

SPOTLIGHT

Stories about 'Wild Women' related at Beverly Art Center

By Terry Loncaric

Nancy Donoval says weird people just find her.

But she doesn't mind because this just gives her more material for stories.

"Somebody once told me I don't have to do research for stories," says the Rodgers Park storyteller. "I'm just kind of a magnet for weirdness. Stories just kind of attach themselves to me."

Donoval brings her twisted sense of humor to the stage when

Storyfest offers enjoyment for all ages

Storyfest, a day-long festival of storytelling, will unfold at the Beverly Art Center, 2153 W. 111th St., Chicago, on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. prior to the 8 p.m. performance of "Mothers and Other Wild Women."

During the day there will be on-going story sessions every hour for all ages, presented throughout the Center by creative and inventive tellers of tales.

Clowns and face painting will add to the fun, as well as tasty treats.

A variety of artists and crafters will sell hand-made works of art that are decorative as well as useful.

Kidzwrites showcases the work of young authors, and adults

she joins her friends, Beth Horner and Susan O'Halloran, to present "Mothers and Other Wild Women" on Saturday at 8 p.m. at the Beverly Art Center, 2153 W. 111th St., Chicago.

The event caps a storytelling festival that begins at 10 a.m. in the Art Center and lasts until 5 p.m. An art fair is part of the festivities.

Donoval, O'Halloran and Horner explore motherhood, wild experiences and even romance in their evening of storytelling.

will demonstrate their skills at weaving a tale.

Featured storytellers from the Beverly area include Joyn Miller Bean and Peg Scott.

Scott will tell Shel Silverstein's "The Giving Tree" to children and have them act it out.

In addition to their evening performance in "Mothers and Other Wild Women," Nancy Donoval, Beth Horner and Susan O'Halloran will each offer story sessions for children, teens and adults in the afternoon.

A \$5 admission at the door will entitle individuals to all of the daytime story sessions.

Tickets for the evening program are \$10.

More details are at (312) 445-3838.

"Every story we tell breaks down a stereotype," Donoval relates. "These stories say that everyone has their own strengths, their own flaws, their own wildness."

Donoval will talk about a memorable trip she took with her mom to Paris when she was a teenager, while O'Halloran will share a story about dealing with a rebellious teenage son, and Horner will present a spoof on romance novels inspired by reading a Danielle Steele novel during a vacation in a family cabin.

The three women switch from telling stories together to sharing more personal remembrances.

Donoval says they work well as a team because she and Horner are actresses who know how to interpret stories, while O'Halloran has a flair for comedy and scripting.

"Sue is a writer who performs her stories," Donoval explains. "She works very carefully with every phrase before it goes in front of an audience."

"I am baffled by that. I have to tell the story out loud. Very few of my stories are on paper."

One of Donoval's favorite tales, which she will share Saturday night, is Jane Yolen's "Mountain Lady," the saga of a woman who dies in childbirth but returns as a vampire.

Donoval says she likes this story because it isn't creepy in the way most vampire stories are.

"I like stories that combine elements of great sadness and great humor," Donoval remarks. "We expect vampire stories to be bloody or brutal, but this is one story that takes mother love and looks at it from an extreme."

Though the nationally-renowned storytellers slip in an



Regaling audiences with stories of "Mothers and Other Wild Women" are (left to right) Sue O'Halloran, Beth Horner and Nancy Donoval.

occasional folk tale or ghost story, most of the stories the women tell are inspired by real-life experiences.

Audiences identify with these stories, Donoval says, and that is what makes storytelling more rewarding for her than acting in a theatrical production.

Storytelling, she says, is a theater of the mind that actively engages the imaginations of the listeners.

"The role of the storyteller," she relates, "is to bring stories to the audience that help them to know themselves better through the life of the story."

Often after a performance people in the audience are moved to share their stories.

"People are hungry to know

that the stories in their lives are important," Donoval reflects.

The popularity of storytelling workshops throughout the country offers proof that people still crave human connect.

By sharing our stories, Donoval observes, we are given permission to connect.

"I think the thing that makes storytelling so wonderful is that it calls to the adults in children just as it calls to the children in adults.

"It helps children to stretch their imaginations, and it helps adults to come back to a place where they can believe in things."

Tickets to "Mothers and Other Wild Women" are \$10, and tickets to the Storyfest are \$5, available by phoning (312) 445-3838.