

Journal of Tar Heel Tellers

Volume 19
Number 1
ISSN 1077-307X

Fall 2012
NC Storytelling Guild
Official Newsletter

NCSG Spring Retreat - Wildacres

by Lona Bartlett

The journey began with the usual ritual of packing up clothes and toiletries that were necessary for a few days away from home. After some time on the main highways the journey continued up, up, up, up (four ups is just not enough) UP the mountain to the peak of Wildacres and hugs of old friends then to the introductions and handshakes of new ones. The sky and weather was beautiful and the company, of course, amazing.

With clean pallets and pen in hand the twelve of us joined together in the library room of Wildacres ready to grab hold of the nuggets that Joan Leotta cast before us. We only needed to catch those shiny pearls, place them on the paper to be savored. The gems came flying at us at a fast pace. We all quickly realized that the information we were being trusted with was not a quick dissolving Sweetart but more like an Everlasting Gobstopper.

The workshops: *Telling Stories to Remember*, *From Stage to Page*, *Creating a Costumed*

Character, gave foundational truths that can be used in so many areas of storytelling. "Always consider your audience ... practice good stagecraft ...



Joan Leotta



Front Row, L to R: Crystal Cockman, Joan Leotta and Rob Kretzu. Middle Row L to R: Sherry Lovett, Priscilla Best and Lona Bartlett. Back Row L to R: Frankie Adkins, Charlotte Ross, Alisah Horne, Dianne Hackworth and Susan Adams. Photo by Sylvia Payne.

read Donald Davis' book ... Doug Lipman's book is good too ... remember, you can adapt folklore ... Voices in the Glen ... use family material, but get their permission ... don't over sell the character in the story ... you cannot put on movement like a sweater ... introduce conflict, resolve conflict, exit ... check Good Will for costumes ... now, write something!"

As I write this article I am back in my own home and I have my workshop notes before me. You see, I took on this small project as my homework assignment. Lucky for me, it is open book and I can once again draw in and consume the sweet bits that were entrusted to me while at the top of the mountain.

Lona Bartlett is currently serving as our NCSG President. She is a performance artist and educator, combining storytelling and puppetry for over 30 years. Be sure to read her President's message on page three. You may contact her at: lonabartlett@att.net

JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

Editor, Sylvia Payne
1621 Nathaniel Street,
Newton, NC 28658
NCSG Website:
www.ncstoryguild.org

*Journal of Tar Heel Tellers (JTHT) is the official news-
letter of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild and is
published biannually, Spring and Fall.*

ISSN 1077-307X

Copyright 2012 by NCSG

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be
reproduced without written permission of the editor.

Subscriptions are through membership in the NC
Storytelling Guild only. Single copies are not avail-
able.

Advertising rates (each issue):

- \$20 business card
- \$30 1/4 page ad
- \$50 1/2 page ad
- \$80 full page ad

Calendar listings are free.

Mission of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild:

- ☉ to celebrate the various cultures of NC,
- ☉ to promote excellence in oral tradition,
- ☉ to foster an appreciation and acceptance of the
art of storytelling,
- ☉ to affirm the value of story and the importance of
story listening,
- ☉ to nourish the development of emerging and
established artists.

Correspondence should be addressed to the editor
and will be considered available for publication, un-
less noted, "not for publication". The editor reserves
the right to revise contributed articles for style and
length.

Spring Cast of Characters

Sylvia Payne - Editor

Contributors - Lona Bartlett, Martha
Johnson, Bob Kretzu, Sherry Lovett, Tim
Lowry, Connie Regan-Blake, Jan Schmidt,
Linda Stout and Donna Washington.



Here's what's happening with your
storytelling friends around the state!

This past spring **Cynthia Cudaback** took a big plunge and moved to California. She is already involved with her new local guild and storytelling festival in the San Francisco Bay Area. Those of you who attended 2012's Winter Workshop with MaryGay Ducey will be pleased to hear that Gay was the artistic director of this year's Bay Area Storytelling Festival . . . In early September **Cynthia Brown** traveled to the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area to attend Schiffer Publishing's annual author meeting. While there, she took part in conferences, workshops and performance . . . Several months ago **Willa Brigham's** hubby escorted her to the General Federation of Women's Club of North Carolina celebration. She was honored as one of their Women of Achievement award winners for her contribution to our great state. **Congratulations, Willa . . . Tim Lowry** was selected to perform at Exchange Place at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN the first weekend in October. **Congratulations, Tim.**

"If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them
away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story
more than food to stay alive."

- Barry Lopez, "Crow and Weasel"

Our Stories Are Our History

from the editor's desk

My recent vacation on Ocracoke Island, NC gave me
occasion to pause. I spent much time observing, exploring,
reading and listening to stories from the Ocracokers living
there on the island. Then I began to think about the many
stories that we each tell or share informally. The stories that
we share about our friends, our families and ourselves are a
part of our history. It's done so naturally we aren't cognizant
that we are sharing history, though that's exactly what we're
doing.

This issue lends a personal, family history story by Martha
Johnson, Donna Washington shares her history as a
professional storyteller, Bob Kretzu shares a bit of his history
as a Methodist Pastor and Tim Lowry talks about NCSG's
Winter Workshop he will lead, called *Telling Stories from
History*. All articles that appear here will actually become a
part of the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers* history. In turn they
will become a part of the history of the NC Storytelling Guild.

So you see, we are all a part of history in some way. Enjoy
this issue!

Submit to:

Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton,
NC 28658. E-mail: sylpayne@bellsouth.net

Deadline for Spring 2013 Issue: March 15th.



Lona - Photo courtesy, the Editor

President's Message by Lona Bartlett

Greetings All,
Life is all about the story,
so here it goes.

Several years ago my father was in the hospital and on his floor was a common area, a space where patients could go to get out of their rooms or visitors could go to take a pause. In that room on a table someone had put a large unsolved jigsaw puzzle. It was an open invitation to anyone who was so inclined to make some connections. I was one who was willing to accept the invitation. Sometimes I would spend a few minutes and other times as much as an hour or so picking up one piece then another, placing the abstract piece here or there hoping to make the hills and valleys fit together. At times a connection would be made and I felt a personal victory. There was no one to applaud or pat me on the back, just my own satisfaction of making it work. When I left that room I knew that this project would be left in the hands of someone else. I would often see the evidence by the additional connections that had been made when I returned and because someone else added a few more pieces I was able to make some different connections. I have no idea who else was working on that puzzle but as the days went on the picture started forming, the beauty of

making the connections was coming together. I had a comrade, maybe two, maybe more, there was no way of knowing but I did know we were working together for a common goal. In fact, there was a connection between all of the "puzzlers" who came in and out of that room.

I see all of us in NCSG as a large group of puzzlers working together. Let me give you an example. In January of this year a group of NCSG members went to the Winter Workshop at Fort Caswell. Someone there mentioned that money was being collected to build a driveway for the Hicks family. Ted Hicks was wheelchair bound and unable to be at home until a driveway, a way of mobility, could be built at a cost of \$5000. Right there we took up a collection and it was in the neighborhood of \$250, a far cry from the \$5000 needed but we connected all of our little pieces together and sent them on to the Hicks Fund. Others in different parts of the state offered their pieces too until, at last, all of the connections were made and the puzzle complete with a new driveway for the Hicks family. This summer my husband and I attended the dedication of that driveway and it was exciting to meet others who had worked on this puzzle and put it all together.

Now for a challenge! I'd like to see the members of NCSG continue to work together and make connections. For instance; Give a good word here, a little information

(Continued on back page)

Get out. Go Wild. Learn Stuff. by Martha Johnson *(Photos were taken by Martha's father, Ted Johnson.)*

Kids don't get out in the wild to play anymore. This saddens me deeply. What stories will they have to tell?

It is remarkable to me that until quite recently I never gave much thought to the ways in which my time in the wild formed the person I've become. I spent many of my summers from the age of 9 to 19 away from friends, TV and telephones in the wilderness of Nova Scotia with my family; mom, dad, three older brothers, and a younger sister. We lived each summer without a connection to the outside world. We spent our time building a log cabin and improving it each summer. Our evenings were spent around the table playing games – Yatzee, Canasta, and Trivial Pursuit or telling tales of the adventures of the day. At night mom and dad took turns reading aloud to us by the light of the lantern.

Our days were filled with jobs and hard work. The process of building a log cabin in the woods, without power tools or prior experience, was bound to create a fast learning curve. It also required an "all hands on deck" approach.

My father's goal that first summer was to complete the building of our 12 X 16 one room cabin on a budget of spare change. The budget restraints required that all building material would be found on the land. The building site was

only accessible by paddling or sailing across our pond or hiking several miles through the thick trail free woods. The remoteness of the land was intentional, as my father had previously determined that his family was no longer fit for public camping.

Dad had spent the previous year reading, *How to Build a Cabin in the Woods*. He kept the book in the bathroom and read in short intervals absorbing the information slowly and thoroughly. Although the rest of the family noticed the book and the increased amount of time dad spent in the bathroom, we did not have a clue as to what we would accomplish or how it would change us.

After exploring our land and picking the spot for our cabin, jobs were assigned. We started by exploring the



Martha's sister, Beth, at age 7

woods and marking trees of the appropriate diameter, which appeared to be straight. My brothers, ages 24, 17 and 15 along with dad would pair off with two man saws to fell the trees. It is important to note

(Continued on page 5)

Wildacres Retreat: Wild and Wonderful

by Linda Stout

I have heard golfers say they visualize their ball sailing over the fairway, rolling up to the green and into the cup. Other athletes have said they visualize the steps, the moves, the motions they will undergo to achieve greatness. It's a confidence builder to visualize your goals. In story creation I have dreamed my story, drawn a story out on a storyboard, or organized random thoughts and words in character development. But now I have learned a deeper way to actually get into the senses of the story to see new details and sharpen the images.

It all came about as a result of a week long workshop with Donna Marie Todd at Wildacres Retreat in North Carolina.

Dianne Hackworth organizes these gatherings every year and provides a wonderful week away from the distractions of business and life to delve deep into story. This was my first – but not my last – time to attend this gathering and I found a week of work on my stories not nearly enough time to do all that I wanted. I have attended workshops many times, from weekends to three day 'institutes.' All have provided the camaraderie and support of fellow storytellers, interesting and enlightening leaders, and a brief dip into the story topic of the day. Usually I come home inspired and perhaps with one or two ideas for my story development. Seldom is it enough to say "I have to integrate this into my own storytelling."

This weeklong workshop was different. Each day of activities built upon the previous work. Each day I discovered new things about the focus stories on which I was working. At the end of each day I realized my brain was **tired!** I could not write fast enough, find enough time to go through the exercises again, listen more, tell more, find more in each of the stories to discuss. I was constantly applying the exercises to different types of story, anxious to get into each one.



Perhaps the workshop leader, Donna Marie Todd was what made the difference. Though it was my first time hearing Donna Marie, I instantly fell in love with her animated expressions, concise stories that took the listeners right into the emotions of the story, and her beautiful singing voice that just complemented her tales. Surely that was part of it.

The workshop was on 'Visualization and Character Development'. I expected the usual storyboard, and question/ answer type workings but was pleasantly surprised by Donna Marie's teaching; a process that may closely resemble meditating. Gently she led us through a process to relax and remember, then find all the sensory images in our story. We fleshed out details, walked with characters, and lived out story. Careful not to go too far without making notes, my journal is full of new insights in my stories. By the end of the week we had discussed words and personality, actions and appearances, emotions and motivations. We briefly discussed accents and created our own character voices. Unlike my efforts at meditation, I never fell asleep but was excited to delve into my stories and 'play inside my head.' This was something I definitely will integrate into my story process with each story.

(Editor's Note: We also took time to revise our mission statements. See page 8)

Perhaps it was the 'Improving your storytelling' coaching that happened every afternoon that made the difference. An hour was devoted to this each afternoon, but most days we spent more than this one hour listening, answering, delving deeper into each other's stories. When else can you have a ready audience that can compliment and suggest something for your own story? Everyone who desired had a chance to participate and most did. Some folks decided an afternoon nap or a trip to town was more what they needed and that was fine as well. Dianne

Hackworth set the rules and offered insights to each storyteller, along with Donna Marie Todd and the others. Dianne wears the nickname "Enabler" well as she is so good at helping others find their style.

Family dining offered time to get to know each other, joke and become a unique group bonded by love of story. There were performance opportunities during the week for everyone, with an ending concert on Thursday evening. Stories were as varied as the trees on the mountain: all lush with detail, yet each a simple reflection of the storyteller.

Saturday morning came with an anxiousness to return home, but not without taking some of this Wildacres magic with each one of us. There were too many special things about this week to identify just one as the ingredient that made it so meaningful. It was summer camp for storytellers with all our activities centered on our passion for storytelling. A week of work and practice is just long enough to get the process into my head to stay. Like my childhood summer camp experiences, the memories last. I can't wait for it to happen again.

Linda Stout is a founder of the SC Storytelling Network and Editor of their newsletter. She is the Director of 'Stories for Life' in Charleston, SC. You may contact her at: tellstories@yahoo.com

(Get Out...continued from page 3)

that when a tree falls in the woods, you best get out of the way. Eric didn't, but he is superman and got up and walked away. There are times when a tree would be cut, but refuse to fall. The tree's branches would get hung up in the upper canopy of the forest and simply lean rather than fall. In that case one of my brothers would climb up the tree with a saw, remove the branches and ride the tree down. I so wanted to do that, but was declared too small.

Once a tree was cut down, we used hand saws, axes and small hatchets to trim it of all its branches. Beth and I, ages 7 and 9, were assigned small hatchets to assist with that process. Once cleaned of its branches and cut into 12 or 16 foot segments the log

would be dragged or floated to the cleared site. Afternoons were spent working together to strip the bark off the trees and notch the ends in preparation for the building.

Stripping bark off trees is really not difficult, if done quickly after the tree is cut down; however, the sap is incredibly sticky. Here's what I learned the moment a chisel flew out of my brothers' hand, across the clearing and down my sister's leg: Chisels are sharp, arterial bleeding is BAD and my family moves fast. Immediately my father began shouting out instructions as he held on to and applied pressure to my stunned sister's leg. Mom ran for the first aid kit. Chris dug through the tent for the car keys and proceeded to run through the woods to get the car

and drive it to the location across the pond most accessible by boat. Eric ran down to the shore to get the sailboat ready. Brian helped mom and dad apply a compression bandage to the wound, a deep slice down the side of her leg from knee to ankle. I sat frozen and wide eyed quietly trying to get my sticky chisel out of my hand.

We loaded Beth into the sailboat and I went with mom and dad for the trip to the nearest hospital, which was one pond and 30 miles of dirt roads away. My brothers stayed behind to finish stripping trees. We were on a schedule; work must continue. Our goal must be met; ten logs each day.

Recently at a family gathering Chris noticed the scar on Beth's leg and said, "I am so sorry I did that to your leg."

(Continued on page 10)

We Did It! by Connie Regan-Blake

Many of you know about the fundraising efforts over the last few months for the Hicks Fund. Our goal was to put in a driveway so that Ted and Rosa Hicks can have easier access to their home. Well, mission accomplished!



Hicks Driveway - Work in Progress



Hicks Driveway - Completed

Together we have raised over \$5,000 and the Hicks can now drive right up to the front door. Congratulations and thanks to all who volunteered, told stories, donated money, played music, baked goodies, attended benefits, wrote articles, took tickets, bid on silent auctions items, moved sets, and spread the word. And special thanks to Vixi Jil and Doyle Pace. The gravel drive is now a reality - and the extra funds raised will go towards paying land taxes, utilities, oil and other necessities for the Hicks family.

When I talked to Lenard the day after it was completed, he said, "Ted is tickled to death to be visiting home" and that "his eyes were sparkling." Rosa said, "Ted had a good day." And Lenard continued, saying that now he "could carry groceries right into the house." And it struck me how many trips up and down that steep embankment the Hicks and friends had made over all these years and generations, including Ray on a stretcher when he was first diagnosed with cancer back in 2001.

Now life is just a bit easier. And Ray who would have been 90 years old on August 29 is probably smiling!

PS Rosa and Ted enjoy visitors and receiving notes and cards. Please be in touch:

Rosa Hicks, 218 Old Mountain, Banner Elk, NC 28604

Ted Nathan Hicks, Life Care Center, 185 Norwood Hollow Rd., Banner Elk, NC 28604



Lenard, Orville and Ted Hicks

As one of America's most celebrated storytellers, Connie Regan-Blake played a role in making this project happen. She is a featured teller at the 40th annual National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough this fall. You may contact her at: connie@storywindow.com

A Festival Saved - A Fairy Tale Story

By Sherry Lovett



Suzi Whapples



David Novak

reserve the tent. They had to find the right tellers to make the event one that would make the sponsors and the audience want to keep coming back. Michael Reno Harrell, Kim Weitkamp, Suzi Whapples, David Novak, and Becky Stone did just that. The tellers too came to

hear stories from a line-up of National storytellers under the big tent beside Creekwalk in Bakersville, the Appalachian Mountains a beautiful backdrop to the scene. A good time was had by all and the festival had just enough money to pull it off. Things went so well that Bakersville would like the

Once upon a time the Toe River Storytelling Festival was held at Riverside Park in Spruce Pine and sponsored by the town of Spruce Pine. It had a thirteen year run there with many a fine storyteller over the years. Enter the problem... Spruce Pine decided that it was time for the town to try new things so a BBQ festival moved in and the storytelling festival was booted. Cue dramatic music... Dun dun dah!

What was to be done? How was the festival to be saved? It needed a hero. It needed money! Sherry Lovett and Kay Goins went in search of someone to help save the festival and, as luck would have it, connected with Dr. Dan Barron a story and literature buff (as any director over the Mitchell/Yancey/Avery county library system would be). Dr. Barron thought the festival would do well in Bakersville, his hometown, and that the town would welcome it. The three began working together.

They had to search far and wide for financial sponsors. The Blumenthal Foundation, Asheville Storytelling Circle, and a private donor came to the rescue with funds to hire the tellers and

the rescue with stories that had the audience laughing until they were crying and crying while they were laughing. They had to find volunteers to make the big day run smoothly. People to put up chairs, sell tickets, park cars, clean-up... Now it was the local people of Bakersville and Spruce Pine to the rescue because they came out in force to get all of these jobs done. There were even some folks from the Asheville Storytelling Circle that gave a helping hand.

Now for the happy ending. The big day arrived and all was in place. The 14th annual Toe River Storytelling Festival took place on July 14, 2012. Three hundred plus people came to



Becky Stone

festival to be held there again next year and our sponsors want to help us again.

I am happy to say the Toe River Festival is living happily ever after.

Sherry Lovett is secretary of the Asheville Storytelling Circle and President Elect of NCSG. She served on the board that enabled this festival to be a success. She may be contacted at: thelovetts3@gmail.com



Michael
Reno Harrell



Kim
Weitkamp

Spring JHT 2013

We need your articles, stories, and storytelling news for the Spring 2013 issue of the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers*.

Include storytelling events open to the public. The events will be included on our website 'Events' page at: <http://www.ncstoryguild.org/events.html>

Deadline: March 15, 2013. Send to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net

Month of November

Not only is November *Native American Heritage Month* but it's *Family Stories Month* as well. Also *American Education Week* is celebrated this year on November 11-17.

Twenty Fifth Anniversary by Donna Washington

I am going into my twenty fifth year as a professional storyteller. I can't say that I ever thought I would write a sentence like the one preceding this one. I can't say that I ever thought I'd be doing anything for twenty-five years that didn't involve involuntary biological systems, and yet, here I am. The knowledge that I've been at this so long raises a question that baffles me. When is this going to get easy?

I always assumed that if you did something for a long time it would get easy. That's the idea behind practice, practice, practice, right? If you practice something enough it should come second nature to you. Why is it that this art form I've decided to spend my life doing hasn't done that? (Of course, I guess I could ask that same question about marriage, but we can get into that whole thing some other time.)

I spend my time chasing interesting stories, deconstructing old stories, crafting new ones, writing, thinking, speaking, practicing, changing, editing and on and on and on. Sometimes I come up with a story that I think is going to go well, and it is a dud. Sometimes I come up with a story that I need to stick somewhere because I only have five minutes and it is a hit and becomes part of my repertoire for the next ten years. Sometimes I throw my hands in the air and ask why I didn't do something less infuriating like become a traditional actress so I could just pick up scripts, memorize somebody else's carefully crafted words and throw in a little improvisation here and there. What draws me to this insane life where I put thirty to forty thousand miles on my car every year, live at the Hampton Inn and visit my family every now and then? Why must I obsess over a single phrase or gesture for hours? Why do I have to come up with two distinct ways to portray talking monkeys so they don't get confused in a narrative that lasts five minutes? What sort of insanity is this?

The average audience I face as a storyteller isn't easy either. Every

audience is different, they all want the same thing, they all want different things, they all want stories they know, they all want stories they don't know, many still have no idea what a storyteller does, they have no idea what I am going to do and most of them are convinced they aren't going to like it because they don't see any puppets, props or musical instruments. When it is all over, they have had a wonderful time, but some of them had to be dragged there...kicking and screaming. If you've ever done a summer reading event, you know what I'm talking about.

Festival audiences are the best, but not the easiest. They know stories, they know storytelling and they expect you to rock their world. Sometimes you only get one shot and then they are out the tent to go and see someone familiar to them. You can't do all the stories that are requested and someone is going to be disappointed even if they had a good time. I cannot tell you the number of times someone has come up to me and said, "I really liked those stories, but my favorite story you tell is...and you didn't do that one this time." It doesn't get any easier.

Middle School principals take one look at me when I enter their school, and fear they've made a mistake asking me to address a group of adolescents. They are certain I will be eaten alive. When the show is over they cannot believe I could get the entire student body of twelve or thirteen or fourteen year olds to sit still and follow me for that long without bells or whistles or rap music. Convincing them to let me in the door the first time hasn't gotten any easier.

I still have to explain what I do to people and even after I explain, they haven't got any idea what I'm talking about. That hasn't changed in twenty-five years. I doubt it will ever change. I'm pretty certain that the other peculiarities of this profession aren't going to get much easier either.

Having said all of that, there is one thing of which I am most certain. It sure is an amazing amount of fun. I love

being a storyteller. I love watching the faces of an audience as we share a story. I love playing with an audience. I love finding out that I've been telling a story the wrong way for the last five years and being able to fix it right there on the spot. I love having complete control of my repertoire. I love having my own versions of classic tales. I love hearing well told tales. I love the act of creation and I even love being so exhausted I can't sleep after a particularly invigorating set. I love the travel and the excitement of getting to win over a new audience. I love the fact that people leave storytelling in love with the art form. Heck, I love almost every part of this wild ride I have elected to experience. The parts that I don't particularly love I outsource to my husband.

In the end the question is not whether or not this is easy, but whether or not it is fun. It is. Perhaps I should ask if it is challenging. It is. Maybe I should concern myself with whether or not I'm getting any better at it. I should certainly hope so! I mean, after all, I have been doing it a very long time.

Perhaps I am being impatient. There are more gigs on the books for 2012 and work to be done in 2013. Who knows? Perhaps, somewhere in the middle of this booking year I will wake up, look around and everything will be a piece of cake. I will pull everything I need out of the air and not angst about any of it. Maybe it is on the verge of coming together! This time next year I might have reached a point where being a storyteller is finally easy. If not? Well, there's always the year after that.

Donna Washington, is celebrating her 25th year as a professional storyteller and award winning recording artist. Her manager husband works very hard to keep her booked and on the road. She may be contacted at: qbot5@aol.com



Telling Stories from History by Tim Lowry

A Sneak Preview of Winter Workshop 2013, sponsored by NCSG

I am very excited to be offering a workshop on *Telling Stories from History* at the annual NCSG Winter gathering at Fort Caswell. Stories of history in a historic fort! How cool is that? Here is a little preview of what is in the works for the weekend.

“And now you know the *rest of the story!*” This very familiar phrase from one of America’s most well-known radio personalities, Mr. Paul Harvey, is an excellent way to summarize my approach to conducting research on stories from history. It is often the “story within the story”, the back story, or the minor character’s perspective that is most intriguing. For instance, everyone has heard of Captains Lewis and Clark and their famous, native guide Sacagawea; but do you know the story of John Colter, the youngest member of the expedition? He ended up running butt naked for his life when he was nearly captured by a band of Blackfoot warriors! Now there’s something worth reading about!

“Daniel Boone was a man. He was a BIG man!” Remember that theme song from the old television show? It

sums up my approach to presenting a story of history to a live audience. I like to emphasize the “bigness” of the main character, the larger than life qualities. I often draw on my training and experience as a theater artist to craft a “tellable tale.” The world of live theater, particularly the operatic stage, influences my performance style.

At the annual Winter Workshop, we will practice lots of engaging and rigorous activities to help you find an intriguing story from history and then mold it into a tellable tale that captures the audience’s imagination in a dramatic “story grip” of emotional intensity. Planned activities include lunch with Helen Keller, a concert with diva Jessye Norman, a staged reading of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and a nice chat over tea with Mr. Thomas Edison. Imagine all those fascinating personalities in one room! The conversation will crackle! Hope to see you there. (One more thing—Bring your shouting voice, Mr. Edison is a little hard of hearing.)

If you want a little taste of a story from history as told by Storyteller Tim



Tim Lowry (Photo courtesy, Jim Payne)

Lowry, visit his website (www.storytellertimlowry.com) and watch the Story of the Month—Cowboy Bill Pickett, Bulldogger.

Professional storyteller Tim Lowry will be leading our 2013 Winter Workshop at Fort Caswell. In real life Tim mixes tales from American history with stories of growing up Baptist, teaching English to Russian immigrants, exciting road trips to Disney World and much more. Tim may be contacted at: timlowry@bellsouth.net

NEW STORYTELLING GROUP IN WAKE COUNTY

Storytelling at Wake Zone Coffee House. A new monthly storytelling group recently began meeting on the second Tuesday of every month to share stories and provide critical feedback to one another. This group is for storytellers seeking to improve their skills and/or polish their stories. Meaningful participation will be expected from both a telling as well as a feedback standpoint. This event will be open to the public and promoted as a family story night, so stories should be appropriate for all ages. A critiquing session will follow the public storytelling session. Second Tuesday of each month at 7pm. 6108 Old Jenks Road, Corner of Davis Drive & Old Jenks Rd, Apex NC. Contact Alan Hoal at 919-607-0993 or alan.hoal@gmail.com or go to <http://www.thewakezone.com/>

October is Family History Month. Learn more at: <http://familycrafts.about.com/od/holidays/p/FamilyHistoryMonth.htm>

Have You Revised Your Mission Statement Recently? The Editor

Some of us took valuable time to revise our individual mission statements during a storytelling workshop this past summer. Here are a few below.

“I am a conduit and a reminder that we are more than who we believe. And, that we are all in the same little house together.”

“I am a storyteller who connects people to the divine love and mystery of God.”

“I am a storyteller who excavates and decorates the bones of traditional folk and fairy tales as an invitation to others to do the same.”

“I share stories to entertain, to connect, to teach and to inspire through the heart.”

Storytelling From the Pulpit

by Bob Kretzu, Pastor, Wallace UMC

In the Fall of 2011 I was praying about the way forward in my pastoral ministry. I felt like I had done all I could at the church I was serving. I was reluctant to leave, though. We were comfortable. We loved our congregation. Another fear factor was that Methodist pastors never know if the Bishop might move them from the frying pan into the fire!

God answers prayer in a number of ways, but it's often that "still, small voice". So you can imagine I was surprised when God loudly commanded me to do three specific and unexpected things: 1. Start painting oil portraits. 2. Learn to be a storyteller. 3. Learn about online game development.

While I had graduated from art college before God called me to pastoral ministry, my degree was in commercial art. I wasn't at all comfortable with portraits or oil painting. But I started taking portrait classes and going to portrait studio; where a group of artists each pay a small fee to hire a model so they can draw or paint from life. At the same time I was on an unrelated search for my birth family (I'm adopted). In February of 2012 I

discovered that my birth mother was working as a commercial artist when I was born! In April I discovered her last resting place in the dusty graveyard of a Texas border town. She had spent the later years of her life there painting portraits!

My pastoral ministry began in Western North Carolina. I was so disappointed when a colleague left the pastoral ministry to become a professional storyteller. While I enjoyed stories as much as the next person, my seminary professors had somehow persuaded me that storytelling from the pulpit was a "lower" form of preaching. Never mind the example of our Lord. But the storytelling workshops I attended were an epiphany! I began to understand the power of story and even had the opportunity to speak privately about storytelling from the pulpit with my former colleague and master storyteller, Donald Davis.

Well, my Bishop did indeed move me from the frying pan into the fire! My wife and I face many new challenges in our new congregation and community. We don't know if God worked through the Bishop or in spite



Bob Kretzu

of him, but we know that we are where God wants us! On our first visit, we saw that their church was filled with original artwork. We have professional artists in our congregation. And when I saw their "Greek Revival" formal sanctuary and their "walk up" pulpit, I knew that storytelling would be a necessary and vital part of my preaching here. I still don't understand about the online game development thing, but I can't wait to find out!

Bob Kretzu is one of the NCSG's newest members. Bob is a Methodist minister living in Wallace, North Carolina. When Bob isn't serving in this role, you may find him wearing one of his other hats - as an artist or as a storyteller. He may be contacted at: bkretzu@hotmail.com

Arts Curriculum...Are you on board? by Donna Washington

In North Carolina our state mandates that all of our students have a certain amount of contact with the arts. Teachers have to provide art immersion and integration and then they have to evaluate whether or not the student is proficient at using or identifying that art form. If you work in schools, and have not gone on the state education website and read the art standards, I recommend that you do that immediately.

Knowing what schools are looking for in performance and teaching artists can help you tailor your marketing materials. It can also

help you as you choose which types of stories, residencies and content you want to offer to your audiences.

Learning to integrate arts curriculum language into your marketing materials, even if you are not a teaching artist, gives schools another reason to include you in their ever shrinking budgets. For some districts, being able to check off a box or two on the growing list of things they are responsible for supplying is no small thing.

Following is the link to the North Carolina Arts Curriculum Standards page. Good Luck to all and happy telling.

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/artsed/resources/>

Donna Washington, is celebrating her 25th year as a professional storyteller and recording artist. Her manager husband works extra hard to keep her booked and on the road. She may be contacted at: qbot5@aol.com

October 14-20th is Teen Read Week. Learn more at: <http://familycrafts.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.ala.org/teenread/>

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR STORYTELLERS

MICHAEL RENO HARRELL

Morganton, NC - Michael Reno Harrell recently released a New Music CD, *Then There's Me*. It includes 14 new songs - 13 recorded with his trio, Dale Meyer and Steve Bradshaw and one recorded live at the National Storytelling Festival Midnight Cabaret, 2011.

CYNTHIA MOORE BROWN

Summerfield, NC - Cynthia Moore Brown's new book, *Folklore and Food: Down home cookin and stories*, with co-author Theresa Bane was released September 28th. Our culture is often saturated with bizarre folktales such as found in this publication, including a special bonus of recipes to connect with the stories. It's now available on www.amazon.com

TRISH DUMSER

Charlotte, NC - Trish Dumser will soon have

many new stories to tell. She is putting in many long hours working with the presidential election campaign in her local community. Her photo below was recently taken of with Joseph Biden.



HAWK HURST

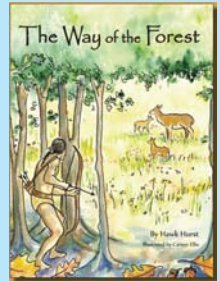
Charleston, SC - Musician, storyteller and author, Hawk Hurst, recently published his new book, *The Way of the Forest*.

"This story comes from a time when all communicated, and respect for the natural world is 'The Way'. Hawk does a wonderful job using the Native American's way of speaking using descriptive words such as 'finned ones' for fish, that leads the reader into a time long ago. The characters have Native names, and the songs are fully explained. The story and education are intertwined and weave a tale that brings the reader into the angst of a childish mistake, and the modern dilemma of taking care of the earth."

- Linda Stout

The book is now available at:
<http://www.hawkhurstflutes.com/thewayoftheforest.html>

(Continued on back page)



(Get Out...continued from page 5)

Everyone in the room turned and stared at Chris and began to laugh. Beth answered, "You didn't do it, Eric did." Chris was amazed - years of guilt for nothing! Shared memories are interesting.

After the cabin was built, there was much time for lazy afternoons spent canoeing, sailing, swimming and exploring. I remember disappearing into



Mom relaxing beside the cabin

the vastness of those woods feeling that I'd been gone so long mom would surely have sent out a search party. I would get lost sitting on a stump staring at the ferns blanketing the forest floor. I would sit, stare and think of the

adventures I would have in life or just think of nothing at all. It was peace.

I remember spending hours in the water. We bathed and swam daily. I learned that ivory soap floats and this was important. I remember jumping off the dock my sister and I built, floating in the water watching the clouds go by, feeling weightless, free and connected to my world. I remember the leeches. They sucked! Yuck!

I remember the outhouse my dad built. It was located down an isolated path from our one room cabin. It had three walls, a roof and an amazing view of the lake. At sunset the view went from amazing to spectacular when it was accompanied by the songs and dance of the loons on our pond. My friends think our three wall outhouse is absolutely hilarious but to me it was perfectly normal. Why would you want to sit in an enclosed stinky dark room when you could spend your time enjoying the view?

My family accomplished an amazing goal. Thirty years later this is what I know: the smell of the woods



View from the outhouse

enters your soul and never leaves, life in the wild will change you forever, teenagers can survive without electricity, running water and TV, we don't need to be entertained 24/7, silence is good, the imagination is a powerful thing, unscheduled time is vital, and it's good to sit and enjoy the view every now and then.

So, my friends . . . Get out. Go Wild. Learn Stuff. You'll have stories to share!

Martha Johnson, originally from New England, now hails from South Carolina. Martha is a single mom of teenage sons, a traveler and teller of tales of crazy experiences with family, friends, and daily life among the living. You may contact her at: johnsonmr64@hotmail.com

Brevard Storytelling Fest



Sponsored by:
Friends of the
Transylvania County Library
& North Carolina Storytelling Guild



November 2 & 3



HEATHER FOREST
(Huntington, New York)



LEN CABRAL
(Cranston, Rhode Island)



CLAIRE RAMSEY
Oxford, NC



GALE BUCK
Raleigh, NC



MIMA DIXON
Washington, NC

Free Admission

FRIDAY November 2: Headliners Concert— 7:30 PM
SATURDAY November 3: Concerts and Workshops— 9 AM— 9:30 PM

Transylvania County Library

INFO: 828 884-3151 ext 3 or 828 274-1123

Complete Festival Schedule online: <http://library.transylvaniacounty.org>

Brevard Storytelling Festival Schedule

Friday, Nov. 2

7:30 - 8:30 pm

Festival Kickoff Performance:
Heather Forest and Len Cabral

Sat., Nov. 3

9:00 - 10:30 am

Workshop presented by Heather Forest: *Narrating the Natural World: A Storytelling Skills Workshop*

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Workshop presented by Len Cabral: *Storytelling in the Classroom and Beyond: A Storytelling Informance*

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Afternoon Family Concert featuring Len Cabral and Heather Forest; NCSG Regional Tellers: Gale Buck, Mima Dixon and Claire Ramsey; Library Youth Tellers

6:30 pm - 9:15 pm

Evening Concert featuring Len Cabral and Heather Forest; NCSG Regional Tellers: Gale Buck, Mima Dixon and Claire Ramsey

Contact: 828-884-3151 or 828-274-1123 or go to: <http://library.transylvaniacounty.org/>

Silent Auction Items: Books, CD's, crafts, and items pertaining to storytelling are particularly popular. If you can't attend arrange to send your items by contacting your area representative or any Board Member.



Review by the Editor

Dawn of Day

2012 by J.A. McPhail

Rowe Publishing and Design

Dawn of Day is an entertaining and educational historic novel. The setting moves back and forth from 1932 to 1856. In 1856 many Kansas citizens were struggling to abolish slavery, with fierce opposition. They needed help and it arrived as a company of men from the state of Connecticut, armed with Bibles, rifles and a passion to help Kansas become a Free State.

Do you have material that you would like to see reviewed? If so, simply send us a complimentary copy and watch upcoming issues for your review.

The Connecticut Company formed a group called the 'Prairie Guards' to protect and help slaves escape by means of the Underground Railroad.

Throughout the book a little girl named Henrietta, and her little sister, listen while their neighbor, Maude, tells this story. (*Time is 1932*) Henrietta has always despised history, but now she becomes intrigued and excited. Maude has her hooked on every word. It's a story in which Maude's own father was involved.

The further I read, the more intriguing and

suspenseful this story became. Maude's father, William, had been one of the Prairie Guards who was mistreated and narrowly escaped hanging by ruffians against abolition. The story becomes breathtaking as Maude explains how her father set up an escape route for children and adult slaves by wagon during harsh weather, as they lay hidden beneath layers of blankets and straw. Were the slaves or her father caught? What were the consequences? Sorry, I dare not spoil the story.

To order go to: www.themacsmusic.com

Spoken-Word Ghostly Tell-off and Intensive Workshop by Jan Schmidt

The Storytelling & Arts Center is starting something wonderful and new ... The Spoken-Word Ghostly Tell-Off, a competition of tellers who may compete for prizes and a People's Choice Trophy for telling the scariest, most ghostly and spookiest story. Wouldn't you want to be the teller with bragging rights that you are the winner of the Spoken-Word Ghostly Tell-Off? It is a unique opportunity to prepare and share stories that everyone loves to hear. Read the information below or go to www.storyartscenter.org for an application and other information. Join in the fun and share this information with others.

Background info.... The Storytelling & Arts Center of the Southeast (SACS) and Story Spinners Guild Invites you, on October 20, 2012, to the:

INAUGURAL SPOOKEN-WORD

GHOSTLY TELL-OFF - FROM 1:30 – 5 PM,
AND

SPOOKEN-WORD STORYTELLING

PERFORMANCE AND SPOOKY STORY SLAM
AT 7 PM

Storytellers *are invited to* face off on October 20, 2012, in Laurinburg, NC. The SPOOKEN-WORD Ghostly Tell-Off will be judged by nationally acclaimed storyteller and spooky gal, Kim Weitkamp, two other impartial judges and the audience.

Stories must be SCARY! Stories must be 4 – 8 minutes. *Stories must be suitable for a family audience.* No

profanity or off-color content will be accepted. Judging criteria is:

- Technique- delivery, confidence, general stagecraft.
- Story development- good development of the tale in the time available.
- Originality- new material or fresh handling of a familiar scary story.
- Effectiveness- in judges' opinion, audience response will be considered.

The Judges will score each category on a scale of 1 to 10, with a maximum of 40 points. The audience will vote on their favorite storyteller. The Judges' score will count for 50% and the audience vote will count for the other 50% of the final score. The decision of the judges and audience will be final.

The judges will confer at the end of the contest to decide the finalists and the audience scores will be tallied. The winners will be announced at the end of the Tell-Off and they will tell their stories at the evening performance. There is no cost to be a contestant in the SPOOKEN-WORD Ghostly Tell-Off. In the evening, Kim Weitkamp will perform her original scary stories. The afternoon

and evening performances are \$10 each or \$15 if you purchase a combined ticket. The winners of the Tell-Off will each receive a complimentary ticket for the evening performance. The evening performance will include a Spooky Story Slam. The Tell-Off contestants are welcomed to enter their names for that activity with an impromptu story. Call for Information: 910-277-3599. Go to www.storyartscenter.org for an Application, Rules, Criteria and a Poster. It will be a truly terrific time for all!

On the Sunday and Monday after the Spoken-Word Ghostly Tell-off, Kim Weitkamp will be presenting a 2-day workshop for tellers who want to improve both their telling techniques and marketing skills. Go to www.storyarts.info and click on Intensive Workshop for information, cost and to register. Kim is a wonderful teacher, who knows how to find the best in each of us and work with us to make our tales more meaningful and fun for every listener. This is a wonderful opportunity to treat yourselves to a great storytelling weekend.

Jan Schmidt is the Executive Director of the Storytelling Arts Center of the Southeast. She also plays a large role in organizing Laurinburg's Storytelling Festival of the Southeast. You may contact her at: jan@sloc.info

Annual Hagood Mill Storytelling Festival - Pickens, SC October 20th (See Upcoming Events; page 13)



Sheila Kay Adams



Doug Elliott



John T. Fowler as Host



Connie Regan-Blake



Judy Seeley



October 2012

October 9-13: Mitch Capel will be **Teller-in-Residence**. Matinee Performances Tuesday through Saturday, 2pm. International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main St.,

Jonesborough, TN. <http://www.storytellingcenter.net/events/storytelling-live/matinee-performances/mitch-capel/>

October 13: *Storytelling in the Park*, with Kim Weitkamp, Andy Offutt Irwin, Cathy Jo Janssen and Fynn Crooks. 10am and continues all day. Ghost Stories begin at 7pm. Hosted by Carolina's Literacy Network. Andrew Jackson State Park, located on Hwy 521, Lancaster, SC. Contact Kathy Wilds at 803-285-8805 or kathy@carolinasliteracy.org or go to: <http://www.carolinasliteracy.org/storytellinginthepark/>

October 14-18: *Starburst Storytellers' Festival*. Opens Oct. 14 at 3pm. Featuring Andy Offutt Irwin, Lynn Ruehlmann, Clemson Area Storytellers' Guild, Linda Goodman and Oba William King. Free admission. 300 North McDuffie Street, Anderson, SC. 864-260-4500, x107. Contact Marybeth Evans at mevans@andersonlibrary.org or go to www.andersonlibrary.org

October 20: *The Inaugural Spoken-Word Ghostly Tell-Off*. A ghostly challenge. Afternoon competition: 1:30 - 5pm. Evening performances and story slam: 7- 9pm. Storytelling & Arts Center of the Southeast, 131 South Main Street, Laurinburg, NC. Contact 910-277-3599 or 910-706-3266. More information at: <http://www.storyartscenter.org/spookin.htm>

October 20: *Eleventh Annual Hagood Mill Storytelling Festival*. Featuring Nationally known tellers Doug Elliott, Connie Regan-Blake and Sheila Kay Adams. Family fun, Saturday from 10am - 4pm. The Pickens County Museum of Art and History invites you to a free day of milling, stories, tall tales and lots of memories at the Hagood Mill Historic Site and Folklife Center. Host will be storyteller, musician and radio personality, John T. Fowler. Located at 138 Hagood Mill Road, Pickens, SC. For additional info contact 864-898-2936 or 864-898-5963.

October 21-22: *Intensive Weekend Workshop with Kim Weitkamp*. 2 days of storytelling workshops that will include group telling, one-on-one telling/coaching, group coaching and training, as well as break-out sessions. Storytelling & Arts Center of the Southeast, 131 South Main Street, Laurinburg, NC. More details at: http://www.storyartscenter.org/intensive_workshop.htm or contact 910-277-3599; 910-706-3266.

November 2012

November 2-3 *Brevard Storytelling Festival*. Featuring Heather Forest and Len Cabral. Regional tellers will be E. Gale Buck, Mima Dixon and Claire Ramsey. Transylvania County Public Library, 212 South Gaston St., Brevard, NC. *More details on page 11.*

November 2-11: *The Old Woman in the Basement*, written and performed by author and storyteller, Gwenda LedBetter. Gwenda is the recipient of the Oracle Award from the National Storytelling Association and the Lifetime Achievement Award from North Carolina Storytelling Guild. Weekend performances, Friday and Saturday, 7:30pm; Sunday matinee, 2:30pm. NC Stage Company, 15 Stage Lane, Asheville, NC. Contact 828-239-0263 or go to www.oldwomaninthebasement.com

November 10: *Second Annual Optimist Music and Story Festival*. A fund-raiser for childhood cancer programs supported

(November continued):

by the North Raleigh Optimist Club. Featuring Donald Davis, Michael Reno Harrell, Suzi Whaples, Ron Jones and the local a cappella group, Second Shift. 9:30am until 6:00pm. Apex United Methodist Church, 100 S. Hughes Street, Apex NC. We are in need of sponsors! Contact Alan Hoal at 919-607-0993 or alan.hoal@gmail.com or www.northraleighoptimistclub.org

November 16-18: *Storytelling - It's for You!* Class led by Dianne Hackworth. Whether you plan to incorporate storytelling into everyday life or hope to become a professional teller, this class is right for you. Choose, learn, tell, and polish your stories - literary, personal, or folktale. John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Rd., Brasstown, NC. Contact 1-800-FOLK-SCH or https://classes.folkschool.org/class_details.aspx?pk=15135

Nov. 17: *Tellabration!* at Charleston County Libraries: 11 am: Johns Island Regional Library-Storyteller Tim Lowry spins seven world folk tales. 11 am: James Island Library, 1248 Camp Road James Island. Claire Willett and Hawk Hurst will spin a few yarns. 11 am: Otranto Regional Library, 2261 Otranto Road, North Charleston. Minerva King and David Baxley will provide fun and laughter with stories for children. 11 am: Mt. Pleasant Regional Library, 1133 Mathis Ferry Road, Mt. Pleasant. Linda Stout brings her enthusiastic storytelling style to folktales. 2pm: Charleston County Main Library, 68 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC. Contact 843-805-6930.

November 18: *Tellabration!* Asheville Folk Art Center, Blue Ridge Parkway. Sponsored by Asheville Storytelling Circle, Southern Highlands Craft Guild, and the National Storytelling Network. Contact 828-664-1429 or 828-777-9177.

December 2012

December 2-8: *Storytelling - Story Giving*. Class led by Elizabeth Ellis. Collect family stories and personal narratives for a truly priceless gift. No prior storytelling experience is required to enjoy this wonderful opportunity. John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Rd., Brasstown, NC. Contact 1-800-FOLK-SCH or https://classes.folkschool.org/class_details.aspx?pk=15197

December 3: *A Not So Silent Night*, an evening of holiday storytelling featuring Bil Lepp, Andy Offutt Irwin and Kim Weitkamp. 7-8:30pm. Greensboro Public Library, 219 North Church St., Greensboro, NC. Contact 336-373-3617 or beth.sheffield@greensboro-nc.gov.

January 2013

January 25-27 *NCSG's Winter Workshop*, with master storyteller Tim Lowry. To be held on the grounds of the Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC. Contact Terry Rollins - bardelf@gmail.com or Dianne Hackworth - dianne@diannehackworth.com. *See article on page 8.*

March 2013

March 8-9: *Charleston Tells Storytelling Festival*. Featuring Syd Lieberman, Barbara McBride-Smith, Ed Stivender and Donna Washington. Wragg Square, Charleston, SC. Tickets available November 2012. Contact Charleston County Public Library at 843-805-6930.

March 21-23: *Storytelling Festival of Carolina*. Featuring Rev. Robert Jones, Bil Lepp, Barbara McBride-Smith and Willie Clafin. Festival kicks off on Thursday night; 7:30. The Storytelling & Arts Center of the Southeast, 131 S. Main St. in Laurinburg, NC. Contact: 910-277-3599; info@sfoc.info or <http://sfoc.info/>



*Sylvia Payne, Editor
1621 Nathaniel Street
Newton, NC 28658*

Remember Silent Auction Items For Brevard:

Books, CD's, crafts, and items pertaining to storytelling are particularly popular. If you can't attend arrange to send your items by contacting your area representative or any Board Member.



(Continued from page 10)

Calabash, NC - Storyteller & Author, Joan Leotta, recently published her new novel, *Guilia Goes to War*. It's her first of a series based on World War II.

Condolences to Jeannie McPhail and family on the death of Jeannie's daughter, Stacie Jeanne McPhail.

(President's Message - continued from page 3)

there, a 'I'm in your area can you meet me for dinner?'. Why not plan a simple gathering at the local coffee shop so you can meet the NCSG tellers in your area? One local guild could go visit another guild. Plan a book swap. Come to the Winter Workshop or the storytelling festival in Brevard and meet tellers from across the state. Whenever possible, go to the events where NCSG tellers are telling, applaud for them and introduce yourself afterward. I am sure you all understand what is being said.

So, here is my email just in case you want to say hi or let me know when you are in the area, maybe we could grab a cup of coffee: lonabartlett@att.net. Have a great Fall and I look forward to hearing from you!

Happy Tellin',
LONA BARTLETT,
NCSG PRESIDENT