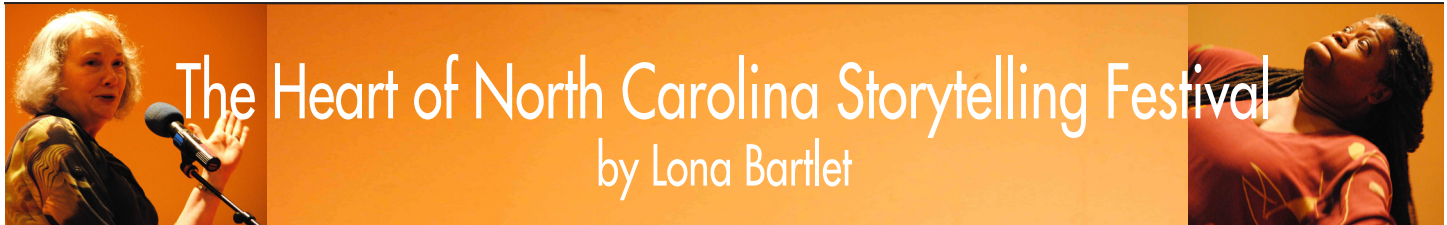


Journal of Tar Heel Tellers

Volume 22
Number 1
ISSN 1077-307X

Fall 2015
NC Storytelling Guild
Official Newsletter



There may have been rain outside but there was sunshine inside!

The North Carolina Storytelling Guild, Triad Story Exchange and The City of Greensboro worked together to present The Heart of North Carolina Storytelling Festival. With three concerts, three workshops, a basket raffle, vendor table, visiting friends, the day was full.

Our Featured Tellers; Michael Reno Harrell, Linda Goodman and Donna Washington; did not disappoint. They all brought their 'A' game and gave us some stories to remember. Michael's stories took us to his home and he sang us a song, Linda reminded us all of family, and Donna told us how her father is a quick thinker, just like Brer Rabbit.



Above, Michael Reno Harrell; upper left, Linda Goodman; upper right, Donna Washington, National Tellers

Our Showcase Tellers; Naomi Faw with a sweet southern tone, Vicky Town with animated character, and Ray Mendenhall with his orange hat and guitar; made us all laugh a bit and thankful that we got to hear them spin their yarns.

Around the vendor table you could hear people talking about attending the workshops and how much they learned. The basket raffle held everyone's interest and added a

bit of extra fun to the event. All of the baskets were beautiful and well put together. From handmade quilts and a framed drum, to coffee and jewelry and everything between, there was something for everyone to bid on.

Thank you to everyone who participated in The Heart of North Carolina Storytelling Festival; organizers, tellers, attendees, donors, ticket takers, selection committee, committee members, volunteers, publicity, workshop leaders, The 100 County Journey ... all of you, there are no words to say how amazing you are!

Lona Bartlett is former president of NCSG and the NCSG Festival Coordinator for The Heart of North Carolina Storytelling Festival. We commend her for such a great job! You may contact her at: lonabartlett@att.net

(Photo credit: Jim & Sylvia Payne. Additional photos; page 3.)



Audience



Naomi Faw, Regional Teller



Ray Mendenhall, Regional



Vicky Town, Regional

JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

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

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

ISSN 1077-307X

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Subscriptions are through membership in the NC Storytelling Guild only. Single copies are not available.

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, unless noted, "not for publication." The editor reserves the right to revise contributed articles for style and length.

Fall Cast of Characters

Sylvia Payne - Editor

Contributors:

Lona Bartlett, Vickyi Byrd, Kali Ferguson, Janet Harlee, Michael Reno Harrell, Martha Johnson, Gwenda LedBetter, Catherine MacKenzie, Ray Mendenhall, Rev. Jim Martin and Brian Sturm.



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

Gwenda LedBetter attended NSN's 2015 National Storytelling Conference in Kansas City, Kansas . . . This fall storyteller and yoga instructor, **Judith Valerie**, celebrates her 25th year of teaching yoga in Raleigh, NC . . . Congratulations to **Joan Leotta** who was featured on August 11, 2015 in the *National Federation of Presswomen*. Not only is Joan a storyteller but an author and has been a journalist for 30 years. You may read the article by going to: <https://tlehre.wordpress.com/2015/08/11/meet-a-member-joan-leotta/>

. . . In August, storytellers **Alan Hoal**, **Ron Jones**, **Pamela Alberda** and **Henry Vogel**, were featured at the *Forest of Wake Storytelling Festival*, in Wake Forest, NC . . . **Linda Goodman** was one of six storytellers from across the country to compete in the National Storytelling Festival's 4th annual Story Slam. This event took place Saturday October 3, 2015 in Creekside tent . . . Congratulations to **Willa Brigham**. She has been selected to receive the prestigious *Zora Neal Hurston Award*, the highest honor given by the National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc. (NABS) to an individual who has contributed significantly to the preservation and perpetuation of African American Folklore. The award is to be presented November 14, 2015 during the NABS awards ceremony in Arlington, Virginia.

"If you want your children to be intelligent read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales."

- Albert Einstein

100 County Journey, a First

from the editor's desk

Mix road travel, rain, hotels, drying out, and listening to heart-rending stories. What do you get? Damp feet and a heart full of sunshine! These experiences led up to the Heart of North Carolina Storytelling Festival. Some 100 County Journey visits across the state were met with rain, but that didn't dampen your spirits nor slow you down. The spirit of storytelling ran strong in September.

You will read about these events in this issue, along with an array of intriguing articles about the art of storytelling. For example: saying goodbye, keeping your story either in past or present tense, African stories echoing from past centuries, a challenge from our NCSG President, Kansas City's NSN Conference, a storytelling week with master storyteller, Donald Davis, and so much more.

My gratitude, as editor, goes out to each of you and your dedication to the oral tradition of storytelling, no matter if you are a listener or an avid storyteller. I am indebted to all of you who contribute to this Journal. It's due to your commitment to the ancient art of storytelling, your fellow members and authors that we are able to publish this journal. It takes a "family." We are all in this together, whether you took the 100 County Journey or not. I salute you!

Submit articles for JTHT Spring 2016 issue to:

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

Deadline for Spring Issue: March 15, 2016.

The President's Message, Janice Davin



THREE IS MAGIC

When Sandra Gudger advised me to check the air in my tires before she transferred the presidents' notebooks to my car, I realized that I was about to receive a weighty cargo. The Ark of the Covenant came to mind. On the way home, I think I heard my tiny Honda Fit whimper in awe.

At home, I dedicated a small bookcase to this chronicle of NCSG's history. Then I began to read starting at the beginning, the retreat at Brown's Summit on March 28-29, 1998. I recognized most of the storytellers who were present for the retreat and the organizational meeting that followed. In that first year, the events that characterize the guild were set in motion. As I pondered this impressive

feat, it occurred to me that our 20th anniversary is THREE years away. As storytellers, we all know that three is magic. How can we use the next three years to "Relight the Spark" for another generation?

The symbol for three is the triangle. It represents arrowheads (new possibilities) and sacred mountains (the achievement of desired goals). How can we use the next three years to examine new possibilities, set desired goals, and achieve them?

The board began this process at our first meeting by drafting a Vision and a Mission Statement based on the By-Laws.

Vision: To communicate the power of story.

Mission: To create a thriving

storytelling community by performing, nurturing, and educating.

These statements are a work in progress. We welcome your suggestions for improvement. We need your insights. What is your vision for the guild? How do you understand our mission? How can we prepare for our 20th Anniversary? Periodically I will ask for your opinions. Please respond in the way that works best for you: email, the members' wiki, surveys, regular mail, or you can call me (704-843-4559). Let's dream the impossible dream and then use our storytelling magic to make that dream a reality.

Janice Davin

(Festival photos...continued from front)



State Sponsored Swimming

by Michael Reno Harrell

*M*ama was one of seven children born in Buncombe County, North Carolina. That is the home county of the great city of Asheville. The part of the county that is home to my people is called Pole Creek, which is a part of the Milksick Cove. I know, it is a somewhat odd address. Once I asked Stover Mason, my granddaddy's best friend, why he thought anyone would name a place "Milksick Cove." The old boy studied on that a bit, studied the stick he was turning into shavings, winked and allowed, "Well, might have been a lot of lactose intolerant people in the area at one time." It's as good a reason as I can come up with.

Mama's older sister, Elveta married one of the Earley boys, Clarence. They had three children, my cousins Bob, Patsy and Bill. Their little farm there on Monte Vista road is the scene of some of my favorite growing up memories.

For instance, one sweltering July afternoon Bob, my brother Eddie and I had drug a red wagon piled high with empty feed sacks from the barn down to the creek which ran through the hay field and under the road through a huge metal culvert. This was a really huge culvert, eight feet in diameter. The shallow creek made a sharp left turn just after exiting the culvert, forming a long sand bar along the water's edge on the apex of that bend.

We boys had commandeered



a broken handled shovel from Uncle Clarence's tool shed. We knew better than to use the good tools without permission and Uncle Clarence was at work so we couldn't ask. We three were laboring in the hot July sun filling the first of those feed sacks with sand. We planned to then drag them out into the creek where we would stack them together to form a dam, thus creating a swimming hole in that little stream.

But, just like the best laid plans of mice and men, ours also went awry. After filling that first sack with gold flecked, mica creek sand and stitching it closed with bailing wire, we immediately discovered that we couldn't budge the hundred plus pound sack of sand. Bob suggested removing a tad of sand in order to make the bag more manageable, which we did. Eddie removed a hefty shovel full, but the combined effort of us three boys still couldn't budge the

sack. More and more sand was removed, until finally we were able to drag the thing a few feet across the bar to the water's edge, but one could hardly refer to the now pitiful looking piece of burlap as a sand bag. It looked more like a fifty pound bag of flour which was down to its last couple of pans of biscuit makings. Even a modest dam would take a thousand such sad sacks to do the job. This was just not working. It looked like the three of us had worked up a steamy summer sweat for naught.

There we stood, calf deep in the water, cussing the heat, the sand, the sacks, the too shallow for swimming creek and the broken shovel when we heard laughter. We passed a puzzled look among ourselves, then turned our gazes upwards where we were met with a rather disturbing sight. There on the roadside twelve or so feet above us stood a man in a blue uniform, the butt of a twelve gauge pump shotgun resting on his thigh. Lined up next to him there on the shoulder of the road stood six men in white North Carolina State Prison uniforms holding sling blades and shovels.

They were obviously a work gang in the process of cleaning out the Monte Vista Road ditches. As the three of us perspiring, sand encrusted, open mouthed boys watched in amazement, the guard spit a stream of tobacco juice into the weeds, drug a shirt sleeve

(Continued on page 12)



"Yes Josie, I'll tell you a story"

by Martha Johnson

I've been stuck in middle school for decades! It is my job as a school counselor to help students through the daily challenges the world of middle school provides. It is a job I love and yet if truth be told, I often learn far more from my students than they learn from me.

One of those students was Josie. When Josie arrived at school I was worried for her. By all middle school standards Josie was a student who could have easily been a target for all the teasing, taunting and bullying the world of middle school sometimes offers, and yet she wasn't. Josie was small in stature, looking more like a fourth grader than a seventh grader. She had crazy, wild hair that looked like she'd cut it herself with playschool scissors, thick lens 80's style glasses too big for her face and she had speech challenges that left her words extremely difficult to understand. Her wardrobe and hygiene issues were a reflection more of her family economic challenges than a lack of care. However, in spite of her small stature and significant situational challenges, Josie's spirit soared high.

Josie was a lover of story and each time I came to her class or she saw me in the hall she'd hug me, smile at me and say, "Tell me a story." Some days Josie would escape from her classroom and arrive at my office, knock on the door, grab a photo of my dad and say, "Tell me another story about him."

Josie's love of story inspired me to take 38 of my students to the Storytelling Festival of the Carolina's in Laurinburg, NC. I was excited to have my students

see some of my favorite tellers and experience the energy and magic of tales under a tent. Josie was beside herself with excitement and could barely contain her enthusiasm. As I loaded the students and 14 chaperones on the bus I began to think and to worry. What if my students don't want to hear my stories anymore after hearing tellers like Bill Lepp, Barbara McBride Smith, Willy Clafflin and Revered Robert Jones? . . . What if I'm just not good enough?

The festival was a huge success. From my vantage point on the stage as emcee, I could look out at my student's faces and see their shock as I greeted the crowd and introduced the tellers. My students sat mesmerized, along with 800 other students under a giant tent on a cool spring day as the tales unraveled. As Willy Clafflin was in the middle of a story, setting the scene of a sheep hiding from the wolf in the woods the entire crowd was silent, hanging on every word and gesture until out from the crowd came a clear resounding, "bahhh". It was Josie! She had absorbed and become part of the story and oh how I loved that girl! After the story, Willy sat down next to me and said, "Did you hear that? . . . amazing!" That's my Josie. I responded, "she's amazing."

On the bus ride home none of my students, or teachers pulled out their phones or ear buds. They shared and retold their favorite tales of the day and the stories of their lives. I sat and listened to the stories all around me; it was a beautiful symphony of human connection.

When we arrived back at school I asked the students to write me a note about their favorite teller or story. I was planning to use their words to introduce the tellers during the festival gala. Josie didn't write me a note. Instead she snuck down to my office, burst through the door, threw her arms around me and said, "Thank you, thank you, thank you Ms. Johnson for taking me to the festival!!!" She then proceeded to retell her favorite story in an almost clear voice I wish her speech therapist could have heard.

As she left my office I again began to think, "What if she doesn't want to hear my stories anymore?" But before I could finish the thought in my head, Josie rushed back into my office and said, "I loved the festival Ms. Johnson, but you're still my favorite storyteller and I like your 'Duck Tape Love' story best of all."

My heart melted that day as I learned from Josie the true power and magic of story. It's all about connection and being present in the moments all around as our stories unfold. It's about taking that moment in our crazy busy lives and saying, "Yes. I'll tell you a story."

As a middle school counselor Martha Reed Johnson has over 25 years of experience working with youth and families. She is a master at finding, creating and telling amazing stories from ordinary moments. She was a featured regional teller this fall at The Festival of Carolina in Laurinburg. She may be contacted at: johnsonmr64@hotmail.com

Past or Present, but Not Future

by Brian Sturm

Past, present and future sat in a bar...it was tense. (traditional joke)

One of the things that has struck me in teaching college students to tell stories has been the tendency for beginning storytellers to share stories in the present tense, or to switch between tenses. This is a tendency I have been exploring to try to determine its origins, as I have tried to dissuade them from this practice; here is what I have discovered so far.

Stories, particularly folktales, often begin “Once upon a time,” or “Long ago,” or “In the time before time,” and all of these story beginnings signal a setting that is past; hence folktales are most comfortably understood and heard in the past tense. But even stories such as personal narratives, literary tales, or contemporary legends are still stories, and these, almost by definition, imply that they happened, not that they are happening. They are, again, completed actions that occurred sometime in the past, hence their storied nature and past-tense performance. It can jar the ear to hear a story in present tense, but many novice storytellers, particularly young ones, seem to share a proclivity to tell stories in this manner. Why?

There are several possible reasons that have surfaced in my classes over the last few years. Perhaps the most common – and obvious – possibility is that storytellers shift to present tense in order to heighten the immediacy, vividness, or drama of the tale, and there is much scholarly writing on this issue. The use of historical-present tense – the use of present tense to refer to past events – in this case is an

attempt to bring the distant past into the current lives of the listeners.¹ Speakers can “employ overt tense markers which normally reflect present time, but which have been semantically established to refer to time other than the present... thus, present-tense forms are used as if they were past tense...(cf. The



discourse of two teen-agers, in which every sentence begins *and he goes... and then she goes...and then...*)² In literary studies, this phenomenon is sometimes related to “involved writing” (in contrast to “informational” writing) and is characterized by an increased use

For further information on tense switching, see: Fludernik, M. 1991. The historical present tense yet again: Tense switching and narrative dynamics in oral and quasi-oral storytelling. *Text and Talk* 11 (3): 365-397; Wolfson, N. 1979. The conversational historical present alternation. *Language* 55 (1): 168-182.

1

See: Friedman, L. A. 1975. Space, time, and person reference in American Sign Language. *Language* 51 (4): 940-961; Blyth Jr., C., S. Recktenwald, & J. Wang. 1990. I'm like, Say what?!: A new quotative in American oral narrative. *American Speech* 65 (3): 215-227.

2

of first- and second-person pronouns, contractions, “private” verbs such as *think* and *feel*, and present-tense verbs.³

Storytellers may also get caught up in visualizing the story so completely that it feels as if it is happening around them as they speak. This shift to present tense also occurs with personal narrative storytelling “when sensory and affective memory representations are strong enough to exert a direct influence on purposeful narrative processing.”⁴ Whether by choice or accident, this often leads to tellers beginning their narrative in past tense (signaling it as *story*), then shifting to present tense in order to make it “present” for their listeners. Unfortunately, this can be immensely disconcerting to listeners, who must navigate these shifting tides, and it can throw listeners out of that storylistening trance – or immersion in the story world – for which many storytellers strive. Immediacy is achieved more effectively in many other ways, such as leaning forward, lowering or raising the voice, direct eye contact, or vivid description,

See: Biber, D., S. Conrad & R. Reppen. 1998. *Corpus linguistics: investigating language structure and Use*. Cambridge University Press. Baron, N. S. 2004. See you online gender issues in college student use of instant messaging. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 23 (4): 397-423.

3

Pillemer, D.B., A. B. Desrochers, & C.M. Ebanks. “Remembering the past in the present: Verb tense shifts in autobiographical memory.” In *Autobiographical memory: Theoretical and applied perspectives*. (C.P. Thompson, et. al., Eds.). 1998. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 145-162.

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(Continued on page 7)

Celebrating Storytelling: the NSN Conference in Kansas City by Gwenda LedBetter

Elizabeth Ellis, Storyteller extraordinaire, looked at my turquoise three-wheeled walker and said, 'We're going to have a race of crutches, canes and walkers. You interested?' "Sure," sez I. "I thought so," sez she. She didn't say when the race would be. We are standing next to the registration table on the second floor of the Marriott Country Club Plaza Hotel. People are coming in and out of the door to the ballroom where a member of the city's council welcomed a crowd of arm waving cheering storytellers. Donna Washington made a keynote address that affirmed where we were, who we were and what we were there for.

I am a veteran of the Conference when it was summer camp out at Washington College down a back road near Jonesborough, Tennessee. We learned of archetypes from Gioia Timpanelli; sang in a circle led by Jay O'Callahan and John Langstaff, and after supper, told stories on the porch. I still remember some of them. The last NSN conference I attended was in 2006

(Past or Present...continued from page 6)

but if this is the underlying reason, at least it has the redeeming characteristic that the student is, indeed, *living* – or reliving – his or her story while sharing it.

A third possibility, given the preponderance of horror stories told in present tense, is the idea that present tense indicates the narrative is extant, and the villain, therefore, still at large. This is a substantial component of horror stories, as any viewer of the movie *Friday the 13th* can attest; the undestroyed evil is considerably more terrifying than the terminated one.

in Pittsburgh where I received the Oracle Award. Storytelling is a life changing occupation. We are oracles passing on the wisdom of the world and how to live and die in it. All of the 2015 workshops I attended spoke to this: Milbre Burch's powerful, *Changing Skins*, Bill Harley's *iPerformance Workshop* ... Beth Horner and Sue O'Halloran *Collaborative Telling*... Lani Peterson's ...*Narrative Healing*... , Laura Simms, and Angela Lloyd's, *Training of the Compassionate Storyteller* and Jo Radner's, *Giving Place a Powerful Role*. I missed many just as strong. Kendall Haven's keynote, *Your Brain On Story*, told of what happened when the Department of Defense combined a storyteller with a room full of neural scientists. Alan Hoal told his wild tall tale as part of the *Fringe*. There was wild dancing after the Oracle Awards. I nearly broke something. The final concert - Dr. Heather Forest emceeding, Anthony Rocha, Emily Lansana and her son Onam, Bill Harley, with Andy Irwin's whistling and Libby

Finally, one's training can impact one's narrative construction. Many of my students come from an English Literature or Classics background, and their papers are written in present tense. For example, they might write, "Shakespeare's work shows a remarkable..." or "Socrates uses many..." This use of present tense writing may bleed over into the students' oral speech.

The primary caveat to my argument here is that dialog should be performed as if you *are* the character at that moment, so present tense is completely valid during characters' speech.⁵ In

from Jonesborough's signing brought tears at the beauty.

Elizabeth's race: I walked out of *Fairytale's* to find Elizabeth lining us up. Elizabeth on a cane, Judith Black on a crutch, Lorelee Cooley on a cane and someone on a motorized chair. I slid my turquoise three-wheeler into place beside Elizabeth, motioning folks before me out of the way. Then thought I have wheels I should give an advantage. I heard myself say "No!" Elizabeth said "Go!" I went and came in first. Judith Black hopped in second. Kiran Singh said, "You were like a cheetah after a deer." Elizabeth said we made \$194.00.

I told a friend about the conference adding that it was pricey. She said, "I don't think I can afford not to go."

Storyteller, author and playwright, Gwenda LedBetter, began her fifty years of storytelling in Asheville, North Carolina. She first told at the National Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee in 1979. She was awarded the Oracle Award from NSN in 2006. You may contact her at: bahpu80@gmail.com

fact, present tense storytelling is a valid approach, so long as it is a choice that breaks the tradition to advantage. Rules are meant to be broken, but they must be broken deliberately and with consummate skill to be effective.

For some current bloggers' perspectives on present tense in narrative, see: <http://www.storyteller.net/articles/65> and <http://theeditorsblog.net/2012/01/31/narrative-tense-right-now-or-way-back-then/>

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Brian Sturm is an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. His focus is on storytelling, folklore, children's and young adults' literature, public library services, children and technology, and bibliotherapy. You may contact him at strom@ils.unc.edu.



100 County Journey

by Catherine MacKenzie



As we all sat around the table talking about the upcoming “Heart of North Carolina Storytelling Festival” at the 2015 NCSG Winter Workshop at Fort Caswell, presenter, Kim Weitkamp, ignited a spark that became the “100 County Journey” initiative.

As part of an organization dedicated to promoting the art of storytelling and as supporters of the state library system, we dreamed of bringing a teller, free of charge, to a library in each of North Carolina’s 100 counties culminating in a festival in Greensboro where North Carolina tellers with national and regional acclaim would share stories with family audiences.

Over the course of two months, forty-six tellers reached a combined total of 2,795 listeners. Some counties were the beneficiaries of numerous programs

offered by our generous members who gave so willingly of their time. In others, the program stretched to an hour or more. Audiences were captivated and several tellers were asked to come back again to the libraries at which they told.

Special thanks to Lori Special, the Youth Services Consultant for the State Library of North Carolina, who helped promote the program with area directors and individual librarians, and who made possible the gift of storytelling boxes with puppets and books to interested librarians in the system. Our hope is that, having experienced the power of story, more individuals have caught the storytelling bug.

I would also like to thank the wonderful tellers who enthusiastically embraced this initiative: Michael “Badhair” Williams, Bob Kretzu, Brenda

Gilbert, Carrie Foreman, Catherine MacKenzie, Charlie St. Clair, Charlotte Ross, Charlotte Hamlin, Cindy Raxter, Claire Ramsey, Cynthia Brown, E. Gale Buck, Rebecca Tighe, elena miller, Frankie Adkins, Gwenda Ledbetter, Henry Vogel, J.A. Bolton, Azalea Bolton, Tyris Jones, Janet Harllee, Janice Davin, Joan Leotta, Joel Richards, Kali Ferguson, Lee Lyons, Linda Goodman, Lona Bartlett, Lynda Johnston, Mima Dixon, Pete Boggs, Priscilla Best, Ray Mendenhall, ReVonda Crow, Rodger Ellingwood, Ron Jones, Sam Pearsall, Sara Beth Nelson, Sharon Clarke, Sherry Lovett, Susan Adams, Sylvia Payne, Terri Ingalls, Terry Rollins, vixi glenn, and Willa Brigham.

(100 County photos below)

(Additional photos continued on page 9)





Thank you North Carolina!

Storyteller Catherine MacKenzie serves on the NCSG Board as secretary and historian. We applaud her for her dedication in organizing this 100 County Initiative, in order to help this project succeed. She may be contacted at catherinemackenzie@carolina.rr.com



Friends, Friends, Friends by Ray Mendenhall

Over the years, I have shared thoughts and ideas in the journal, but this time I want to share a deep sense of gratitude. As Ann and I prepare to start a new adventure and life in Kentucky, we realize that we will be leaving a special group of friends that have been important to us over the years. It was in 1998 that Ann introduced me to the NCSG. We found a gracious welcome at our very first visit in Kernersville. I found a great group of friends who didn't take much notice of the fact that I was a minister and treated me like a regular "Joe." That in itself was a gift, but as I gained interest in storytelling, I found an equally great group of mentors and gentle critics who helped me grow and

develop as a storyteller.

The NCSG gave Ann and me opportunities to both learn and practice the craft of storytelling. They encouraged creativity and cheered our successes. We are both profoundly grateful for this. Winter Workshop became a regular event that gave us an opportunity to hang out with a group of folks who had become very special to us. It was one of the highlights of our year. It goes without saying that we will miss you all. Our involvement in NCSG has been enriching and nurturing in ways we cannot even put into words. For the years of friendship, fellowship and just plain fun we thank you one and all and no doubt will be sure to venture back for festivals in the days to come.

There is a song I learned as a child in Sunday School. It goes like this:

Friends, friends, friends, I have some friends I love

I Love my friends and they love me

I help my friends and they help me
Friends, friends, friends, I have some friends I love.

You are all friends we love. Keep Smilin' and Keep Tellin'! Come see us.

Ray Mendenhall, is a pastor, storyteller and musician. He is former President of NCSG. You may contact him at rwmend@juno.com.

**ECHO
OF
THE
AFRICAN
DIASPORA
BY KALI
FERGUSON**



Echo, echo, echo: nothing but an echo of the past. Nothing but an echo of the past.

~ from "Echo" by Sweet Honey in the Rock

The word is life, and life lies within the word.

The name is understanding, and understanding lies within the name.

The song is love, and love lies within the song.

The story is power, and power lies within the story.

The story must be told because the story never ends!

The stories of the African Diaspora today are the echoes of the tales our ancestors told centuries ago. They told stories in the heat of the equatorial sun to keep their heroes and histories alive. They told stories to make sense of the universe, to explain the how's and why's of life. Their stories taught people how to live, love, and just be happy. They gave them moral ground to stand on and entertainment to boot. Our great-great-grandmothers and grandfathers even carried their stories with them on that sad trip from one coast of the Atlantic Ocean to the other. Despite deprivation, disease, and death, our ancestors – and their stories – survived.

Once here in the so-called "New World," things changed drastically. However, our oral traditions remained intact. Orality took the form of riddles, proverbs, songs, legends, and folktales, among other things. And in every corner of the colonies the tradition survived.

Take for example Haiti, the world's first Black Republic: there we find the story of Nananbouclou and the Piece of Fire. Nananbouclou was the mother of the gods. One day four of her sons brought her a piece of fire that had fallen from the sky. Each one played a part in bringing the fire to Nananbouclou. They argued and argued over which son should get to keep the fire until they all became quite angry. Finally, the matriarch decided to restore the harmony her family had enjoyed before. So, she hurled the fire back into the sky, and it remains there to this very day, better known as the evening star.

Now, if we close our eyes and imagine a similar story with slightly different characters, we might come up with the Ashanti tale of Anansi's six sons. Anansi went on a long journey, during which he kept meeting up with trouble. Just like the children of Nananbouclou, Anansi's sons each had special powers,

which they used to save their father's life. Also like the first story, each son felt that he should be rewarded for his good deed. And of course, Anansi decided that neither son would get his reward, which was the moon. Consequently, the father gave the moon to Nyame, the sky god, and that is where it has stayed ever since.

The specifics of the basic story may have changed, but it is clear that Haitian storytellers still impart the same values to their listeners as do the Ashanti of modern-day Ghana. In both instances we learn reverence for our elders and the importance of family unity. The legacy lives on.

Travel a couple hundred miles west of Haiti, and West Africa's Ashanti and Akan influence can be seen in Jamaica. Anansi turns in to Anancy (or Aunt Nancy), and appears everywhere in Jamaican folklore, tricking others and barely escaping trouble. Like the time he tricked Brother Tiger into letting him ride on his back like a saddled horse. Or what about when he discovered that holiday drink, Sorrel, in the marketplace? But that is just in Jamaica. Brother Anansi lives everywhere – Costa Rica, Surinam, and now, the U.S.A. In the town of Bluefields, Nicaragua, many black people from the British Caribbean settled a while ago. But when they tell Anansi's stories, they place him on cattle ranches, scheming on how to get U.S. dollars out of Tío Tigre's hands. What a laugh we get from the clever antics of he who is both man and spider at the same time.

But wait. Anansi is not the only clever character in our stories. From Uganda to Nicaragua to North Carolina, one animal outsmarts the others every time. Be it Molly Cottontail, Bruh Rabbit, or Tío Conejo: whatever you call him, he personifies the triumph of the seemingly

(Continued on page 14)

My Week with Donald Davis by Vicki Byrd

It's 3:30 pm on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. The Swan Quarter Ferry has just docked at Ocracoke. Once off the ferry my first stop is at the home of Merle and Donald Davis. I am greeted by Merle who lets me know that dinner is at their home at 7pm.

The evening meal was delicious. This was also a time to meet the other participants attending the Donald Davis Storytelling Workshop. After our meal, Donald went over the weeks plan and gave us an agenda for the week. Whoa! Looks like a fun filled busy week!!

Monday morning, anxious to be on my way. We meet in the home that is being rented by some of the participants (arranged through Donald and Merle). Our meeting began with each of us introducing ourselves. What a diverse group-from Methodist minister to chemist, from mid-wife to Santa Clause, from retired teachers to storytellers. Five from Georgia, two from Tenn., and one from NC.

Donald begins with talking about the basics for storytelling: place, people, and plot. He reminds us that place and people are things we can see and touch, they are visible, while plot is invisible. Our task is to think of adults we knew as we were growing up, that we wish our grandchildren could meet. Each of us shared our thoughts. For me, it would have been my dad, who passed away in 2006. I have been trying to come up with a story that I could tell without a shaky voice and tears streaming down my face. The team was very encouraging and my advice from Donald was to tell my story over and over and over.

Donald points out that our listeners are not listening to our words, they are seeing a picture as we are telling our

stories. Therefore, it is descriptions that work in a story, not concepts. He encouraged us to use lots of nouns and verbs in our stories.

Tuesday's assignment: Think about trip stories, the place we went, and the people we met along the way. Donald is great about drawing diagrams to help us.

Place} What is common

=Starting Point

People} What is normal

"If a story needs to be longer, it needs to start earlier," says Donald. This certainly makes sense!

Tuesday afternoon we take some time off to go sailing with Captain Rob Temple on the skipjack, Wilma Lee. I won't take up space to tell you how wonderful and peaceful this was. If you want to know more about this skipjack you can go to: <http://www.ocracokealive.org>. On the top bar click on Skipjack Wilma Lee. Afterwards, we dine at the Jolly Roger, then off to the Community Center to hear a concert put on by Coyote + 1. Loved it!

Wednesday starts out early with a delicious breakfast at the Pony Island Restaurant. Then off we go to walk the trail at Springer's Point. Donald talked with us about all the history that had taken place: Black Beard's famous pirate party, a man buried here along with his horse. Some say the horse is buried standing up! So much history on this one little island.

We meet back at our workshop station at 1:00pm. Our assignment for today was a love story. Some told about best friends, some told about parents, but two if us told about our pet dog!

On Thursday we would be telling

stories at the Ocracoke Preservation Museum. Donald asks for three volunteers and one MC. I volunteered to tell a story. Several showed up for the stories.

Friday arrives way too soon. Today we could tell any story we wanted. Wish I had taken a recorder with me! So many fun stories to hear! I told my "Lucky Break" story. Donald gives us another diagram for coming up with stories. He tells us that this diagram works very well with school children.

#3 Problem
(keep it a secret for a while-one sentence)

#1, 2
Places
(describe)
*make a list

| picture |

#1, 2
People (assume no one knows them, make a list)

#4 Progress
(one sentence)

This evening our group will kick off the OcraFolk Festival. Donald requested that Ron Kemp tell. Ron is a very entertaining teller and I would highly recommend you hearing him if you have not yet had the pleasure. Then Donald asked for three volunteers. Since I told last year at Deep Water Theater, I volunteered to MC. The theatre was packed with a little more than 100 attending! Our tellers had everyone's full attention as they told stories of yard sales, losing a young daughter in a large department store, a dad who came home to see his family before passing

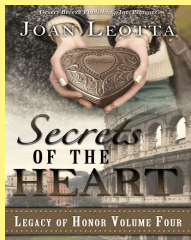
(Continued on page 12)

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR STORYTELLERS

AUTHOR JOAN LEOTTA HAS HAT TRICK SUMMER – THREE BOOKS

CALABASH, NC – Three of this Calabash, NC award winning journalist and performer's books have been released this summer. Moreover, each book is in a different genre! One is romance/women's fiction, the second is a collection of short stories and the third is Joan Leotta's first picture book, *WHOOSH!*

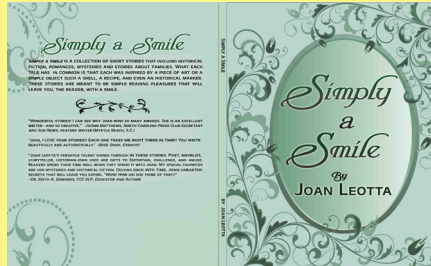
Desert Breeze Publishing has just released *Secrets of the Heart*, the fourth book in Joan's *Legacy of Honor*



series. In this installment, set during the first Gulf War in the 1990s, the granddaughter of the woman in book one, discovers secrets about the family's history from a Civil War era in Fort Fisher, North Carolina. In addition, in her role as a journalist intern in Rome Italy the young heroine helps thwart a jewel thief and finds a bit of romance along the way. More women's fiction than straight romance, the book is suitable for YA as well as adults. Each book in this series deals with the struggles of the

women in the same Italian-American family at different points in time, but each can be read as a stand-alone. Joan is happy to come and speak to your group on Italian Americans in the US Civil War, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam-Era, on strong women in history and/or on how she develops the ideas for her books.

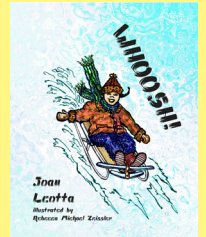
Cane Hollow Press has brought out *Simply a Smile*, a collection of Joan Leotta's short stories—some award



winners. The tales are varied in genre and length, including historical, women's fiction, a mystery and an ekphrastic (art-inspired). What joins them is that all were inspired by objects. Wilmington, NC is the setting for several. *Simply a Smile*, the title story was inspired by the one smiling warrior in an exhibition of the Terra cotta soldiers. Joan is available to talk on object-inspired writing, "Getting an Object to tell its Story," (for middle schoolers, high school age and adults) and on the more

general topic of short story writing, as well as to book clubs on the stories in *this* book.

WHOOSH!, TheaQ Publishing recently released a picture book that shares a little girl's excitement of waking up and discovering that the ground is covered with snow. Even better, Dad is home instead of at work!



The sound of the sled going down the hill at a nearby park (*WHOOSH!*) guides the tale through the fun and bonding between the child and her dad. His love for her is demonstrated in the smallest ways — in gestures she may not understand now, but will impact her life later. In dialogue with both her dad and mom, the child reveals that time with them is indeed the most important thing to her — any day. Joan is available to speak to groups of children on picture book writing, as well as to adults on the same topic.

For review copies of any or all of these books, or to schedule a reading or talk by Joan, please contact Joan Leotta at [http://www.joanleotta\[at\]atmc.net/](http://www.joanleotta[at]atmc.net/) or 910-575-0618.

(State Sponsored ... continued from page 4)

across his mouth, then turned to his charges and yelled, "Y'all git on down there and build them boys a dam!"

Six grinning, sweaty convicts scrambled down that bank and went to work. Within a half an hour they were standing waist deep in cool Western North Carolina creek water stacking the last sand bag in place on the finest swimming hole dam in all creation. Of course we three took full credit for that bit of civil engineering every time a neighbor kid was invited down for a dip.

October finally brought weather too cool for swimming and enough rain to decimate

that wonderful structure, but the summer of 1954 will always be remembered as one of the best of my young life. It was the summer I turned six, caught my first fish, fell out of a tree house and the summer I learned to swim.

I still can't cross that little creek without silently thanking the North Carolina penal system for a crystal clear, sixty-one year old memory of three boys, six convicts and one very cool prison guard.

Michael Reno Harrell can occasionally be found at the foot of Yellow Gap in Burke County, North Carolina...that is when he isn't out performing around the country. He may be contacted at joan@michaelreno.com.

(My week with Donald ... from page 11) away, and a scary hike up a mountain while traveling abroad.

Saturday is the really big day. Ocracoke Festival Day is here! Lots to see, do and hear. I attended Donald's afternoon session and ended up sitting beside his sister. What were the odds of that?

Saturday evening we were invited to Donald and Merle's for a cookout. The fellowship with one another as we relived our week was heart warming. Then, Donald breaks the news: "You have all failed and have to come back next year!"

"HOORAY", we all yell!!!!!!

This marks the second summer Vicki Byrd has spent at Ocracoke, studying in a week-long workshop with master storyteller, Donald Davis. In June 2014, she was selected to tell on stage Friday night, at the popular Ocracoke Music and Storytelling Festival. She may be contacted at: vcbyrd@hotmail.com

Resources at Learn NC

A program of the UNC School of Education. Covers innovative and successful practices, K -12th grades. Available to teachers, students and the world! Can be applied in the classroom. <http://www.learnnc.org/>

My Dad's Old Billy Goat

by Rev. Jim Martin



My dad had a cow, a mule, a couple of pigs, a bunch of chickens and an old Billy goat tied to a pole with a cow chain in the back yard.

The cow gave milk, the mule pulled a plow, the chickens laid eggs, the pigs provided bacon and that old Billy goat did nothing except eat honeysuckle vines.

And, I had the most aggravating brother a guy could have. Johnny was four years younger than I. That would make him about eight years old. He would throw rocks at me all the time and then run and hide. Around and around the house we would go. He would throw those infernal rocks at me and I would chase him. When I got close enough to grab him he would make a wild dash to the kitchen and hide behind Mother's coattail and scream that I was going to kill him, which was not true, exactly. And she would scold me. She got tired of that and one day cut off a keen switch from the privy bush and switched my legs. Boy, did that smart, all because my brother threw rocks at me. I could never catch him. He was fast. Oh, this must have been about the year of 1950 or so. It was fun for my brother, not for me. He was the most aggravating brother a guy could have.

I had a friend whose name was Ben. He had red hair and came to visit me now and then. We would go to the woods and play cowboys and Indians. I was the Indian because I had brown hair. We

didn't think Indians had red hair, of course neither one of us had ever seen an Indian. I'm not sure that I can say "Indian" today, it would be politically incorrect, I think. Don't know what we could say we were playing today, hmmm? Of course, my little brother thought he ought to go along with us, we didn't think so, but he followed us around begging to go. I told you he was aggravating. What to do with my little brother? Oh, I got it. Dad's old Billy goat, that's it.

You remember Dad's old Billy goat? Billy was mean. Every time I tried to catch him he would stand on his hind legs and lunge at me. He was tied to a pole with a cow chain in the back yard. But this day I had a plan. I would sneak up on his blind side and lasso him. I did. It worked. My friend and I put my little brother onto the forks of that Chinaberry tree in the front yard and tied old Billy to it. Now, how we got my brother onto that tree I choose not to remember. But we did. Ben, my friend and I left my little brother in that tree and went to the woods to play cowboys and Indians.

When we got back we noticed that old Billy had eaten all the bark off my mother's favorite Chinaberry tree in the front yard and my little brother was not in the tree. When I got around to the kitchen I found out what happened. My dad came home from work and heard my brother yelling his lungs out and came to his rescue. Well,

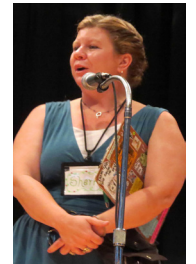
my mother got out that long, keen privy switch and you know the rest of that story. Aw, that didn't hurt. It was worth it to go to the woods and play cowboys and Indians and put my little aggravating brother in a tree and tie that old Billy goat to it so he could not get down. Of course, I never did that again - that is, when my mother was looking. Those were the good old days of my childhood when the sun was warm in the '50's.

Humorous writer and storyteller, Rev. Jim Martin, says "storytelling has been an integral part of my ministry." He is a former member of the Writer's Guild of NC. You may contact him at revjmartin@triad.rr.com

TOE RIVER STORYTELLING FESTIVAL



Tim Lowry



Sherry Lovette, Emcee



Donna Marie Todd



Donna Washington

July 11th marked the 17th annual Toe River Storytelling Festival in Bakersville, NC. Three superb professional tellers, shown above, entertained the audience with an incredible blend of fun, tears and laughter.

3 Roles Nonverbal Cues Play

by Janet Harlee

Nonverbal cues are *key* in communicating! Why? Because they help convey your verbal message.

Here are 3 roles that nonverbal cues play in communication with our clients:

1. Emphasize. They can repeat or emphasize your verbal message. If you say, "I'm sooo happy" with your whole face smiling then we would believe you are truly happy. Your **words and facial expressions** tell

us you are.

2. Contradict. Nonverbal cues can also contradict your verbal message. If you were to say, "I feel great" but your nonverbal did *NOT* match your verbal, then there is contradiction in your message. When this happens people will always believe your nonverbal.

3. Substitute. Sometimes nonverbal cues can substitute for your verbal message. Have you ever caught someone's eyes and you knew what

they were saying? Your eyes may give a more vivid message than your words do.

So, being aware that your nonverbal cues can *Emphasize*, *Contradict*, or *Substitute* for your verbal message, can help you be a better communicator with your clients.

As a master communicator, Janet Harlee has years of experience in the world of business. She's also a storyteller, professional speaker and free lance artist. She may be contacted at janet@janetharlee.net.

(Echo of the African ... continued from page 10)
powerless over a rich, large, or fierce enemy. Whenever Bruh Rabbit begs his way into the Briar Patch or shames the larger animals into preparing his meal, we are amused and encouraged. In Latin America, he is called Tío Conejo (Uncle Rabbit). Sometimes he cons Tío Tigre to eat his own tail. In other Central American countries, Tío Conejo disguises himself as the "King of the Leaves" in order to avoid his enemies. He tricks bigger animals into jumping in the river with rocks to look for cheese, a favorite Latin American food. Even though Tío Conejo's tricks are sometimes cruel, we cheer him. We cheer because in our stories, cunning wins over brute strength and one little critter can overcome all challenges just by using his head. The stories tell us there is hope, that we can win despite the losing hand we may have been dealt.

The echoes resound and resound. They bounce off one another and create new traditions. These days, our stories show up in reggae music and Rastafarian chant. French, Cuban, and East African rappers use storytelling to

paint pictures of their lives and dreams. Blues and gospel music speak of the hardship and hope we carry in our hearts.

In the song "Africa Dream", rapper Talib Kweli connects the young present to the turbulent past:

We outlasted the Middle Passage...

We the reflection of our ancestors.

We'd like to thank you for the building blocks you left us as your spirit possessed us,

Yo, you blessed us.

Thank you very much, thank you very much, and God bless you.

Kweli reminds us that the possibilities are endless because of the sacrifices our predecessors made on our behalf. As we begin a new millennium, we must continue to honor our traditional stories while telling new ones as they unfold. We must always remember that each of us has many stories to tell. Before our elders leave this earth, we should encourage them to recount their stories to us so that we may pass on their verbal riches to our youth. We must nurture the imagination of our children and communities in the face of too

much access to empty entertainment and violence. We must share our values with anyone who will listen even if those values oppose mainstream immorality. We must listen to the everyday stories and inspired visions of our brothers and sisters in Colombia, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone, and here at home. They can teach us all about the world of humanity and spirituality in which we live. We are all keepers of the word, and it is our legacy and birthright to perpetuate our souls' voices. Our story must be told because our story never ends.

Echo, echo, echo: stories are an echo of the past. Stories are an echo of the past.

Storyteller, educator, Kali Ferguson leads bilingual storytelling programs and workshops. Her *StoryJourney* performances address Common Core State Standards for Pre-K through 6th grade. She also performs poetry and songs. You may contact her at: kali@kaliferguson.com

If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.

-Rudyard Kipling



October 2015

October 27: *Stories Under the Stars* by *Story Squad*; 6:30pm to 8:00pm: North Regional Library of the Durham County Library, 221 Milton Road, Durham, NC. Contact info: Stephanie Mulligan, 919-560-0100.

October 30: *Whispers and Shadows: Scary Stories for Grown-ups*, with Linda Goodman, at Created in the Carolinas, 216 W. North Main Street, Waxhaw, NC, 8:00 pm. \$10. Call 804-687-6341 by 10/24 to reserve spot.

October 31: *Spine Tinglers*, at Created in the Carolinas, 216 W. North Main Street, Waxhaw, NC. 1:00pm (younger children) and 2:00pm (older children). \$5 per session. Call 804-687-6341 by 10/24 to reserve spot.

October 31: *Halloween Stories for Grown-Ups*, with storyteller, Linda Goodman. FABO Coffee House, 8:00pm. 8424 Park Road, Charlotte, NC. <http://mugsofcharlotte.com/>

November 2015

November 12-15: 33rd Annual National Black Storytelling Festival & Conference. "In the Tradition..." Key Bridge Marriott, 1401 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA. Washington, DC Metro area. Contact <http://www.nabsinc.org/contact-us> or 410.947.1117.

November 13-14: *Bringing the World Together: Archetypes, Images, and Stories*. Featuring a storytelling evening and a day experiencing archetypes and archetypal images in the old stories - as well as telling or writing personal stories. Begins Friday evening, 7:30-9:30pm with a lecture by Gioia Timpanelli, "Dean of American Storytelling" and novelist. This event followed by an optional Saturday workshop. Admission is \$10, student ID gets \$5 discount. Church of Reconciliation Presbyterian Church, 110 Elliott Rd., Chapel Hill, NC. <http://www.meetup.com/JungNC/events/224001510/>

November 21: *Living in a Multicultural Community*, Storytelling Concert. Featuring Donna Marie Todd. Historic building at Feed and Seed, 3715 Hendersonville Road, Fletcher, NC. This event is part of a series of events sponsored by

Henderson County Arts Council and STEAP (*storytelling education and arts program*). Contact feedandseednc.com.

November 22: *Tellabration!*

Asheville Storytelling Circle stages its 19th annual Tellabration! -- an event so popular it is perennially sold-out. TICKETS are available first-come, first-serve, and are sold at the door on the day of the event. Tickets may be reserved in advance for pick-up and pay at the door. Information: 828-595-2251 or 828-274-1123. Sponsored by Asheville Storytelling Circle in partnership with the Southern Highlands Craft Guild and the National Storytelling Network. 3pm; General Admission: \$10. Folk Art Center, Milepost 382 Blue Ridge Parkway, Asheville, NC. More information: <http://ashevillestorycircle.org/> or <https://www.southernhighlandguild.org/folk-art-center/>

December 2015

December 3: *Winter Stories* by *Story Squad*. Thursday, 5:00pm to 6:30pm; Pleasants Room of the Wilson Library (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus, Chapel Hill); Contact: Dr. Brian Sturm 919-962-2460.

December 3-5: *The Uncalled for Trio: There is a Bulb Out*

The Uncalled for Trio brings their Christmas show, *There's A Bulb Out*, exclusively to the International Storytelling Center in 2015. Featuring Bil Lepp, Kim Weitkamp, and Andy Offutt Irwin Thursday-Saturday, 2pm and 7:30 pm. Admission \$20. Refreshments follow the show. Reservations strongly recommended. International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.952.8392 or <http://www.tnvacation.com/events/46229/>

December 19: *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*

For a truly special holiday outing, see Storyteller Tim Lowry in his renowned one-man show. Dressed in Victorian costume, Lowry invokes the spirit of Mr. Dickens with his quick wit, rapid-fire delivery, and flair for the dramatic - *The Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present, and Future* along with Ebenezer Scrooge, suitable for ages 10 and up. Refreshments follow the show. Reservations strongly recommended. Saturday, 2pm and 7:30pm. Admission \$20. International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN, contact: 800.952.8392 or <http://www.tnvacation.com/events/46230/>

tnvacation.com/events/46230/

December 19-20: *Stories for a Holiday Season*. Featuring storyteller, Donald Davis at the Big Barn, Fearrington Village; sponsored by McIntyre's Fine Books. Saturday at 11am; Sunday at 2pm. Please bring an offering of non-perishable food for the CORA Chatham County Winter food bank. No other admission! Pittsboro, NC <http://www.fearrington.com/village-shops/mcintyres-books/>

January 2016

January 16: 8th annual *Bold-Faced Liars' Showdown!* Beginning at 2:00 pm at the Storytelling & Arts Center of the Southeast, 131 S. Main Street, Laurinburg, NC. Tickets: afternoon - \$10; evening - \$10. For both - \$15. <http://www.storyartscenter.org/> Reserve or call 910.277.3599.

Winter Workshop with David Novak

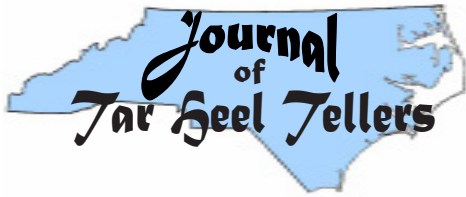
January 29-31, 2016
The Assembly at Fort Caswell

Exercising the Listener/ Massaging the Story

This is a Master Class for developing effective interpretive and performance skills. The workshop includes creative coaching, voice, movement and character work. Participants will explore performance dynamics such as the syntax of surprise, the uses of silence and the creative use of simple objects in order to engage their listeners and give them the dynamic experience needed to stay involved in a story. An excellent workshop for the seasoned storyteller, but the novice can benefit, too!

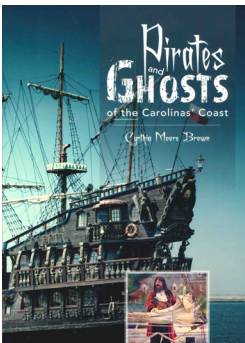
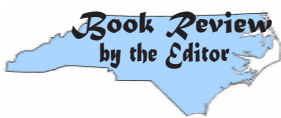
We are thrilled to have **David Novak** as the presenter for our 17th Winter Workshop. A pioneer of the storytelling renaissance, David is an award-winning storyteller, author

(Continued on last page)



Journal of Tar Heel Tellers

Sylvia Payne, Editor
1621 Nathaniel Street
Newton, NC 228658



Pirates and Ghosts of the Carolinas' Coast

Book by Cynthia Moore Brown, © 2015
Schiffer Publishing, Ltd.

May be ordered From: <http://www.schifferbooks.com/>

Cynthia has collected ghost stories for most of her life. In this, her forth book, you will travel to North Carolina beaches, haunted houses, strange places around Topsail Island, dig up ghosts along Highway 17 (*formerly the Old Plank Road*), and other eerie locations. You may just bump into a few pirates along the way.

I suggest you read the forward before settling into Cynthia's stories. It's written by the ole' teller of pirate tales himself, our own Terry Rollins.

I dare not give these well told stories away, but will mention several that definitely grabbed my attention.

The story "Lady Rose," a Civil War spy in real life, had me adding Civil War spies to my list of topics to research, mainly female spies.

In "Almost Too Late," a lone woman is enjoying a sunny day on the beach. Dark, gloomy clouds quickly appear overhead. She finds herself caught in an approaching storm and can't see her way to safety. My imagination immediately saw visions of being this woman. I was being swallowed up in a raging wind, and at the same time being strangled in a blinding fog. Fighting hard for direction and balance, I faintly see a dark form moving ahead. What...the heck...is..? No! I dare say no more.

I must mention the final chapter in the book, "Sagamore Hill – Mrs. Teddy Roosevelt." This story actually took place along the coast of New York state. It's a ghost story which happened to a cousin of Cynthia's. The cousin is actually telling the story as she remembers it.

If you are intrigued with ghosts and eerie happenings, this book is a must for you. Well done, Cynthia!

(Winter Workshop . . . continued from page 15)

and actor, performing on the main stage at the nation's top storytelling festivals. David immerses himself so completely in a story and embodies each character so fully that the audience savors each sentence and anxiously anticipates the next. Novak's love of telling is inescapable.

The retreat center is located on the grounds of the **Baptist Assembly at Caswell Beach**, on Oak Island, near Southport. Rooms are shared, two people per room (two double beds and a private bathroom).* Meals include a Friday night dinner, full breakfast and lunch on Saturday, our popular Saturday night supper of Stone Soup, a continental breakfast on Sunday, and a bounty of snacks!

Go to NCSG's website to download more information and registration form: <http://ncstoryguild.org/>

Call for Spring 2016 Articles

Send your articles, stories, and storytelling news for NCSG's Spring 2016 issue of the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers*. Consider sending information that's happened between this issue and the spring 2016 issue.

If you know of events in your area, we can have them added to NCSG's website 'events' page at <http://www.ncstoryguild.org/events.html>

Events must include: name of event, location (street address, city), date and contact information.

Deadline is March 15th, 2016
Send to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net