



Lone Wolf
Theatre Company

Resources

More resources section will be added over time. Our archives will include links, PDF articles, photos, and more samples of Mr. Thorson's writing.

Lone Wolf Howl: ALLISTER AND HIS ONIONS REMEMBERED

(Originally published in Cochrane Times: January 25, 2006)

HIGHLIGHTS

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If you have a link you would like us to consider for this page, please [email](#) us.

"The truth is often unbelievable."

An adage I've always suspected to be accurate, but it proved itself so many times over this past year as I toiled around the province collecting stories from fellow Cochranites past and present.

There's one who tells a tale of a UFO sighting up Jumping Pound Creek way some 30 years ago, and the poor RCMP officer who was sent the next morning to investigate.

Another one tells of his time spent in a youth gang before quitting school in Grade 8 to become a lawyer. He reads over 100 books a year.

A third tells of the body she discovered – stone cold dead – sitting upright in an outhouse north of town. No foul play, just foul scent.

A newcomer to town tells of the house she used to dream about as a girl growing up in Ontario, only to discover the two-storey home on Chinook Drive she moved into as a mother of three was it.

An old-timer recalls the church minister in town (with a face like a tombstone) whose dog used to bite the parishioners.

And somewhere in the middle a girl who lost the geography bee in Grade 6 grew up to work and live in more countries than there are churches in Cochrane.

Nearly everyone talks about family at one point or another in their stories, but not a single participant mentions cows or hockey or politics. Ten different storytellers, however, talk about ice cream.

I'm referring to the Livestories Programme: 100 Stories for 100 Years. We've been at it for a year now (we being Lone Wolf Theatre Company and the Cochrane Historical Archival Preservation Society) and we're halfway there. 50 stories told, shot, edited, and burned onto DVD. There are 50 still to go.

Two stories deal with explosive devices, there's one that tells of a man happily trapped in a tower for 30 years, and over eight different tales tackle the subject of death: dead bodies, nearly dead bodies, and bodies that were once dead and came back to life.

Like I say, each story is unbelievable but everyone's telling the truth.

There's one story that merits special mention at this time, and I'll never forget the day we excavated it.

It was a miserable morning in May, and the gentleman allowed Gordon and I into his beautiful brick home across the street from the police station.

After setting up my lights and camera in his dining room, framing my 92-year-old subject in front of his 350-year-old grandfather clock, I began to ask about events that usually extract a story or two from the gums of memory: 'Tell me about your wedding day?' or 'What got you into trouble as a boy?' or 'What was your worst day on the job?'

After each question asked, my subject only smiled and with all the politeness you'd expect from a gentlemen would say 'Well... I can't remember... that was a long time ago.'

After about 20 minutes of this, I tried not to panic. I searched the room for something to talk about, and my eyes lighted on what was not there.

'Have you planted your garden yet?'

'Oh yes.' He smiled again, asking me without asking to ask some more.

'What did you plant?'

'Onions' he said 'hundreds of them.'

He went on to wax poetic about onions for 15 minutes, which led him to talk about his time working for Calgary Power, growing up as a boy when Cochrane wasn't much more than a blacksmith shop, a train station, and farms like his, and his dear departed wife.

I asked if his wife loved onions as much as he did. He twinkled out a smile and gave over one of those terrific moments you always hope to capture on camera: 'she learned to.'

The gentleman was Allister Moore. Allister passed away last week at the age of 93. It was a pleasure and honour to sit with him for a couple of hours that morning in May, and share in the unbelievable truth of his life.

I still think of him whenever I see, smell, or savor an onion.

(If you're interested in sponsoring one of the next 50 Livestories – for little more than a Ralphcheque – drop me a line at info@lonewolftheatre.com or 932-6179)

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