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# FACT MEETS FICTION

*Bird Cove conference offers up an interesting mix of archeology, culture and history*

By Karen Lloyd

There couldn't have been a better setting for artists, writers and archeologists to play around with fact and fiction than the Plum Point Motel on a Saturday evening earlier this month.

Latoria Hartery, president of Amina Anthropological Resources Association (AARA), which helped organize this year's Big Droke Festival in Bird Cove, said she was incredibly pleased with the four-day event that included an evening of storytelling from three acclaimed Newfoundland and Labrador authors.

"We were aiming for a mixture of academics, art and culture and we got exactly that," she said.

Ms. Hartery said the success of the event was a result not only of AARA's planning alongside the Big Droke Foundation, but because of the skills and talents which the varied participants brought to the table.

Those who attended the Bird Cove conference were invited to learn about the history of the province circa 5,000 years ago and all the tools and knowledge it has provided to mankind since.

On Saturday night, following readings by Kevin Major, Bernice Morgan and Michael Crummey, the authors turned a question and answer period to the audience. And so began a lively discussion about the relationship between archeology and historical literature and how each couldn't quite be one without the other.

Ms. Hartery, an archeologist now working in the Arctic, explained her love of archeology came not from fact, but rather from historical fiction, similar to the works of Crummey, Morgan and Major.

"I used to read some historical fiction as a kid, not a lot, but enough to stir my imagination and inspire me to want to have adventure in my life," she said.

Her life is certainly that these days. Ms. Hartery spends her time between Newfoundland, Labrador, Scandinavia and the Canadian Arctic and Greenland.

"I'm very grateful for what archeologists do," said Kevin Major, author of *No Man's Land* and several other books. "I sometimes wonder what

archeologists think about what we do with what they've discovered."

Each essentially helps the other put the flesh back onto the bones of the past.

"I'm interested in what we can make of what's been left behind," said Mr. Crummey, author of *The Wreckage*.

This year's AARA and Big Droke Foundation conference weaved its itinerary around education and a celebration of archeological research, the achievements of the Bird Cove-Pond Cove Archeology Project, and its place within the current body of knowledge concerning art, culture and history in Newfoundland, Labrador and the Arctic.

The conference looked at recent advances in Newfoundland and Labrador archeological and historical research as well as international developments throughout the circumpolar world.

It was a means to achieve common ground and build new connections with colleagues for future collaborations, explained Mr. Hartery, who hopes to hold another conference in Bird Cove within the next few years.

The group at this year's conference, which also included Trevor Taylor, Minister of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development and Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat, were invited to watch a film, *The Passage*, which honours the value of northern oral history through media arts. They also learned about cross-cultural interaction, cultural heritage and tourism, historical archeology, new developments in Newfoundland archeological research, as well as ethnicity and landscape archeology.

To mark the end of this year's celebration, musicians came together to recreate their province's heritage through instrumental performances and lyrical songs in languages such as Inuktitut, Mi'kmaq, French, Basque and English.

The AARA is a non-profit organization that raises funds to research, preserve, protect and promote cultural, natural heritage and artistic resources in northern locations, and to inform the public about those resources through educational and public-relations programs. These research programs, under social science and pure science auspices, will also serve to benefit local economies.



Well-known musician, actor and producer, Daniel Payne, entertains a crowd at the Bird Cove conference.

KAREN LLOYD PHOTOS



Newfoundland author Michael Crummey (right) discusses the relationship between archaeology and writing at Bird Cove last weekend. He was joined by fellow acclaimed novelists (from left) Bernice Morgan and Kevin Major. The evening storytelling series was hosted by Mr. Major's wife, Anne (left). Above, Newfoundland artist Derek James (left) entertains a crowd at the Big Droke Festival in Bird Cove last weekend as he paints Donna Doyle's face with feather brushes and beautiful colours.

