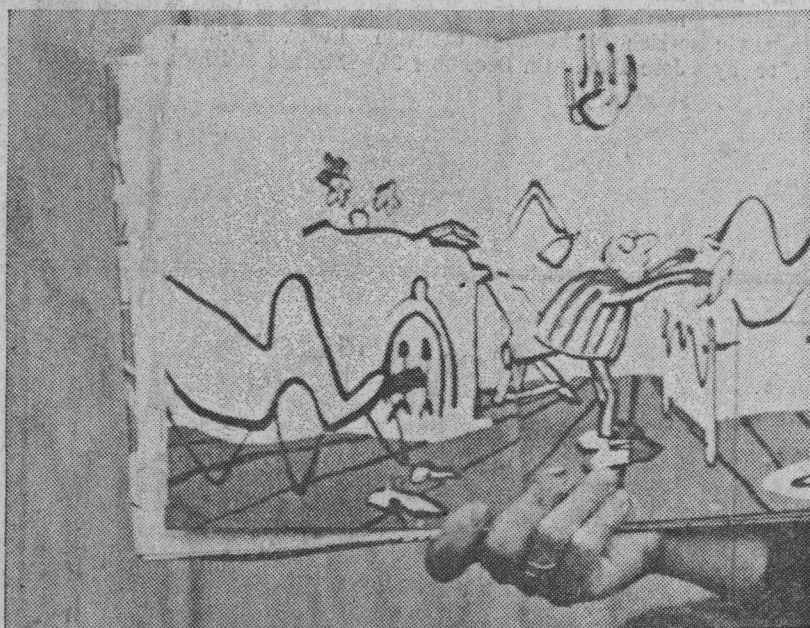




'...and they lived happily ever after!'



"Children are blessed with imagination and the one gift we can give them besides our love is the ability to develop this imagination so they will know that life is full of wonderful things."

So says Ruthmarie (Mrs. James) Sheehan, storyteller each week at the Santa Cruz Main Library and soon to have her own Story Hour on the local TelePrompter channel. She currently is appearing on the Hocus Pocus show and tapes stories for school reading programs.

"It is the imaginative thinker who knows how the other man's shoes feel or who can believe a solution exists where none seems

She quotes Ruth Sawyer who in *THE WAY OF THE STORYTELLER* says, "For as storytellers we are concerned not alone with amusement, or with education, or with distraction; nor is it enough to give pleasure. We are concerned with revealing some beauty and truth that lies hidden within the world and human-kind."

Tools of the storyteller are her voice, choice of language, power of delicate suggestion, facial expressions and gestures.

"Storytelling has moments of quietness, mirth, excitement, melodrama, thoughtfulness, so-





easily visible. With children, as with adults, it may be another way of helping us to cope with everyday harshness, without flinging it in our faces . . . another way of understanding ourselves and other people . . . in other words creative imagination."

Ruthmarie says she believes that oral storytelling is truly an art form. "This is a talent that is exercised and fed with practice, experiences, study, hard work, and above all else, imagination and enthusiasm."

She says that even after her years of storytelling, she still feels she is an apprentice. "It is a continuous matter of growth, building of background and a constant awareness and eagerness."

family . . . it is another expression of the art of loving our fellow man," says Ruthmarie, who also writes children's stories.

Ruthmarie has four children who are among her greatest fans. She tells stories at libraries, schools, rest homes, participates in seminars and workshops. She says she would like to encourage new storytellers of all ages. "There is a need in rest homes, preschool programs, and a need for parents to tell stories to their own children."

There are story hours each Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the Main Library; 3:30 p.m., Wednesday at La Selva Library; 10:45 a.m., Thursday, at Scotts Valley Library, and 10 a.m., Friday, at Branciforte Library.

—MILDRED ANN SMITH



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Photos by
Bill Lovejoy

