



LE RACONTEUR

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

*Kathy Bennett and
Judith Benninger,
Saskatoon SK*

Well, now we've done it!!! Almost immediately after Judith and I sent our resignations to the SC-CC Board, my computer "crashed", burying two or three really interesting articles that I wanted to include in the "last" issue of *Le Raconteur* for which Judith and I will be Editors.

To those of you who DO NOT see your articles in this issue, please accept my abject apology! This is truly due to circumstances beyond my control. I will be more than happy to hand these articles over to the new Editor(s) when they are recovered.

Judith and I agree that it has been a great deal of fun working on *Le Raconteur* as co-editors over the past few years. We also agree that it is time for fresh editorial ideas. We hope the next Editor(s) will have as much fun as we did.

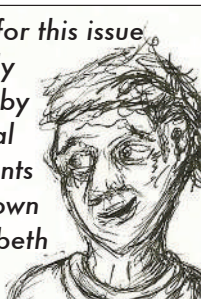
Thank you to everyone who has contributed to *Le Raconteur* during our years as editors. Your support has been much appreciated and truly amazing.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you!

*Kathy Bennett and
Judith Benninger
Editors*



Art work for this issue
generously
provided by
UVic visual
arts students
Fraser Brown
and Elizabeth
Charters.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jennifer Ferris

Dear Members of SC-CC,
Our membership is growing. As of March 31 we have 226 members (50 new), including 19 groups (5 new). Part of our success can be attributed to the hard work of our Human Resources Office, Pearl-Ann Gooding, and Mary Gavan, who contacts lapsed members. Who doesn't want to receive a friendly reminder that we are important to Storytellers of Canada – *Conteurs du Canada*? Our increase in new members can also be attributed in part to the success of the Montreal Conference and our partnership with *Regroupement du conte au Quebec*. The organizing committee of that conference worked hard to introduce Quebecois tellers to SC-CC.

The positive response to conferences show the importance of the annual conference both for individual members and for the health of SC-CC. We are looking forward to this year's event in Ottawa, Tell me Everything! Conte-moi tout! July 4-7 www.scccconference.ca and are very excited about the prospect of holding the 2014 conference in Summerside, P.E.I. However, we need a venue for the 2015 conference.

It is very important that someone step forward to host the 2015 SC-CC conference. It is just over 2 years away and from personal experience I know that 2 years is needed to organize a conference. Please give this serious consideration and contact me at scccpres@gmail.com, or Phil Nagy at scccvpres@gmail.com.



please see page 2. Rapport en français, s.v.p. voir page 2

This is the time of the year when we look for enthusiastic members to consider volunteering for SC-CC. The vacant positions include:

- Vice President (leading to one year as president and one year past president)
- Projects Officer
- Co-editors of *Le Raconteur*

I would like to thank *Le Raconteur* co-editors, Kathy Bennett and Judith Benninger, for all the work that they have done on *Le Raconteur* over the past few years.

With the prospect of a new web site, new funding for professional development and our expansion of international contacts, this is an exciting time to be part of SC-CC

Best wishes,

Jennifer Ferris
Victoria BC

LE RAPPORT DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

Jennifer Ferris

Chers Membres du SC-CC,

Le nombre de nos membres est en train de croître. En comptant à partir du 31 mars, nous avons 226 adhérents (50 nouveaux), dont 19 groupes (5 nouveaux). Une partie de notre succès peut être attribuée au dur travail de notre Bureau des Ressources Humaines, constitué de Pearl-Ann Gooding et Mary Gavan qui prennent contact avec les membres dont l'adhésion a expiré. Qui ne veut pas recevoir un gentil rappel que nous comptons pour les Conteurs du Canada - Storytellers of Canada?

L'accroissement des nouveaux adhérents peut également être attribué en partie au succès de la Conférence de Montréal et à notre partenariat avec Regroupement du conte au Québec. Le comité chargé de l'organisation de cette conférence a travaillé dur pour in-

troduire les conteurs québécois au SC-CC.

Le retour positif des conférences montre l'importance de la conférence annuelle à la fois pour les membres individuels et pour le bien du SC-CC. Nous avons hâte d'être à la conférence de cette année à Ottawa, Tell me Everything! Conte-moi tout! 4-7 juillet www.scccconferenc.ca et nous ne voyons pas l'heure de la conférence de 2014 à Summerside, P.E.I. Cependant nous avons besoin d'un lieu pour la conférence de 2015. Il est essentiel que quelqu'un se manifeste pour accueillir la conférence SC-CC de 2015. Par expérience, je sais qu'il faut 2 ans pour organiser une telle conférence. Veuillez sérieusement considérer cela et contacter soit moi scccpres@gmail.com soit Phil Nagy scccvpres@gmail.com

C'est le moment de l'année où nous cherchons des membres enthousiastes pour se porter volontaires et aider la SC-CC. Les postes suivants sont disponibles :

- Vice Président (en lice pour devenir président un an et ex-président un an)
- Membre du Bureau des Projets/Projects Officer
- Co-éditeurs du *Raconteur*

J'aimerais remercier les co-éditeurs du *Raconteur*, Kathy Bennett et Judith Benninger, pour tout le travail qu'elles ont fourni pour le *Raconteur* au fil des dernières années.

Avec la perspective d'un nouveau site web, de nouveau financement pour le développement professionnel et l'expansion de nos contacts internationaux, font que c'est un moment passionnant pour faire partie du SC-CC.

Mes meilleurs vœux,

Jennifer Ferris
Victoria BC



Escalier à l'Université Saint-Paul,
le site de la conférence 2013

TELL ME EVERYTHING! CONTE-MOI TOUT!

*SC-CC Annual Conference, Ottawa
July 4 to July 7, 2013*

Bytown of the 1840s was a wild and lawless place, as dangerous as any town on the entire continent. It wasn't safe to walk down many streets in those days. An Irish gang was waging a constant war against French labourers, and Mother McGinty, with "arms as big as a man's thighs", was sending men reeling in her infamous tavern in Lowertown. In the middle of all this, Saint Paul University was founded. Nine years later, the city, at that point called Ottawa, was picked by Queen Victoria to be Canada's capital.



Saint Paul University

Things have changed a bit since then, but the beautiful Saint Paul University, still standing on the banks of the Rideau River, will be the site of the 2013 SC-CC Annual Conference in July – a week filled with stories, history, music – and even the history of the music – the blues, that is.

Our Saturday night concert will be all about the blues. The show will feature Maria Hawkins, co-creator of the Ottawa Blues Society and the W.C. Handy Award-winning program, "Blues in the Schools". Maria and her band will take us via story and song from the blues roots in Zulu Africa, to the slave ships, to America, then to

Canada, and finally to right here in Ottawa. "We will sing it together," she says, "a piece of history all tied through music, as it should be". Her family history goes back to her Mi'kmaq grandmother on one side and to the time of Queen Elizabeth I and the English slave trade on her father's side. Winner of many awards, including a 2013 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal, she is a champion of the underdog with her very popular "Stop the Bullying!" presentation to school groups. She says what makes a true blues musician is that "they must be willing to give it all away", and she'll do just that on Saturday night.

Also featured in the program that night are internationally acclaimed storyteller and author, Cathy Miyata, and Quebec's Danièle Vallée (now living in Ottawa), who, with musician/husband,

please see page 4



Maria Hawkins

**Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada
Annual Conference/Conférence annuelle
July 4-7 juillet, Ottawa**

**Tell me everything/
Conte-moi tout!**

**Information & inscription/registration: www.scccconference.ca
613-789-7032**



**Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada
Conference 2013
Tell Me Everything/
Conte-moi tout!**

Saint Paul University, 223 Main Street, Ottawa
July 3 - Evening Story Slam
Conference July 4 - 7, 2013

Why you should attend...

Canada's storytelling community is gathering in Ottawa this summer. This is an exciting opportunity to learn from experts; hear some first-rate storytelling; become better acquainted with Ottawa's history; mix and mingle with performers from across the country; and become part of a national network!

What you don't want to miss...

- Barbecue and tent show at the Billings Estate National Historic Site
- A storytelling concert presenting the blues in story and song to coincide with Bluesfest
- Historical stories at various Ottawa sites, including Aboriginal stories on Victoria Island
- Workshops and panel discussions
- A story slam and a story swap
- ... and much more!

For details, go to www.scccconference.ca

Jean Cloutier (saxophone, flute, bass, percussions, even a hand saw!) will dazzle with a powerful, touching, and funny original piece that weaves together story and instrumentation.

But of course that is only one night of a great line-up of programming. There are free tours of the city, both on foot or vehicle; there are visits to historical sites; there is an evening tent storytelling/variety show (with food and beer) set in July 1927, Canada's Diamond Jubilee year, complete with flappers, a vaudeville comedian, and, of course, the ladies from the WCTU..., a great chance to get ideas on how you could collaborate with a museum in your town. We have workshops, working groups, and even some free professional photo sessions if you need new pics for your promo material. For more options go to our website, www.scccconference.ca. Accommodations at Saint Paul are as inexpensive as \$25 per night (shared).

So what are you waiting for? Ottawa, July 4-7, is where it's happening. Those who arrive early enough can enjoy the pre-conference Slam on Wednesday night. And don't worry -since it's summer,

you won't likely bump into any politicians! If you have some extra time, the city is alive with music and entertainment. If the Bluesfest is not your cup of, well, bourbon, you could try classical music's "Music and Beyond", also on all week.

Great friends, great stories, great shows, a great opportunity to talk and learn about new directions in storytelling. A great holiday! Really, is there any place you'd rather be?



Cathy Miyata



Jean Cloutier, Danièle Vallée

Patrick Holloway, Ottawa

BRITISH COLUMBIA REPORT

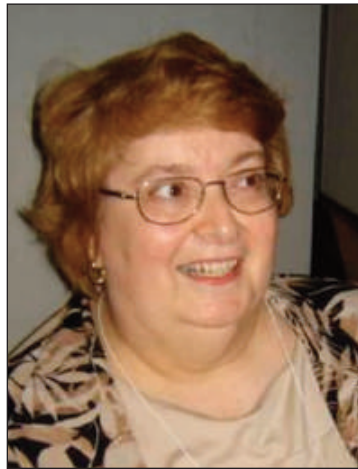
Melanie Ray

FROM MARVA BLACKMORE
IN PARKSVILLE

A new storytelling series in the Oceanside area on Vancouver Island (Parksville-Qualicum Beach) has opened with resounding success. Over 50 people attended a concert featuring tales of Fortune and Fate. Sponsored by the Oceanside Community Arts Council, it will be a regular monthly feature until May and will recommence in September. Organized and hosted by Marva Blackmore, this is a programmed event featuring tellers both local and from "away."

FROM KIRA VAN DEUSEN
OF VANCOUVER, WHILE
TRAVELLING IN MARCH AND APRIL

I'm leaving on Friday for my little tour [Central Canada and U.S.]. I'm finally getting excited! I'll touch so many parts of my life, including some friends, my love from the 60s, my step-sister and her husband, plus the gang in Ottawa and Toronto. I'm telling my two stories five times, as well as a couple of classes at my own high school and a



Siberian program at, believe it or not, a Russian icon museum.

An Iranian woman has just moved to Ottawa who tells Shah-nameh in the traditional way, which is highly dramatic. I wish there would be a time to hear her, but at least we will meet. Her English seems to be on a par with my Farsi, so it'll be quite a transition for her being in Canada.

Kira also spoke of the Vancouver Society of Storytelling's annual business meeting: "It was a super AGM. I found it all very inspiring! All those good ideas and good energy." See elsewhere for Naomi Steinberg's report on same.

FROM MELANIE RAY
IN VANCOUVER

Lately I did a series of storytelling sessions at a large seniors' nursing home. A long bus ride, and a lot of reports, but the work itself was wonderful. I was expected to tell and encourage their own stories. As one of the tellers in Myths and Memories, I've known first-hand how good participation in telling and listening is for the elderly, especially when it is regular and longterm.

But at this institution, storytelling was new. I was not sure if eight weeks was long enough. Here is one example of how it worked: a certain woman, noted during my first eight weeks there for having nothing to say, not only broke her silence in the second set of sessions with a personal story using a mic like a pro, but subsequently led us in singing "Bicycle Built for Two," complimented the fellow next to her on his singing voice, and another time joked with us all about why she had no stories to tell of getting into trouble when a child.

She had relaxed within the group, and with me, through nothing more than listening to stories, for just eight weeks plus one.





FROM GABRIEL NEWMAN
IN VERNON

A recent trend here in the North Okanagan has been combining food and storytelling. Local non-profits have been having literacy days and "turn off the screen" events where food is served and storytellers present over a bowl of soup in one case, and share stories at a giant community family supper table at another. Local arts organizations, health depart-

ments, literacy groups, early childhood representatives and our very involved science centre have been spearheading these events. Professional storytellers such as myself are brought in to tell stories but to also facilitate and encourage participants to tell stories around the dinner table.

FROM FAYE MOGENSEN
OF VICTORIA, WHILE TRAVELLING

Here I am in a small apartment in Istanbul, exchanging stories with my two daughters who I haven't seen for months. We're having a two-week adventure together.

When back at home, I very much enjoy telling stories on a once or twice monthly basis to the congregation at First Unitarian Church in Victoria. Because they know me well, they are very much ready to chime in on a refrain, laugh or cry or even be completely silent with me for a moment if the story calls for it. My repertoire and editing skills are constantly challenged by the need to find stories on unusual topics and keep them brief. Last month



was easy with a spring celebration - I told a favorite Danish Tale, "The Farmyard Elf." The next one I'm puzzling on is timelessness and the multiverse - I look forward to what emerges!

FROM SHOSHONA LITTMAN
IN VICTORIA

There was great participation during my second World Storytelling Day at the Esquimalt Library near Victoria. This was 5-8 year olds mostly. Two families came from a local school where I had told stories, and brought siblings. One family helped count in Mandarin for an action song that I made up. There was one kibitzer (Yiddish: 'joker') in the group but I managed to keep him focused, though I need to remember not to look at kibitzers so much when they get too silly.

The librarian who organized the event provided great rhythm instruments for the children to play during Diane Wolkstein's lively Haitian story, "The Banza," which I dedicated to her awesome memory. (Diane, a major storytelling pioneer, died in Taiwan this year as many of you may know.) Reminding the children to let their instruments sleep on the floor between songs worked very well.

Lots of kids said they played instruments at home during the introduction to my story, "Frida's Flute." There were plenty of violinists and pianists, most of whom said they enjoyed playing. Some kids even said they loved homework too, though a few could relate to Frida who did not. Some were amazed to hear that Frida had trouble learning to read.

The only down side to the day was that I forgot my dancing shoes at the library and broke my umbrella in the wind on the way, but other than that the experience felt successful. The room was packed; parents said they enjoyed it too. The librarian said she'd like me to do this every year - "...the stories were so much fun [which is] nice in these days of apps and internet."



WESTERN REP REPORT

Karen Gummo

World Storytelling Days have come and gone now. And what glorious days they were! As far as I can tell, there were more than 60 events held across Canada. I had the good fortune to participate in many ways. We had some successful events in Calgary, including our monthly story circle, hosted by Maria Hopkins held in tribute to WSD.

I hosted an evening at the Village Square Library where my young multilingual storytellers shared their tales and verses in English, Danish, Punjabi and Ethiopian.

The TALES Calgary Storytelling Carnival held at Shelf Life Books was a wonderful evening of interactive storytelling. We began with a set of stories presented by a core of tellers and then moved off to our varied fateful corners where orbs of fortune and tarot cards were consulted, tea leaves were read, and strings were woven into magical patterns. Our audience seemed to relish the chance to linger and be nurtured by spinners of fate and fortune. We enjoyed this interactive way of presenting story. Thanks to Cassy Welburn for her brilliant scheming.

Earlier on that day, I had introduced the Kaleidoscope Book club to the art of story-



telling with a conversation between tragic hero Grettir the Strong and Trond Sanders, the man who went "Out Stealing Horses" (novel by Per Petursson).

We set ourselves up in the afternoon of March 20th at Shelf Life Book store to have a skype exchange with storytellers in Amsterdam. Thanks to Fred Huit den Broek for organizing this interchange. We had the chance to share our wee stories, peek at ceremonies honouring Dutch storytellers from far and wide, hear some singing from there and then to hear Max Tell of White Rock, share his fateful tale. There will likely be a small film made from excerpts of the international stories shared that day. I look forward to seeing clips from earlier streaming on UStream.

After some words of warning from Chris Lindgren and after scanning the Saskatchewan highway reports of closed roads, Mary Hays and I decided to forego travel on the highways and flew to Saskatoon late Thursday evening. There we were welcomed into the warm hospitality of the Saskatoon Storytellers Guild. Wow!

This ambitious group had a bevy of Storytelling events already underway when we arrived and the events just carried on through the weekend, finishing up on Sunday evening March 24. Danica Lorier and I had a spot on the CTV Arts at noon on Friday with dynamic host Jeff Rogstad. It was an honour to get a little TV attention for our WSD activities. Thanks to Bonnie Logan for making the arrangements.

Mary Hays and I presented our two-hour version of Grettir's Saga to an enthusiastic audience. Heavy snow and storm prevented some of our listeners from making it out that evening but those who came were loving listeners. (See Saga article.) Norm Walker will likely share with you more details of the Saskatoon events. It was an exciting weekend chalk full of energy and community building.

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*Karen Gummo and Mary Hays,
photo by Kevin MacKenzie.*

Saskatoon storytellers have an excellent partnership with the libraries and spoken word community in their city. I can't wait to bring to life a liars' contest the like of the one that Norm presided over. Don't know if I can manage to fashion such a beautiful wooden three-minute timer as was created by that clever man. He sets a high standard.



Since that weekend I have taken a gander at Facebook posts on the World Storytelling Day Facebook page and at comments on the World Storytelling Day listserve. There were varied events carried out in a vast and varied list of venues around the globe. See my list of international locations to follow this article.

The presiding feeling that I get from such a series of remarkable events is that we are part of something bigger than we are. There are folks around the globe who do what we do and who understand the potential and power of story. When we connect ourselves to those far-flung artists and hold events that are linked by theme and date we draw more attention to our efforts and build community world-wide. It was our fate to find friends in far off places. I wonder what the Dragons will bring to us next year?

Karen Gummo

WSD 2013 Celebrations of Fate and Fortune

International Locations

Aarhus, Denmark	Chennai, India	Minneapolis, Minn., USA
Amsterdam (several locations), The Netherlands (live streaming around the globe)	Edinburgh, Scotland	Nairobi, Kenya
Antwerp, Belgium	Helsinki, Finland	Nexoe, Denmark
Barcelona, Spain	Johannesburg, South Africa	Porto, Portugal
Bolga, Ghana	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Prague, Czech Republic
Charlottenburg, Sweden	London, England	Salamanca, Mexico
	Meyrin, Switzerland	Singapore, Singapore
	Mumbai, India	Tenerife, Spain
	Mankato, Minn., USA	Transilvania
		Zagreb, Croatia

VANCOUVER STORYTELLERS' 15th ANNUAL RETREAT

Nejama Ferstman

CONCEPT FOR OUR RETREAT, AS CONCEIVED BY KATE STEVENS MANY YEARS AGO:

A time to relax. In nature. Together. No business agenda.

REASONING:

The guild functions 10 months of the year thanks to the countless hours of dedicated people. These same people gather for meetings and at the monthly gatherings, busy executing the business of crafting stories, generating enthusiasm, and realizing dreams. These people don't generally get a chance to be together with no agenda. Thus, the RETREAT: gather, share food and time and everyday stories of our lives in a natural setting.

SETTING

On the west coast of Vancouver Island, an hour outside of Victoria, there is an (understated) inn, run by a husband and wife who do the laundry, cleaning, chopping of the wood, composting



VANCOUVER
SOCIETY OF
STORYTELLING

and most maintenance chores themselves. They are both in their 60's. The huge floor to ceiling windows face the Straight of Georgia and the Olympic mountain range. (Reservations are done over the

please see page 9



West coast, Vancouver Island. Photo by Mary Katherine Charters

phone, a deposit is not necessary and the fees are paid in cash at the end of the stay. There just aren't many people who do business like this anymore. It is so refreshing and so down to earth you could cry!!!.... Not to mention that it is so moderately priced that it is almost a crime.)

OK enough rambling about people who put their money where their mouth is.... It is just so life affirming and comforting and....

HERE IS HOW IT WENT

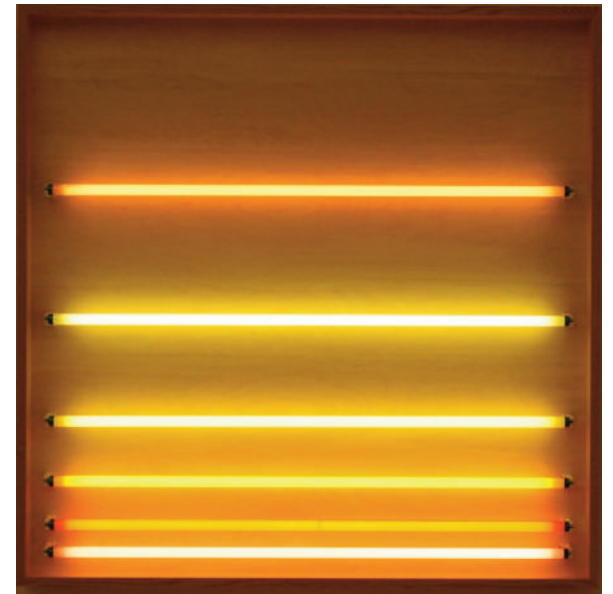
Friday afternoon guests trickled in.... Some people napped near the fireplace, others walked on the seashore or explored the grounds. Among us were seasoned tellers both semi and professional, housewives, psychologists, university profs, clerks, retirees, writers, as well as dedicated story-lovers who've not ever shared in public. At 5pm tea and goodies were served round the coffee table. Armchairs were pulled closer in, blankets and shawls were shared among us as we passed around food, poured hot tea and cupped our mugs. Informal chatting turned to semi-formal introductions by way of telling a story about ones' name. Stories unfolded so natu-

rally and sweetly... this 'opening circle' was like a gentle massage for the spirit. This sort of unrehearsed sharing engendered a feeling of warmth and camaraderie; one could almost hear the sound of muscles releasing their tensions if that was truly something possible to hear. Such was the power of sharing personal stories on a simple theme in our first hour of togetherness. This set the tone for the rest of our weekend. The stories kept on coming. The food was extraordinary. We watched the surf and the horizon from our warm and dry indoor perch as the weather changed every few minutes. We played music, sang, shared novels and news, cooked and cleaned up after meals together, snoozed, read, went for walks on the seashore and ate some more great food.

Sometimes at our retreats a workshop is facilitated by one of our own members. Jennifer Ferris facilitated an improvisation workshop. She demonstrated the ongoing need that a storyteller has for improvisational skills even when telling a classical story. We experienced how it is possible to take an unsolicited or unexpected contribution from a listener or an environmental source and integrate that almost seamlessly into the storyline. That is one of several versions of improv that Jennifer highlighted for us. She led us through many scenarios and improvisational exercises with humour, grace and skill.

Saturday evening, we gathered 'round the hearth. I noticed how many of us were sitting close enough to our neighbours that we were touching each other. We were huddled together in a more close-knit circle than on the first evening. Perhaps we

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Untitled Light Box, by Elizabeth Charters

ST. GEORGE CREEK: A RAINWAY TREASURE

Naomi Steinberg

were wanting to ensure that not a word would be missed of the stories we were about to hear. Perhaps we were that comfortable that we paid little attention to space between us. As on the first night, we went around the circle, taking turns telling. This time we had no theme to guide us. Some people requested a story from someone else in the circle, or wanted the continuation or elaboration on a story from a previous conversation. It went on for hours, until some people needed to retire. There were a few gigglers who remained by the hearth after most had retired. They were soon shushed so that others could sleep.... Rumour has it all three snuggled into one bed and giggled until sunrise.

There were indeed a few M.I.A. at brunch on Sunday. After a leisurely breakfast, the lounge with the windows overlooking the large expanse of ocean and sky beckoned us once more. So with mugs in hand, we sat around in small clusters of two here and three there. Conversations picked up from where they'd left off the previous day, or pressing questions needed responses. In one way or another every participant in the weekend was engaged once again while the late morning sun edged its way across the horizon.

How much can people share? It is endless when the circumstances are favourable.

Nejama Ferstman



Couchlock, by Fraser Brown

Over 50 of Vancouver's historical salmon streams have been piped and buried into sewers, over which people walk everyday. Though we cannot see it, we are lucky to live with a natural history that we can hear gurgling beneath sewer covers. Since 2009, the St. George Rainway has been working with residents of the neighborhood to bring to consciousness one of these streams, St. George Creek. (<http://mtpleasantwatershed.wordpress.com/>)

Community members have invested in the Rainway through activities like storytelling workshops, parades, painting a street mural and building a cob storytellers' bench. The Vancouver Society of Storytelling (www.vancouverstorytelling.org), is thrilled to be part of this initiative. Storytelling has been vital to the Rainway; personal anecdotes, geo-political history, Coast Salish legends, traditional tales and imaginative stories have fostered a sense of place and pride.

If you are ever in Vancouver's Mt. Pleasant neighborhood, we invite you to take "a narrated walk downstream", deepening your experience and appreciation of the Rainway's presence. You may be able to even find a guide through the VSOS or Falsecreek Watershed Society!

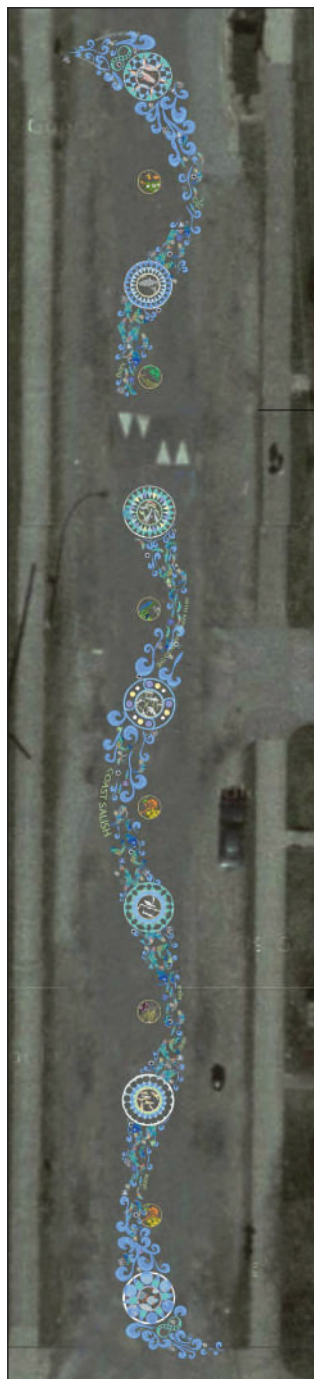
please see page 11



Storytellers' bench at the headwaters of the creek

TRAVELLING WITH A STRONG MAN

Karen Gummo



Street mural tribute

Start at the “headwaters” in Robson Park (N/W corner - 13th and St. George). There, you will see the storytellers’ bench. Designed after a series of workshops at the Native Education College, it is meant to bring to mind the Two Sisters mountains whose story, according to Coast Salish legend, is one of hope and peace.

Walk North. Notice the fish?? A beautiful Stream of Dreams!

At 10th, you will come to Vancouver’s smallest park, “The Gather-Round”. If it is a Sunday, you might meet Julian Thomas there and drink a coffee while sharing stories.

Finally, at 8th ave., with a clear view to the Two Sister mountains, you will be at our beautiful street mural. Depicting the life cycle of salmon and representing the word ‘water’ in many languages, this mural is also a tribute to Hul’q’umi’num’ speaking peoples.

The successes of the Rainway underline our community’s vibrancy and capacity to advocate for an issue of common concern – in this case the health of our water. Look for future opportunities to share stories and vision, fostering resilience while listening to tales!

Naomi Steinberg
A.D., Vancouver Society
Of Storytelling (VSOS)

How do you keep track of a fugitive like the Icelandic hero Grettir Asmundarsson? You do your best to stay on the trail of the outlaw. He was an evasive man due to the turn of the fates, but he left traces of his footsteps in words woven and honed by early farmer poets who gathered in the smoky badstofas and the great chieftains’ halls of his homeland.

Mary Hays and I have been at work, pouring over the saga during the months since we staged the full - length piece with a host of storytellers from across Canada. We journeyed through the Saga of Grettir the Strong to find a way to condense it into a two - hour performance. We knew that the whole story could be told in approximately eight hours because we helped to carry out that day - long epic performance last spring in the Icelandic community of Markerville, Alberta. We wanted to choose powerful excerpts to represent the whole in a quarter of the time.

For World Storytelling Day this year, the theme was Fate and Fortune. The Saskatoon Storytellers’ Guild invited Mary and I to share the Saga of Grettir the Strong as one event in their weekend extravaganza of storytelling that would be connected to storytellers around the globe. We wanted to give them a strong sense of this powerful and tragic tale. This ancient saga focussed on the fate and fortune of a famous outlaw who lived 1000 years ago in Iceland.

How could we condense Grettir’s Saga into a two hour performance? It would not be easy. But after some deliberation we discovered that it would be Grettir’s mother Asdis who could give us direction.

Asdis revealed her dedication and love for her son over and over
please see page 12

again. Through Asdis we learned to love Grettir. That was not easy, for he was a brute of a young man in his early years – openly brazen, brash and downright cruel.

I decided to open the performance in the role of Asdis with what we called A Mother's Song. Asdis sings and looks back over her son's life to question it's unfolding. Always acknowledging that she must accept the way the fates had woven his life story, she is still baffled that this promising young man could have lost his luck. How did he falter?

To follow this opening, we plunged into the events of his life and we chose specific episodes to highlight Grettir's journey. It was his daring confrontation with the Ghost of Glam that gave him his fatal flaw: his fear of the dark. He showed his determination and his will in that battle but it served to begin to change his luck. So certain of



Grettir was a brute of a young man in his early years

his own strength and power, he overstepped his bounds from time to time. He took on more than his fare share of responsibility.

At age 25 he was declared a full outlaw (with a sentence of 20 years) and banished to the fringes of geography and society. Anyone who took him in risked a charge of outlawry against themselves. Most often Grettir aimed to garner good favour with others. He did battle with trolls and with the undead, scaling waterfalls to

carry out his heroic acts.

Mary gave us the account of his Battle with the Troll Woman and with the beast in the cave.

Even with these heroic efforts to rescue community members Grettir lost ground and there was a hefty price upon his head. Advised to go to the Isle of Drangey in Ska-gafjordur to take refuge, he does so. Mary deftly delivers his tender farewell exchange with his mother.

Now stationed on Drangey with his young brother for company and the slave Glaum as entertainment, Grettir and the others make the best of their lot. Grettir feels called to the mainland when he longs for some social engagement and when Glaum lets the fire go out. There he tangles in Negotiations and Trickery and proves again his prowess of intellect as well as his physical strength...and natural urges...

But as his mother had predicted, it would be sorcery that would hasten his death. Asdis proves to be a woman of wisdom and courage.

Grettir, who has warded off attackers time after time, is at a loss when confronted with the words and actions of a sorceress. This old crone toils in the service of her foster – son with a carefully planned sequence of actions. After using spells and incantations and playing with the forces of nature, she puts Grettir in a weakened position. Only then can his attackers succeed in taking him down.

It is Grettir's mother Asdis who has the opportunity to confront the one who killed her sons and uses her courageous words to bring shame upon that one.

We watch how these events are avenged by a step-brother of



*Karen Gummo in performance.
Photo by Paddy Tuddy.*

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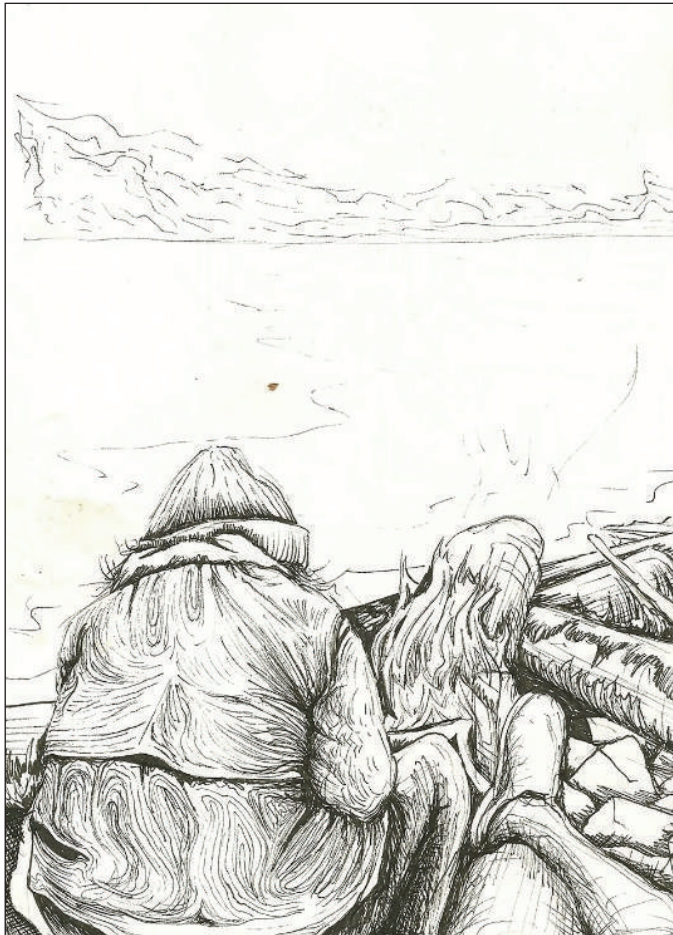
Grettir's in the far off city of Constantinople. The family honour is thus restored.

Each character brings us something to reflect upon: shades of black and white, good and evil. The interplay of Christianity and the belief in the power of black magic creates a tension that enlivens the tale.

This saga brings me great enlightenment and helps me reflect upon events in my own family life.

It might seem that this is a tale that gives full attention to the power and struggles of a male protagonist. But it is the power of a love between a mother and a son that presides over all.

Karen Gummo



*Beach Fire,
by Fraser Brown*
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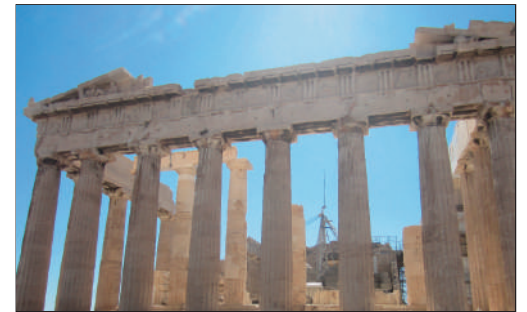
ARTICLE

THE MUSIC OF GREEK STORYTELLING

A DAY OF OLD-WORLD TRADITION IN ALBERTA

Matt Hanson

Sunday April 21 is another afternoon, like any other late winter day in Calgary, where sporadic snowfall lights on the sprawling residential landscape. A few blocks from the university in the northwest quarter of the city, one home opens its



doors to lovers of Greek culture, ancient and contemporary. A neighbor walks down the road, on her way to the event, to show a bewildered downtown urbanite the way in a dizzying maze of suburbia. Host Karen Gummo greets at the door, a member-at-large of TALES, The Alberta League for the Encouragement of Storytelling.

The house concert event features Jennie Frost, recently selected in August 2012 by Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada as an Elder in Canadian storytelling, a prestigious recognition awarded only once a year. She will be recording for the StorySave Project, which honors and preserves the oral storytelling traditions of Canada. Aboriginal, Irish and Canadian heritages are among the many recognized by Story Save storytellers. Frost, a classics scholar, published her first book, "The Courtship of Hippodameia" in 2005. Frost has performed stories for festivals, concerts, confer-

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ences, libraries and over one hundred schools in eight provinces and one territory since 1996. A 2-CD set of her work *Pygmalion and Other Greek Myths* was for sale at the event, along with her book.



The Rembetika Hipsters, from Calgary, provided the music. Rembetika is a “genre of Greek music comparable to the blues,” according to their site.

The event did not begin with storytelling, however, but a *taksim*, a term and practice borrowed from other Middle-Eastern cultures meaning the improvisatory opening to a song in Greek music. Calgary Greek music band, Rembetika Hipsters were present to provide dynamic energy to the overall muse and meaning of story in the Greek tradition. Having toured much of Canada and Greece, the Rembetika Hipsters have released three successful CDs. The band continues to receive great recognition in Greece, especially for a video recording of their tenth anniversary concert in Calgary, where they played with a nine-piece ensemble. After performing the first song, bouzouki player and vocalist Nick Diochnos told one of his own personal stories, set during his Greek wedding in Athens, where he bought his first bouzouki with extra wedding money.

Rhythm guitarist and singer Allen Baekeland of the Rembetika Hipsters gave historical background and taught the meaning of the Greek band name. In the wake of the most significant and traumatic

period in Modern Greek history, the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922), the Rembetika culture formed. The war, known as the *Catastrophe* by Greeks, led to the forced expulsion, or “population exchange treaty” of all Greek communities in Turkey, including the notable city of Smyrna. Over one million Greeks in Turkey were forced into exile. As a result, one in five people in Greece were refugees.

With their Turkish-influenced culture, vagrant impoverishment, drug use and outlaw mentality, refugee youth became what in Greek is known as *Manges*, loosely translated as hipsters. While very popular in the 1920s and 30s, the Rembetika music, likened to American blues, was banned by government authorities. Nick explained that there are two connotations to the word, either it is used between buddies to denote camaraderie, or between parent and child as a means of castigation. Throughout many songs played during the course of the event, Nick would exclaim, “Hey Mange... Opa!”

With a repertoire of over a hundred songs, the Rembetika Hipsters played a diverse selection, not only of Rembetika songs, but also of Greek folk and popular songs. Two songs were especially poignant for their performance, as well as the stories that accompany. Firstly, they sung *Sto Perigiali To Krifo*, with music by legendary Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis in collaboration with Greek poet, and Nobel laureate, Giorgos Seferis. The work of Theodorakis, spanning from orchestral suites to popular tunes, has also been integral to the revitalization of Rembetika music into post-WWII popularity. Secondly, *Ta Pedia Tou Pirea* was sung in memory of Melina Mercouri, a Greek actress, singer and political activist, who sung the ode to the beauty of the Greek port town of Pireus in the film, *Never on Sunday*. The Rembetika Hipsters commented that

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Conference location needed for 2015
*Can you host the SC-CC Conference
 in your hometown?*

the port town's charm is actually a bit more of the rough than the diamond.

Jennie Frost captivated a silent crowd of about twenty keen listeners with stories from the ancient sagas of the Greek pantheon. Storytelling alternated with the music throughout the afternoon. Frost introduced her storytelling modus operandi with a short prefatory anecdote regarding her break from conventional academic interpretations. She gives ancient stories a refreshing new life. During her lively orations, she holds an elegantly crafted wooden cane, in homage to Indigenous traditions of the talking-stick. An elephant sculpture melts into an Ankh-shaped handle, in which are tied innumerable paper-crafted memorabilia from all of the communities she has visited to enlighten through the living tradition of oral storytelling.

With detail enough to craft the most intricate narrative, Frost weaves in and out of character dialogue and illustrates setting with the lithe energy of the overseeing deities she so magically conveys. One of her most memorably enchanting stories drew from Zeus, in relationship with his children, Hermes and Apollo. The visceral imagination of ancient Greek life, as in the story of Apollo's maturation into his role as the god of music, knowledge and poetry evokes the divine majesty of creative human faculties. Hermes, who ultimately gifts Apollo his lyre in the story, becomes messenger of the gods,



Jennie Frost and her elegant talking stick

evincing respect for the underlying interconnectedness of all great worldly and divine phenomena into a harmonious narrative of familial interrelationships.

Frost told many stories, drawing not only from classical Greece. Her final story revealed a welcome gift for diverse cultural expression. Before reciting a quaint Chinese tale about a half-wit boy named Noodle, who eventually outsmarted the gentry of an ancient city through a spirited affinity to poetic meter, Frost proclaimed to all her enthusiasm for epic storytelling sessions. For Frost, a five-hour long telling passes with sparkling enthusiasm. Nonetheless, Frost finished telling her last line on time to close the three-hour event, leaving all with a smile.

The Calgary cityscape glowed from the picture window behind the musicians and storyteller. The love of storytelling is a common root of social cohesion, yet the traditional arts of oral storytelling are too often ignored with similar cultural dissolution as seen in the disappearance of global language diversity. Storytelling, in the traditional and artistic forms of oration, is not simply a nostalgic reversion to childhood.

The lyrics of Giorgos Seferis speak with god-like insight and metaphoric clarity. Impermanent love, the hasty fool's rush to consummate young lust, is the subject of his poem Denial, better known

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Calgary cityscape

as the song, Sto Perigiali To Krifo, sung by the Rembetika Hipsters. In a society dependent on non-renewable life sources, is the consumer resource paradigm of a young nation as Canada not also likened to a parable of the impermanent lust of young love? As Seferis writes in Denial:

On the secret seashore
white like a pigeon
we thirsted at noon;
but the water was brackish.

On the golden sand
we wrote her name;
but the sea-breeze blew
and the writing vanished.

With what spirit, what heart,
what desire and passion
we lived our life: a mistake!
So we changed our life...

English translation by Edmund Keeley and Phillip Sherrard

Oral storytelling roots people to an inner renewal of life, as innately creative, and in continuity with the most fundamental and longest standing traditions of humanity.

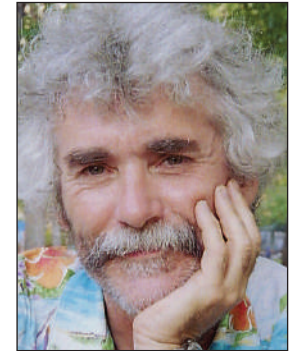
Matt Hanson



*Penelope
and
Ulysses*

SASKATCHEWAN REPORT

Norm Walker



The Saskatoon Storytellers Guild (SSG) continues to lead the organized world of storytelling in Saskatchewan. This winter there were regular storytelling circle nights as well as a series of special events that either the SSG directly organized or members of the group instigated or participated in events.

The monthly Storytelling Circle gatherings occur on the third Friday of the month at 7:30 pm and currently are housed at the Unitarian Centre at 213 - 2nd Avenue, Saskatoon. These sessions usually run from September to June each year (with occasional variations). Potluck treats are always welcomed, but never expected. Admission is usually by donation. For information, contact Chris Lindgren at storytellers@sasktel.net or by phone at 306-653-5092. Alternately, contact Judith Benninger at 306-384-1097.

The events for January to April were as follows:

January 5th - a house concert featuring Norm Walker with Paddy Tutty. This was an evening of mostly musical story-songs and stories behind the songs. The concert was hosted by Chris Lindgren.

January 18 - The monthly story circle hosted by Pam Garner. The evening theme was "Being on the water".

February 15 - The monthly story circle hosted by Kathy Bennett. Her theme was "Hearts and Flowers".

March 15 - The monthly story circle hosted by Jerry and Jo Haigh, and they chose the theme "March" for a round of anecdotes.

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There were a series of events organized in conjunction with World Storytelling Day 2013 in Saskatoon. The official "day" was March 21st but these events were connected with this celebration:

March 15 – FRIDAYS AT TWO – Frances Morrison Branch, Saskatoon Public Library, 2pm Judith Benninger, Chris Lindgren and Bonnie Logan, members of the Saskatoon Storytellers' Guild entertained with magical stories based on the theme of fortune and fate.

March 22 (Friday) – THE SAGA OF GRETIR THE STRONG - 7:30pm Unitarian Centre. Storytellers Karen Gummo and Mary Hays from Alberta presented part of great Icelandic Saga". An added treat was traditional Scandinavian music by Troubadour Camerata.

March 23 (Saturday) – WORLD STORYTELLING DAY FAIRE FOR ALL AGES – 1:00-3:30 p.m. Saskatoon Public Library, Frances Morrison Branch. Fortune and Fate were explored in six storytelling

events over the course of the afternoon. Admission was free.

March 23 – IN FORTUNE'S HANDS – 7:30 pm Unitarian Centre – Nine tellers from the Saskatoon

Saskatoon Storytellers' Guild

Storytellers' Guild entertained with stories old and new, funny and thoughtful, with the theme of fate and fortune. Featured were Norm Walker, Paddy Tutty, Danica Lorier, David Kim-Cragg, Pam Garner, Kathy Bennett, Rhonda Brown, Bonnie Logan and Judith Benninger. Events sponsored by the Saskatoon Storytellers' Guild, the Storytellers of Canada/ Conteurs du Canada and the Saskatoon Public Library.

April 19 – The monthly story circle hosted by Rhonda Brown. Her theme for the anecdotal round was "Food".

March 24 (Sunday) – there was a Story-Slam hosted by the group "Tonight It's Poetry". This was held at Lydia's Pub on Broadway Avenue. The group has had a series of Poetry Slams as well as the occasional story-slam.

Norm Walker

EASTERN REP REPORT

Anne Nagy

WHAT'S NEW IN THE EASTERN REGION

SC-CC has re-invented the Emerging Storyteller Award, formerly known as the Youth Storyteller Scholarship.

What's different, besides the name? The award still consists of a year's membership, an invitation to the annual conference, and mentoring by an established teller, but now the mentoring will take place before the annual conference. The recipient will then be given an opportunity to demonstrate his or her prowess by telling at our annual gathering. We hope this will give our protégée a solid start as a member of SC-CC.

A second change is that the Board has voted to pay an honorarium of \$400 to the SC-CC member who serves as mentor to our Emerging Storyteller. Just as we recommend that members receive reasonable fees for telling, we feel it is only right to offer an honorarium to a teller who offers professional expertise as a mentor.

The recipient for this year's Emerging Storyteller Award is Rebecca McQuaid, of Kingston. She is working away with Deborah Dunleavy, and we look forward to seeing them both in Ottawa this July. Plan to be there!

Anne Nagy



Conference location needed for 2015
*Can you host the SC-CC Conference
in your hometown?*

ONTARIO REPORT

June Brown
Brenda Byers

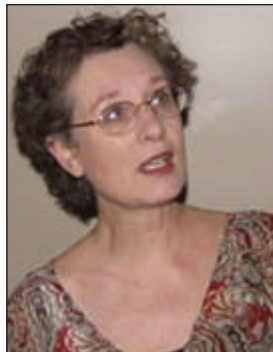
AS FOR EXCITING TIMES IN ONTARIO!

Of course, the event we are all looking forward to is the **21st SC-CC Conference**, "Tell Me Everything! Conte-moi tout!", that Ottawa is hosting this year from July 4th to 7th. We are hoping for a lively Ontario contingent! It isn't too late to participate.

June Brown and I hosted an **Ontario gathering** in Burlington on the 20th of January to meet and welcome Anne Nagy as our new Eastern Representative and Phil Nagy, Vice-President of SC-CC. A great day of Coffee, Cake, a Workshop and Tell-Around was open to all Ontario SC-CC members with a special invitation to those who join or renew their memberships that day. We gained several new members that day who felt very warmly welcomed.

StorySave Event: Friday, June 21st, 1001 Friday Nights is hosting an evening of video recordings for eventual posting on their website, <http://www.1001fridays.org/>. Details of this unique evening can be found there.

Please take a look at the Storytelling Groups in Canada page: <http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca/groups.html>. First of all, to find out what groups are meeting when and where in the New Year so you might plan a visit. Also, to make sure your group is represented and the information is up to date. Make changes by emailing our webmaster.



Great news! Paul Conway is taking the next two steps forward in coordinating the **House Concert Network!** He has been working behind the scenes putting information in order and now it's our turn to assist him in his valiant efforts. To do so, his requests can be found on the Notice Board. The contact address for the House Concert Network is: hcn@storytellers-conteurs.ca.

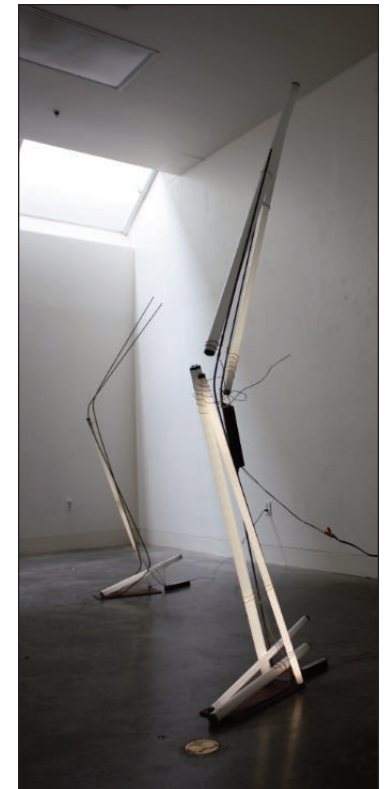
The **Ontario Travel & Billeting Program** for the autumn met with success! Nearly all of the groups willing to be involved were able to meet, hear, chat and dine together. The comments we heard were: warm, inviting, fun, energizing, discovery, and above all, an eagerness to repeat the experience. The spring program is well underway. If you happen to make a visit to a group, let June or I know so we are able to keep some track of how Ontario storytellers are mingling.

The Storytelling Teacher: Telling Tales In and Beyond the Classroom: On 2013 World Storytelling Day, a group of teachers, community animators, professional storytellers, and education students gathered in Regent Park, Toronto, to explore how storytelling has a transformative impact on students' lives and academic skills in the classroom and community. This event was such a grand success, participants have asked for it to be repeated.

The Dumbells, a group of Canadian soldiers turned entertainers, rose from humble beginnings on a makeshift stage of packing boxes in World War 1 France to become the toast of the nation for over a decade. They became arguably the most famous of the Canadian Army "concert parties",

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*Legs for My Father, light installation
by Elizabeth Charters*





Cabin County, by Fraser Brown

those entertainment units that were devoted to building the morale of the troops on the front lines.

Wilson and Brown recreate the era of the Concert Party with music and skits actually performed by the Dumbells. The cast includes three musicians and two actors, along with Jason on piano and Lorne as storyteller.

The date is Saturday, June 15 at 8:30 p.m. For concert tickets and dinner reservations contact Hugh's Room: (416) 531-6604.

We wish to highlight annual summer **events up in the Northern Bruce Peninsula**; specifically, Dyers Bay and Miller Lake.

Ron Baker hosts storytelling evenings every Monday beginning in June at the StoryBarn in Dyers Bay. (519-795-7652 for more information)

Close by is Miller Lake where Leslie Robbins-Conway and Paul Conway host their annual Country Supper Storytelling Concerts beginning June 20th. (<http://www.voyageurstorytelling.ca/Country-supper.htm>)

I could go on about the uniqueness of those places, the hospitality, excellent stories and so forth. Suffice to say, it is well worthwhile to connect these storytelling events in one trip. June, Anna Kerz and I travelled up last year and had a most wonderful time!

For more, look up Storytelling Toronto and the SC-CC Notice Board for summer festivals and events.

Brenda Byers

EH, CANADA! HOW ABOUT A CANADIAN STORYTELLING NIGHT?

Susan Charters

Like, it's time to tell some Canadian stories, eh? And why not have a Canadian Storytelling Night full of them, say in early November?

This year, Canadian Storytelling Night will be called 'Eh, Canada!' as Canadian tellers gather to tell Canadian stories on November 2. You are invited to join in, and make this a truly Canadian event.

You've never heard of this before? Of course you haven't. Canadian Storytelling Night was held last fall for the first time, in Orillia, Ontario.

Why? Well, there's a story about that.

In the heat of the Montreal conference, a great pressure-cooker for ideas, I was at a working group where we were asked to think of a year-round calendar of events that storytellers might provide, both to be able to seek stable funding sources and to be able to introduce Storytellers of Canada-Conteurs du Canada consistently in our home communities.

I said to someone, "Well, we have World Storytelling Day in the spring. We should have Canadian Storytelling Night in the fall." And whoever that someone was said, "You just go ahead and do that." I wish I could remember who said this, because she should get credit for getting the idea off the ground. Let me know! I took her at her word.



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Mark Douglas tells a story at the first Canadian Storytelling Night, called *Lighting the Fires*, in Orillia last year at the end of October.

Since World Storytelling Day began in a small way in Sweden, I didn't think it was preposterous to start Canadian Storytelling Night in a small way in Orillia.

Appropriately, we have a small new group in Orillia, mostly of new tellers. Orillia is a small Ontario city, known widely as

Mariposa and the summer home of Stephen Butler Leacock. But small is sometimes mighty, and some good-hearted souls here helped to organize what we called the First Ever Canadian Storytelling Night on Oct. 25, 2012, in a friendly location on Orillia's main street. The evening was titled "Lighting the Fires," because it was a good time of year to go inside, get cozy and start telling stories again. A native elder who is part of our group agreed that this was appropriate. We told stories and sang songs about fire to a select company.

Going forward, we decided Canadian Storytelling Night should be in early November, to follow busy Hallowe'en, but still call to mind All Saints' Day, the Celtic new year, and the meeting of the worlds as the seasons slide into the dark half of the year, at the cross-quarter day halfway between the fall equinox and the winter solstice.

In Orillia this year, we have set our date as Saturday, November 2. Heather Whaley is coming as a featured teller, and will bring stories and Canadian ballads. That's what we know so far.

We are hoping that the Baden storytelling group will also hold a Canadian Storytelling Night event in Waterloo, Ontario, this year. The idea of it being a night for Canadian stories (rather than just

Canadians telling stories) came from a member/listener at the Baden group, where I spoke of the idea thanks to Brenda Byers' and June Brown's excellent visiting schedule that they have set up between the Ontario groups. I was also able to share the idea and a fire story at Toronto's 1001 Nights of Storytelling.

Jennifer Ferris has been in touch with the SC-CC board about Canadian Storytelling Night, and says that "everyone is very much in favour of the idea of the event and using the SC-CC logo" in publicity. Orillia's event will be organized by SO...(Storytelling Orillia) on behalf of SC-CC.

Could you start a night for Canadian stories in your community? A story circle, a concert, a gathering around a kitchen table with a pot of tea? Or something more Canadian? Please check for Canadian Storytelling Night on Facebook for information and ideas. If you decide to hold such an event this year, please use the Facebook page to let us all know, eh?

Susan Charters



University of Victoria visual arts class considering Light Box 1, by Elizabeth Charters

QUEBEC REPORT

IN ENGLISH QUEBEC

The Montreal Storytellers' Guild continues to meet every month at the beautiful Westmount library. They hosted two special events: a storytelling concert with Brad Woods, and an event for World Storytelling Day titled *Around the World in Eighty Days*: <http://mtlstorytellers.wordpress.com/>

The Concordia storytelling series continues for the third year. This year we hosted the incredible Jan Blake from England as well as our own Jan Gregory, who put on a show of personal stories called *Ask No Questions*, a show she created with the help of Jan Andrews and Jennifer Cayley for Two Women Productions. This partnership is highly successful as the tickets are sold out every time.

The Sherbrooke storytelling festival, *Les jours sont contés en Estrie*, has an English side to its festival. Exciting programming is being planned for October 2013, the 21st edition of this wonderful festival: <http://maisondesartsdelaparole.com/>

IN FRENCH QUÉBEC

The French storytelling scene is extremely active. The Regroupement du conte au Québec (<http://www.conte-quebec.com/>) put on three storytelling workshops in partnership with Emploi Québec: *Organizing a storytelling event*, *Using Sound and Lighting*, and *Storytelling in Schools*. The idea is to help storytellers become profes-

sional.

The mythic Dimanches du conte is celebrating its 15th anniversary with exciting programming every week from September to May: <http://www.dimanchesduconte.com/blog/>

The storytelling publishers Planète Rebelle are celebrating their 10th anniversary: <http://www.planeterebelle.qc.ca/>

Les Jours sont contés en Estrie celebrated its 20th anniversary in the fall. The Festival interculturel du conte au Québec, the biggest and oldest storytelling festival in Québec, is planning a very large edition of its festival in October 2013, with storytellers coming from Morocco, Tunisia, France, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, and the Roma: <http://www.festival-conte.qc.ca/wp/>

Forty events were counted for World Storytelling Day all over Québec.

Mike Burns was named Honorary Lifetime Member of the RCQ at its annual convention in November 2013.

Light Trees,
by Elizabeth Charters



NOVA SCOTIA REPORT

Linda Winham

Rain today, grass is greening, looking good down east!

Seems we hibernated this winter: January gathering cancelled for weather; in February, March, and April, our small group enjoyed great stories "around the kitchen table" in true Maritime fashion. Several of us told Grimm stories at the fabulous Fables club in Tatamagouche in January. Province-wide, there were 7 programs in NS for World Storytelling Day, one shared with Dr. Nicola Grove, storyteller and speech pathologist from UK, who contacted us when she came to Halifax in March to work with L'Arche.

Clare Dugas reports that she worked for three weeks at Ecole Secondaire du Sommet high school in Halifax, and will be coaching six grade 10 students for a storytelling performance. The Southshore group has two new members, and continues to meet twice monthly.

Coming up!!

Leo Feinstein has set up a workshop for us in July with Cian O Morain on Irish storytelling, giving us many Irish tales and typical techniques, with a chance to try it ourselves.

Cindy has workshops booked for interpreters at Pier 21, and for kids at Alderney Landing who will turn stories of sinking ships into ship sculptures as a War of 1812 celebration. She was awarded a grant from the Helen Creighton Folklore Society to research Catherine Gallagher, one of Dr. Creighton's informants, leading to a one-



woman show. This may appear in a film by Matt Hayes, who approached us about including storytelling as a part of his film on Nova Scotia history.

Nancy Muzzatti will contribute local stories drawn from the Cole Harbour Heritage Farm recordings to Matt's film. She has contracted with Atlantic Step-on Tours, to hop on their buses as they tour Halifax, providing stories of historic spots around town, and expects to do Campground Fireside Stories for Nova Scotia Parks and Recreation again.

Liz Newkirk will team up with Steve Vernon, storyteller and author, in a presentation to the Editors Association of Canada annual conference, dealing with both world and Maritime stories, oral and written.

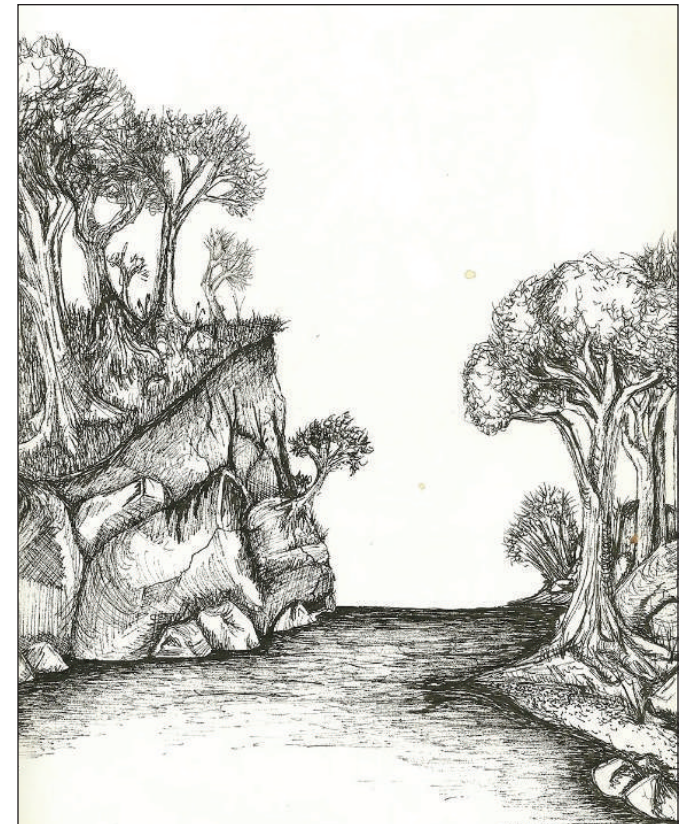
Storytellers Circle of Halifax has been approached to partner with the Inverness County Centre for the Arts (Cape Breton) to help bring story-

telling to the Centre to expand the range of Arts presented there. Jim St. Clair will be involved, along with performers from the Celtic Colours Festival in CB in October. All contingent on funding...

We're not big, but we're connected!

Linda Winham

*Active Pass,
by Fraser Brown*



ARTICLE

PRODUCING A SUCCESSFUL STORYTELLING CONCERT

Claire Miller

Concert night! The doors are open, the ticket sellers in place, the lights are on, the storyteller and musicians are waiting, anticipating.... And then people come, more and more: an audience of almost two hundred adults. Who are they and what brings them out on a cold grey night to a storytelling event?

For five years I had been producing sold-out house concerts, presenting programs of stories and music, and now I wanted to try something more ambitious. The house concerts had given me experience in organizing events and in collaborating with other performers. So I took what I had learned and applied it to a larger stage.

I had the idea for a concert to kick off the Christmas season almost a year before and began then thinking about stories. The moment when I said definitely to myself that I could do this – would do this – was in late spring. So the first thing I did was to look at the calendar. I wanted a night that would be early enough in the Christmas season that I would not be competing with many other holiday concerts, when people would be in the Christmas spirit but not yet tired of it all. I chose a Friday night, November 30, and went looking for a venue.

My first and second choices were already booked (maybe I wasn't meant to do this...), when my husband recalled a church in Dartmouth where we had attended choral concerts many years before.



It seemed ideal – an easy-to-get-to location with lots of parking, good acoustics, a good size but not too big in case the audience was small. I found the church's website and emailed an inquiry with further questions. The reply came quickly: yes, they were available and interested; yes, the church was accessible; yes, they had a sound system I could use; yes, they had a hall and kitchen facilities for a post-concert reception, and their women's group could do the food, as well as set up and clean up; and yes, the price was right! So the church and hall were booked tentatively, with the reservation to be confirmed and the deposit paid once I had visited to make sure it all was as good as it sounded.

Throughout this advance planning, I was, of course, thinking about stories and the program. I knew I wanted music. I have found that music is a great way to get people unfamiliar with storytelling in the door (though the storytelling has to be good to get the listeners to come back!) I wanted singing – sing-along carols as well as a choral set – so I invited a local community choir known for its lively repertoire and with a director who is skilled at getting the audience

to participate. The choir agreed to take part in exchange for a percentage of the door. In addition, I wanted harp music, light jazz piano and a fiddle to accompany several of the sto-

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Halifax storyteller Claire Miller's pre-Christmas concert, titled "Once Upon a Winter's Eve," was held in Dartmouth, NS.

Photo by Susan Charters: "Rue du Petit Champlain, Québec, QC, preparing for Christmas."



ries. These musicians were booked months in advance at agreed-upon fixed fees.

Publicity is where most of my budget went and, unlike my house concerts, I knew I could not rely just on my email lists to round up an audience. So three months in advance, with a title for the show (Once Upon A Winter's Eve) and a vague idea of what kind of poster I wanted, I contacted a graphic designer whose work I knew and admired. The poster was beautiful – unique and eye-catching – with all the necessary information. I had one hundred posters printed on good quality, good weight legal-size paper (here I relied on the artist's expertise) and, with the choir's help, distributed almost all of them. I put up posters in libraries, bookstores, music



A pre-concert blur, as the audience gathers for storytelling in the Newman Wine Vaults, St. John's, NL, during the 2010 SC-CC conference.

Photo and apologies, Susan Charters

stores and performing arts spaces, in cafes and coffee shops, in public transit terminals and farmers' markets, in community recreation centres, hospitals and churches – everywhere I could think of that potential listeners might congregate. As well I had 800 flyers made – a small photocopied, black and white version of the poster – for handing out, and I made sure that all the choir members and musicians had a good supply.

Two months before the concert I hired a publicist – a woman who specializes in promoting performing artists and cultural events. Although I could have easily written and sent out a standard press release, I did not have this woman's contacts or her professional credibility with the media. She sent a release to over 300 outlets and organizations. As a result, I did interviews with community papers and an on-line news journal, and her press release appeared in all the local papers. She also sent an announcement to all the community events columns. At the publicist's suggestion, I recorded PSAs which were broadcast on radio.

Of course I also sent information about the concert to all my email contacts, and choir members and the musicians received the same email to forward to people on their lists. And everyone used Facebook.

And so the audience came and amazingly, most had no personal connection to me, the choir or the church. For many, it was a leap of faith, spending \$15 to listen to stories, never before having heard a storyteller, but they loved it! They came to the concert, they said, because they had seen the poster or read the interview, because the concert sounded "different" and like a "nice evening."

Although it seemed at times as if the organizational details were taking over, cutting severely into the reason for the concert, that is, into preparing the stories, all those details are essential for a successful event. Start early, have a plan, spend a little money, and prepare to be astounded! We all know the deep satisfaction that comes from entertaining and moving an audience with our stories. But when the venue is full of enthusiastic listeners, there because of your ideas and work – well, that is a happily-ever-after ending!

Claire Miller
SC-CC member from Halifax



JAN ANDREWS SC-CC STORYSAVE SPECIAL PROJECT 2013

StorySave Committee

As most of you know, Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada (SC-CC) is this country's national storytelling organization. One of its main programs is StorySave whose aim is to preserve, with a series of audio recordings, elder voices of some of Canada's most respected and seasoned veterans of the oral storytelling tradition. To date, there have been ten elder voices selected for production of triple CD projects, approximately one person chosen per year over the past eleven or so years. And there are more to come.

For 2013 the StorySave committee has chosen to embark on a one-time Special Project to honour Jan Andrews, the originator of StorySave and one of the founders of SC-CC itself.

Last year, her admirers and colleagues nominated her to be among the exceptional tellers honoured in the StorySave series. Between the time of the nomination and the regular selection process, Jan discovered that she was facing a life-threatening illness. The selection committee approved Jan's nomination, and to give more flexibility to her recording, they designated her CD a Special Project separate from the 2013 and 2014 awards. Jan is now poised to

record a sampling of the wonderful work she has offered to audiences over the years. She has re-assured us recently (late March) that, "I think folks should know I don't seem to be about to pop off any minute!". We intend to hold her to her word on that point.

More than a decade ago, Jan recognized the importance of preserving the voices of Canadians who have made a unique contribution to storytelling in this country. And as ever when she has an idea worth pursuing, she threw her prodigious intellect and energies into initiating the "StorySave" project. As well, she found time to be an award-winning author short-listed for the Governor General's Award, storyteller/writer-in-residence in Manitoba and Tasmania, director of two ground-breaking storytelling series, and co-founder of a storytelling company. In her spare



Jan Andrews, first president of SC-CC, and the founder of StorySave

time, she has entertained audiences across Canada, Scotland, Wales, and Australia.

Jan Andrews has been a leading visionary in the Canadian storytelling community for many years. It's time for us to come together to celebrate Jan's contribution.



Jan with partner Jennifer Cayley, up a tree. Jan has founded, and has found, many platforms for storytelling.

Supporters of the artists involved in this series raise the funds to produce the CDs. One important piece of the campaign to fund Jan's CD is the letter that you are reading and your response to it. A national appeal is unusual, but we feel it is justified because the impact of Jan's efforts artistically and nationally in areas such as her

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*Jan at the centre, with some of the tellers who presented *The Odyssey* at the National Arts Centre last year.*

fight to have storytelling widely recognized as an art form, one supported by funders.

We would like to offer you an opportunity to play a part in this great project by making a contribution to the recording, production, and distribution of these CDs.

We believe that those who have heard Jan tell will be happy that they have helped preserve her gentle cadence, her lovely accent, her power and her humour for others to enjoy.



Jan tells a good story

The time-line for this Project is not firmly established but the actual audio recording is beginning in early spring, 2013. The Project completion and release details are to be determined but will likely come to fruition within the coming year, depending on a number of logistical factors. Later this year an Ottawa area committee will be spear-heading and guiding this Project toward completion. Most of those people are currently somewhat occupied with planning the annual conference of the SC-CC in July 2013.

SO THIS IS WHERE WE NEED YOU!

In order to get the Project off the ground, we are now launching a general fundraising appeal to SC-CC members, friends of Jan Andrews, friends of SC-CC and all friends of storytelling everywhere.

There are two main ways to contribute: by cheque/snail-mail or electronically. Contributions of \$20.00 or more will get you a tax deductible receipt with either method (but the electronic method is a lot faster and easier). The instructions are as follows.

METHOD 1

Cheques and snail-mail (slow but sure)

Personal cheques can be made out to:

StorySave, SC-CC

and sent to:

c/o Jennifer Halliday

Financial Administrator - STAF

192 Spadina Ave., Suite 201

Toronto, ON M5T 2C2

Please make it clear that you intend this donation to be made "to the Jan Andrews StorySave Project".

METHOD 2

On-line electronic (very fast and easy)

Electronic donations are made by following these easy directions:

1. Go to the SC-CC website home page
<http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca/>
2. Click on the box on the right side that says "Donate Now through CanadaHelps.org"
3. Type in the amount you wish to contribute and the frequency (one time or repeating)
4. Click on the Fund/Designation drop-down menu and choose StorySave
5. Type the letters "JASP" or the words "Jan Andrews StorySave Project" in the Message/Instructions for Storytellers of Canada dialogue box
6. Click "Continue"

please see page 27

7. The next page is "The Giving Basket" that suggests a small contribution. The CanadaHelps.org service costs us a small amount to use. You can decide this for yourself.
8. The next page asks for an e-mail address so you will promptly receive a tax deductible receipt.
9. The following page will ask for specific information for the income tax receipt.
10. Then follow the prompts, fill in the blanks and make your payments using methods such as a credit card or PayPal. You should receive an e-mailed receipt almost immediately.

Jan was right to think that we who believe deeply in our oral heritage should do what we can to keep significant voices available. Thank you for your commitment to the art. Thank you for reading this letter. And if you are able to make a contribution, whether small or large, thank you very much for that! Watch for further developments in the coming months as this Special Project honouring Jan Andrews comes to fruition.

Jan is a fount of good ideas, a tireless worker, and a magnificent storyteller. It's high time to capture her unique voice and contribution to the art.



Jan at home,
Taylor Lake
page 27



*Mae Lah Refugee Camp, Thailand, acrylic on canvas,
by Elizabeth Charters. The layout editor for Le Raconteur often needs
photos or illustrations to complement stories. Please consider submitting
photos with your articles, or contact other art schools to submit art for the
next edition of Le Raconteur in the fall. Thanks, Susan Charters*

JAN ANDREWS

LE PROJET SPÉCIAL

SC-CC STORYSAVE 2013

Lancement de la collecte de fonds

Comme la plupart d'entre vous le savent déjà, Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada (SC-CC) est l'association nationale des conteurs du Canada. Un de ses principaux programmes, intitulé StorySave, a pour objectif de perpétuer, en les enregistrant, les voix de certains conteurs d'expérience, parmi les porteurs de la tradition orale canadienne les plus respectés et les plus chevronnés. À ce jour, nous avons ainsi pu immortaliser sur CD les voix de dix conteurs, à raison d'un coffret de trois CD par année – ou presque – au cours des onze dernières années. Et ce n'est pas terminé.

Cette année, le comité StorySave a choisi de lancer un projet spécial unique en l'honneur de Jan Andrews, initiatrice du programme StorySave et co-fondatrice de SC-CC.

L'an passé, ses admirateurs et collègues avaient avancé son nom pour le programme StorySave et son exceptionnelle collection de CD. Mais dans l'intervalle séparant sa mise en candidature du processus habituel de sélection, Jan a appris qu'elle souffrait d'une maladie grave. Les membres du comité de sélection ont retenu sa candidature mais, pour qu'elle puisse bénéficier d'une plus grande souplesse dans la réalisation de cet enregistrement, ils ont créé un projet spécial, indépendant des projets standards du programme StorySave pour 2013 et 2014. Jan est aujourd'hui prête à enregistrer un concentré du travail formidable qu'elle propose au public depuis des années. Elle nous a récemment rassurés (fin mars) en affirmant : « Je pense que les gens devraient savoir que je n'ai pas l'intention de disparaître de sitôt! » Nous entendons bien la prendre au mot à ce sujet.

Il y a plus d'une décennie, Jan a reconnu l'importance de perpétuer les voix des conteurs canadiens ayant apporté une contribution unique au milieu. Comme chaque fois qu'elle a une idée prometteuse en tête, elle s'est alors lancée avec tout son cœur et son extraordinaire sagacité dans la création du programme StorySave, ce qui ne l'a pas empêchée de mener de front d'autres projets : auteure primée sélectionnée pour le prix du Gouverneur général, Jan a aussi été conteuse / écrivaine en résidence au Manitoba et en Tasmanie, directrice artistique de deux séries d'événements novateurs dans le domaine du conte, et co-fondatrice d'une association de conteurs. Dans son temps libre, elle fait le bonheur de son public à travers le Canada, mais aussi en Écosse, au Pays de Galles et en Australie.

Femme visionnaire, Jan Andrews a œuvré au sein de la commu-



*Jan admire la
couette StorySave
2007, car il est
dévoilé.*

nauté canadienne des conteurs pendant de nombreuses années. Le moment est venu, pour nous tous, de lui rendre hommage.

Les supporteurs des artistes impliqués dans le programme StorySave s'occupent de recueillir des fonds pour la production des CD. La lettre que vous êtes en train de lire, et la réponse que vous

lui donnerez, jouent un rôle essentiel dans la campagne de levée de fonds pour le projet de Jan. Il est rare que nous lancions un appel national, mais nous estimons que les retombées des réalisations artistiques de Jan à l'échelle du pays, dont son combat pour donner au conte le statut de forme d'art, admissible au soutien des bailleurs de fonds, le justifie.

Nous aimerions vous donner la possibilité de jouer un rôle dans ce merveilleux projet en faisant un don pour l'enregistrement, la production et la distribution des CD.

Nous croyons que tous ceux qui ont entendu conter Jan seront heureux de contribuer à immortaliser son phrasé caractéristique, son charmant accent, son énergie et son humour afin d'en faire profiter le plus grand nombre.

Le calendrier de réalisation de ce projet n'est pas encore définitivement établi, mais l'enregistrement audio commencera au tout début du printemps 2013. Les dates d'achèvement du projet et de sortie des CD

dépendront d'un certain nombre de critères logistiques, mais tout devrait se concrétiser dans l'année à venir. Un comité de la région d'Ottawa sera ultérieurement chargé de mener ce projet à son terme; toutefois, pour l'heure, la plupart des membres de ce comité sont quelque peu occupés par la préparation de la conférence annuelle de SC-CC, qui aura lieu en juillet 2013.



Jan avec Gail Anglin, Jennifer Cayley et Ellis Lynn Duchenes, pour une présentation de l'Odysee.

ET VOICI POURQUOI NOUS AVONS BESOIN DE VOUS:

Pour pouvoir mener ce projet à bien, nous lançons aujourd'hui un appel aux dons à tous les membres de SC-CC, mais aussi à tous ceux qui connaissent Jan Andrews, soutiennent SC-CC et aiment le conte partout dans le monde.

Vous pouvez envoyer vos dons de deux façons : par chèque et courrier ordinaire ou par voie électronique. Un reçu aux fins de l'im-pôt sera émis pour toute contribution de 20 \$ ou plus, quelle que soit la méthode d'envoi choisie (ceci étant, la voie électronique est beaucoup plus rapide et simple). Vous trouverez ci-après les instructions à suivre pour faire un don.

PREMIÈRE MÉTHODE

Chèque et courrier ordinaire (lent mais sûr)

Envoyez vos chèques de compte personnel, libellés à l'ordre du projet StorySave de SC-CC, à l'adresse suivante :

À l'attention de Jennifer Halliday
Administratrice financière – STAF
192 Spadina Ave., Suite 201
Toronto (Ont.) M5T 2C2

Veuillez préciser que vous faites ce don en faveur du « projet StorySave Jan Andrews ».

DEUXIÈME MÉTHODE

Par voie électronique (très rapide et simple)

Veuillez suivre les instructions ci-après pour faire un don par voie électronique.

1. Ouvrez la page d'accueil du site Web de SC-CC : <http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca/>.
2. Cliquez sur la vignette « Donnez par Canadon.org », à droite de l'écran.
3. Saisissez le montant ainsi que la fréquence (don unique ou récurrent) de votre don.
4. Cliquez sur le menu déroulant intitulé « Affectation des fonds » et choisissez StorySave.
5. Indiquez « PSJA » ou « Projet StorySave Jan Andrews »

s.v.p. voir page 30

dans la zone de texte « Message / instructions a/s
Conteurs du Canada ».

6. Cliquez sur « Continuer ».
7. La page suivante, intitulée « Panier de dons », vous offre la possibilité d'ajouter un petit montant à votre don afin de nous aider à défrayer les coûts afférents aux services de Canadon.org, mais cela est laissé à votre entière discrétion.
8. Sur la page suivante, on vous demandera d'entrer une adresse de courriel afin de vous envoyer rapidement votre reçu aux fins de l'impôt.
9. Pour remplir correctement ce reçu, on vous demandera ensuite d'entrer des renseignements spécifiques.
10. Suivez les indications, entrez les informations demandées et procédez au paiement par carte de crédit ou PayPal. Vous devriez recevoir un reçu électronique presque immédiatement.



Katherine Grier; Jan et sa voix

Jan a raison de penser que tous ceux qui sont profondément attachés au patrimoine oral, comme nous le sommes, devraient faire tout leur possible pour perpétuer les voix de ses représentants majeurs. Merci de votre engagement envers l'art du conte. Merci d'avoir pris le temps de lire cette lettre. Et si vous pouvez vous permettre de faire un don, petit ou grand, merci du fond du cœur!

Au cours des prochains mois, nous vous tiendrons au courant de

l'évolution de ce projet spécial en l'honneur de Jan Andrews.

Jan est une source intarissable de bonnes idées, une travailleuse infatigable et une conteuse hors pair. Il est plus que temps d'immortaliser sa voix et sa contribution uniques à notre art.

There was once a distinguished gentleman, haughty and proud as any ever known, who perceived and perceived his in every way, young daughter, too, but one who was incomparable, took after her mother, who has been the most noble.

StorySave

Voices of Canada's Storytellers

A Storytellers of Canada / Conteurs du Canada Project

StorySave Artistic Director Jane Taylor has a new address:
Please address correspondence to J.C. Taylor,
810 - 1 Grosvenor Street, London, ON
London, ON N6A 1Y2
j_c_taylor@bell.net



Light Trees, by Elizabeth Charters