



in the Wind

Seattle Storytellers' Guild Summer 1994, Vol. XVII, Number 3

Fall Festival Plans Nearly Complete October 15, 1994 at the Nordic Heritage Museum

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 15, the date chosen for our annual Fall Storytelling Festival. This year's Festival will again be held at the Nordic Heritage Museum and will begin with morning workshops, feature a catered lunch and a time for swapping stories. In the afternoon we will enjoy a program designed for families and conclude with an evening olio of stories for older audiences.

The evening line-up has been confirmed and includes a delightful array of local tellers, Debbie Dimitri, Cathy Spagnoli, Kathy Sider and University of Washington Professor Emeritus Spenser Shaw. They are sure to offer a rich and not-to-be-missed program.

Other participants in this fun-filled day include some exciting newcomers as well as some of our more seasoned tellers. Gene Frieese's workshop, *Children as Tellers*, will be popular with children and will include tips for getting children to tell folktales as well as their own stories. Our family program promises to be a lively event with these tellers, Cathie Currie, Elizabeth Yee, Karen Haas, and Tom Galt.

Other workshop participants and family tellers have not been confirmed but we hope to offer workshops on dramatics and movement in storytelling and tandem storytelling. The day is guaranteed to be filled with food for the storyteller's soul and knowledge for the storyteller's mind. Be sure to join us!



On the Airwaves...

KUOW 94.9 FM presents the **Rabbit Ears Storytelling Program** Sundays at 1:30 p.m.
KSER 90.7 FM Community Radio presents the **Musical Enchanter Storytelling Hour**, 7 a.m. Sundays, and **The Enchanted Forest**, more stories and songs, 8 a.m. Sundays.



Bookshop Offers Workshop

The Secret Garden Bookshop is offering a **Whole Language Workshop Series**. Each class will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. and cost \$12. For more information, call (206) 524-4556.

Resuscitating the Story

by Martha J. Eshelman-Smith

One of the most popular books of the Middle Ages, *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, has just been translated into English for the first time since 1483. The *Golden Legend* was compiled around 1200 A.D.; given its enormous popularity we can assume that its stories reflect what was meaningful in its time.

The following statement regarding St. Nicholas (a.k.a. Santa Claus) caught a friend's attention: "While the infant was being bathed on the first day of his life, he stood straight up in the bath. From then on he took the breast only once on Wednesdays and Fridays." (Note: Wednesdays and Fridays are still fast days in the Orthodox tradition.) I had a dual response to her surprise: first, the statement reminded me of parents bragging about the children—why are there no average or below average children? Second, it made me consider why stories change—how changing keeps stories alive rather than becoming mere "museum" pieces.

Axel Olrik's *Principles for Oral Narrative Research* provides a number of clues. He identifies several reasons for change. The reason "to clarify a blurred point" is illustrated by the need to note the importance of Wednesday and Fridays when I quoted the text. When the tale was collected, the fasting nature of the days was common knowledge and required no comment.

A second reason is "to bring the plot into agreement with what seems reasonable either by removing what seems unreasonable or by consciously emphasizing its incredibility." Thus an infant standing on his first day and voluntarily (instinctively?) observing religious fasts has been lost from the St. Nicholas story. But the need for the fantastic remained; it has been filled by flying reindeer, sliding down chimneys, and omniscience regarding good and bad behavior.

Stories change because "the narrative is mixed with other narratives that the narrator knows." Our historical sensibilities want "the true, verifiable facts." Compare the attitude of Agnellus of Ravenna (b. ca. 805): "Where I could not uncover a story...to avoid a blank space...I have with the assistance of God through your prayers invented a Life for them. And I believe

that no deception is involved." (quoted in Jones' *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend*). Such an attitude easily merged the legend of St. Nicholas of Sion with the legend of the more famous St. Nicholas of Myra.

And stories change to "reflect the mentality of period and external reality." Thus Lutheran Germany replaced the Catholic Saint Nicholas with Kris Kringle. But the "new" Kris Kringle lacked the legendary qualities of St. Nicholas: hence, in many senses the two merged.

Observing how and why stories change in order to remain living stories provides guidance on how to resuscitate "dead" stories—stories we know only from books, especially old books or books from outside our culture. An excellent example is Wolkstein and Cramer's *Inanna*. A relatively literal translation (from Jacobsen's *The Treasures of Darkness*) reads: "My husband, seeking pasture, was killed in the pastures. / My young man, seeking water, was delivered up at the waters. / My young husband nowise departed town life the (decently) shrouded corpse, / O you flied of the early pastures!" Wolkstein and Cramer render it: "Gone is my husband, my sweet husband. / Gone is my love, my sweet love. / My beloved has been taken from the city. / O, you flies of the steppe, / My beloved bridegroom has been taken from me / Before I could wrap him with a proper shroud."

The latter version uses a chant structure with much repetition—a structure we associate with lament and "primitive" song. The concern that the corpse be properly shrouded is subtly changed to a personal responsibility "before I could wrap him" more representative of our time. The distinction between town life and pastures is retained in city vs. steppe—but the choice of steppe rather than pasture gives a "foreign" flavor: in this case foreign as in "divine" for this is the story of a goddess as well as foreign as in "Central Asian steppes." Wolkstein and Cramer find a middle ground that keeps

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Sources: About Stories and the Folks Who Tell Them

by Margaret Read MacDonald, King County Library System

We all Go Together: Creative Activities for Children to Use With Multicultural Folksongs by Doug Lipman (Oryx Press, 1994). Paperback with cassette.

Storyteller Doug Lipman teaches us how to use simple folksongs with our audiences here. In this book, Doug tries to convince the reader that singing with children is easy. Every comment is aimed at encouraging the reader to agree... "Yes I could do that." To make things even simpler, he has set all 30 of the folksongs in the same key. And if you feel up to making your first attempts at guitar accompaniment he supplies an address to write for instructions on playing the one chord you need to know. This book should be a great starting place for anyone who has always wanted to try using a guitar or autoharp...with only one chord to learn, how can you go wrong? From the 30 folksongs included Lipman creates 140 activities. Each song has various uses...from simple activities for very young children to play party directions for older youth and adults. Unfortunately, the book is confusing in its layout. The songs themselves are at the book's rear and the various activities for each song are sprinkled throughout the book's text since the arrangement is by type of activity... "Games for Choosing," "Movements for Standing, Lying, and Moving Around" and others. Just be prepared to do lots of flipping back and forth as you gather the information you need about your song. A tape of the songs' tunes is packaged with the book to help you pick up the melody and rhythm. Doug asks that you *not* use the tape with children...the whole idea of the book is that you can enjoy singing with your children *without* electronic backup. Indexes of rhythmic and melodic elements are included for music teachers who want this breakdown. Those who already use folksongs in their programming will find lots of innovative ideas here. The rank beginner will find constant encouragement and Doug's insistence that you *can* use music with your children...even if you can't carry a tune in a bucket!

Next Teller: A Book of Canadian Storytelling by Dan Yashinsky (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island: Ragweed, 1994). Paperback \$12.95 Canadian.



Thirty-one Canadian tellers share a favorite story here. Especially interesting are the comments with which they introduce their stories. Though I didn't find anything here I am apt to retell, I did love listening to their many voices. I particularly liked Yashinsky's introductions to the collection in which he stresses the importance of passing stories along to the "Next Teller." He cites the Cape Breton Gaelic teller Joe Neil MacNeil who once said "What the ear does not hear will not move the heart." Whether you chose to retell these tales or not, your heart will be moved by reading them. And you will enjoy meeting some of our old friends in this collection too...Nan Gregory, Melanie Ray, Bob Barton, and Ken Roberts are among the Canadians included!

Resuscitating

Continued from Page 2



the story true to its origins while modifying it to reflect current cultural sensibilities.

A method that works for me in resuscitating old stories is to read it once, then retell it to myself several times. Then I read it again and note where I have unconsciously changed the story. I consider the reason for each change—accidental, "political correctness," geographic or foreign name changes, change in emphasis, appeal of particular images, etc. Only then am I able to choose where (or if) I need to be faithful to the original and where changing the story will keep it alive.

Calendar of Events

In Area

June



20 Bird Tales/Bird Walk, a program for families led by Kathy Sider. Bothell Library, 7 p.m. Storytelling, followed by a bird walk at Bothell Landing.

30 Story 'n Snack potluck dessert and story swap. 7:30 to 10 p.m. For information and directions, call 621-8646.

July

7 Storytelling with Deborah Hudson, Puss 'N Books, 15788 Redmond Way, Redmond, 885-6828, 11 a.m.

9-10 The Nordic Heritage Museum's annual Tivoli summer festival, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, 3014 NW 67th Street in Ballard. For more information call 789-5707.

9 Storytelling and Craft Hour: BIG! Cats, Puss 'N Books, 15788 Redmond Way, Redmond, 885-6828, 10:30 a.m.

11 Second Mondays on the Hill, Seattle Storytellers' Guild monthly storytelling triple header. Cherie Trebon, Dawn Kuhlman and Camille Wooden will each take their turn at the plate (mike). 7 p.m. New City Theatre, 1634 - 11th Ave., Seattle. \$3 SSG, \$5 general.

12 Learning About Our Self and Others, by Dr. Katherine Schlick Noe, Professor of Education at Seattle University. How to use folktales and multi-cultural literature to promote Social Studies understanding. Especially for K-8 teachers. At the Secret Garden Bookshop. Call 524-4556 for more information.

14 Storytelling with Deborah Hudson, Puss 'N Books, 15788 Redmond Way, Redmond, 885-6828, 11 a.m.

16 Guemes Island Storytelling Retreat, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Guemes Island (10 minute ferry ride from Anacortes), three-hour follow-up session in Seattle area at a later date. Learn six short audience participation stories. Suggestions for finding and learning tellable folktales. Uses of multi-cultural tales in classroom and library. Taught by Margaret Read MacDonald. Class: \$60; 1 SPU credit \$30. Call (206) 827-6430 for information.

21 Storytelling with Deborah Hudson, Puss 'N Books, 15788 Redmond Way, Redmond, 885-6828, 11 a.m.

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28 Story 'n Snack potluck dessert and story swap. 7:30 to 10 p.m. For information and directions, call 621-8646.

29 Afternoon storytelling, Puss 'N Books, 15788 Redmond Way, Redmond, 885-6828, 11 a.m.

August



2 Wiggly Readers: Reading with your Preschoolers, Ann Dalton, outreach librarian for Seattle Public Library to preschools and daycares, teaches finger-plays, storytelling techniques, flannel boards, and other ways of sharing family reading, especially for parents. Secret Garden Children's Bookshop, 524-4556, reservations required.

8 Second Mondays on the Hill, Seattle Storytellers' Guild monthly storytelling event. Bruce Wolcott, storyteller and improviser, tells stories that dig deep into the imagination and brings them alive. 7 p.m. New City Theatre, 1634 - 11th Ave., Seattle. \$3 SSG, \$5 general.

10 Happy Endings: Tales Told by Two, Cindy Easterman and Debbie Deutsch team up to delight audiences with summertime stories using enchanting puppetry, special effects, and other surprises. All ages, free, Mill Creek Library Park Outdoor Stage, noon, sponsored by Mill Creek Parks and Recreation. Call 742-7293 or 483-2098 for more information.

25 Story 'n Snack potluck dessert and story swap. 7:30 to 10 p.m. For information and directions, call 621-8646.

September

12 Second Mondays on the Hill, Seattle Storytellers' Guild monthly storytelling event. Debbie Dimitre, story weaver, will tell a patchwork quilt of old and new tales. 7 p.m. New City Theatre, 1634 - 11th Ave., Seattle. \$3 SSG, \$5 general.

22 Story 'n Snack potluck dessert and story swap. 7:30 to 10 p.m. For information and directions, call 621-8646.

25 Story Corner with Debbie Dimitre, Bellevue Regional Library, 1111-110th NE, Bellevue, 450-1775, 1:30 p.m.

Out of Area



Jul 6-10 17th Annual National Storytelling Conference, Fort Worth, TX. Co-sponsored by NAPPS and the Tejas Storytelling Association. Contact NAPPS, P.O. Box 309, Jonesborough, TN, 37659, (615) 753-2171.

Jul 10, 17, 24 Stories at Craigdarroch Castle, Victoria B.C., 2-4 p.m., free with museum admission. Information: (604) 384-8084.

Jul 12-15 Johnson City, TN, International Storytelling Institute, East Tennessee State University. Contact Dr. Flora Joy, ETSU Box 70647, Johnson City, TN 37614-0647, (615) 929-4297.

Jul 14-17 The Storytellers School of Toronto Summer School, an intensive four-day immersion in storytelling. Offered at both beginning and advanced levels. 412-A College St., Toronto, Ontario M5T 1T3, (416) 924-8625, \$310.

Jul 30-Aug 10 Storytelling Ireland with Ray McGrath and other Irish Storytellers. Walks, seminars and workshops on storytelling in Irelands South-East and West Coast. Contact heritage Rambles, 31 High Street, Waterford, Ireland, (353) 51-82629, fax (353) 51-82689, \$1528 U.S.



Aug 11-19 CAJE 19 Storytelling Conference, "A Festival of Jewish Folklore and Folktales." For all details, contact the CAJE office in New York, 261 W. 35th St., Floor 12A, New York, NY 10001, (212) 268-4210, fax (212) 268-4214.

Sep 16-17 Corn Island Storytelling Festival, Louisville, KY, featuring Kathryn Windham, "the most important ghost tale collector in the South," and "grand lady of Southern ghost lore." Sponsored by the International Order of E.A.R.S., Inc. (502) 245-0643.

Begin Anticipating

Oct 15 Seventh Annual Northwest Storytelling Festival. Will include workshops and storytelling concerns. Nordic Heritage Museum. See article on Page 1.

Nov 19 Tellabration! National Night of Storytelling. Watch for Seattle location.



Calls for Tellers

Bay Days, a Maritime Festival in Tacoma, WA. September 20-October 2, 1994, seeks storytellers who specialize in maritime stories—stories of the sea, stories of ships, old salts, new environmental tales—are invited to contact Clare Petrich, 1118 East D Street, Tacoma, WA 98421, (206) 272-1005.

The Story Tree features storytelling on public radio. To submit your work for consideration, send a tape to: The Story Tree, P.O. Box 2465, Johnson City, TN 37605.

Cassette or reel to reel tapes are accepted. Material 2-10 minutes in length is especially welcome, but longer stories will be considered. Include information about yourself.

Tellers whose work is selected for broadcast will be given full credit and a short introduction of the teller will precede the story. Tapes cannot be returned, and they will not be used without the teller's release.

Co-Presidents: Cherie Trebon (525-0382) and Dawn Kuhlman (939-7117);
 Vice President: Margaret Read MacDonald (827-6430);
 Secretary: Gene Frieze (284-9469);
 Membership and Festival Directors: Debra Harris-Branham (772-0415) and Phyllis Silling (246-7636);
 Newsletter Editors: Susan Veltfort (322-2385) and Julie Miller (935-1471);
 Publicity: Kathleen Sider (524-1485);
 Volunteer Coordinator: Avis Jobrack (206-863-5025);
 Member at Large: Camille Wooden (854-2909).

In the Wind is the newsletter of the Seattle Storytellers' Guild, a non-profit organization, and is published quarterly. Membership in the Guild includes a year's subscription. Please check the expiration date on your label. Deadline for the Autumn issue is September 1, 1994.

For information about the Guild, call 621-8646.

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Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Date: _____

New: _____ Renewal: _____

____ Individual, \$15

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____ Donor, \$35

____ Lifetime, \$150

____ Muse, over \$150

____ I am interested in volunteering. Please
 call me to discuss how I may help.

____ Please include my name on mailing
 lists for related events.

Mail to: Seattle Storytellers' Guild, P.O.
 Box 45532, Seattle, WA 98145-0532.

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