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Fall 2020
NC Storytelling Guild
Official Newsletter

Old North State STORY TELLING

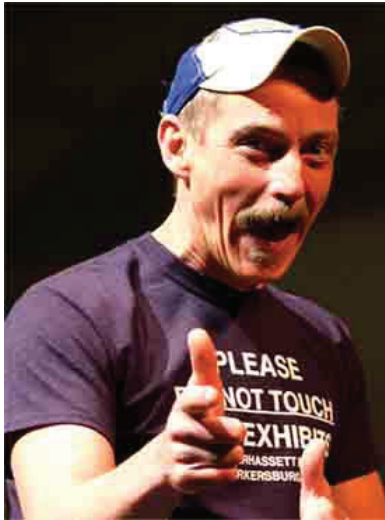
FESTIVAL

Nov. 6, 2020

Available **ONLINE**
for 14 days

The NCSG Celebrates the **Second Old North State Storytelling Festival by Alan Hoal**

As members of the NCSG we all happily recall how we were able to celebrate an incredibly successful launch of the Old North State Storytelling Festival in November of 2019 at the historic Cary theatre in downtown Cary. The inaugural festival, which was a partnership between the Guild and the



Town of Cary, not only sold out three of its four shows but also provided profits that enabled the Guild to offer grant money to each of our five regions to fund new and creative storytelling projects. It also introduced hundreds of people to the world and art of Storytelling. We were all excited about what promised to be an ongoing annual event which would further the goals of the NCSG to promote and grow Storytelling in North Carolina as well as provide funding to further the Guild's influence and image.

Then came the coronavirus.

The pandemic has wrought havoc with almost every type of business and personal activity and has done particular damage to performing artists, as festivals, concerts and shows have been cancelled around the world. Storytelling festival promoters have had to be creative in coming up



with ways to survive the shutdowns and live to tell another day. The NCSG Festival Committee and the NCSG Board were determined to not lose the momentum created by the success of the first festival and decided to present a virtual version of the event this year.

The 2nd annual Old North State Storytelling Festival has been made available online for 14 days beginning on November 6 and features nationally acclaimed storytellers Connie Regan-Blake, Bil Lepp, Mitch Capel and Michael Reno Harrell along with four of the NCSG's best tellers, Jane Cunningham, Ramona Moore Big Eagle, Steve Tate and Sam Pearsall.

While virtual festivals have become a go to solution for many organizers, the quality of these festivals has varied greatly. Due, in large part, to the energy, leadership and connections of committee member Steve Tate as well as the financial commitment of the NCSG Board and our festival sponsors (see their names on the festival website, <https://www.oldnorthstatestorytellingfestival.com>) we were able to hire the necessary audio, video and website talent to

launch a professionally produced festival using the services of Sessions Studio <https://www.session-studios.com>.

While it is not anticipated that this year's festival will provide a sizeable financial return for the Guild, it is important that the festival has been able to continue and to provide a bridge back to our live festival in 2021 at The Cary Theatre. As a result of this experience, it is anticipated that our future live festivals will also have an online component, which is, itself, very exciting and something to look forward to.

I would like to thank the festival committee

members, Robin Kitson, Steve Tate, Dianne Hackworth, Sam Pearsall and Willa Brigham for their work on both last year's and this year's festivals. I would also like to thank our partners at the Town of Cary, Kris Carmichael, Jennifer Hocken and Robbie Stone. Finally, I would like to thank the NCSG Board of Directors for their commitment to the continuation of the festival and the confidence they have shown in the committee's efforts.

I can't wait till next year! See y'all in Cary!

Alan Hoal, Chair of the Old North State Storytelling Festival Committee, serves on the Board as NCSG President-Elect. He may be contacted at: alan.hoal@gmail.com

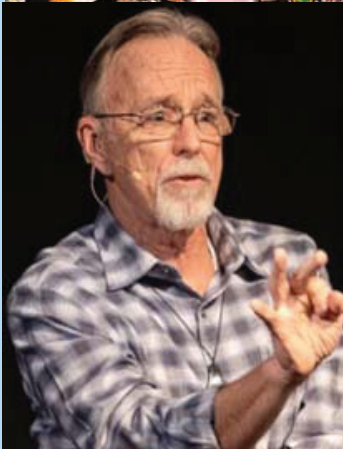
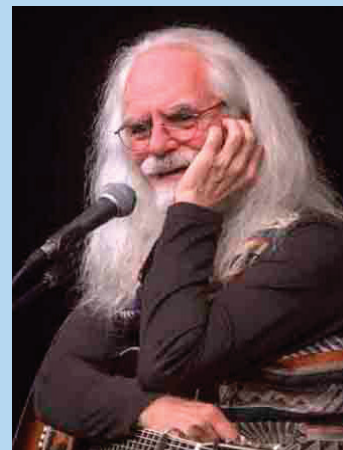


Featured Storytellers
Mitch Capel, top L Michael Reno Harrell, top R

*Center, L to R: Steve Tate, Sam Pearsall, Miss Jane
Cunningham, Ramona Moore Big Eagle*

Lower L: Emcee, Sherry Lovett

Lower R: Violet Bell, musicians



While apart by fate
We're together through
Smiles, guffaws, and
Hoots of laughter

We long to breathe the same
Air of fellow storytellers
Share winks and nudges
Only travel in our minds
Again



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 newsletter of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild and is published biannually, Spring and Fall.

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Calendar listings are free.

Vision Statement

To communicate the power, joy, and impact of story to every community in North Carolina.

Mission Statement

To create and nurture a thriving community of storytellers through performance and education.

Goals

- To affirm the value of storytelling by fostering an appreciation of oral traditions and the importance of story listening.
- To educate people, both tellers and listeners, in North Carolina about storytelling.
- To promote excellence in oral tradition by developing emerging and established artists.
- To seek out the needs of North Carolina storytellers and respond by creating opportunities.

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 - Linda Gorham, Donna Catton-Johnson, John Golden, Alan Hoal, Catherine MacKenzie, Ray Mendenhall, Marva Moss, Larry Pearlman, Kanute Rarey, Cynthia Raxter.



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

Congratulations to **Ray Christian** for winning another Moth StorySlam in Asheville, NC this past summer . . . In September **Connie Regan-Blake** emceed the "Shivers in the Night" session at the virtual *Timpanogos Festival* and shared a chilling tale of her own . . . **Lona Bartlett** shared a story on the Wren's Nest virtual storytelling website. The Wren's Nest is the home of Joel Chandler Harris in Atlanta, Georgia, and is a cultural center promoting the art of storytelling in contemporary forms. Due to Covid-19 the center is closed to the public, but remains committed to producing virtual storytelling performances . . . **Willa Brigham**, Emmy-Winning Performer and Storyteller, is featured in an article in Cary Magazine, as "Woman of Western Wake: Willa Brigham." And her photo is also on the magazine cover. See magazine article: <https://www.carymagazine.com/features/woman-of-western-wake-willa-brigham/> . . .

It is my opinion that a story worth reading only in childhood is not worth reading even then. - C.S. Lewis

Our Stories Our Journey

from the editor's desk

This year's covid-19 pandemic has become life-changing for most of us. We remain safe at home, practicing the 3 W's to stay well. Even so, we find ways to communicate and share stories.

Our Guild recently lost a great lady, and friend, Charlotte Hamlin. Her family (*living on opposite ends of the US*) and her many friends participated in her "celebration of life," gathering to say goodbye on Zoom. (*Page 8; tribute to Charlotte.*)

Some of our NC storytellers have vicariously performed in far-away places. This past summer Connie Regan-Blake shared stories in *Bridging North America Storytelling*, where tellers were bridging stories across the North American continent (*see page 7*).

In October Donna Washington performed online at the *Scottish International Storytelling Festival 2020*. Bynum Front Porch expanded their storytelling and music programs to a new weekly podcast (*see page 7*).

Donna Marie Todd conducts a portion of her *Bereavement Program* via Constant Contact and podcasts. And who could have dreamed we would attend the *National Storytelling Festival* in the comfort of our own home, wearing pj's? Our *Old North State Storytelling Festival* was just produced and broadcast over the Festival's new website. Storytelling itself has been, is, and always will be life-changing. It embraces mutual understanding through the love of story and our journey into a new day.

Submit articles for JTHT Spring 2021 issue to: Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton, NC 28658. E-mail: sylpayne@bellsouth.net Deadline for Spring Issue: March 15, 2021

President's Message



For those of you who don't know me, I was born and raised in New Orleans (NOLA), a place surrounded by water. Growing up there taught me how to steer my life no matter how thick the fog or how

sharp life's turns, and to leap over potholes, no matter the size. NOLA infused me with a "joie de vivre" and a live and let live attitude.

This year I accepted the job of Guild president to repay the Guild for years of friendships, encouragement, and education. My hope for the coming year is to find ways to benefit us all while this world gone "tilt" rights itself. I would also like to add new members, especially youth, to keep the Guild going for the next twenty years.

I moved to NC in 1975 and worked as a cocktail waitress for \$2.25 an hour plus tips with only a HS diploma. One winter I couldn't afford heating oil due to lack of tips. To put that event in my rearview mirror forever, I chose a field with a good income and a stable future, even though I had no innate interest in the subject. My AAS Electronics Engineering Technology paid bills, but I was a square peg in a round hole. Then, a friend sent me a News and Observer article on storytelling and said, "This sounds like you."

Via the storyteller featured in the N&O I enrolled in Dianne Hackworth's Storytelling Class. My first story was from my memory of desegregation and the day Ruby Bridges entered my school, William Frantz Elementary, which changed my life forever. Dianne said, "You are a natural!" I thought, "Finally I am

good at something!" Next Dianne connected me to a gig as a Cajun Folktale Teller. Today, my repertoire has greatly expanded thanks to many NCSG workshops and festivals.

Two Guild members and I are working to expand knowledge about the Guild and Storytelling, to reach new audiences, and generate experiences that will draw in new members, especially youth. We are exploring the use of an online platform for webinars and doing a cost benefit analysis for board approval. Our primary targets are Middle/High Schools and Community College students and teachers. Other ideas are 4 H, Home School, and Girl/Boy Scout groups. We will include trendy phrases like "Spoken Word" and "Improv Storytelling" to attract young people in English and Theater Classes. We are determining how to plan online programs that fit into the public-school curriculum and how to make use of / serve libraries in this period when they are closed.

For our members, we are investigating how to create webinars that generate income for members who can teach. In addition, there is always room for storytelling practice and sessions where our tellers can talk through our ideas so we can think of ways to keep our craft going. Since our Winter Workshop has been cancelled, we need to find ways to improve our own telling, crafting, and continue networking as a community. I am sure there are many more ideas to explore--so anyone who has an idea please contact me at nanirobin@gmail.com.

While driving on this tilted, foggy road my vision is to help us grow as individuals so we can bring storytelling to the world.

Robin Kitson

A man's work is nothing but this slow trek to rediscover, through the detours of art, those two or three great and simple images in whose presence his heart first opened. - Albert Camus



First Date, First Kiss

by Donna Catton-Johnson

thrashing about in the water. Young, tanned teenagers, reveling in summer fun.

One evening at home, I received a surprising phone call from Joe. He asked me out on a date! I was flabbergasted- I had never been on a date, though my parents had told me I could start dating at age 15. I told Joe I would ask them, somewhat hoping they'd say no; the whole idea made me nervous. I mean, I liked Joe; he was a great guy. But did I find him attractive? I wasn't sure. Still, a first date- that is a milestone, and Mama and Daddy said I could go. Joe said we would be going to a movie with his older brother and sister-in-law, ergo, they'd be our chaperones.

The big night came. I had dressed carefully and had a bad case of the jitters. Right on time, the doorbell rang, and I invited Joe in to meet my father. Mama had already prepped Daddy, so he was just his usual silly self, making jokes. Joe appeared to be at ease. We got into the backseat of the car and I was introduced to his brother and sister-in-law. They seemed nice; she bore an amused smile. The movie we went to see was The Dirty Dozen - so romantic, right? When we finished our popcorn Joe held my hand, and both his hand and mine were sweaty. I guess he was rather nervous, too.

After the show, Joe 's brother drove us to my house and Joe got out to walk me to the

door. His brother didn't think to douse the headlights, so there we were, spotlighted at my front door. The moment of truth - Joe leaned in for a kiss. All my misgivings were confirmed when he slipped me his tongue! I had heard of French kissing, but I was NOT prepared for it. My reaction was revulsion. I quickly said, "Thank you and good night," walked in, and closed the door. I leaned against it, my heart pounding! Oh dear, how yucky! Why would people want to do that? I decided that night that I definitely wasn't attracted to Joe Valdez!

About a week later, my best friend, Mary, and I arranged to meet at the movies to see the James Bond film, You Only Live Twice. I arrived first and took a seat in the third row, one seat in from the aisle. Suddenly, across the way I spied Joe and he had spotted me! Oh no, he was coming toward me- what was I going to do? There was no escape. He walked up with what I remember as a sweet grin on his face, said hello and asked if he could sit with me. I don't even want to tell you what I did, because even today, more than 50 years later, I'm embarrassed for myself. I looked at him, and said, "No, this seat is saved for my friend, Mary." His face fell; he didn't bother to ask about the seat on the other side of me, just walked away, looking crest-fallen. School started shortly thereafter, and I did not see him at the pool in the interim.

Joe Valdez was new to the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base; his father having just been transferred there. It was summer vacation and I was a lifeguard at the base pool. My mother was a Water Safety Instructor and taught swimming lessons - she had enlisted me to teach the wives of officers, the thought being that if a 15-year-old could do it, so could they. Consequently, she and I both spent most of our daytime summer hours at the pool.

When Joe first showed up, he offered to help with the lessons for the children and my mother was happy for the assistance. She introduced me to Joe with a twinkle in her eye. I think she thought we'd like each other... and we did! Before long, Joe and I were kidding around a lot, swimming together whenever lessons were over, and generally getting along famously! He was dark-haired, not tall, but wiry, and quite strong. He had a delightful sense of humor; however, one thing he thought was funny was throwing me into the pool unexpectedly. We were always

Continued from previous page

When I did see Joe again, at school, he wouldn't look at me. When I said hello, he sneered and turned away. As the days went by, he began to say mean things to me whenever there were other kids around. I was so naïve; I had

no idea that what I had done amounted to REJECTION! (Cue the echo effect!) And guess just who became the star quarterback of our high school football team that fall! Yup! You know it- Joe Valdez! I could have been a contender...for Homecoming Queen!

Donna holds an Interdisciplinary B.A. in Visual Arts and Theatre and taught elementary art for 25 years, as well as drama and art for 12 Summer Arts programs. She has used storytelling as a teaching tool and has told stories in numerous schools and libraries in South Carolina. She may be contacted at: dramatree@gmail.com

The Power of Story by Ray W. Mendenhall

One of my favorite writers, Frederick Buechner, reflected on the power of story in his book of sermons, The Magnificent Defeat. I think his words are worth considering.

"Stories have enormous power for us, and I think it is worth speculating why they have such power. Let me suggest two reasons. One is that they make us want to know what is coming next, and not just out of idle curiosity either because if it is a good story, we really want to know, almost fiercely so. And we will wade through a lot... to find out... but the curious things are that if it is a good story, we want to know how it all turns out in the end even if we have heard it many times and know the outcome perfectly well already.

And that brings us to the second reason why I think stories have such power over us. They force us to consider the question, "Are stories true?" Not just, "Is this story true? ... but are any stories true? ... Every storyteller, whether he (or she) is Shakespeare telling about Hamlet or Luke telling about Mary, looks out at the world much as you and I look out at it and see things happening- people being born, growing up, working, loving, getting old, and finally dying- only then, by the process of taking certain of these events and turning them into a story, giving their form a direction, does he (she) make a

sort of claim about events in general, about the nature of life itself. And the storyteller's claim is that life has meaning—that things that happen to people happen not by accident... there is an order and purpose deep down behind them or inside them and they are leading us not just anywhere but somewhere. The power of story is that they tell us that life adds up somehow, that life itself is like a story. And this grips us and fascinates us because of the feeling it gives us that if there is meaning in any life... then there is meaning also in our lives. And if this is true, it is of enormous significance in itself, and it makes us listen to the storyteller with great intensity because in this way his (or her) stories are about us and because it is always possible that he (or she) may give us some clue to what the meaning of our lives is." (p. 59-60)

In the end, every story is our story because in some mysterious way it points us towards a way in the world and the purpose of life; It helps to answer the questions, "who am I," "why I am here," "what am I called to do?"

Ray is a storyteller and retired Presbyterian Minister, continuing part-time as a minister. He left North Carolina to be near his daughter and family in Kentucky. Ray may be contacted at: rwmend@gmail.com.

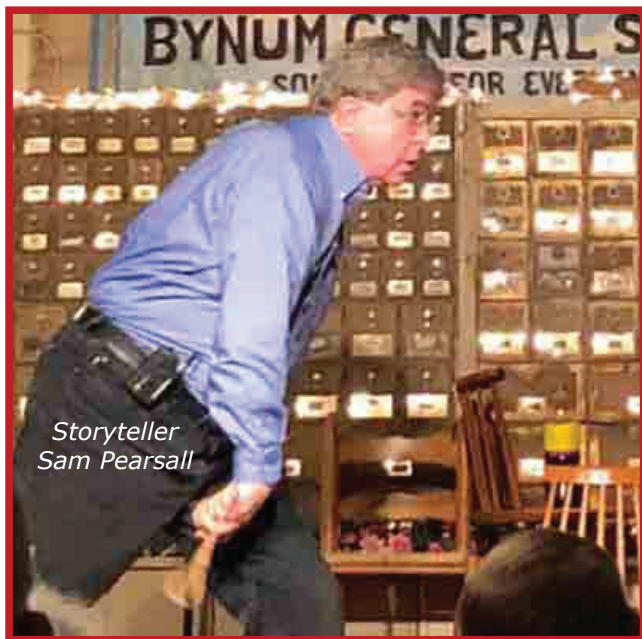
The Library of Congress National Book Festival 2020

Every fall, a list of books representing the literary heritage of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories is distributed by the Library of Congress's Center for the Book during the National Book Festival. Each book is selected by a Center for the Book state affiliate or state library.

<http://read.gov/greatreads/downloads/print/2020GreatReadsList.pdf>

Bynum Front Porch by Cynthia Raxter

We are very excited to announce: on August 20th, the Bynum Front Porch was awarded an almost \$7800 Community Challenge Grant from AARP Liveable Communities. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/>



Storyteller
Sam Pearsall

Our application was chosen from 2800 applications. It was funded 100% because of our past programs and the community support and enthusiasm for Bynum Front Porch.

The grant will help expand online programming. Bynum Front Porch provides almost

weekly music and storytelling shows online that entertain current and former residents - and many others isolated during the pandemic.

Even before the pandemic, sometimes it was difficult for older residents or families with small children to attend live performances at the town's former country store and post office.

The AARP grant will help Bynum Front Porch expand live streaming music and storytelling programs. It will fund a new weekly podcast. Part of the funds will be used to update the mu-

sic shows' audio equipment (purchased in 2006). It will also help pay for the high-speed internet the community can use at the store. Most exciting, if someone wishes



to teach an online class or host a workshop at the store, we will have the internet and technology to support this.

We are very thankful and excited about the new programs and opportunities. We are very grateful to Chatham residents - present and former - for their community and support. Very, very grateful.

Cynthia Raxter lives in the former mill village of Bynum, NC. She shares her father's and mother's stories of the Depression. She brings to life her ancestors' stories from Sassafras Mountain. For information about virtual storytelling at Bynum Front Porch contact Cynthia at cindy.raxter@gmail.com

The rocking chairs await the community's return.



Let us develop respect for all living things. Let us try to replace violence and intolerance with understanding and compassion. And love. – Jane Goodall

What's Happening With Our Storytellers

Bridging North America Storytelling.

This past summer **Connie Regan-Blake** was one of twelve storytellers from Canada, United States and Mexico, bridging across our North American continent, making a treaty of friendship under the universal con-

tract of story. They shared indigenous stories, local folklore, personal narratives and music as tellers and listeners came together, building bridges of learning and friendship to a virtual audience.
(August 15, 2020)

TRIBUTE TO CHARLOTTE HAMLIN

Charlotte's death has left a hole in our Guild and in the hearts of those of us who knew and worked with her. Her heart was filled with energy, integrity, generosity and kindness. I shall never forget the first story I heard her tell.

- *Sylvia Payne*

Charlotte was one of the most enthusiastic ladies I've known. She brought out the best in the young storytellers we worked with. The festivals we worked on and our Triad Storytelling Group were where Charlotte devoted time and energy. She worked tirelessly for our Guild and perpetuation of storytelling. I loved to listen to her tales as she spun a comforting warmth to her listeners. Most of all I'm going to miss her. She was a sweet friend.

- *Cynthia Moore Brown*

Charlotte Hamlin had many gifts, but the one that impacted me the most was her passion for storytelling with teachers and students. We had many stimulating conversations about the importance of creating a new generation of tellers. She generously invited me to participate in events she created thus expanding my skill and commitment to young voices. Whether her audience was large or small, her energy and enthusiasm was always unlimited. Her vision was always directed toward the future.

- *Janice Davin*

Fall 2020

Charlotte's passing has left us with "the dark heartache of goodbye," yet her life and accomplishments tell us to celebrate her life. She was a woman who broke the mold of her era and rose above the expected to serve as a role model for young women to come. Her sharp intellect, academic success and compassion made this mother, teacher, administrator and storyteller a gift to all who knew her. To know Charlotte was to love and respect her. When Erik told me his mother has passed, I was not surprised. Charlotte and I had talked about her quality of life, and how that was disappearing. The visits of her beloved children and grandchildren and the incredible completion of her memoir helped her face her end with dignity and satisfaction. My "soul sister" is gone, but will never be forgotten by family, and storytellers whose lives she touched. Journey on, sweet Charlotte, and Rest in Peace.

- *Trish Dumser*

I came into Charlotte's life late, but it was fun getting to know her and telling stories with her over the past few years. She was there at the Triad Storytelling Exchange when I told my first story, and was in a Monday group of Zoom Tellers when I told my most recent one for a (semi-) public audience. There will be more stories from me in the future, and I



will remember Charlotte with each one.

- *Bruce Kirchoff*

The death of Charlotte Hamlin is not only the loss of a fine storyteller and NCSG member but of a dear friend for so many of us. She was a bright spot everywhere she went, with an active and thoughtful mind. She was upbeat, always engaged, cheery and so much alive. It is hard to think of her in any other way. So long dear Charlotte, you have left a big gap in many places, but also a great vision of a life well lived.

- *Ray Mendenhall*

I will always remember the time we met with Charlotte in her apartment planning our NCSG Storytelling Festival for Andy Griffith Playhouse in Mt. Airy. We consumed succulent strawberries while enjoying the warm sun shining graciously through her living room window. At that meeting she sold me her autoharp, which I play and remember Charlotte as it chimes in tribute

Continued from previous page.

to our lovely lady. "Never say goodbye. Say thank you for coming into my life and giving us joy and love." And for Charlotte we say thank you for giving us love through story.

- Elena Diana Miller

My heart is saddened by the death of Charlotte. She

never failed to share warm, friendly welcomes, and fun-loving interactions during our storytelling gatherings! She will be missed.

- Marva Moss

Charlotte was a big-hearted storyteller. She was one of the first storytellers I met when I moved to the area. Such a loss! - Vicky Town

Charlotte was a full soul! I loved watching her tell with spirit and joy. I will miss her voice, and the way she could touch my soul with her words. I will also miss that smile. Thank you for all of the laughter and wisdom.

- Donna Washington



Frightened baby too weak to fly.

BABIES FLIGHT TO WONDER *by the Editor*

On occasional m u n - d a n e COVID-19 days, there were times a nice surprise arrived. One lovely sunny afternoon in July, our backyard became rather hypnotic!

My husband and I observed a pair of bluebirds feeding their babies inside their birdhouse. Jim and I had a front-row seat at our picture window. We watched as the parents flew back and forth, delivering delicacies to the nesting babies.

Meanwhile the parents positioned their youngsters from a previous brood as helpers in nearby junipers trees. They were awaiting their turn to feed three baby siblings.

During the delay for tasty morsels, the babies became energetic and fidgety and bounced about inside the nest. We watched as they wrestled for position to see the world through the small round window of their home. There was no space for three heads in one small hole. Each little body fought hard to push the others away.

Finally, one by one, each stuffed his full body in the opening. I became nervous. I said, "that one is going to fall out or fly." This little circus performance was repeated several times, while we took turns using our binoculars for a close-up look. Suddenly, the first baby blasted from the opening, flapped his wings and landed in a nearby tree. As we held our breath, the second baby bounded into the opening, flapped his wings and shot from the hole, and repeated his nest-mate's accomplishment.

Finally, the third baby appeared, then quickly disappeared. His attempt was weak, he just wasn't ready. He stepped up again and again, just like a frightened young soldier on his first parachute jump. His family realized he needed additional nourishment for strength. So, he was given additional tasty morsels.

Now came the final attempt. He took his time, carefully perched his entire body in the opening, leaped forward, and flew down, down, down into the grass. While his family watched from their perches, a brown thrasher approached. Baby opened his wide beak, waiting for food. But no food! Soon, two young robins approached, watched, then moved on.

Finally, a mourning dove came by. But he wasn't helpful.

Several hours passed, when we found him on the lower ledge of our deck rail! In the meantime, baby's family kept watch, cajoling him to fly. But he just sat there. A bluebird appeared on the deck rail with nourishment, but the baby didn't notice. He was turned in the opposite direction. So, the bluebird flew away.

After our break for supper, the baby was gone. We had confidence he was safe.

The day after the nature show, there was more activity. We learned baby hadn't traveled much farther than the deck, where the family continued to leave food.

Near the deck was a Japanese maple tree. Each time a bluebird passed this tree, there was hesitation, and a low dip, followed by an acrobatic spiral. At last, we were confident the stranded baby was safe in Mother Nature's arms. He was hidden under the watch of the Japanese maple, as his clever family beckoned, "Come, fly away with us!"



STAYING AHEAD OF THE VIRUS BY KANUTE RAREY

The day that we found out that there was a pandemic in the world regarding the coronavirus I was standing in the Atlanta airport about to fly to Dallas, Texas, as Co-managing Director of the Texas Storytelling Festival. The date was Wednesday March 11th. My wife Kathy had already warned me about wiping down the seats on the airplane and I was prepared with a small baggie of wet wipes. I had shopped the previous weekend at our local Ingles grocery store and had a supply of gloves, mask, wet wipes, and hand sanitizers. Also, that weekend, noticing our depleted inventory of toilet paper and paper towels I also helped myself to a small supply of those. Not so many as to describe myself as a hoarder. But enough just in case.

It had been an easy drive from Hayesville to the Atlanta airport and from the parking lot to the terminal. Traffic was already beginning to get lighter even in the morning rush hour that I maneuvered my way through. Because of announcements on the Internet and on the television the previous week about school closings and about the rising number of people in New York and Washington and California with the virus, I handled my own luggage and kept it in my close possession.

I was also listening to people coughing and watched what people were touching. I was already wearing gloves and wiping down the handles on my luggage and avoiding direct contact with people.

I was still surprised when the first TSA staff person at the front of the security check line asked me whether I was a visitor from China or been around anybody who had traveled to China recently. I said no to all the questions and proceeded to the next TSA member but this time held my own I.D. And boarding pass. After these checks I proceeded to the usual impersonal search that is required at these X-ray and scanning checkpoints.

After the checkpoint I began to notice the number of stores that were not busy and the lack of people in the airport corridors. Several stores were shuttered along the way. It was beginning to look like "not business" as usual. Clerks reminded me international flights had already cancelled due to lack of passengers. The waiting area chairs at the airline boarding gate and the public restrooms also created an opportunity for a "hands off" approach using paper towels and gloves and good old soap and water.

As I boarded the plane, I did notice that I was one of the few people wearing a mask and disposable gloves. I also was the only person I saw to wipe down my airplane seat. Thank goodness for Kathy's foresight about wiping down the airplane seats due to germs in general that we share under normal

circumstances on airplanes and other public transportation. That was when I began to realize how many different places that I touch. Besides the arms on the seat, the button to change the back of the seat forward and back, there is the tray table and the edges of the tray table in the back of the seat in front of me, there are many more. This includes the top of the seat in front of me that I always use to help me get up and down. Thank goodness I had an aisle seat. I also wiped down the entertainment screen imbedded in the seat back including the buttons and surface. It was pointed out to me later that the seat pocket in front me with the in-flight magazine and the safety instructions is a hot bed of germs under the best of circumstances. If you venture to look in the very bottom of these it is like an archeological dig and best to be avoided. I vowed never to put anything there again.

I told the flight attendants that



I was smiling underneath my mask. That gave them a good laugh. I noticed they also were also wearing masks and gloves. So, I knew I was not alone. I decided to refuse anything from the beverage cart. I had brought my water bottle with

Continued from previous page.

me which I filled after going through security so I had everything I needed. I had also purchased pre-wrapped food from a vendor in the airport. I avoided using the plane's lavatory on my trip to Dallas just to be on the safe side. I didn't even want to try to count all the places you could touch in there.

I made it to Dallas and picked up my luggage from the luggage carousel and wiped it down thoroughly. And then I was off to find my rental car. Now the rental car is another story. Once I signed the contract using my own pen and selecting my car, I realized then that I had another job of disinfecting in my future. I proceeded to wipe off the door handles (inside and out), the steering wheel, the gear shift knob, seat change buttons, window buttons, rear view mirror adjustment buttons, rear door hatch latch, drop down lever, and gas cap cover and lid. I almost forgot to include the arm rests, radio control buttons and cruise

control buttons.

Arriving at the hotel I signed in using my own pen and swiping my own credit card and proceeded to my room. I wiped down the door entry cards and politely refused the free bottle of water from the receptionist. I moved to the elevator where I pushed the buttons with the end of my pen. At the room, on the outside handle I wiped some more. Inside the room I explored every button, knob, lever or handle I might touch or I wanted to touch. First though, I washed my hands. Then I wiped down the thermostat control, drawer handles, mini refrigerator handle, lamp and light on and off switches, alarm clock, telephone, closet and bathroom door handles, and shower and lavatory controls levers. At that point I put out the "do not disturb" on the door and left it there for four days so I was the only person in the room.

Unfortunately, the Texas Storytelling Festival, was cancelled after only two days

because the City of Denton, Texas, closed all public buildings on a Friday with a four-hour notice. It was a very good decision in the long run. With the help of wonderful volunteers, we adjusted and wrapped up everything in just six hours from start to finish.

My travel home was the reverse of my travel to Texas. I am glad I did not get stranded any place along the way and that I got home safe to my friends and family and community back in Hayesville on Sunday, March 17th.

Home now for several months I have converted my "storytelling life" to one Zoom event after another adapting to a new way of life and looking forward to a future again of live performances and up close and personal audiences and combining the old with the new.

Kanute writes and performs his stories from his heart. That work is a product of his life experiences and imagination. To find out more about Kanute's storytelling events in the far west of our state you may contact him at kanutetells@gmail.com.



What's Happening With Our Storytellers

NC S G 's
2017-2018
President,
Elena Diana

Miller, was inducted into Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Traditional Artist Directory on August 6th. Nominations were made by Sarah Bryan, Executive Director of NC Folklife in Raleigh and by Mark Freed, Director of the Town Cultural Resources Department in Boone, North Carolina. Rob Bell is the Senior Director of Programs at BRNHA. The designation is by recommendation and the en-

dorsement of BRNHA.

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area is home to the two most - visited National Park lands in the country, Blue Ridge Parkway and The Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The area was authorized and designated by Congress and the U.S. President in November of 2003 as a National Heritage Area in recognition of its unique character, its age-old traditions of crafts, music, agriculture, and its wealth of natural and cultural treasures unmatched in our country. The area serves as the

steward of the living traditions while protecting, preserving and promoting its historic value for future generations. It is home to the Blue Ridge Music Trails and Craft Trails. The Traditional Artist Directory is a guide to many of the finest traditional craft artisans, musicians, dancers, and storytellers in the North Carolina mountains and foothills. Visit the site at www.blueridgeheritage.com/traditional artist directory.

Hamilton and Me ©2020 by Linda Gorham



Dear Storytellers,

You could call me obsessed. Not clinically. Not dangerously. Obsessed in a good way – at least, I hope. I am obsessed with the storytelling concepts showcased in the Broadway play “*Hamilton*” by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

I never saw *Hamilton* live. I tried. I stood among the crowds outside the Richard Rogers Theatre in New York City hoping my name would be called in the \$10 just-before-curtain fan lottery. When the play came to Chicago, I joined other eager hopefuls standing in the hot sun. “Please, please call my name.” Nope! They didn’t.

Then when I moved to Raleigh, North Carolina and the \$10 lottery went on line, I signed up every day for months – not just for the touring show that came to Charlotte (2 ½ hours away) but also to performances all over the country. I figured the price of plane fare and a hotel night would still be cheaper than \$600-\$1600 for two tickets in New York City. I actually know people who won tickets on-line ... but alas ... not me.

And then this year Disney announced a *Hamilton* movie was coming out. It was filmed over three days in front of a live audience in New York City and it was going to be available on Disney+. My first thought, “Okay, how much is this going

♪ *And I’m not throwing away my shot!* ♪

to set me back?” The answer: \$6.99 for a month by month subscription. “Really? Are you kidding me? You mean I will feel like I’m in front row seats? The really expensive, reserved for VIPs seats? Sign me up.”

So far, I have seen *Hamilton* five times. I am still fascinated (okay obsessed!) by it and I intend to watch it at least a few more times. The play is a synthesis of everything I enjoy about live theater and quality storytelling:

- **Truth:** Well-researched stories – either personal, historical or folklore – that reflect a universal truth and/or that speak to the storyteller’s own story or journey
- **Twist:** Narrative that is unexpected, creative, unique and current
- **Technique:** Music, rhythm, dance, songs and whatever else adds interest

Now I enjoy a well-crafted story simply and sincerely told, but I have to admit I’m a fan of adding a little creativity. Okay ... a lot. I love flair; I love humor, even in serious stories; and I love the wildly unexpect-

ed. These techniques coupled with truth and sincerity, captivate me – especially when there is a connection to the current world. And *Hamilton* has it all – outstanding lyrics, unique rap rhythms, phenomenal dancers,

amazing singers and talented actors that reflect America – people of many colors. No wonder the play won eleven Tony Awards and a 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Drama. It is storytelling at its best!

In a nutshell, the play tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, a key figure in the American Revolution (late 1700’s), and the fight to free American colonists from what they saw as control and tyranny from the British regime. It details Alexander Hamilton’s loves, challenges, friendships, accomplishments, and his ultimate death in a duel with Aaron Burr.

The music will stick in my brain forever. The dancers were sexy, strong and mesmerizing. (I wish I could do dance like that!) But what really impressed me was the decision to cast Black and Brown actors as the Founding Fathers. In Miranda’s words, *Hamilton* is about “America then, as told by America now.”

America now. Like so many, I believe the United States of America is far from the stated ideals of the American Revolution. This country is still in

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need of a cultural revolution of acceptance, understanding, kindness and equal treatment for all. All over the country Americans of all ages, races, genders and creeds are writing, speaking and marching against injustices. And many of iconic phrases from *Hamilton* are displayed on protest signs:

"Rise Up."

"Immigrants, They Get the Job Done."

"History Has Its Eyes on You."

"Who Lives? Who Dies? Who Tells Your Story?"

Storytelling now. Black Lives Matter. Me Too Movement. COVID-19. We are living in a mask wearing, six-feet-apart, non-hugging world. Camera phones have captured horrible crimes. Tweets have incited viciousness. Rudeness is rampant. Everything has changed (or at least everything seems amplified). I join many in feeling drained and uninspired when it comes to my work as a

storyteller. Michelle Obama put my malaise into words when she said she felt "some form of low-grade depression." I feel it too. I miss the energy of live audiences. I miss the laughter, the ah-ha's, and the call and response. I miss the human touch ... the hugs.

But, as they say ... this, too, shall pass. I will, one day, become re-energized. I will be inspired to create new stories. And when I do, I believe I will emerge with a *Hamilton* inspired energy because I know that storytellers are in a unique position to *Rise Up* and *Get the Job Done* by including more important stories in our repertoires.

We have the opportunity to dig deep into old folktales and myths and ask: "Why have their messages about morals, survival and the world around us endured?" "How should these stories be retold for today's audiences and today's issues?" We have the chance to tell tall

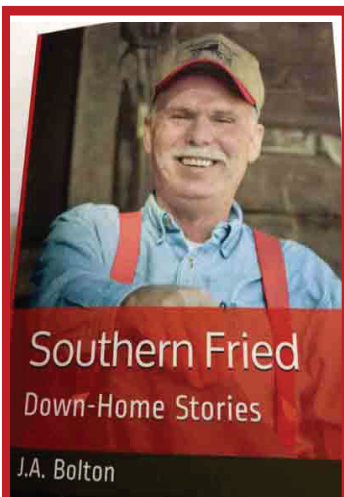
tales that speak to universal truths about justice, fairness and acceptance. We have the skills to research and craft stories – our stories, her-stories, his-stories – and share them stylized, twisted and musicalized. We are in a unique position to educate and enlighten through story – and we must think about how we can do that effectively.

My favorite line from *Hamilton* is when Lin-Manuel Miranda as Alexander Hamilton sings about his passionate need to work tirelessly on designing and fighting for a new nation.

Storytellers, we have the audience. Don't throw away your shot!

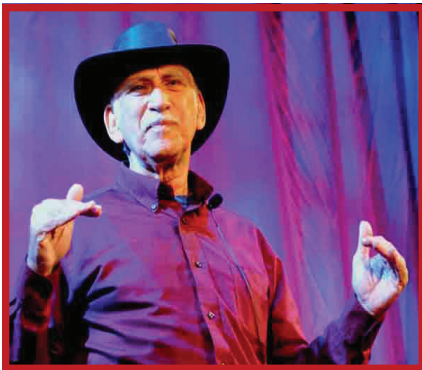
Linda's performances are filled with surprising twists and unconventional humor. She was awarded the Distinguished National Service Award by the National Storytelling Network in 2016. She was also one of NCSG performers during our 2019 Cary Festival. You may contact her at: Lgorham3@gmail.com

♪ *I am not throwing away my shot. I am not throwing away my shot. I am just like my country, I'm young, scrappy and hungry and I'm not throwing away my shot!* ♪



What's Happening With Our Storytellers

J.A. Bolton – I had my third book published this past summer. The book has about thirty-two of my short stories. They include stories of my experiences growing up on a small tobacco farm, hunting and fishing stories and local stories that have been handed down through generations. You can order them on Amazon for fifteen dollars each. Also check out my web-site at ja@jabolton.com



AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR BY LARRY PEARLMAN

There are times when pet sitting becomes an adventure.

I had stayed with these two yellow labs before and even

though they are named Patton and Rommel, they get along very well together and do not have the aggressive nature to go with their names. Since they have a huge fenced in yard, they don't even require walking and are very easy to care for. So, I was anticipating an easy, pleasant week.

The first sign that this might not be the case came on the first full day I was with them. Upon arriving on Friday afternoon, I set up my clothes in the bedroom and food that I had brought in the refrigerator and on the back of one of the four-foot counters in the kitchen. Because I knew from experience that Rommel enjoyed investigating anything on the counters that just might be food, I had those dry goods in a zippered sturdy cloth bag. On Saturday, the fun started.

The only requirement for that sturdy cloth bag to successfully guard my food is for the zipper to be zippered. Somehow, I overlooked this important fact. On Saturday, while I was on the computer at the dining room table with my back to the kitchen, Rommel, great strategist that he is, managed to silently take that green bag off of the counter and, cooperating with his Allied counterpart, ate the bagels, bread, and cookies that I thought were safely stored there. All of this within 20 feet of where I sat and yet leaving me completely unaware of what was happening until I went to the kitchen for some water. There I found the remnants of the plastic bags that had held the food items, my empty unzipped green cloth bag, and two big happy innocent-looking yellow labs.

Starting that afternoon, after obtaining replacement supplies, that green bag was stored on top of the dresser in my bedroom with the door closed and the bag zippered! With security in place, you can imagine my surprise when the next day I found a torn and chewed plastic bag on the floor of the kitchen. Where could that

have come from? That's when I noticed that the large Tupperware containing the bird seed for Kona, their parrot, was missing from the counter along with her bag of peanuts. In the family room I found the seeds still in the Tupperware (Rommel isn't THAT smart) and peanut shells everywhere.

Now, before I get to the meat of this story, I need to describe the layout of the house. It is three stories. Bedrooms upstairs. Kitchen, dining room and family room on the middle floor with a sliding glass door leading to a deck. Storage room/office on the bottom floor with sliding glass doors leading out to the large yard.

Every morning about seven, I go downstairs, feed the dogs (which takes 10 seconds!) and Kona and then take The Generals downstairs to let them out into the yard. On Sunday, we went down the five steps to the landing and as we turned to go down the next five steps, there was a 4-foot snake coming up the steps! Patton was slightly behind me but Rommel was to my right and partly in front of me. He was already sticking his nose out to investigate the intruder. As I held Patton back with my left hand, I grabbed Rommel's tail with my right and started pulling him back up the steps. Wish I had it on video as it must have been quite a sight!

Not knowing exactly what kind of snake this was, I figured I had best first neutralize The Generals and then figure a way to get the snake out of the house.

I put the dogs out on the middle floor deck and then checked to confirm that the snake was still on the lower stairs. Hmmm.... thought I. Maybe approaching this snake in my shorts without shoes is not a great idea. So, I ran upstairs, jumped into long pants and sneakers and stopped in the kitchen to find something with which I could prod the snake. The first thing



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that came to hand was a Swiffer but I didn't trust the rotating head so replaced that with a broom and headed downstairs. Fortunately, my friend was right where I had left him. I took careful notice that there were no rattles on his tail and it was black - definitely not a copperhead. I assumed it was a harmless black snake but my confidence did not extend to walking over and picking him up. Instead I used my broom with one hand to move him back down the stairs while with the other hand asking Siri to connect me to Animal Control. Siri was not too bright that day so I had to give up on that but I did guide the snake into the storage room/office and towards the open sliding glass door. Just before going out, he did a sudden right turn and disappeared behind a bunch of stuff against the wall. Carefully, I moved a large box, a large backpack and some other items to the other side of the room and then saw him disappear behind a picture leaning against the wall.

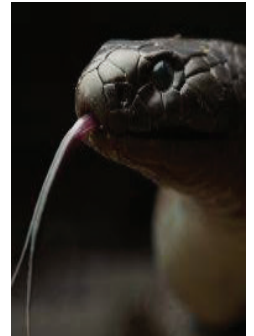
Now I'm not exactly sure what happened next. I thought I never took my eyes off of that picture but if that's true then this snake was a reincarnated Houdini because when I pulled the picture away from the wall he was gone. Just gone. So, I'm guessing I must have turned around for a minute and he scooted off. The question was, did he scoot out the door or was he somewhere in the room?

I closed the door so he couldn't go upstairs and searched through the room including a closet full of stuff that would be really easy to hide in, even for a four-foot snake. No luck. I left that room, closed the door and stuffed a towel under it to prevent ingress.

After a couple of days of not seeing him again, I went back to business as usual. On Wednesday, I had gone back to my house after the morning chores and was returning for noon feeding. I came through the garage as was my norm. The dogs always met me at the door

and then ran up the stairs once I was in, eager for lunch. This time, they did not do that so I thought maybe they really had a nature call taking precedent over their hungry tummies. I let them out and when they came back in, we headed up the stairs. They led the way. When I turned the corner on the landing, my heart pounded when I saw our old friend at the top of the stairs staring right at me with his tongue flicking. The dogs were already up there and they appeared to be old friends with the snake as nobody but me seemed to be scared.

Since he had shown no aggression, I walked by him and this time got a pizza paddle (never knew anyone with a pizza paddle before) thinking I could pick him up with it and carry him outside. Wrong! But I could prod him down the steps with it and back into the storage room where he repeated the tactic from the other day and headed right down the wall. This time I followed and saw him get comfy in a corner behind the desk. By now, I was smart enough to have Animal Control on my speed dial! I told them I'd leave the door open for them so I could keep my eyes on the snake. They showed up pretty quickly and used a snake-handling pole to pick him up and deposit him in the woods outside the house.



All was well....until I went upstairs. When I got the pizza paddle out of the closet in the kitchen, I had left the gate open giving Rommel free access to the trash can. The Generals had struck again. Made me wonder if they had a deal with the snake.

Larry has had a successful 30-year career in sales, sales training, public speaking and acting Minister for Emissary Ministry. He has traveled with the Peace Corp and lived in Africa, Costa Rica and Australia. Not long ago he found a home in Black Mountain, NC. You may contact him at: larrypearlman42@gmail.com

Technical Support from NSN

[Making Zoom Video Calls Look More Professional: View Video Series](#)

[Gallery View vs. Speaker View on Zoom: View Tips for Videoconferencing](#)

Zoom Etiquette

- 1- Don't be late
- 2- Turn on the camera
- 3- Sit still
- 4- No eating
- 5- Close the door
- 6- Don't multitask
- 7- Mute microphone when not speaking

Suggested by Wall Street Journal

OSCAR THE MOVIE CATFISH by John Golden

This tall tale is from the telling of Lady Jane Morgan of Carvers Creek, NC. It is one of many of her stories about characters and legends from Southeastern North Carolina folklore. Jane Morgan (Sandling) was a founding member of the Dram Tree Tellers Story Society in Wilmington, NC, during the 1990s. The story is recalled and contributed by John Golden, another of the Dram Tree founding members, and a big fan of Jane's graceful and mischievous telling style.

OSCAR, THE MOVIE CATFISH

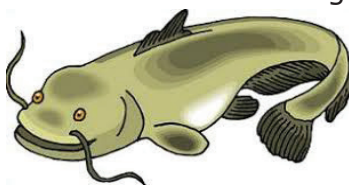
To really appreciate the life and times of Oscar, the movie catfish, you need to think back and remember some important aspects of the movie industry in the mid-1930s... particularly as related to animal movie stars.

To wit: 1. Two of the top five movies stars in the 1930s were dogs: Rin Tin Tin and Lassie. Human stars in the top five were Shirley Temple, Mickey Rooney and Roy Rogers (and his horse, Trigger) followed closely behind by Gene Autry (and his horse, Champion). 2. Later in the 1940s one of the early TV show hits was MR. ED featuring a talking horse who possessed a fair degree of common sense. Another popular show had a talking Army mule named Francis.

Oscar's story begins on the Cape Fear river in southeastern North Carolina where in 1992 a 92-pound catfish was hooked and brought to shore. Sixty years earlier Oscar was brought up in the Cape Fear river and grew to similar dimensions...

every bit of six feet long.

Hob Sandling (Jane's daddy) went fishing every Saturday morning with his black sharecropper companion, Tobe, which was short for Tobey. They left the landing at Carvers Creek at first light, poled their bateau out into the river and floated downstream with their lines out...trolling the river bottom for catfish. A good morning's catch would bring in eight to ten catfish weighing



anywhere from 5 to 20 pounds. That was just the right amount for the catfish stew that Hob cooked some Saturday afternoons for an evening get-together of his neighbors and friends...old-time music and catfish stew...mmm... good... and well attended.

This warm summer morning was typical of a good fishing day; they had caught about six fish by noon so they pulled over to the river bank for lunch. They unwrapped their Vienna sausage sandwiches and poured coffee from a stainless-steel thermos jug. The surface of the black water river was smooth as glass with water bugs skittering back and forth and a few May flies fluttering down from the overhanging branches. A sun perch or a brem would gobble them down as soon as they hit the water.

Tobe saw it first...and watched it closely trying to figure out just what it could be. It was a wave of water about

a foot-high pushing toward them from upriver...created by something moving fast in the water. Tobe nudged Hob as the creature floated up to their boat...it was a huge catfish at least five feet long. The two men put down their lunch and stared at the catfish...and the catfish stared right back as if to say, "Well,..." Tobe reached over and stroked the catfish's forehead while Hob carefully slipped a rope loop around its tail. They expected a mighty struggle but the catfish came easily into the boat,...even helping get its head over the gunwale. Hob decided to head back to the landing and call it a day...what a day...an eighty-pound catfish.

When they got the bateau and the fish loaded into the pickup truck, Hob told Tobe to



take him to the house where they would unload the fish... then Tobe was to go around to the neighbors' farms and invite them to a Saturday night fish stew celebration. Fish stew was a long-time tradition in Bladen County when the fishing was extra good...like when the shad runs came upstream in the Spring and the stripers in the Fall. This catfish stew would be extra special.

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Hob and Tobe laid the catfish on the cleaning bench and Tobe left in the pickup to make his rounds of the neighbors. Hob went inside to gather up the tools for skinning the catfish, i.e. the knife and pliers for pulling the skin off of the catfish. The knife needed sharpening so he honed the blade with a stone until it was good and sharp. He decided he would clean the smaller ones first then go to work on the big one. When he turned the corner around the house, he was stunned to see that the big catfish was gone... there was a long wet spot on the cleaning bench but no catfish in sight. Hob looked around for signs of a struggle; had dogs or a panther cat dragged the big fish away? No clues.

A commotion over in the chicken yard caught Hob's attention. He proceeded around the hedges to the wire-fenced yard and beheld a strange sight. The entire population of chickens was squawking and flapping at a tall figure in the center of the yard who was strutting around and buck dancing while singing Turkey In The Straw...and he knew all the words. The catfish and his audience ignored Hob...he went right on into Oh, Susannah and then Alabama Jubilee. The chickens obviously loved him.

Hob had some tall thinking to do...here was a catfish with talent...and Hob had a fish stew announced for that very night. At that moment his two daughters, Jane and Sally, came up to watch the show,...they were thrilled. So Hob decided to clean and cut up the smaller fish for the stew and give the big catfish a home. Jane and Sally named him Oscar.

There were many fish stew Saturday nights the rest of the summer and into the fall...and Oscar was the entertainment. It turns out he could do the old soft shoe to go along with his singing so Hob got him a straw boater hat and a cane; he could do all the vaudeville favorites,...the song and dance routines. Word of his talent spread around the county and by late summer the Raleigh newspaper ran an article on him with a picture of him wearing his hat.



Hollywood at that time sent out traveling talent scouts as well as Movietone news crews to film short pieces for the Saturday movie matinees... the news shorts would show between cartoons and the cowboy serials. There was Red Ryder, Lash LaRue, Gene and Roy and Dale Evans (she rode Buttermilk), Bomba, the Jungle Boy, Hopalong Cassidy, the Cisco Kid (and Pancho) and you can think of many others. Flash Gordon, how could I leave him out (with the Merciless Ming)? Leading up to the news shorts, you would see troops marching

in Europe and planes flying over the English Channel. There were natural disasters, the geyser at Yellowstone and ticker tape parades for Charles Lindbergh down Broadway in New York City. For comic relief there were animal acts, the Keystone Kops, Emmett Kelly (the sad clown) and that's where Oscar's chance came. The movie scouts noticed the newspaper article and contacted Hob to set up a film shoot of his talented catfish.

The film shoot went smoothly. Oscar was not bothered by the lights and cameras. They filmed him with the chickens and with Sally and Jane. He wore his straw hat and twirled his cane through several show numbers. They interviewed Hob and he took them on a tour of the old Colonial two-story house and the fields and woods around the farm. Within two weeks the film short was showing in Saturday matinees across the country and the response from audiences was immediate. Word-of-mouth carried the news of the performing catfish to those who hadn't seen it and there were long lines for the next showing. Within a month Oscar was the talk of the town and the darling of Hollywood.

So, the next film date was set but early in that week a hurricane storm came up the Carolina coast dumping twelve inches of rain in less than 24 hours. The creeks and rivers overflowed their banks but late in the week the sun came out and the movie crew confirmed they would arrive on that Friday. Friday morning came and everything was ready. Jane and Sally argued over the bowtie color that Oscar would wear. Jane, being older, won

Continued from previous page.

the argument so Sally, pouting, announced she was going to take Oscar outside for a walk. Jane warned her not to do it but Sally put the leash on him and headed across the fields down toward the branch for a walk along the creek bank. Jane trailed along with them, protesting that their daddy had told them not to go outside until the film crew arrived.

The brown water of the branch was churning and frothing almost out of its banks. Sally led Oscar to a moss-covered log that crossed the branch and started across. Jane yelped that they shouldn't cross the slippery log but Sally pulled Oscar onto it. He almost made it across...but his tail fins slipped in the moss and into the thrashing water went Oscar.

Sally couldn't hold on to the leash so away he went down the branch. Sally was stunned; Jane was furious. The two girls desperately searched each side of the branch but saw nothing of Oscar. They ran back to the house to summon Hob (and the film crew which had arrived). After another half-hour of everyone searching they found Oscar lying on a tangled bed of limbs in a curve of the branch. His eyes were wide open but he wasn't breathing...and he had no pulse. He just lay there in his red bow tie and white satin vest...Oscar, the movie catfish,...had drowned.

It was a sad day...the life of a talented catfish cut short. He was...in a good way...a fish out of water.

Post script: In the late 1920s the Academy of Motion Picture

Arts and Sciences had developed a series of annual awards for actors, actresses, writers, p r o d u c e r s , directors and technicians in the movie industry. In the mid-30s they commissioned an eminent artist to design and sculpt a statue that would be presented to each award winner. A nationwide contest was run to select a name for the statue... guess whose name won the contest?



John shares coastal Carolina folklore with songs and stories in living history programs performed in costume. The legends, heroes and characters that make up our coastal heritage come alive from the Lost Colony to pirates to lifesavers to blockade runners. He may be contacted at: johnncgolden@ec.rr.com

What's Happening With Our Storytellers

NSN Interview with Robin Kitson

NSN says: "We are witnessing the power of stories to tear down the walls that divide us, build bridges between people and cultures, and connect us, human-to-human. In this interview series, we'll talk to storytellers who exemplify this **Story Now!** movement."

This fall Robin Kitson was interviewed by Kathy Greenamyre, National Storytelling Network (NSN) Community Relations Manager. Robin was interviewed for the monthly series entitled, STORY NOW! During the interview Robin recalled her experience as a 10-year child, as she watched fed-

eral marshals escort Ruby Bridges into Robin's school. Frightened little six-year-old Ruby was the first African American student to integrate an elementary school in the South. Having witnessed this event, Robin says, has changed her life. [Story Now Interview: Robin Kitson](#)

Flow: The Mark of a Masterful Teller From the International Storytelling Center

It's the fourth episode of StoryVault, our new podcast series—and our second opportunity to share rare archival footage of stories that the late **Jackie Torrence** shared at the National

Storytelling Festival. Today we're talking about Jackie's fluid way of moving between family stories and traditional tales. She makes it sound easy, but make no mistake—that's the mark of a masterful

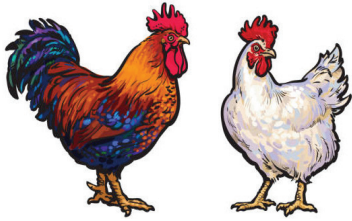
storyteller. Listen now, or get caught up on the first four episodes of the series.

<https://www.storytellingcenter.net/stories/flow-the-mark-of-a-masterful-teller/>

A Lantern Light Tale

by Marva Moss

The children were all settled in their warm beds - when they heard cackling sounds of chickens ... again! Earlier that evening they followed Mama, their grandmother, to the chicken house. Late that evening, they had gone to see what could be upsetting her chickens. Now, with more squawking from the chicken house, the children groaned, "Oh no, not another trip *tonight!*"



Mama called out, "There's something bothering those chickens! We've got to go back out there to the chicken house!"

The children moved quickly, like little soldiers - four pairs of feet found their shoes under the edges of beds. Jackets, sweaters, and a pile of toboggans lay on chairs. In only a few minutes, they were ready for action. They pulled toboggans down over their ears, and marched to the back door.

Everyone was ready for the night's mission. Mama lit the lantern and met them at the door. By the light of the lantern, she saw four sleepy faces. She made a quick check to make sure they were dressed for the weather.

Louise, the ten-year-old, was given the lantern "Hurry children," she coached. "Open the gate to the chicken yard! I'll be there in a minute." Then she

dashed off to find her shoes, a sweater, and a toboggan too.

On that late, fall night, the children headed across the wrap-around porch, and onto a pathway which led to the sounds of the chickens. Guided by the lantern light, on their left was the fence surrounding the chicken house. On their right was Papa's grape arbor. For a moment, the children could almost smell the sweet, juicy, ripe grapes they had enjoyed, many weeks ago. As they passed the chicken wire fencing, branches from the weeds on the inside the fence reached out - poking the children as they passed by.

"Ouch!" Bill, the six-year called out. He had become a victim of a stick or a thorn as he walked too close to the fence.

"Quiet," whispered the lantern leader. Just a few steps away, Rob, the seven year old, and his sister Louise, worked to open the gate's hand-made latch. While working to open the gate, and waiting for their grandmother, their imaginations began to run wild.

Serious thoughts filled their little toboggan covered heads. "Maybe something has *caught* a chicken! How terrible to see its poor little head dangling like an old banana peel! It might *attack* us! Imagine its piercing eyes and sharp teeth! Oh, why can't we just make a lot of noise and scare the critter away?"

"She's coming!" Mia, the nine-year-old, shouted in a whispered voice, "I see Mama's lantern light!" Their grandmother

was carrying something other than the lantern. She had a plan.

While waiting for Mama, the sliding and twisting of the latch on the gate had finally caused it to open. She and the children moved through the gate, and into the chicken yard. They were close to a little door, and a ramp which allowed the chickens to enter or exit their house.

Mama gave her lantern to Rob. Louise was holding the other one. "Hold those lanterns near that little exit door," she commanded, standing between the two lanterns. In one of her hands she held a stick, and made a fist with the other. She banged and banged against the chicken house. Granny gave the side of that house one final, loud BANG!

The creature crashed through the little exit door! Down went Mama's stick, again, and again. It was difficult to hit her target, due to poor lighting of the lanterns. Down the exit ramp went a scared, furry critter! Lanterns were swinging! Chickens were cackling! And children were screaming - "I see it, I see it!" Mama was yelling too - "Stay out of my chicken house, you greedy, old weasel!"



Continued from previous page.

The creature escaped and ran through the chicken yard which was overgrown with dried weeds, shrubs and bushes. Cracking and crunching sounds made by the "weasel" could be heard as it ran in many directions inside the fence.

"We almost had him!" Rob shouted, as they all gathered in disappointment, and excitement. When the night calmed,

a few feathers lay on the chicken coop floor. The chickens were shaken, but unharmed. The thought of a real, live weasel had filled the children's night, with fun conversations, and excitement.

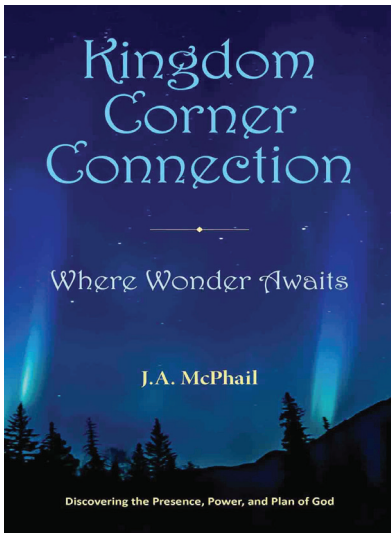
(Many years later, they learned that weasels were seldom, if ever, found in Brunswick County, and that the critter they



hoped to destroy was probably a fox).

Marva Moss is a retired educator and story-weaver, sharing her stories through the oral tradition and as a writer. Marva broadens her horizons by studying photography and taking piano lessons. She may be contacted at: owlcottage@atmc.net.

What's Happening With Our Storytellers



to learn more it at:
<https://www.jamcphail.com/>.

Jeannie McPhail's new book, just released on November 1, 2020, is non-fiction about spending time with God in your "Kingdom Corner," a concept introduced in her Tresia books. Several of her Tresia books have been reviewed over the years in the *JTHT*. Go to her website

Larry Pearlman - Well, I've got some news that's exciting for me anyway. On 7/12 I entered the MadZoomBot Storytelling Slam put on by Caren Neile in Florida. I told a story about the fire department ruining the back seat of my mother's 1965 Rambler American Classic when I was a teenager and won the \$50 first prize! From that show, I was invited to submit a 5-minute true story (had to be about Florida) to be considered to air on the NPR station down there and my story about getting caught in a speed trap in New Smyrna Beach was aired on 8/16.

If anyone is interested in participating in the MadZoomBot Storytelling Slam (5pm the 2nd Sunday of each month), they can contact Caren at carenina@bellsouth.net. They want unpolished stories like you're sitting around with a bunch of friends. Fun time.



Alice Cunningham, who prefers to be called 'Miss Alice,' was featured in the Winston-Salem Journal in late July. Here is the portrait taken by the photographer of Miss Alice sitting in the room where she hosted many tea parties prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. She often includes stories reminding her guests of growing up and of times past. She mentioned to the journalist that she may reflect on ideas from her pandemic experiences, including humor, to create new story material.

MY STORYTELLING DATABASE BY CATHERINE MACKENZIE

I created a "Microsoft Access" database of storytelling sources about 15 years ago, so that I can find stories by searching any of the categories I've entered. For instance, I can find 8 minute stories, stories from Japan, or about goats, or that I've told, or for young children. I can find stories of clever women, or call and response stories, or felt board stories. If I'm going back to tell to a group, I can see what stories I told previously. I created this for my own use, but perhaps you'd like to develop something like it using a database of your choice.

My database currently contains about 1,250 entries, each of which has the following information:

Tales to Tell (*Name of the story*)
Last (*name of author*)
First (*name of author*)
Source (*book from which the story was taken*) Page (*page where it is found.*)
Last (*name of the author of the anthology*) First (*name*)
Publisher (*if a book*), Year (*of publication*)
Subject (*with a drop down of possibilities, drop down to prevent alternate spelling*)
Traits (*of the characters in the story...i.e. cooperation, stinginess, greed*)
Story type (*drop down including those Tim Lowry had in Winter workshop*)
Motif (*from The Storyteller's Handbook*)
Location (*In book, felt board box, etc.*)
Length (*estimate*)
Age (*Young, old, all*)
Told (*check box if I've told the*

story)
Permission (*check box if I have permission*)



Permission from (*drop box: Author, implicit Original Public Domain, Publisher*) Own (*check box that I own the source*)
Spine Label (*I organize by country and then by the last name of the author*)
Cutter (*i.e.: WOR(Id) DeS, or (CAR)ribean COU*)
Country of Origin (*can be particular such as southern US*)
Props (*drop down: flannel board, hand puppets overhead projector, shadow puppets, stick puppets, story cards*)
Where told (*date and place*)
Synopsis (*a brief summary or in some cases the whole story*)
Alternate source (*these may be in the database or elsewhere*)
Where heard (*If I first heard it told somewhere*)

Once the data has been entered, I can use the "find" feature, or make queries using functions of the database. I can edit the dropdowns by modifying the tables, search for advanced criteria by making "queries," or run reports.

GRANDMA SCHOOL

I have found this database really helpful, especially now that I am holding GOOL, "Grandma School," with two of my grand-

sons for an hour every weekday afternoon via Skype. I start each session with a riddle and then we pepper our study of insects, Greece, space, or whatever the topic is, with folk tales, myths or other stories on the subject and sometimes short video segments from the Internet. The boys now have a wealth of folktales in their background. They know that the number three is really important in folktales. They look for similarities and differences in the stories they hear. Because they are 5 and 8 years-old, incorporating puppets, story cards, and other props is helpful to get their attention, but the magic of story is that they are enthralled with fairly lengthy stories that have no props. I treasure this special time with them, and their parents, who are both working from home, appreciate this hour where interruptions are minimal.

Catherine is currently serving on the NCSG's Board as Secretary/ Historian. She does such a great job she has been re-elected for the past several years. She is an avid collector of tales, fell in love with storytelling in the bayous of Louisiana, and is always thrilled to find a new story to share. She may be contacted at: mmackenzie50@gmail.com

The instruction we find in books is like fire. We fetch it from our neighbors, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all. - Voltaire

GUILD WEBSITE – EVENTS PAGE

Remember to search for storytelling events on our Guild website.

<https://ncstoryguild.org/events/>


Virtual events appear and change frequently. Rather than posting them here, please refer to our website.

You may discover a festival, workshop, or seminar far away that you would not be able to attend otherwise.


TELLABRATION!

ASHEVILLE STORYTELLING CIRCLE - 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION


November 22




Wayne & Jane Sims
Saint Johns, FL




Connie Regan-Blake



Sherry Lovett
Little Switzerland



Catherine Shealy, MC
Flag Pond, TN



Wallace Shealy
Flag Pond, TN

Asheville Storytelling Circle
presents their virtual *Tellabration!*
November 22, 2020, 3pm through November 30, 2020, 7pm

Donation Tickets:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/25th-annual-tellabration-tickets-126059069069>

NCSG – Board of Directors 2020-2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

President: Robin Kitson - nanirobin@gmail.com

President Elect: Alan Hoal - alan.hoal@gmail.com

Secretary/Historian: Catherine MacKenzie -
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Treasurer: Paul Stutts - PStutts@spc-cpa.com

Ex-Officio: Alan Hoal - alan.hoal@gmail.com

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Journal Editor/ Membership: Sylvia Payne -
sylpayne@bellsouth.net

Area Representatives:

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joanleotta@gmail.com

Mountains Representative: Nancy Reeder -
nancyjreeder@gmail.com

Piedmont Triad Representative: Alice Cunningham -
alicesplace@bellsouth.net

Piedmont Triangle Representative: Henry Vogel -
henry.vogel@gmail.com

Southern Piedmont Representative:
Deborah Winkler - winklerdeborah@yahoo.com

Accepting Articles

Articles, stories, and storytelling news are needed for NCSG's Spring 2021 issue of the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers*.

We ask that you include events that you are aware of (*open to the public*). They will be posted on NCSG's website 'Events' page at <http://www.ncstoryguild.org/events.html>.

Allow three to four weeks notice for your event to get posted on NCSG's website 'Events' page.

Deadline: March 15, 2021
Send to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net.