

Monterey County
The Herald

Spin a yarn at 'Have I Got A Story for You!' storytelling workshop series

By LILY DAYTON
 Herald Correspondent

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Stories are what this human life is made of. So if you've got a story to tell — or you're longing to develop the raconteur within — now's your chance.

This Wednesday (Jan. 26), local poet, writer, teacher, performer and storyteller extraordinaire Kathryn Petruccelli will facilitate "Have I Got A Story for You! A storytelling workshop" at Cafe 316 in downtown Monterey.

This will be the first in a four-week series of Wednesday night workshops that will culminate in an evening of shared storytelling performances.

Participants are welcome to sign up for one workshop or for the entire series, though Petruccelli said that people will get more out of the workshop by participating in all four because the storytelling group will build as a community.

Following the series, workshop participants will gain free admission to "Wait 'Til You Hear This One! An Evening of Storytelling at Cafe 316" at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 18.

In this limited-seating event, five storytellers, including local performers Jane Press and Jill Jackson, and Los Angeles literary scene veteran Lisa Ann Orkin, will spill their guts through true tales

that will make you laugh, gasp and wonder.

Petruccelli's invitation is alluring: "If you are a writer or interested in writing; if you are a performer or just keen on the stage; if you have a story to tell or wish you did, come play!"

Basically, the workshop is for anyone interested in the art of story. Petruccelli

said that she will know who this workshop is designed for when you show up.

"I think we all have a lot of stories to tell," said Petruccelli, a self-proclaimed NPR junkie who has been spinning poetic spools of yarn on the Monterey Peninsula for the past 13 years. "This is partly about getting people to believe in the power of what they have to say."

Fascinated by the interplay between the oral and written tradition, Petruccelli plans to use a combination of the two during the workshop, focusing on the strength of each storytelling vehicle.

"Different things happen when you tell versus write," said Petruccelli, adding that it's often not until you are in the process of creation that you figure out what it is you're really trying to say.

Workshop topics that will be explored include the dynamic interplay between spoken and written word, finding your "way in" to your story, timing and delivery, discovering the value of what you have to say, playing with the art of detail, how crafting a story of an event may change that event and how the things we learn from our stories often surprise us.

Those completing the full series of four workshops will leave with an audio file of themselves telling their stories and a permanent website link.

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The only things participants need to bring are a notebook, something to write with and a willingness to engage.

"We're excited by the entertainment of stories, riveted by suspenseful details, we think to ourselves, 'How can it get any worse?' — and then it does," said Petruccelli. "But what is important in storytelling is to bring it to a level of art. There's a punchline, a lesson learned and sometimes we're jolted when it's over. A surprise is what we often walk away with. We think, 'Oh, that is what this is about.' (This surprise element is) a really important piece."

Bringing people's stories to a level of art is what Petruccelli hopes people will gain from this series. She also hopes to encourage people to gain confidence using their own unique voice.

"I honestly believe that part of the power of our stories is the emotion we bring to them," said Petruccelli. "The original emotion we carry is a very personal thing. Doing it in your own voice, telling it your own way, telling your version of it — these things are very important. That's when we're going to be captured as an audience."

"When I hear personal stories on the radio, I'm really riveted," she added. "It's a chance to learn who we are. Life goes pretty fast, why not repeat some of it?"

Lily Dayton can be reached at montereybaylily@gmail.com.GO!

WORKSHOP

- What:** "Have I Got A Story for You! A storytelling workshop" facilitated by Kathryn Petruccelli
- Where:** Café 316, 316 Alvarado St., Monterey
- When:** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9 and 16

•**Tickets:** \$25 drop-in charge for any single session; \$80 for the series; reservations can be made at 324-4566

•**Information:** 324-4566, montereybound@yahoo.com

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