about how great the event is and what talented tellers we have right here in our own back yard!!!

So book your calendars now, find some friends to carpool with and plan to come.

Wainwright, Alberta
2 hours southeast of Edmonton on Hwy. 14

Saturday, July 2, 2011,
in the Wainwright Cemetery
3 km S. of Wainwright on Hwy 41,
where Hwys. #14 and #41 cross

At MIDNIGHT

\$20.00/ person

Arrive at 11:30 so that you can get a good seat – which by the way, you need to bring!

Bring a lawn chair, blanket, flashlight, and a buddy so you don't have to walk through the cemetery back to your car all by yourself after 2 hours of ghost stories.

See you there!

**2011 TALES AGM Conference Call
Sunday, October 16 from 4 – 5 PM**

Lend us your energy and good ideas that we might put the art of storytelling under the brightest spotlight yet!!

Please submit AGM reports to President Stephanie Benger by October 1.

Let Stephanie know if you would like to participate: sbenger@shaw.ca, 780-489-9621

At the time of the call follow these instructions to connect:

Edmonton and area – phone into the conference one minute before 4 PM at 780-421-1483 then dial access code 5762186#

Calgary and area – phone 403-232-0994 then dial access code 5762186#

If you have any problems dial '* 0' and ask for conference services.



COME AWAY...CD by Mary Hays and Voice Dance

You are invited to the CD Launch Concert on Saturday, November 19th at the TransCanada Theatre, Olds at 7:30 PM. Tickets \$15.00, CDs \$20.00. Information: Mary Hays storymary@hotmail.com

COME AWAY...Once Upon A Time Beckons... Come away on a magical journey, traveling with story, song and music. Mary Hays' heartfelt family stories, passed down for generations, provide a frame for her creative retelling of the ancient Celtic folktales. The tales continue to speak their universal wisdom. The storytelling journey is carried along with delightful music by *Voice Dance*, ranging from instrumental to a cappella; the joyful original composition *Anja's Not-So-Reel* carries the listener to the three-part vocal harmony of *Dulaman* sung in Traditional Gaelic.

Voice Dance is a group of three friends from Olds, Alberta. They enjoy singing a variety of music including classical, jazz, pop, folk, medieval, renaissance, and sacred. All three sing with the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus. Lorrie Lipski is an Orff music specialist, teaching singing, movement, and instrumental music in her MusiCreations Studio. Kate Chapman plays the piano and harp and has a keen interest in harmony and arranging music. Anja Hamel has a music teaching degree, plays a variety of instruments and composes music. The trio sings at special events in central Alberta. In July 2010 Voice Dance sang together in Eisenach, Germany. For information - anja.smil-e.hamel@hotmail.com

Mary Hays, from Olds, Alberta learned the art of storytelling as a child at the kitchen table. Steaming cups of coffee added fuel to her family's imagination as they told stories of growing up on the prairies in the 1930s. She has put her interest in stories to use as a teacher of storytelling and a performer. Her storytelling adventures have taken her across Canada, to Brazil and to London, England. Mary tells stories of her roots found in the folk tales of Sweden, Scotland and Ireland, family stories and stories of Alberta history.

The Canadian Children's Book Centre Creates New membership Level: Professional Creator

TORONTO, MARCH 30, 2011 — The Canadian Children's Book Centre is pleased to announce the creation of a new membership level. Effective immediately, Professional Creators, which the CCBC defines as published authors or illustrators as well as professional storytellers, will be offered a CCBC membership for the significantly discounted rate of \$35.00. CCBC board member and author Sharon Jennings explains the change: *"In our ongoing support of authors, illustrators, and storytellers, the Canadian Children's Book Centre wishes to make a statement in support of our 'creator' members and better allow them to benefit from the Centre's programming and resources."*

Members will continue to enjoy a one-year subscription to the quarterly magazine *Canadian Children's Book News* and a copy of *Best Books for Kids & Teens*, an annual selection guide. Members will also receive an invitation to the Annual General Meeting each June and invitations to special events hosted by the CCBC throughout the year.

Professional Creator members will benefit from a listing in the Canadian Children's Book Centre's Author, Illustrator, and Storyteller Directory.

Current general members who are published authors/illustrators will be able to renew their memberships at the discounted price when their current membership expires, but the CCBC is not able to retroactively discount memberships.

The Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1976. We are dedicated to encouraging, promoting and supporting the reading, writing, illustrating and publishing of Canadian books for young readers. Our programs, publications, and resources help teachers, librarians, booksellers and parents select the very best for young readers. For more information visit www.bookcentre.ca.

To apply to tour as a storyteller with CCBC, check out their website for more information. Also check with Jennie Frost who toured with CCBC this year.

The Show Must Go On! A True Story, with a Happy Ending

Anne Cowling

cowlinga@telus.net

About two years ago I joined an Anglican church choir. The full complement of our group consists of about 15 sopranos and altos, and 4 tenors and a bass, led by our revered choir master, Allan, who continually challenges us with some incredibly beautiful music. Our church, meanwhile, is a plain building, situated on the edge of a lovely park. The park is on a hillside, and populated at various times by energetic runners, dog-walkers, and adults and children playing in various ways. Generally speaking, there aren't any shady characters, but there is a regular visitor, who is a little different. He is out most days, wearing a backpack, wool hat, headphones, and revolving and rotating along the edge of the park, with his arms raised upwards. Sometimes he carries sticks and holds them aloft. A friend of my son's once asked him what he was doing, and apparently he is communicating with aliens. He is otherwise quite harmless, and apparently very happy, so that is good.

My choir practices are on Thursday at 7:15. Like many events in my life, I am usually racing in at the last moment. On the day of the story I had been happily walking on Nose Hill with a friend and her dogs. It had been a lovely day, too enjoyable perhaps, and now I was late.

I raced back home, threw some pizza at my teenagers, and looked ruefully at my clothes. They were *almost* all right – I was wearing the black turtleneck and dress pants I had worn to work – still OK, except for the set of muddy paw prints on my trousers that the dogs had left when they had walked over my lap in the car. Still, there was no time to change – but, with luck, the choir gown would cover them up. I jumped into the car and drove the two minutes over to the church. But, what were all these cars? The sign board had it: *Maundy Thursday Service, 7:30 PM All Welcome.*

Oh, help! I must be really late, for the practice is always much earlier when we have a service. I skidded into the choir room and grabbed my music and my gown. I like our gowns. They are a discreet burgundy and can cover a multitude of sins...

I charged up the stairs to the practice room, slowed my pace down to decorum and entered the room. I was in luck. They had just finished practising the easy hymns, and were about to start the more complicated *Pie Jesu*. Ilona would be the soloist. She was one of the few sopranos that can nail that top A. Ilona doesn't normally sing with us, and there were several extra sopranos singing with

us during Easter week. That turned out to be a good thing that night.

With about five minutes to go, the door opened and in came Jack and Geraldine. Jack is 81. He has a military background and is a strict disciplinarian, especially regarding dress and protocol. Above all, no matter what happens, *The Show must go on!*

I am often in trouble with Jack. There are times my cross is awry or my collar tucked in, and then there was that dreadful day when I wore my Remembrance Poppy on the right hand side...

It was odd that they were late. Jack is never late, unless he is busy on other Church matters, which would be unusual that night. He also looked rather pale. There was no time to think about that. We had finished our practice, and were heading down to the church to begin our Processional Hymn.

The Maundy Thursday Service is one of the most moving in the Christian year. It is a re-enactment of the night of the Last Supper, where Jesus washes the feet of His disciples in an act of humility must have been very puzzling to His disciples. They then celebrated the Passover, and had a supper of Bread and Wine. As Jesus broke the bread and poured the wine, He made more puzzling comments about it being His body and blood in sacrifice. Then later, while the disciples were sleeping, He walked in the Garden of Gethsemane, was arrested by soldiers and taken away.

The Maundy Thursday Service re-enacts all this. Firstly there is the foot-washing, where the senior priest washes the feet of the junior priest, and then the junior priest washes the feet of any in the congregation who come forward. Then the Communion is celebrated, which is really a re-enactment of the Last Supper. Finally the choir processes to the back of the church, the church is stripped of adornments, in darkness, and two choir members sing what might have been Jesus' thoughts as He was naked, in desolation and alone: *I called for you, and you did not answer* and the choir responds *My God, my God, why has Thou Forsaken me?* Then all leave the dark church, in silence. It is a very powerful and moving experience.

We were soon underway. We had processed down the aisle to the choir stalls *Praise to the Holiest in the Height*.... I was seated between Anneliese, an irrepressible post-teen, and Jocelyn, a cheerful, plump, red-haired soprano who had come to help out, and whom I didn't know well. It wasn't long

before we were singing the Psalm, with Shirley as Cantor. The Cantor's job is challenging. She is given the lead note, and then has to sing the rest of the verse without accompaniment, relying on one's music and one's memory. The choir and organ join in the refrain. It was good we had Shirley. She is a former member of the Calgary Opera, very professional, and can nail the notes, no matter what happens.

So we were rolling along. Shirley had now completed two verses, effortlessly, with us joining in the refrain. It was then that I looked to the back of the church. There was something unusual. There was a man standing just inside the door to the side aisle. Headphones, backpack, jacket, and he was wearing two brilliant aqua-blue gloves. No sticks. I recognised him – he was our friend from the park.

I froze. Where was our usher? I knew the man was generally harmless, and we say, "*All are Welcome*". But was it appropriate to communicate with Aliens during a Christian Service? What if one were to turn up? Then what?

He had now started to rotate. He rotated up the aisle, his hands held high. About two-thirds of the way up, he stopped moving forward and just rotated on the spot. I looked desperately for our usher. Then I saw him. He was by the door of the centre aisle. Had he seen the man?

Meanwhile, thank goodness we had Shirley. She was cruising through, solid as a rock, nailing every note. We choir kept our end up with the refrain: *I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord*. For, of course, the show must go on...

Then I saw our usher again. He had entered through the side aisle door. He moved up the aisle. Our rotating friend saw him, and gave a beatific smile, and started to locomote again. He revolved up the aisle, across past the front pew, and down the centre aisle. After that - we didn't know. We did not see him again that night.

We breathed a collective sigh. Shirley triumphantly finished the last two verses of the Psalm, with us following in her wake. We had kept the show on the road – for the moment.

The priest launched into sermon, and then the foot-washing ceremony began. The preliminary readings and liturgy. The priest's feet were washed, and the junior priest turned to the congregation and invited any to come up who wish...

Then – womp! Jack had gone over. A little scuffle, then Greg reached over and cradled Jack's head on his lap. A woman in grey glided up from the congregation to his side.

"Don't worry," said Anneliese, cheerfully, *"he's always doing that. He has fluctuating blood pressure. Fran's an R.N. Jack will kill us if we interrupt the service. Keep singing."*

So we sang. The congregation came up for their foot-washing, as did some of the choir. Greg propped up Jack, who was as white as a sheet. He wasn't singing, and neither was Greg. The woman in grey slipped back to her pew.

Then we began the Communion:

We have erred and strayed in our ways like lost sheep...

Then – womp! Jack had gone over, again. This time it was really scary. His eyes rolled back in his head, then closed. He was totally unconscious. The woman in grey glided up. We sopranos in the front row squiggled along to let Geraldine out. Jocelyn went over, too, and so did Ilona. There was a hurried whispering. Ilona was dialling 911.

We were now down 2 tenors and 4 sopranos.

I moved uneasily in my seat. With all the competent people around, there was nothing more I could add, but it was awful to be so helpless. Surely there was something I could do...

"Don't worry," said Anneliese, calmly. *"Jocelyn's an emergency room nurse. Jack would be so embarrassed if we interrupted the service. Keep singing. We have to keep the show on the road."*

The priest was intoning the Absolution. There was no singing at that moment. My heart plummeted and some tears slid from my eyes. Jack could well be dying, or suffering a very severe heart attack or stroke. There was nothing I could do – not even sing. Then, maybe there was. I dropped to my knees and began to pray. I felt Anneliese go down, and then little thumps as the rest of the choir behind me went down too. A minute or two later, our priest casually walked part way down the centre aisle, and led the congregation in prayer, *"Let us pray for Jack, that he gets the help that he needs..."*

We continued with the liturgy. It was the sharing of the Peace of Christ. We hugged each other. Jack had regained consciousness, just. We glided in a loop past Jack, like little burgundy angels, and squeezed his hand, in turn. *"Peace be with you, peace be with you, peace be with you..."*

It was now the Offertory hymn. We sang our way through it. A quiet moment as the gifts were blessed and transferred. The waiting seemed interminable. *"Where are the paramedics?"* I growled to Anneliese.

"Oh, don't worry; we've only called them five minutes ago. They'll be along soon. Keep singing." I

looked at her suspiciously, but her eyes were raised heavenwards, in all innocence.

We were now into the Sanctus: *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts...* and the aisle door swung open. The paramedics had arrived! They rolled up the aisle with their stretcher and were soon at work with their oxygen and instruments.

Oh Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the World... we sang. Without a word, the priests quietly moved up to the front steps, and took up their positions with the Bread and the Wine. Jack and his paramedics had taken over the Sanctuary, where we would normally receive Communion.

It was the choir's turn first. We little burgundy angels flowed around for our Communion, and flowed back to our choir stalls. Then we began to sing the Communion Hymn. Jack and his paramedics rolled away down the aisle. Jocelyn came back to her place.

"Don't worry," she said, cheerfully. *"He'll be all right! I checked his vitals, and they're OK."*

I felt like crying with relief. But we could not stop. It was time for the *Pie Jesu*. Ilona moved out and began, her beautiful, clear soprano soaring to the rafters, and us below, the most beautiful *Pie Jesu* we had ever done. We then processed to the back, and the ceremony of the stripping of the Altar began, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*. We left the church, in silence, in darkness,

exhaustion - and relief. We had given our all to maintain the sanctity of the service, a beautiful spiritual experience. We had kept the show on the road.

In the hall, Anneliese was tugging on her jacket. *"I'm going to home to phone Dad and Sheri,"* she said cheerfully. *"I might just get there in time if I hurry. They'll never forgive me if I don't tell them about this!"*

Easter Sunday dawned bright and beautiful, with a clear blue sky. I arrived at our choir rehearsal, on time for once. The music for Easter Sunday is quite different, very rousing: *Christ the Lord is risen today-ay!* We were stood in position in the practice room, waiting for Allan to start playing. Then, suddenly, came a loud, confident, stentorian voice, a man's voice:

Hello, everybody! So sorry I disrupted the service the other night!" It was Jack – ruddy-cheeked, with a huge grin. The sight of him hit me with a wallop, like seeing a very vibrant ghost. He gave another grin. *Thank you, everyone, thank you. So glad you managed to keep the show on the road!"*



Coal in the Valley – Drumheller Miner Photographs and Stories by Lawrence Christmas

Submitted by Sandra Follett of Cambria Publishing

Coal in the Valley by Lawrence Christmas celebrates lives of Drumheller Valley coal miners.

Duotone portraits and personal stories capture miners' pride and love for coal mining when 'Coal was King.'

Excerpt from Coal in the Valley:

"I was born in 1917 in Wayne. When I was laid off at the railroad, I got a job in a little gopher-hole mine at Ward's Lane, loading coal in a boxcar. I was 17. I ran a duckbill loader in the mine and always on the graveyard shift. They kept switching me around from crew to crew on the graveyard. Still, I think coal mining is one of the best damn jobs a guy can get. I liked it."

Pete Ludwig, Rosedale

Lawrence Christmas is a well-known portrait photographer and a respected Canadian mining historian. He loves to tell stories through pictures and words. His latest book, *Coal in the Valley – Drumheller Miner Photographs and Stories*, pays tribute to the coal miners and their families that made the Drumheller Valley their home. *Coal in the Valley* is a collection of 95 duotone portraits and personal miner stories that Christmas painstakingly gathered over a 30-year period.

"I think Coal in the Valley documents an important period in Alberta's past when coal was king. The Europeans that migrated to the Drumheller Valley beginning in the 1920s were hard working people who took great pride in their work, their families and their communities. I have attempted to capture their spirit through my portraits and by sharing their personal stories."

Coal in the Valley is Lawrence's fifth book that documents mining in Canada. It features the mining communities of East Coulee, Lehigh, Cambria, Wayne, Aerial, Rosedale, Bankview, Drumheller, North Drumheller, Midlandvale, Newcastle and Nacmine.

The official launch of the new book was held in Drumheller on May 1.

Coal in the Valley – Drumheller Miner Photographs and Stories can be bought at www.cambriapublishing.com, Chapters, Atlas Coal Mine and Drumheller Mail. Retail: \$34.99

About Lawrence Christmas – TALES Calgary member

Although he wears multiple hats, Lawrence Christmas is best known as an accomplished portrait photographer and one of Canada's most respected mining historians. Born in Alberta, he has divided his time between Cambria, (a former Drumheller Valley mining town) and Calgary. For more than three decades, he has explored the culture of Canadian miners through his environmental portraits and

thoughtful stories about their lives. He has written and published numerous books, including *Canmore Miners*, *CoalDust Grins* and *Alberta Miners*, and co-wrote/produced a music CD of original songs about Canadian miners. Christmas was awarded a fellowship in the Canadian Institute of Mining (CIM) and was made a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts for his contribution to the arts through documentary

photography. His photographs are displayed in various collections across Canada.

www.cambriapublishing.com

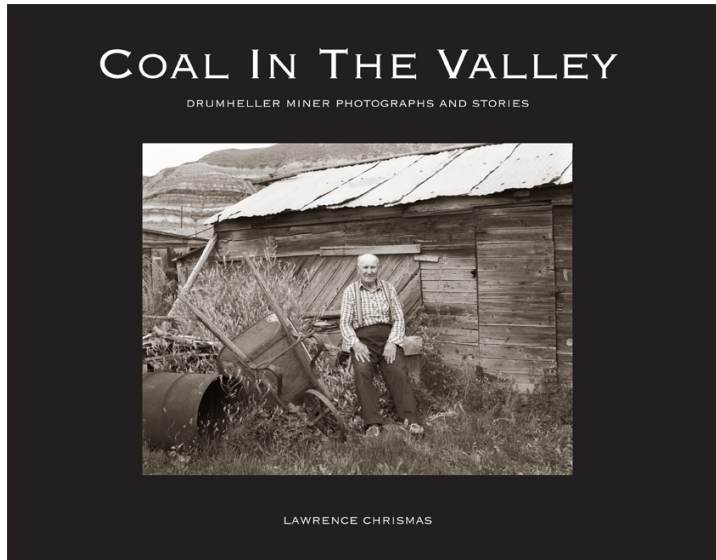
About The Drumheller Valley Mining Centennial

The Drumheller Valley Mining Centennial is a community wide celebration of Drumheller history. With over 27 partners and dozens of volunteers, the centennial is championed by Atlas Coal Mine National Historic Site. www.drumhellermining100.com www.atlascoalmine.ab.ca

Please join us for author talk(stories) and wine and cheese

Friday June 10, 2011 at 7:30 PM
At

PAGES ON KENSINGTON
1135 Kensington Rd. NW, Calgary



K. Sean Buvala, TALES Fort Edmonton Storytelling Festival Presenter

"Sean promised me that when he was finished with the day, our people would have practical skills to begin their own story telling. Sean was right. Not only did he give folks practical strategies for forming stories he captivated and inspired us all with stories of his own."

-Christopher Ashby, Baltimore

Sean describes the collection of stories in his head as *life and legend*, representing the mix of stories from his experiences, myth and legend from many cultures, sacred stories and observations of shared life events.

As a storyteller, Sean primarily works with teens and adults, However, schools and libraries use him all the time for younger children. He describes his style as somewhere between "in your life and in your face" depending on the needs of the group he's telling to/with at any given gathering. Sean recognizes the ability of story to change the lives of the listeners, as he see stories change his own life as a teller.

Sean has been presenting and storytelling on the road since 1985. He's traveled to perform and present workshops in dozens of states and to hundreds of organizations in those states. His audiences have ranged from just few people gathered in a living room to several thousand teens and adults. Both national organizations and local groups have experienced Sean as a teller and workshop leader. You'll find audio and video examples all throughout this site at seantells.com.

Sean's experience also involves training and design for the telecommunication and hospitality industry. He's done customer service instruction/team development for companies ranging from government, to faith based organizations to major corporations.

He's an author, a recording artist and trainer. Along with his own programs, he's been a featured presenter for companies such as Group workshops and the Social Story Conference, the South Mountain Community College Storytelling Institute and more.

For more information on Sean go to:

<http://www.storyteller.net/tellers/sbuvala>



A Note From the Editors:

You may have noticed that the newsletter format has some subtle changes, or you may not. If you haven't, that's good because we would like the layout of the information to disappear.

We want the reading to be easy and simple on the page.

If you have anything you would like to say about the way the newsletter is laid out and presented on the page you can send your notes to:

Gord Churchill gchurchi@telus.net

or

Mary Hays storymary@hotmail.com

TALEteller is a publication of The Alberta League for the Encouragement of Storytelling. It is published three times a year and is sent to all members of TALES. Copies are available from Mary Hays or Anne Cowling. All material is free to be duplicated for the promotion of story telling in Alberta, but may not be changed or repurposed in any other form.

The deadline for submissions for the next TALEteller is November 3rd, 2011.

Local Chapters are allocated two pages. *Each Chapter is asked to Please Provide:*

- Teller profile
- Chapter report
- A story to tell

Members are invited to submit 1 page articles for Mastering the Srt of Storytelling.

Each Member is asked to please provide:

- Title and author. If taken from another source, please provide proper citation for the source.
- Submit as an attachment in ARIAL, 11 point
- Single spaced, left aligned, no formatting, left justified.

Submit to Mary Hays
storymary@hotmail.com 403.556.2818

Members, this is your newsletter. Please take time to submit your reports, events and articles!

PLEASE FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES!

TALES Executive

President

Stephanie Bengler sbenger@shaw.ca

Past President

Karen Gummo karengummo@shaw.ca

Vice President

Mary Ann Lippiatt lippiatt@mailhub.ca

Treasurer, Membership

Anne Cowling cowlinga@telus.net

Secretary

Cathie Kernaghan cathie.kernaghan@gmail.com

Calgary

Cassy Welbum catherine_welbum@hotmail.com

Edmonton

Kate Quinn, Renee Englot talesedmonton@hotmail.com

Strathcona

Jennifer Kennedy, Laura O'Connor hlavende@telusplanet.net

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Pearl-Ann Gooding, Dawn Blue,

Debbie Woiken, Maria Hopkins, Kathy Jessup,

Caroline Stuart, Helen Lavender, Joanne Meknara,

Marie Anne McLean Festival Rep. talesedmonton@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Mary Hays storymary@hotmail.com

Gord Churchill gchurchi@telus.net

TALES maintains a website.

www.talesstorytelling.com

Information about:

Chapters, Storytellers, Events, Festivals, Gifts and Membership forms.

TALES-*The Alberta League Encouraging Storytelling* has operated since 1982 as a nonprofit organization promoting the tradition of oral storytelling. We are storytellers, story listeners, writers, interpreters, speakers, entrepreneurs, teachers, curators, librarians, ministers, educators, and parents, anyone who celebrates the art of storytelling! The focus of our work as an organization is to advance education by raising the aesthetic taste of the community through public performances, presentations and workshops in the art of storytelling.

Return Address of Sender:
The Alberta League Encouraging Storytelling
2308-34th Ave. NW,
Calgary, AB. T2L 0V2

Stamp

Addressed to