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frisco's first storytelling festival

by natalie medigovich

MOST OF US TODAY FIND OURSELVES MULTI-TASKING, but not by choice. However, an opportunity to accomplish many pleasurable things at once awaits those who attend Frisco's first ever Storytelling Festival October 8 & 9.

Frisco Storytelling Festival goers will be treated to a variety of fables from ancient cultures, retellings of Native American legends, hilarious chronicles of childhood misadventures and music guaranteed to make your hands clap and toes tap. During these two magical days and nights, stroll through the beautiful Frisco Commons Park and watch puppet shows, musicians, folk artists and craft demonstrations such as quilting, leatherwork and pottery, providing fun for all ages.

The Library Foundation is organizing the event as a major fundraiser for the public library, which recently celebrated its groundbreaking for their new location in Frisco Square. Plans call for completion and relocation to the new facility in 2006. The newly remodeled Frisco Commons Park, (formerly Friendship Park) has become the city's primary location to hold major outdoor city events. The Storytelling Festival is the inaugural event for the park with the Frisco Association of the Arts as title sponsor.

Storytelling is the art of creating characters and plots in the listeners' minds without the aid of printed material and are referred to as "concerts." Some storytellers use props such as musical instruments to enrich listeners' experiences and many include movement to keep viewers intrigued. Considered to be a lost art, several areas of the country have been enjoying the festival atmosphere of world-class storytellers for three decades.

Six award-winning storytellers from around the country will share their enthusiastic and entertaining art form. They include: Carol Birch, praised as a spontaneous skillful weaver of images and moods; Gladys Coggsell, master folk artist who shares stories from her childhood and the nation's history and known for getting her audience involved; Heather Forest, who's unique minstrel style and sparkling voice is a delight to hear; David Holt, a talented instrumentalist who tells stories of the South; David Novak, who's theatrics are a treat in themselves; and Tim Tingle, who shares Native American and ghost stories known to keep listeners on the edge of their seats. Most of the nationally acclaimed performers have published books, CDs and/or tapes and will have their wares for sale at the Festival Store.

Regional storytellers Cathy Crowley, known for her gift of blarney and ability to make audiences laugh out loud and Karen Tipton, who has been storytelling and playing music since childhood as well as six local Fisd students will also share the limelight with the headliners.

After researching the family-oriented event in other cities for two years, Shelley Holley from the public library and Marcy Jones from Frisco Parks and Recreation department agreed bringing storytelling entertainment to Frisco was a great idea. Fisd has planned Friday as a field trip day for grades three through seven. While soggy weather has delayed the reopening of Frisco Commons Park, it won't cancel the fun-filled weekend, attendees will be sheltered under canopies instead of under the stars at the park's new amphitheater. A parking shuttle also is reserved in the event of inclement weather. Chairs will be provided, but it is important to note that there is no reserved seating and storytellers begin promptly.

Frisco hopes to create a recurring community event that is family focused while showcasing the new park. For a schedule of events and ticket information, or to become sponsor, contact the library at 972-335-5510 or log on at www.frisco-storytellingfestival.org.

Natalie Medigovich is a freelance writer living in Frisco.