

LEISURE

FUN IN BORDERLAND

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who have interesting pastimes or hobbies.
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Fort Frances woman publishes second book

Woman’s ancestors play key roles in ‘Emma’s Story’

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

At age 8, Frances Shelfantook said she would forgo playtime after dinner to sit and listen to the adults in her life swap stories and share memories. More than 90 years later, she turned those stories into a series of published books. Shelfantook, who last month turned 100 years old, recently released her second book, “Emma’s Story,” a fictional collection of tales inspired by the life of Emma Peterson Beckman, Shelfantook’s grandmother, who lived in a cabin on the shores of Squaw Lake, Minn.

“I never really thought I could write a book and I never really tried,” Shelfantook said of becoming a published author.

Emma’s Story is a sequel to “Sophia’s Journey,” which was published in 2011. The two books are part of a trilogy – the third book is not yet released – about Shelfantook’s ancestors who emigrated from Sweden in the 1860s and settled in Minnesota.

“The books are fictional, but the main characters are all real and almost everything is based on real events,” Shelfantook said.

The author has lived in Fort Frances since she was 4 and became a teacher in the 1930s. She recalled always having a passion for writing, but said she never imagined putting her thoughts together between two covers.

“When computers were first coming on the scene, our school board arranged to have a period of the day for mature students to learn about typing and how to run a computer,” she said. “I remember thinking, ‘My goodness, the characters just appear on the page.’ I thought it was fun, so I started writing more.”

Shortly after her retirement in 1977,



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Frances Shelfantook poses with the two books she has published, “Sophia’s Journey” and “Emma’s Story.”

Shelfantook got serious about writing her family’s past. With the help of her cousins who lived in America, she discovered Sophia, Shelfantook’s great-grandmother who was born in 1831 to a prosperous Swedish family. What Shelfantook and her cousins came across, she said, were people and events from stories she had absorbed as a youngster.

“I remember how I would sit and listen to stories (adults) were telling when I was really very young,” Shelfantook said. “The people just sounded so fascinating – they just walked right on to the pages of my books.”

Sophia’s Journey was written in the early 1990s and sat unpublished for several years until family members asked to read Shelfantook’s manuscripts.

“And they seemed to enjoy them,” she said of the people she let read her work.

Thinking others may enjoy her ancestor’s stories, too, Shelfantook, with the help of her daughter, Linda LaFrance, set out to self publish the stories near and dear to her heart.

“The best compliment I receive is people can’t put the book down,” the author said.

As soon as Sophia’s Journey was written, Shelfantook said she “could hardly wait” to get started on Emma’s Story.

“She was a very dear person,” she said of Emma. “I was able to know her, she died when I was 16 years old.”

Emma’s Story includes more details of actual accidents occurring during the early 1900s – maternity difficulties, forest fires and many other events Shelfantook either witnessed or heard about.

“I wanted to make sure to write about what life was like back then,” she said. “Not everything had a happy ending.”

Shelfantook is modest about her writing skills.

“I really do believe there is some guiding force that tells you what to do,” she said. “It seemed whenever I came to a part of the story that needed something, a character would just walk onto the page. I don’t know what it is – it’s not magic – but it really seemed to always work out.”

Except when Shelfantook, like any writer, experienced the dreaded writer’s block.

“It was all enjoyable until I would come to a dry spot,” she said. “There were days it was hard to make (the story) really interesting and moving.”

Still, she said she would overcome the block and managed to produce two stories she is very proud of – and a third is on the way.

“The next story will be of my mother, Ann,” she said. “I’m not sure what it’ll be called yet, but I expect it’ll be ready to go by next spring.”

Both Sophia’s Journey and Emma’s Story are available at Ronnings in International Falls and at Betty’s in Fort Frances.



Area musicians rehearse during last year’s Rainy Lake Community Orchestra.

FILE PHOTO

Orchestra marks 35th year

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

For the 35th year, the Rainy Lake Community Orchestra will offer an opportunity for youth and adults to participate in a free Summer String Workshop scheduled for Aug. 11-16 at the Ranier Community Building in Ranier. Visiting professional musicians from the United States and Canada will share their experience and expertise with lessons, instruction and conducting, according to a release. Area string musicians of all ages and abilities are welcome and encouraged to attend the workshop to have the opportunity to improve their skills, and rehearse and perform symphony orchestra music.

Private and group lessons, quartets and ensembles, youth orchestra and adult orchestra sessions are expected to be offered. The lessons and small groups are scheduled according to skill level and available free time.

The Rainy Lake Sinfonia, comprised of youth musicians, will rehearse at 4 p.m. and the Rainy Lake Orchestra, the adult musicians, will rehearse at

5:30 p.m. each day, Sunday through Thursday.

Young students who are able to play advanced musical literature are also welcome to play with the adults; beginning adult students are welcome to play with the youth. A concert, free and open to the public, will be presented at 7 p.m. Aug. 16 at Ranier Community Building.

This orchestra workshop is funded in part by an Arts Grant Award from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council. Funds are made possible from the State of Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

The workshop is sponsored by the Rainy Lake Community Orchestra, the City of Ranier and various friends of the orchestra.

Registration for the workshop is not required; interested string musicians may come to the first rehearsals in Ranier on Aug. 11. All activities during the week are free.

For more information, contact John Faith, 286-3281; Marcia Bringedahl, 286-3318; Jane Barthell, 283-9567; or Joe Belanger, 283-3414.

Tchotchke
(choch•key)

meaning:
trinket, doohickey, gizmo, whatchamacallit

Miracle Laundry Boost for Whites

- HOT, HOT, HOT water(Fill washing machine)
 - 1 cup of laundry detergent
 - 1 cup powdered dish washer detergent
 - 1 cup bleach
 - 1/2 cup borax
- Soak whites for 2 hours and wash as usual.



Salt-kissed strawberry cake

- (adapted from 101 Cookbooks)
- 2 1/2 c all-purpose flour
 - 1 T baking powder
 - 1/2 c brown sugar
 - zest of 1 large orange
 - 1/2 t salt
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 c yogurt
 - 1/4 c butter, melted and cooled a bit
 - 1 c of strawberries, roughly chopped (more if you like)
 - 3 T large grain raw sugar
 - 1 t kosher salt



1. Preheat oven to 400F. Butter and flour an 11 inch cake tin.
 2. In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, sugar, salt and zest and set aside. In another bowl, beat together the eggs and then stir in the yogurt and butter. Add the wet ingredients into the dry and mix lightly until combined.
 3. Pour* batter into prepared tin and drop strawberries into the cake. Smush them a bit to let the juices run if you wish. Sprinkle the tops with the raw sugar and a light dusting of the salt. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the top is golden. Serve with whipping cream and strawberry sauce. Or eat plain.
- * Batter will not be runny by any means. Pour is more like “plop”

Kids and Pets Footprint Keeper

Salt dough recipe:

- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup plain flour
- Half a cup of warm water

Mix together into a large bowl and knead it until smooth and stretchy. This last part is important otherwise the dough remains sticky and quite granular from the salt. If it is still too sticky add a bit more flour, if too dry and crumbly then add a tiny touch more water. Press and flatten into desired shape. Place foot on and press. Dry and paint to add color.



Homemade Pudding Pops

1 package of instant pudding, 1 1/2c milk, 2c cool whip. Dissolve pudding in milk, whip in cool whip. Spoon into 3 ounce Dixie cups and insert Popsicle stick. Freeze.



Soften and Get Rid of Tough Calluses



Blend two tablespoons of baking soda in a basin of warm water and add a few drops of lavender oil. After a nice long soak, scrub your feet using three parts baking soda, one part water, and one part brown sugar. Follow with an application of a rich moisturizer and a warm towel foot wrap. Let sit for 5-10 minutes.