

SC-CC TD CCBC Book Week Report

The Flood and Re-conciliare

Broken culture powerful tool for healing, reconciliation.

re-conciliare: to meet again as an individual, as a culture

To meet one's self.

-acknowledge Paul

And the rains came tumbling down! The trip to Ottawa and then Montreal showed water flooded fields and rivers swollen past their banks. My first session at Chelsea was cancelled but the Wakefield Elementary session, the only school in the area Since Earth Day had just passed, most of the schools had requested 'Tales From the Green Lady', a set of environmental tales, an interesting choice, with Mother Nature flexing her muscles all around us.

For the grade 9, 10 and 11 students of Westwood Senior High School, I chose dilemma tales from Africa, which prompted some lively discussions as the resolution of dilemma tales is up to the listener.

The adult listeners at The Learning Exchange were a delight and a challenge. As they were from several cultures with various levels of English proficiency, I concentrated on musical tales with lots of repetition and I emphasized the need to pass stories on to their children. A highlight at TLE was having one session broadcast to a remote location and seeing their responses to a participation tale via monitor!

The three elementary schools on Kanawake Territory, Karonhianonhnha, Kateri, and Kahnawake Survival School, were a learning experience. The students at each school impressed me with their desire to reclaim their Mohawk language and culture through story, while expressing an eager enthusiasm for stories from other cultures from around the world. My time at Kanawake Territory was too short, and I hope to return some day. There was a wonderful diversity of listeners, children, young adults, ESL students and First Nations children. I was impressed by how the love of story connected them all, and I thank them for renewing the love of story in myself as well.

The TD CCBC Book Week began with a flood; roads and fields were covered; the ways through were lost. After the storytellings were finished, I saw the flood as a metaphor for each group I visited, teenagers seeking a direction through life, new Canadian immigrants navigating a new, unknown culture while keeping a connection to the old, and young Mohawk children finding their way to recover and reclaim what has been lost.

When water covers the roads and the ways are lost, story is the boat that allows us to navigate the flood, find our way home and from there, continue our journey.