

Perpetuating traditions of an ancient art

Storytellers from 22 states meet in convention

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

Detroit Story League will host storytellers from 22 states who convene July 8-11 in Dearborn Inn to share their expertise in the ancient traditions of the oral art.

Guests will be welcomed to any or all of the variety of activities scheduled by the host league and chaired by Linda Aldrich of Plymouth and Dinghy Sharp of Farmington Hills.

Guest speakers scheduled for the four day event are Gwen Frostic, Weldon Petz, Max Ellison and Verna Aardema.

The convention offers tours of Greenfield Village, luncheon programs, a variety of entertainment, workshops and impromptu, informal story telling sessions.

Guests may pick and choose from the schedule that will be sent upon request by contacting Mrs. Sharp, 31819 Marklawn, Farmington Hills, 48018.

The 1981 Central District Convention of National Story League was made possible by a grant from Michigan Council for the Arts.

The aim of the league, as written in its constitution, is "To encourage the creation and appreciation of all that is good and beautiful in art and literature through storytelling."

DETROIT STORY League consists of storytellers from throughout the metropolitan area. Members gather monthly to practice their art; then respond to requests for storytelling programs.

Some may perform with puppets, or in costume, or in poetry. Some perform alone, some in group presentations. Some storytellers are specialists in a given area of literature or history, or on a given subject.

The creativeness in the members' storytelling will be shown during the convention, when storytelling will be incorporated with choral music, a singalong, a banjo recital and Indian dancing.

"Stories from our guest speakers and all the programs scheduled for the convention will be enhanced by stories from the tellers in all the 22 states in Central District," Mrs. Sharp said.

The 22 states include about 45



Gwen Frostic



Weldon Petz



Verna Aardema

"The four scheduled story hours are really story-swapping time. That's when everyone joins in with their own personal favorites."

— storyteller Bob Kroepel of Farmington

leagues from the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachians, from border to border.

"The four scheduled story hours are really story-swapping time," said member Bob Kroepel of Farmington. "That's when everyone joins in with their own personal favorites."

The story hours Kroepel speaks of are scheduled for 3 p.m. Wednesday, and at 8:30 p.m. for the other three days of the convention.

Gwen Frostic, the guest speaker for the "Welcome Dinner on July 8, is an artist, lecturer, philosopher, poetess, publisher and author, who comes to the convention from her studio in Benzonia, a small village about 60 miles west of Traverse City.

At age 75, she is known as "the diminutive dynamo" who masterminds "Presscraft Papers," doing business in

all 50 states and 71 countries. She is the recipient of numerous honorary college degrees and countless civic awards.

Weldon Petz, educator, musician, author, lecturer and Lincoln scholar, is the after-luncheon speaker July 9.

Recognized nationally as the foremost living authority on the life of Abraham Lincoln, Petz will talk about the president and show some of the artifacts from his prodigious collection.

In 1972 Petz received the "Lincoln Diploma of Honor" which joined him in an elite and select group which includes Raymond Massey, Robert Sherwood and Carl Sandberg.

The West Bloomfield resident is principal of Flanders Elementary School in Farmington who has continued his research on the life of President Lincoln after he completed his masters thesis on the man.

MAX ELLISON, storyteller, poet and artist, takes the podium after dinner on July 9.

Ellison's formal education in a one-room schoolhouse in Frog Holler, near Traverse City, ended in the eighth grade. But his poetry, colored with images of history, folklore, nature and the simple greatness of common people, bespeaks a man who qualifies for a doctorate in practicality.

Known as "The Wandering Minstrel," Ellison writes and paints as he crisscrosses the country giving recitations. He has published work for Wayne State University and Kentucky Educational TV.

Verna Aardema Vugteveen, who uses Aardema as her pen name, is the guest speaker for July 10. A storyteller from Muskegon and author of 13 books, she holds the 1976 Caldecott Award for the illustrations done in "Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears."

For 21 years she has entranced second graders with her tales.

Now her time is spent mostly in travel, keeping up with requests for her talks and lectures, or heading up storytelling workshops.

Her latest book, "Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain" has just arrived in most area public libraries.

Theme for the storytellers convention is "Ways to Grow."



Max Ellison brings a true appreciation for the language, for storytelling, for imagery and for life in his native rural Michigan to his audience. The poet and artist addresses members of National Story League's Central District when they meet in convention July 8-11.

Club honors its golf pro

Preston Meisel, golf professional at Farmington Country Club for the past 24 years, will be honored Tuesday with "Preston Meisel Stag Day."

The event is open to guests who may make reservations by calling the club, 553-3333.

Lunch at noon, golf throughout the afternoon, cocktails and dinner are on the day's schedule.

Immediately following dinner, Ray Lane, Detroit sportscaster, will serve as master of ceremonies for a Preston Meisel Roast.

Is 'invisible parochialism' robbing schools?

By Shirlee Iden
staff writer

Even though Michigan voters defeated state aid for private schools in 1970, "invisible parochialism" is diverting millions of dollars from public education, according to a member of the State Board of Education.

Annette Miller, in a speech before members of the American Jewish Congress at their annual Rose Frenkel Memorial Meeting in Southfield, charged that what sounded then like a signal from citizens that public funds not be used to support private education seems to have been muffled in the ensuing decade.

The 1970 parochialism appropriations proposal would have given \$22 million to non-public schools. Instead, voters adopted an amendment to the state constitution prohibiting state aid to pre-elementary, elementary and secondary schools, 1.4 million votes to one million votes.

"Parochialism lost that year but strong voices for it were not silenced," Mrs. Miller noted.

"Back in 1970 when I got elected with your help, I ran as an anti-parochial candidate, but I didn't know much about it."

Though the \$22 million grant to non-public schools became illegal with the 1970 vote, Mrs. Miller said she has seen many millions of dollars diverted from public education.

"I'm concerned about parochialism itself, but also about special education, programs for gifted and others and the children that need them," she said.

"Parochialism eats into funds for these programs. What I have seen is the growth of what I call 'invisible parochialism.'"

BORN IN Indiana, Mrs. Miller attended nursing school in Philadelphia as well as Wayne State University. During World War II she was as an officer in the Army Nurse Corps, serving overseas.

A resident of Huntington Woods, she is married to Sidney Miller, a physician, and is the mother of three sons.

After a failed campaign to win nomination for Congress in 1970, Mrs. Miller was elected to an eight year term on the State Board of Education. In 1978, she was re-elected and has served as vice president of the board.



"Millions of tax dollars are being diverted to private schools and more will go to them though they discriminate about who can go there and who can teach there. The best possible education for all children is what we want, and the way to see that we get it is to help the public schools."

— Annette Miller

An active Democrat, she is a national vice president of Americans for Democratic Action, has been Michigan ADA Chairman and was vice president of the Council About Better Education.

An opponent of the use of tax dollars to support religion in the schools, Mrs. Miller said that support for public education in Michigan has declined continually since 1967. "And higher education has faced a similar decline," she added.

"In the past 10 years, only private colleges have gained in support from the state."

She pointed out that many services that are funded with tax dollars for private schools are unaccounted for.

"These are subtle forms of parochialism whose costs have never been assessed," she said.

"There are no figures on how many tax dollars pay for private school busing, for nutrition, for school psychologists and social workers. When children spend in shared time programs in parochial schools, the public schools pay."

MRS. MILLER said that although 11 to 12 percent of the state's college students are in private schools, they get about one-third of the competitive scholarship money available, about \$5 million.

"It's an unfair percentage," she con-

tends. "They compete in the competitive exams and if they don't win, they can get funds on need through programs not available to public college students."

"All the \$34 million short-fall in higher education in the state today is in the public sector. No private college student has ever been turned down."

She said some \$15 million has been added in tuition grants to private colleges since 1973.

"All of these increases have come despite the resounding defeat of Proposal C," she said.

"Grand Rapids Baptist College gets \$358,000 in public monies, yet one must have a pastor's reference and claim 'Christian testimony' to get in."

"Schools like this, and many others, have religious requirements for those they allow to teach. I need your help in fighting this invisible parochialism and encroachment of the separation between church and state."

In that vein, Mrs. Miller said she believes that prayer in the schools is parochialism. "It's an out-and-out support of religion in the public schools. The costs to our students and their families is great."

SHE EXPECTS the controversial school prayer bill to get through the Michigan House of Representatives

and into the senate without difficulty.

"Our only hope in the senate lies with senators like Jack Faxon, who will oppose it. Since he's chairman of the education committee, we expect the bill to go to his committee. We're going to have to work very hard to defeat it."

Another area in which she urged help in defeating legislation is at the federal level. "We must work to beat a tuition tax credit which is being proposed," she said.

"The cutbacks in education are already so severe. They are affecting the state library, vocational rehabilitation, special education programs, hampering hiring of needed personnel, and will probably mean that linguistics programs will be cut."

Mrs. Miller said a new phenomenon in the state are the six new Christian schools that were opened last year.

"State law requires that we check that they are safe and offer programs comparable to the public schools," she said. "They not even tell us how many students they have."

When the State Board of Education sued for this information, the courts ruled against them, she explained.

"ANYONE having \$25,000 can legally purchase a charter for a state college and then have the right to grant degrees," she said. "That's why we have a Scientology school in Clawson, and there are others we don't even know about."

She said one charter was bought by the Allen Touro College, based in New York, for a school in Southfield.

"But they are checking closely as to what the standards are and what requirements they must meet unlike many private schools. I resent giving them public dollars as much as to any Christian school, but they are trying to do the right thing."

Mrs. Miller considers funding of the non-public schools a perversion of the principal of public education.

"Millions of tax dollars are being diverted to private schools and more will go to them though they discriminate about who can go there and who can teach there."

"The best possible education for all children is what we want and the way to see that we get it is to help the public schools," she said, urging that her audience vote for millages and let their legislators know how they feel about funds being diverted from public schools.

Nostalgic Wicker Rockers

CLASSIC DESIGNS FOR TODAY'S LIVING!

Echoes of warm summer breezes...lazy afternoons rocking on the porch...lemonade 'n' mini slings...Wicker brings back nostalgic memories. Our collection includes these three great rockers...two in white and a tall one woven in toasted wicker...all ONE GREAT PRICE! We have just 24 in stock to sell at this low, sale price!



Your Choice \$199.

VISA CARD, MASTER CARD, WICOS PLAN 35 OPEN MON. THURS. 9 AM - 5 PM. 544-1111

Wiggo

TELEGRAPH RD. at LONG LAKE RD. BLOOMFIELD HILLS