

ETH-NOH-NEWS



Building Community, Sharing The Arts, Listening and Telling Stories Around the World.

Fall Winter 2010 Newsletter

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Eth-Noh-Tec is growing green with a hands-on approach. **Page 1**

SALON: YEAR 6!

ENT rallies another season of fantastic artists and organizations **Page 1**

CHINA REPORT: IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

Our 4th visit to the traditional Gengcun Storytelling Village. changes are coming! **Page 3**

SMITHSONIAN JOURNEY STORIES

What do stories of immigration, the Holocaust and Rumi Poetry have in common? Find out. **Page 2**

ZELLERBACH FUNDS NEW WORKS

ENT wins an award to create new works!. **Page 1**

NATIONAL FESTIVAL

4th time on the National Stage with some surprises!. **Page 2**

It's All About COMMUNITY!

Green Grew Our Garden!

Who knew we had a green thumb?! Certainly not us! But who would know in an urban setting? So this summer, we made a garden on Orcas Island! Though it was a cool summer, we were able to grow many vegetables: zucchini, beans, peas, turnips, beets, lettuce, kale, rainbow chard, cabbage, Japanese greens, mustard greens, basil, green onions, parsley, tarragon, and shucks – green tomatoes! It was a lot of work, but oh so rewarding to see the miracle of what seeds, starters, dirt, water and sun can do! Whoa! And what a delight to go out and pick your food fresh! Hmmmm... Try it! You'll like it! There are many vegetables that can grow in pots. We had all the herbs, some tomatoes and lettuces on the deck. The rest were in the ground, but



Reduce Carbon Footprint- Raise your own Greens- eat more GREEN

in fact, neighbors grew squash in a pot. Green green green the world and share the produce with friends!

Zellerbach Funds New Works!

We were gratefully awarded \$1500 from Zellerbach Family Foundation to write 12 new pieces. So far we have written from India: *"The Omen Bird"* - a magical love story between a prince and princess wrought with fateful omens, and *"The Kingdom of Fools"* – as the title infers, the satirical story of one kingdom of fools where everything is backwards and upside down, where right is wrong and wrong is right. Unfortunately, in our world, there are way too many of these kingdoms of this description!

Another new piece is *"Monkey in the Tree"* from Tibet – the story of our inability as humans to keep a clear

Dan Goldensohn is ON! at the Salon!



"Bittersweet" informs and entertains the listeners about immigration and family relations

mind; *"Monkey Wind"* from the Philippines – the story of gentle power greater than forceful power, and finally Robert's mother's magical *"New Pair of Wings"* immigration story to America at the age of five.

Nancy also recently completed her mother piece *"Bittersweet"* commissioned by storyteller Sue O'Halloran and Father Derek Simon of RaceBridges. It has been a very healing process, one that is recommended to all those who have lost a parent, a child, a dear one. Researching and writing the story of that person and your relationship brings closure and peace.

Salon! You're On! 6th Season!

And these wonderful, warm and welcoming monthly evenings is exactly where you get to see Eth-Noh-Tec's new pieces, along with an exciting array of other Bay Area performers. This year we will continue our mandate to weave in more salon collabora-

tions with other arts groups and organizations. Some of the exciting partnerships will be with the following arts organizations: **Young Audiences of Northern California, Philippine American Writers Association, Asian American Women Artist Association, Storytellers Association of California.** Each of these organizations come with their community connections to dozens of Bay Area artists. By collaborating, ENT hopes to broaden our outreach, advocate for more arts and storytelling in the community. So be on the lookout for our next series: www.ethnohtec.org/salon



"Hugsfest" at ENT Studio engages with artists from Young Audiences of No. California- one of our Salon partnerships.

ON THE NATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL STAGE AGAIN!

There are numerous storytelling festivals around the world – perhaps one every weekend of the year somewhere in the world. America’s foremost festival is this one: **The National Storytelling Festival.** Over 12,000 adults and older kids gather for 3 days in 5 tents to hear the national featured tellers of America and abroad every first weekend of October. This year, Ethnohtec was one of the 20 national tellers featured where we performed our new pieces and Nancy’s mother’s story “Bittersweet” which was followed by a standing ovation! **Most Popular - not our stories?** Oh, there were lots of thank you’s and compliments for our work as we

strolled the pedestrians-only Main Street of this quaint town called Jonestown ... and yes, lots of requests for photos and autographs. But, this was not the reason for our most frequent stops as we strolled Main Street.

Two of the most common remarks were how well we handled the train coming past the tent as we performed a story and how funny we handled the microphone failure! These two situations happened to us on the same day during two different performances.

Train you ask? Yep! Every teller dreads the train that rumbles past 1 of the tents. You can hear it coming from afar. You brace yourself as the sound gets closer and the train whistle begins its tooting.

This particular train seemed to last for 5 full minutes during which the ‘bird’ of our story ended up flitting about on stage for what seemed an eternity. And after such an interruption, who can remember where we were in the story?!

As for the microphone failure, we had to shout, then the mike would come back on and we’d end up blasting our lines! Other times we tried to share the same mike clipped to Nancy’s costume. It was a Laurel and Hardy-3 Stooges storytelling routine!

So, our 2010 national appearance is now remembered as the funny tellers handling the horrors of performance! The art? Ah phooey! It seems audiences love to see how vulnerable tellers are and how they can improvise. They get to feel they know us a bit more intimately in how we handle mistakes and challenges.

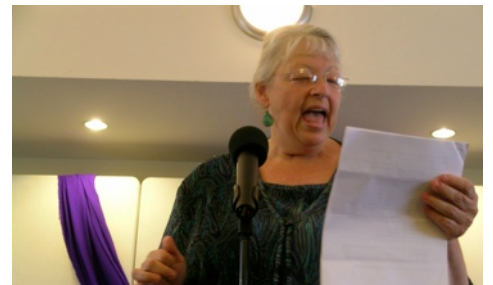


Journey Tales: Anji Ringzin, Nancy Wang, RKY and Ginni Stern: the Journey’s team

Speaking of Festivals...

This summer on Orcas Island, Nancy produced a one-day event called **“Journeys that Shape our Lives,”** a storytelling program in conjunction with **Smithsonian’s Journey Stories** traveling exhibit and held at the Senior Center performance space.

The program consisted of 4 performers: 1) Nancy’s mother piece that includes her family history from the first generation that arrived in California in 1850 through to her mother’s own 4th generation; 2) Robert’s mother’s immigration story, his song of the



Ginni Stern shares stories of Holocaust survival and family healing.

“Manongs (elders) of Walnut Grove”, Ca. and his song: **“Carry On”** ; 3) **Ginni Stern’s** journey story of her many annual **Bearing Witness** pilgrimages to Auschwitz that she helps organize for Zen Peacemakers; and 4) Rumi’s poetry of the journey of the heart performed by **Anji Ringzin** with music accompaniment by Robert.

The program was standing room only and very well received by way of a

standing ovation! If you'd like any of us to perform for your function, let us know. It's a lovely winning combination.

Thanks to the performers, the audience, the Senior Center, the Museum on Main St. and the Orcas Center!



2010 Nu Wa Delegates on steps of Summer Palace (and Linda Fang too seen below)

Nu Wa Storytelling Delegation to China 2010

Many of you already know – whether you've been to China with us or you know someone who has – about the storytelling tours we take tellers, artists and story lovers to in China. It's a very special, heart-warming and life-changing way to meet the majority of Chinese in China – their rural villagers. But, this farming village we go to is not just any village! Gengcun is a village with a storytelling tradition that has been in place for over 600 years.

Our 4th Delegation

This was our 4th tour there, but in no way was it redundant. In fact, it was like returning to our home away from home. They're storytellers like us! And, they feel the same about us. Each time we arrive, they welcome us like family who've been away far too long. They always welcome us with hugs and smiles, drumming and dancing, clapping and ceremony. They waited for us to arrive to have their

opening ceremony for a new and beautiful Chinese gateway to their village. We then got right down to the purpose of the tour: to share stories and build bridges between our cultures, our countries.

Teens Join us in the Village

This time, 13 international 8th grade students from the **International School of Beijing (ISB)** joined us in the village. Eth-Noh-Tec and **Greg Thomas**, Middle School Curriculum Director of ISB, put this exchange project together. Each student learned about folktales and storytelling from their brilliant Chinese language



Youth, energy and laughter brightens the mood of our delegation

teacher **Delinda Liu**, who had prepared them for our one-day workshop and coaching sessions. They then met us in Gengcun, and you can imagine the sparkle and energy they brought to our group and to Gengcun: 13 bouncing teenagers! They joined our 3 groups in the homes of the tellers and told their stories in Mandarin. They even helped in translating the Chinese tellers' stories to us non-Chinese speaking Americans! Hopefully the school will follow up on keeping these exchanges with the village and making Gengcun part of their own bridge-building project.

Village Changing



New gateway welcomes Americans to the storytelling community.

Much has changed in the village. We see larger homes being built, old homes being torn down, and also a seeming emptier village. Four elder tellers passed away since our last visit in 2007, taking with them 100s of their stories. Children are few with their 20-30+ year old parents working in big cities. The school has only two of the seven classrooms opened. This is one of the effects of globalization and our economic times. We are very concerned about their storytelling tradition. To whom will they pass down their stories?

What can be done to sustain the village and tradition?

We are very committed to helping this village and their tradition thrive. We must find a way to economically keep the young adults in the village. Sev-



Nancy Wang and Linda Fang flank Master Teller Jin jing Xiang (knows over 500 tales!)

eral ideas have been brainstormed by their village council on how to do that:

(1) A TV animated series of their stories;

(2) Develop a Geng Village Arts and

Crafts establishment as a tourist commodity as well as to promote a pick-it-yourself fruit, cucumber, green bean harvesting industry;

(3) Cultural Club: presenting local folk opera performances, Yangko team, drum team, the official umbrella-colored silk performance, and their whole warm-up aerobics program.

(4) Agricultural Demonstrations & Exhibit: hoeing, planting, picking cotton, wood shavings, raw yam, picked green vegetables.

(5) Geng Park: clay statues of widely circulated known stories of filial piety; the park would have Bagua Zhen, Lion King joy, Longtenghuyue lanterns, sheep, carts, monkey climbing pole, Pig back wife.

(6) Small Farmhouse show, so visitors a day or two can learn old style cooking of corn pancake buns, vegetable dumplings, etc.

(7) Summer Nights On the Streets: storytelling at night, experiencing the rural Summer Night.

(8) Organic Domestic Chicken farming: tour and a tasty meal.

(9) Lantern Story

Design: from Peter Liu, a very dedicated and the best ever guide, he contributed this idea: Design scenes from stories on Lanterns with proceeds to the village.

UNESCO

Though we always donate a few thousand dollars each time we go, they will need much more to sustain this treasure, this traditional storytelling village. We are working on an application to UNESCO to certify them as a village and tradition worth preserving. Once this is done, the doors are open for more help!

If you have any ideas or ‘ins’ to any organization



Nu Wa Gems and Gengcun villagers discussing the Temple renovation project.

or corporation that could help, please let us know. And join us in 2012 – our next visit.

Check out our blog on our 2010 trip to China and get a real flavor of our time there:

www.ethnohtec.org/category/programs/tours/china-2010/

Sample Stories from Gengcun Storytelling Village told by Hou Guo Guo, a 67-year-old woman:



Hou Guo Guo also plays a mean drum!

1. **“Brother Lice”** There once were 2 lice that were sworn brothers: One was 17 years old and the other 18

years old. Both were very hungry.

“Since I am the elder lice, I will go to a rich family for my meal. You go to the poor family.” But, within a few hours, they met again to discuss their meals. The younger lice complained: “You must have eaten well, my brother. You went to the rich family.”

“Oh no. It was very disappointing,” sighed the elder lice. “They were so rich, they changed their clothes three times a day! There was no chance to settle in. How about you?”

“Oh,” replied the younger brother. “My family wore no clothes at all. They were too poor. And not only that, they stood by the fire three times a day to keep warm. I barely escaped with my life!” [Moral of the story? It doesn’t pay to be a parasite. Work!!]

2. **“Ugly Son-in-Law”** There was a family consisting of a father, a mother and their two married daughters. Number 1 daughter married rich and number 2 daughter married poor. Now the mother was quite the complainer and always announced to everyone that she was always right: “Look at that poor number 2 son-in-law - so ugly! He looks ugly, walks ugly, eats ugly. I much prefer my rich son-in-law. I know I am right about this!”



Hou Guo Guo spins a yarn

The father replied: “But the rich husband is bad – he eats too much, drinks too much, gambles and goes to prostitutes. I like the poor husband. He works hard and is a good son-in-law.”

Each New Year both daughters and sons-in-law would visit with gifts and spend the night after a grand feast. The poor husband brought a few gifts while the rich husband brought many. After the banquet, the mother, also very nosy, decided to check on her sleeping sons-in-law.

As she crept with a lantern into the bedroom of the poor son-in-law, she saw that this poor man even slept ugly! He tossed and turned, scratched his legs... “Ah ya! He looks like an upside-down turtle waving its feet in the air!” She then crept into the rich son-in-law’s room and saw him sleeping soundly and so handsomely.

A year passed and it was the New Year holiday again. Much had happened in that year, however. Both sons-in-law had become richer. But the rich son-in-law had also become lazy and in due time, began losing money. By the new year, he could only bring a few gifts. On the other hand, the poor son-in-law had worked hard, saved his money and bought land. And this time he brought more gifts. Once again, the mother crept into their bedrooms to look: “Look how beautiful Number

2 son-in-law sleeps. I have noticed he looks very good and walks very good. But, ah ya! Number 1 son-in-law is so ugly! Look how he shrinks like a lobster!” The father replied: “But you said before the very opposite!” “Noooo,” boosted the mother. “I always said my rich son-in-law was the best!”
[Moral of the story? Mothers ARE always right!]

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ENT OPENS ANNUAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Each Fall, Robert presents a power-point and demonstration for Asian American Studies Course #304 “Community Arts” course taught by Professor **Valerie Soe**. Part of the class requirements is a 20 hour community service internship with a local Asian American arts non-profit. This Fall 5 students were selected to work with Eth-Noh-Tec. Their duties include research, marketing, and general assistance. This comes at a critical time as they launched right away in helping us process our annual fund-



raising letter. With their help and people power we were able to get our fundraising campaign mailed on time! Our hats off to the following student interns: **Charmaine Rosales, Patag Xiong, Daphnee Valdez, Raeann Limun, Miranda Tsang.** The intern-

ship offers students first hand experience in what it takes to run a non-profit arts organization. When asked about their involvement in the program Charmaine Rosales (pre-nursing major) said: “I never knew there were so many arts groups (like Eth-Noh-Tec) doing wonderful work in the community!”.

ETH-NOH-TEC: OUR PEEPS!

Board Members: Don Nguyen, pres., Jill Williams, sec./treas., Rhodessa Jones, Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo, Ric Trimillos, Nancy Wang, Dorothy Wong.

Advisory Board: PJ Hirabayashi, Alina Hua, Kay Kleinerman, Bill Tamayo, Gloria Unti.

Staff: Nancy Wang and Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo, co-directors, Diana Thompson, office manager, Simon Murage, volunteer accounting and bookkeeper.

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What people are saying:

“Oh Nancy, I loved hearing your story!! What a wonderful, wonderful story with so many themes woven together so well. I was riveted the entire time. My attention never lagged. I found myself learning a lot, experiencing so many emotions and even relating to the mother-daughter relationship.” **Beth Horner, storyteller, Columbia MO**

“You and Robert were brilliant at the Festival last weekend.” **Len Cabral, storyteller, Providence RI**

“You’re doing such positive, wonderful work. I hope to get the pleasure of

being in your audience again someday soon.” **Jim Beatty**, movement performance artist, northern CA

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Other quotes: “Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life.” Pablo Picasso

“Regret for the things we did can be tempered by time; it is regret for the things we did not do that is inconsolable.”

“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.” Jasper Johns

“You can’t have everything! Where would you put it?” Steven Wright

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Thank you to all our friends and family for all your support. Your donations have been much needed, much appreciated and moreover very heart warming!

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Photo Gallery “SOME PICTURES ARE...

This past year ENT conducted several think tanks with SF educators to fine-tune their **Green Grows The Story** project to better serve school communities. (below)



Visiting Singaporean storyteller and author, **Vera Tay** (shown in red sweater) meets other Asian American writers, poets and playwrights at a special ENT Salon held this past summer.>



^ Crowd laughs it up with Comedian and director of **Bindlestiff Theater**, **Al Manalo**. ENT is strengthening ties with other Asian Am. arts groups, such as Bindlestiff Theater home to Filipino Am. theater, comedy, and playwrights.



< Classic Great Wall picture from our Nu Wa journey to China. We climbed the wall amidst the challenges of gravity and wonderful mingling with other international tourists.

During our visit to the Gengcun Village we held many gatherings in the **Hall of Stories**, the community center that was remodelled by funds raised from our Eth-Noh-Tec’s previous visits.

(below)



... Worth A Thousand Stories!”



We’ve been documenting the trips, interviewing both American and Chinese storytellers. We’ve known all along that film making is an lengthy process- especially for us (non-film makers!). Shown here is **Arif Choudhury** and **Kelvin Saxton**. (below)

