

303 words, column #38
Java Talk
(for January 17 to January 23, 2008)

Every Age Is The Best Age

The Season of Suppositious Endings and Beginnings

Pondering the many ways storytelling influences relationships reminded me how a good storyteller gives each listener the feeling that the story they are hearing is especially meant for them.

At this month's "Stories at Fern", I will be telling the creation story that Arnarluk, an old Inuit storyteller, told Knud Rasmussen, an anthropologist, during his expedition to Greenland, in 1921. "Age does not tell lies," Arnarluk said, as she continued to explain the way her ancestors preserved their history, before she began the story. "They did not understand how to hide words in written signs like you do; they could only speak...." I like this story on many levels, which is why it is in my repertoire. For just one reason, it tells about a time when people "did not know death." They became very elderly, to say the least. Eventually, two old women talked about what they thought should be, but when one disagreed and said there should also be death, so "it came to pass...."

With unexpected sad news, the story seems even more relevant to tell. Jim London, a historian and one of the long-time storytellers on my *Vancouver Island Storytellers' E-Mail Tree* listserv, died a week ago Sunday. Some of you will know him because he taught the B.Ed. History of Education course at the University of Victoria; or because he was Langford's first mayor; or for his many roles as a public school teacher, administrator, and his service on the Sooke School District Board of Education; or for his work helping people record their own histories; and as a friend.

In Victoria, all types of stories are told and listened to at "Stories at Fern". This month's gathering is on Monday, January 21, 2008, from 7:15 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at 1831 Fern Street. (Adults \$5, Students \$3).

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