

# JCC book fair goes universal

This much is clear: the Cherie Smith JCC Jewish Book Festival is a readers festival that happens to include Jewish themes and Jewish authors. Sometimes the two may connect, and these Jewish authors happen to write on Jewish themes. After 19 years, the little book fair that could has become the universal and broad. It's less intimidating to those of us who can't count themselves as part of the Jewish community but who really want to hear authors like Ms. *Magazine* founder **Letty Cottin Pogrebin**, who's released debut fiction, or take a workshop with **Karen Tulchinsky**, just two of the 30 presenters at the festival at Jewish Community Centre, Oak and 41st. from Friday night (Nov. 17).

**Reisa Smiley Schneider**, the JCC's cultural arts director and the coordinator of the festival, has long wanted to break the mystique that

seems to hover around events that seem to welcome only one community, as the name would imply.

It seems to be working. A couple of years ago, Smiley Schneider got a call from the Fraser Valley Christian high school, no less. A teacher wanted to bring about 100 students in from Surrey. It was booked that year, but into the community centre the kids piled the next year, to hear authors from a background so different from their own read from their work. "It was then I realized, 'hmm...I should really be doing more of this,'" she says.

Since then Smiley Schneider has done some strategic brochure-ing, releasing the book fest programs during the Vancouver Writers and Readers Fest (so smartly papering Writers Fest sites with them) and reeling in readers of every persuasion. It

worked: opening night events bring in near SROs. This year, writers like **Elana Dykewoman**, **Allan Gould**, **Robyn Sarah**, **Kate Taylor**, children's authors **Aubrey Davis** and **Kathy Kacer** show up for readings and talks through the weekend. Best of all, with the exception of opening night, a Sunday brunch and writing workshops, every event is free. Now that's accessibility. Check out [www.jccgv.com](http://www.jccgv.com) for details and authors.

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Yet another fest hits the city, but this time there are no books being sold outside the front door. Celebrating the power of word of mouth, **The Vancouver Storytelling Festival** gets underway at the Vancouver Museum with accounts from here and around the world in events like *Era Uma Vez: Stories from Brazil and the World*,

The poet Sharon Thesen has been affiliated with the *Capilano Review* for some years, and is now serving a turn as its editor. Thesen said her decision to devote



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*Tales from Haiti, The Wee Boy: Stories and Songs of Growing up in Scotland and Older is Bolder: Spinsters, Crones and Other Dangerous Women*. On Friday night, the fest gets underway with the event *The Greatest Stories Ever Told* this Friday (Nov. 14) at 8 p.m. at the Vancouver Museum auditorium, where much of the festival is taking place. Info at [www.vancouverstorytelling.org](http://www.vancouverstorytelling.org).

Much less pure is the hot erotic sexy gay talk that'll no doubt heat up the room at the launch of *Quickies 3: short short fiction on gay male desire*. Authors like **John Briggs**,

Street heritage gem their posh reno'd haunt, in one of the instructive processes of today's hyper-civilization.

Outside, the Alibi Room at

**Stephen Emery**, **Doug Ferguson**, **Wes Hartley**, **George Ilsey** and **Colin Thomas**, from 7 p.m. Saturday (Nov. 15) at The Odyssey, 1251 Howe. On a similar note, the book's Arsenal Pulp Press companion *Hot and Bothered 4: short short fiction on lesbian desire* launches at Crush Champagne Lounge, 1180 Granville, Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. with **Ritz Chow**, **Lorna Richards**, **Lisa McArthur**, **Tanya Davies** among other authors, reading from their contributions.

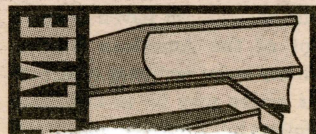
The Vancouver Poetry Slam continues Monday (Nov. 17) at Cafe Deux Soleils, 2096 Commercial, with **Daphne Gottlieb** (author of *Final Girl*) from San Francisco and **Hal Sirowitz** from New York. They're touring North Amer-

ica, so this is the only Vancouver stop; doors open at 8 p.m., with a slam starting at 9 p.m., five bucks.

**Live: Biennial of Performance Art** continues with **Juliana Barabas' Seamline: An Invocation of Energy Through Tattoo**, her seventh installment in a 12-part performance series. Barabas is a patient one, as this whole series entails her getting a line tattooed around the circumference of her body. Want to draw on that bod? Pick up a crayon on site, and colour away, to the accompaniment of **Tetiana Senyshyn** on cello. (That's interactive art, I tell ya.) Barabas is your canvas from 8 p.m. Wednesday (Nov. 19) at The Union, 478 Union St., on the southwest corner of Jackson. ☐

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