

## **For the Marshfield News-Herald**

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*by Harry Toufar*

On Tuesday, Tracy Chipman brought her story telling to the Spencer Library Summer Reading Program. Her goal is to tell stories with a message. She aims to entertain while teaching children about problem solving, teamwork, respect and, of course, having fun.

Within the boundaries of her brain, Chipman has about 150 stories neatly filed away. With each program she comes to, she can extract three or four that will fit the occasion. She shares the craft of telling stories without using books. With a very attentive audience, she challenged them to "step into the story." She explained to them how that can be accomplished. You need to use your ears and listen carefully. Your eyes become very important as she uses body language, facial expressions and props. Your mouth needs to be turned down so all can engage in the story. Most of all, you need to use your imagination. This is the most essential of all.

The trip was about to begin. With the help of an audience member, she rolled out the "magic carpet," so magic that it slid right under the kids sitting on the floor. This journey would take them outside of Spencer, outside Wisconsin and even out of the country. With the carpet pointing east, the group headed over the Atlantic Ocean to the country of Scotland where they met Angus and the three witches. Using a scarf from Scotland, Chipman told of a magic red hat that could take them anywhere. It was time for us to travel on as we rode the magic carpet to China for a 3,000-year-old story. She used a roll of material from China to help her with the story. The sun was in a cave and would not come out. Finally, a rooster tried as he gave it his best. Hearing such beauty, the sun said he would come out if the rooster would get up every morning and share his melodious sounds with everyone. The rooster agreed. So impressed, the sun rose every morning just to hear the rooster.

Our next scheduled stop was India and the story of the Buddha and the rabbit. Buddha was so impressed that the rabbit offered himself as food for Buddha and his friends. Buddha places the rabbit in the moon as thanks for his sacrifice.

Chipman's final story was of Earth itself. Earth was having problems. Her fields were empty, oceans polluted, forests were dying and the people were fighting. Earth asked help from the sun and was turned away. She also was rejected by the moon, wind and the animals. Running out of hope went to the children. "Can you help me?" Earth asked. The children said "Yes!" They planted crops and cleaned the oceans. They planted trees and the most important thing came next. The children said, "We will teach the people to be friendly." The children saved the earth. Earth was happy!