16TH ELLWOOD CITY STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

‘Woods’ draws 800

Imaginations, attention of young and old captured

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

ELLWOOD CITY — Storytelling, Michael Perry says, “is the shortest distance between two people,” differs from story reading, Nancy Wallace notes, in that it “it all depends on your expression, the animation you give to it, your movement” and ultimately, Jocelyn Dabney adds, “stimulates the imagination.”

The attention of hundreds of children sitting, standing and dancing under a canopy of sun-splashed white oaks, silver

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‘Wow! This is packed!’

325 get taste of Ellwood City area at Chef, Wine & Ale

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

ORTH SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP — Diane Elms stood elbow-to-elbow with her husband, John, on the periphery of The Grand Hall, each tantalized by the sights, smells and tastes accompanying the 12th Chef, Wine & Ale Event hosted by the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce.

“I am excited that it is buzzing,” Diane, of Brighton Township, said

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as she grasped in her left hand a square faux-bamboo appetizer plate topped with a cut of grilled flank steak, red quinoa salad, sweet potato puree and a chimichurri sauce, and in her right hand, the stem of a wine glass and a white paper napkin woven between her fingers.

The Elmses were first-time visitors to the Chef, Wine & Ale Event at Shakespeare’s Restaurant and Pub, and among a curious crowd drawn to the opportunity to sample the signature offerings from more than 20 food and beverage establishments.

“That,” Diane said, “says a lot about the area, and a lot about the local food suppliers and companies.”

Added John: “When we pulled into the parking lot, I was like ‘Wow! This is packed! A lot of people.’”

Chamber chief: “So many smiles”

The elbow-to-elbow atmosphere also offered patrons a chance to rub elbows with one another, said Raymond Santillo, executive director of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce.

“People had fun talking, so many smiles,” he said. “The nicest thing you can wear is a smile.”

Ellwood City residents Rebecca Gant and Jennifer Frisk were all smiles as they gathered around one of the many black-draped pub tables, softly illuminated by one of the Grand Hall’s 13 dimly lit bronze chandeliers.

“There are a lot of choices here,” said Gant, a first-time visitor to the Chef, Wine & Ale Event who between mouthfuls of a seared pork belly taco topped with watermelon salsa and chipotle hot sauce raved about the seared pork belly taco topped with watermelon salsa and chipotle hot sauce.

“This,” she said of Z Pub &

Brooke Bartolomeo, left, of Ellwood City, Jaclyn Trozzo, of North Sewickley Township, and Samantha Brewer, of North Sewickley Township, attend Chef, Wine & Ale at Shakespeare’s Restaurant and Pub on Sept. 11.

Diner chef Chris Blinn’s creation, “is amazing.”

Her visit to the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce’s largest annual fundraiser – in the heart of what board director Janet Falotico called a “foodies community” – was Frisk’s second.

“I think there is a bigger turnout this year,” Frisk said of the Sept. 11 event. “And there are a lot more vendors. I really like the tacos, and The Sweet Shop’s cookie dough. I think I will be coming back next year.”

Chairman: Congrats abound and all around

That – along with compliments for Kimmel’s Bakery’s sesame-seed queen biscuits, the Log Cabin Inn’s roasted pork tenderloin and rainbow-roasted potatoes, and Shakespeare’s Restaurant and Pub’s grilled flank steak, red quinoa salad, sweet potato puree and a chimichurri sauce — is
maples and elms at Ewing Park was focused not on electronic devices, Wallace whispered during a performance at the aptly themed “Into the Woods” Ellwood City Storytelling Festival – but on storytellers.

Storytellers like Dabney who enlisted the participation of children on Folino Stage, storytellers like Perry who walked among children sprawled across the grass, storytellers like Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy who retained the attentiveness of young and old alike in an age when the average attention span is reported to be eight seconds.

“The kids are so into the technology right now and spend so much time on games and things like that. This afternoon, they are outside, in the fresh air. They are listening to stories, doing interactive things with the storytellers ...”

On Sept. 16, the festival – which drew 800 children and adults – featured characters in walking tree, dragon and bear costumes, and balloon sculptors, face painters, horse-drawn carriage rides, and 3 1/2 hours of storytellers ranging from Bill Pate and Shawn McGinnis’ music-themed performance to Hollingsworth-Segedy’s “kid-friendly” ghost stories around an early evening campfire.

**Storytelling is bringing the story to life, live**

Jocelyn Dabney, right, of Youngstown, enlists the participation of children on Folino Stage in Ewing Park during the Ellwood City Storytelling Festival on Sept. 16.

“Because it is personal communication, it is probably sacrosanct,” he says. “It’s untouchable because it is eyeball to eyeball, person to person by definition. It is probably the last man standing when it comes to technology. Storytelling is not the same as reading. Storytelling is bringing the story to life, live.”

Dabney, and her husband, Robert, who plays African drums, brought storytelling to life with the help of nearly a dozen children who after being summoned to Folino Stage enthusiastically voiced the parts of a crying baby, a singing mother, a boisterous crowd and a galloping horse.
“You really are in a two-way conversation,” Perry said, “and of course you have a message.”

Added Wallace: “It gives children a chance to be in the spotlight too.”

Also in the spotlight were former Broadway and movie actor Tim Hartman, wandering minstrels Sharon and Curt Savage, and teen-aged Ellwood City Public Library volunteers Emmalee Hindman and R.J. Wilson, and Dakota Marshall, 21 – who for the first time would perform as the costumed bear, dragon and talking tree and were unsure what questions curious children would ask.

2016 Walking-talking bear: what kids asked me

They needed look no further than Nikaya Westphal, the 2016 bear.

“I had to make up stories because they asked why I was not hibernating, where did I come from and where do I live?” said Westphal, an Ellwood City Public Library employee and business management student at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle.

“I told them that I lived somewhere in that direction where all the trees are, and that it was a special favor to (Wallace) that I was coming out of hibernation.”

One thing they didn’t ask was how a bear could talk.

“They didn’t seem to think that was weird,” she said with a laugh.

Four-year-old Lucy Dobo-Gorzkowski, of Pittsburgh, sat between her mother, Liv Dobo, and grandmother, Kathy Gorzkowski, of Ellwood City.

“We came last year,” Liv said.

Lucy said she was looking forward to “face painting and balloon animals” and that the thing she remembered most about visiting the 2016 Ellwood City Storytelling Festival as a 3-year-old was “face painting and balloon animals.”

New Castle performer: Ellwood City has a “vibe”

Not far away and under the cover of a shelter, Robin Kelly was twisting balloons into works of art, and Nancy Zurynski and Amy Eiden-miller were painting the faces of children such as Marian Anderson, a 7-year-old from Franklin Township and first-grader in the Riverside School District.

“Before I got my balloon and face painted, I listened to the storytellers,” Marian said.

Sharon Savage, who with her husband Curt live in New Castle, portrayed Johnny Appleseed as a storyteller when the festival was in its infancy at held at the former Ellwood City Public Library on Crescent Avenue.

The setting in Ewing Park, the list of great storytellers and Ellwood City itself make the festival one of a kind, said Curt, between strums of his black acoustic guitar and while dressed in a full pirate costume.

“The availability of having the horse-drawn wagons here, the playground,” he said. “Everything is so close and family centered.”

Ellwood City, said Sharon, who accompanies her husband musically by striking a cowbell with drumsticks, “is just such a nice town. It is very family friendly with a lot to do. Just by the people who are here at the festival and how they support this. How they support (Wallace) and (library director) Veronica (Pacella). I think that makes this city very unique. People want to be here.”

The story of Ellwood City, Curt said, is that it “has a vibe, that it is alive. All the businesses, the small businesses, the restaurants. A lot of family owned businesses that have been here a long time. People support the businesses, they support the community. They know what is going on in the high school, the churches. Whenever anything is going on, people turn out in Ellwood City. They support what they are doing. It is a very strong feeling of community here.”
Quench thirst for Germany!

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

ELLWOOD CITY — Four members of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce will offer a taste of Old Germany with halushka handmade from a hand-down recipe, sauerkraut, kielbasa sliders and autumnal craft and homemade beers at the eighth annual Oktoberfest set for noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 7 at the Wolves Club shelter in Ewing Park.

“It is a great day, rain or shine,” said Denny Boariu, a member of the Ellwood City Wolves Club that with the Rotary Club of Ellwood City, the Ellwood City Lions Club and Pete’s Uptown Beer and Beverage are sponsoring the event that last year drew 840 visitors.

Tickets cost $20 in advance, and $25 at the door. In addition to authentic German music and a menu that features at least 14 items, cornhole and keg toss competitions will be held, Boariu said.

Proceeds from Oktoberfest benefit scholarship funds created by the Ellwood City Wolves, Lions and Rotary clubs, Boariu said. Additionally, 25 percent of all advance sales will be donated to the Ellwood City Civic Beautification Project.

“Our plan is to raise money to replace the wooden Welcome to Ellwood City sign on Route 288 at Route 65 in Franklin Township with some sort of a permanent masonry structure,” Boariu said. “This will house the signs of the local civic organizations.”

Among the major vendors at Oktoberfest will be Pete’s Uptown Beer & Beverage, Sweet Caroline’s – which will offer ice cream floats – and Pappy Rick’s Kettle Korn, Boariu said.

The menu will feature hot dogs, sweet potato fries, meatball sliders, French fries, sausage sliders, sauerkraut and kielbasa sliders, German potato salad, German halushka, fish sliders, deep-fried hot peppers, fish and chips, hot pretzels and pepperoni puffs.

“My favorite is the German halushka,” said Boariu, adding that the Wolves Club makes the dumplings by hand from a recipe handed down to member Lynn Smielek’s Grandmother.

“That along with the cabbage, butter, onions make a very flavorful treat,” he said.

A bake sale will also be held, with proceeds benefiting the Ellwood City Public Library.

325 GET TASTE OF ELLWOOD CITY AREA AT CHEF, WINE & ALE

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Raymond Santillo
Chamber director

Caroline Golmic
Chamber president

Tropical Torpedo Pale Ale and Torpedo IPA; and Magic Hat’s Mother Lager, Hocus Pocus, Elder Betty and Blind Faith, was Elder Betty.

“Most people are looking for something light,” he said. “But they want something different. They want some sort of taste that isn’t normally associated with beer and beer products. That right now is the standout.”

Guest surprised it was "this fabulous"

said the 2017 turnout “might be the best that we’ve had.”

Golmic was still selling tickets nearly 90 minutes after the event began.

“I just walked past a woman who said, ‘This is fabulous. I didn’t think it was going to be this fabulous.’”

The Grand Hall was full, Golmic said. There are new businesses in the Ellwood City area that are participating in the Chef, Wine & Ale. It is exciting, she said, for everyone to witness the growth.

And, like Diane Elms, would applaud the participating establishments’ offerings, if it weren’t for that 4-inch white plate in one hand and glass of wine in the other.

“This cannoli,” she said of another of The Sweet Shop’s samples, “is amazing.”
A crowd walks along Lawrence Avenue on Sept. 30 during the third Ellwood City Fall Fest.

Brandie McClain, of The Average Jane Band, sings at the third Ellwood City Fall Fest in the Community Plaza on Sept. 30.

Abbie Marx, left, and Riley Crogna-le, 18, both of Beaver Falls, throw bowls while representing Gingko Clayworks at the third Ellwood City Fall Fest on Sept. 30.
James Streit, 14, of Shenango Township, a member of Studio P Dance Studio, performs during the third Ellwood City Fall Fest on Sept. 30.

Calvin and Darlene Suttle, of Franklin, are reflected on the door of their 1955 Chevy 210 as part of the Car Cruise at the third Ellwood City Fall Fest on Sept. 30.

Megan Moore, of Ellwood City, holds nephew Adrian Val-entino, 1, of North Sewick-ley Township, while listening to music at the Community Plaza during Fall Fest.
Braelyn Kirkham, 6, of Ellwood City, decorates a pumpkin near McElwain Motor Car Company during the third Ellwood City Fall Fest on Sept. 30.

Jace Atkinson, 4, of Ellwood City, travels down an inflatable slide at Fall Fest.

Vic and Raylene Italiano, of Wurtemberg, view a 1964 Ford Galaxie 500 owned by Gary Verrico, of Rochester, as part of the Car Cruise at Fall Fest.

Hadley Frech, 3, of Ellwood City, laughs at the third Ellwood City Fall Fest on Sept. 30.