

Pro says love your stories: Professional tale weaver Charles 'Chill' Kuhn laments his dying art

By Rebecca Straus
Senior, Schuylkill Valley

Charles "Chill" Kuhn, a professional storyteller from Coatesville, will be featured in the Fleetwood Library's presentation of "Tales for the Telling: An Evening of Storytelling for Ages 5-105," on Friday at Fleetwood Middle School.

Before taking an early retirement in 2001, Kuhn practiced storytelling as an amateur for more than 20 years. Now as a professional, Kuhn tells stories at a variety of churches, groups, and organizations. Included in his repertoire are folk tales, children's stories, contemporary tales, Christmas stories and stories of his own life experiences. However, though Kuhn tells beloved classics, many of his tales are original works which consist primarily of children's stories meant to convey moral lessons, he says.

I am a self-taught storyteller," Kuhn says, "and my interest in storytelling actually began when my kids were quite small and I began telling them bedtime stories. I even began to make up some of my own stories, which were usually stories with a Christian message."

To tell a good tale, Kuhn believes that the storyteller must personally love the story before he passes it on to his audience.

"Don't just tell the story," he says, "love the story. Know the story, live it and present it in such a way that your enthusiasm is contagious to the audience."

Kuhn says that when the audience is mesmerized with a story, they

will remember it because they are living the tale as the teller reveals it. He explains that storytelling has given him a venue for passing on morals and values that he feels are important to communicate.

Kuhn especially loves telling stories to kids - kids of all ages.

"I love seeing their faces light up and the expressions on their faces while I am telling. I might add that I enjoy telling stories to 'children of all ages' because I often see similar smiles and expressions of joy on the faces of adults as well," he says.

Unfortunately, professional storytellers are becoming increasingly obscure in the modern world.

"Yes, I do believe storytelling is a dying art," Kuhn says. "But I would like to add that we are all storytellers whether we realize it or not."

When people communicate personal experiences with others, they vary their inflections in order to express emotions and feelings, and that, says Kuhn, is storytelling.

from:

readingeagle.com

<http://readingeagle.com/Article.aspx?id=165452>

11/10/2009