

Telling tales

Prairie Center hosts third annual storytelling festival

By LARA JACKSON

The next time a child asks you, "Tell me a story," consider it carefully. Does the child simply want you to read a story or to tell one?

There's a world of difference between the mere reading of a printed story and the more engaging act of performing a tale.

A good place to discover the newest practitioners of this ancient art is the third annual storytelling festival at the Prairie Center for the Arts in Schaumburg on March 10.

Storytelling likely began as a means for cultures to fight boredom and entertain their fellow clansmen. Some of those early tales of heroic feats, legends and fantastic creatures still survive today.

Storytelling events — which have experienced a resurgence in the past few years — are often more personal experiences for the audience than a movie or even a play. The listeners become in-

"As we become more technologically advanced, there is a need for more intimacy — we need that 'human touch.'"

— Storyteller
Beth Horner

involved with the tale the performer is weaving.

The Prairie Center began hosting its festival after the Wild Onion Festival in Evanston ended its run, leaving a void for storytelling events in the area, said Lucinda Flodin, development coordinator for the Prairie Center.

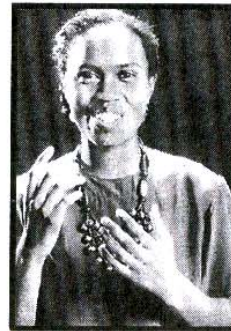
"As the cliché goes, 'When a door closes, a window opens,' she said. "Well, we wanted to be that window when the Wild Onion Festival closed."

This year's five featured storytellers have all appeared at the National Story-

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Ianice Harrington

A professional storyteller, Harrington is the director of children's services at the Champaign Public Library. Her story "The Devil's Dulcimer" appears in "Talk That Talk," an anthology of African-American stories.



Bill Harley

A regular commentator on National Public Radio and a 1999 Grammy nominee, Harley has made 18 recordings of songs and stories and written four children's books. His humorous yet meaningful work chronicles the lives of children at school and home.



Beth Horner

Striking a balance between traditional and contemporary storytelling, Horner draws on folklore for her humorous tales, accompanying herself on autoharp. She has performed around the country.



Susan O'Halloran

O'Halloran's stories explore the complex issues of race, politics and human relationships, engaging her audience with an empathy for human suffering and a passionate wit.



Jon Spelman

Recipient of a Children's Radio Award, an Achievement in Children's Television Award and two Emmys, Spelman has been heard on public radio and at the Smithsonian Institution, the Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center.

Storytelling Festival

10
Center for the Arts
Schaumburg Court, Schaumburg

9 a.m.: **Storytelling Workshop** by Bill Harley. \$30. Learn the trade and how to shape experiences into memorable for families, friends and funerals.

11 a.m.: **Family Story Sampler**. \$7. The featured tellers presents its short story with a universal that's sure to charm kids, parents and their parents' par-

5:30 p.m.: **An Afternoon with Storytellers**. \$12 (\$10 students & seniors). Hour-long sessions by each storyteller.

7 p.m.: **Storytelling for Adults**. \$12 (students and seniors). Each presents a story that reaches an adult audience. Themes include equality, love and humanity lore.

Admission: **Pass** (Sampler, Afternoon & Concerts): \$22 (\$20 students & seniors).

For more information, call (847) 895-3600. TDD: 5-3638.