

Preserving the art of story telling

The old art of storytelling is alive and well. This reassuring statement comes from Linda Aldrich of Plymouth, president of the Detroit Story League. She describes the league as a service organization.

Members offer their services to children of all ages in hospitals, in public and church schools, in camps, and in libraries.

Aldrich's storytelling skills are come into effective use in her first-grade classroom in the Clarenceville School District. She has attentive listeners among the fifth-graders in the Novi schools when they spend a week at camp. And when she returned to her hometown of Vermontville, Mich., she discovered that a senior citizens group was enthralled by a good story.

Through stories the teller challenges others to laugh, to be happy, to be brave, to be comforted, to travel in faraway places, to know interesting and great people of every race and creed.

THE DETROIT Story League was founded 70 years ago by Mary Conover of the Detroit Children's Library. It is a branch of the central division of the National Story League.

"The central division stretches from Michigan to Texas," said Aldrich. "There also are eastern and western divisions."

The national organization began in the summer of 1903 in Knoxville, Tenn.

More than 2,000 teachers from all sections of the country had gathered for a conference. Each evening a few teachers congregated on the lawn of the university and told stories. The meetings grew from attendance of several dozen to several hundred.

At their last meeting they organized into a Story

Tellers' League which afterwards became the National Story League.

Its one fundamental purpose was to discover in the world's literature history and life, the best stories. They would tell them to the young people with love and sympathy.

ALDRICH said members of the league collect stories.

Some use poetry. Some use gestures. Some sit quietly and use a conversational tone of voice.

She utilizes many-pokked aprons for some of her stories. She has a grandma's apron, poetry apron.

The storytellers share stories. She has about 20 in her collection.

"I memorize my stories; a good story is worth memorizing. I have seen a storyteller take a three-paragraph story and elaborate on it," she said.

They always are looking for new stories, buying out-of-print books and adding to their libraries. She said some very old stories have been revived. With artwork they have become best sellers among the new books for children.

Conventions present opportunities for sharing stories from all over the world. She says some wonderful tales have come from Africa.

One of their members collects southern ghost stories.

LEAGUE members have taped stories for the blind and for radio programs.

Aldrich said television and picture books have not taken away children's interest in a good story.

"They love the opportunity to use their imagination."

The national group chooses a central theme for each year. This year it is "Memories." In keeping

with this, the Detroit Story League will have "Golden Rule Days" for its September theme.

Serving with Aldrich as league officers are Donna Teichman of Redford Township as vice president, Ruth Breault of Westland as treasurer, and Kate Allan of Redford Township as secretary.

Persons interested in membership can call Roberta Bullough, 464-7084; Ruth Kroepel, 477-5622; or Aldrich, 420-2588.

Aldrich said the professional storytellers have their own organization. It is the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Story Tellers.

Charles Laughton, great professional story teller, said, "I like stories better than anything else that is made by man."

Members of the story league agree with this quote from Laughton's book, "Tell Me a Story."

Charity cards to be published

The Observer & Eccentric plans its annual publication of information on charity Christmas and Hanukkah cards on Thursday, Oct. 21. Pictures of cards being sold by charitable organizations, together with information on ordering them, will appear in the newspaper's Suburban Life section on that date.

Extra space will be devoted to cards on that date in an effort to serve better the fund-raising efforts of support organizations and persons in the community interested in purchasing charity cards.

Every effort will be made to publish on Oct. 21 all cards received by Oct. 10, as space permits.

In addition to the published listings, display books of charity cards will be available for public viewing in the Observer & Eccentric offices at 1225 Bowers, Birmingham, and 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, beginning Monday, Oct. 25.

Send three copies of cards to be published to Margaret Miller, Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, 48150.

Slovaks dance at market

The Sarisan Slovak Dancers, a troupe created and led by Farmington Hills resident Milan Straka, will be among the performers when the International Institute stages its Old World Market Sept. 30-Oct. 3.

The dance group will take the stage at 8 p.m. Oct. 2 in the institute on Kirby and John R, Detroit.

Born in the Depression, Old World Market was conceived as a means for new immigrants to earn a little money by selling their old world crafts.

Now more than 900 institute volunteers work to prepare the four-day event. The market offers crafts, food, dance and music from those who come from about 50 nations.

Entertainment runs continuously during market hours, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sept. 30 through Oct. 2 and closes at 5 p.m. Sunday.

Admission is \$1.50 for adults, 50 cents for children and \$1 for seniors.

The institute, which is a Torch Drive agency, has been aiding new immigrants to the Detroit area for 60 years. It has multi-lingual social service departments which serviced nearly 2,000 clients last year.

It also offers ethnic education programs for school children, English language classes for the foreign born and a series of continuous ethnic events representing the different ethnic communities of metropolitan Detroit.

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