

# Journal of Tar Seel Tellers

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NC Storytelling Guild  
Official Newsletter

## THE OLD NORTH STATE STORYTELLING FESTIVAL BY CATHERINE MACKENZIE



The third annual Old North State Storytelling Festival took place in Cary, North Carolina, on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to the Town of Cary as our co-host and also to our new outreach partner Read and Feed, an organization dedicated to making sure that underserved elementary students are fed both physically and intellectually. Covid precautions ensured that everyone felt safe. Proof of vaccination or a negative test was an entrance requirement, and wearing masks was mandatory.

What a treat to be able to see a live performance again. I appreciate technology and the fact that we were able to view beautifully crafted virtual performances during



the pandemic and also that folks who couldn't attend this year's festival in person will be able to view it in the comfort of their homes. But storytelling has three components that are equally important: the story, the teller and the audience. It was refreshing for the tellers to be able to interact with the audience and the audience with the tellers. Both of the evening performances were particularly well attended making us confident that there will once again be sold-out performances in 2022 when we trust that Covid will no longer be such a threat.

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**Linda Gorham**, as emcee, helped us navigate the four showcases by capturing the essence of the tellers in a few words making us eager to hear more. We were treated to a variety of stories told in a variety of styles. There were folktales, fairytales, tales of social justice, family stories, stories of overcoming handicaps and tall tales. We were treated to the music of drums, flute, guitars, banjo, fiddle, voice and whistling.

**Andy Offut Irwin**, in his inimitable style, shared a song he wrote when he was a student at Georgia college and a “scientific” story of an experiment encouraged by a high school mentor. His fabled ability to become his characters through voice led us to know more about his Aunt Marguerite and great-great-Uncle Leo and Aunt Rose. We heard about Liberty enlightening the world and a wonderful story of Steadfast guarding the chickens. The festival closed with an original song Andy composed for storytellers. Guitar playing and whistling added to the fun.

**Willa Brigham’s** love of quilting was evident in her colorful outfits. The “Feel-Good Storyteller,” as she is known can light up the room with her smile and her songs about anything and everything ... from encouraging personal hygiene to eating vegetables to scratching flea bites. The audience joined her on refrains in original stories such as “The Magic Pizza Tree Seed.” Willa shared a poignant story about a wise blind man who proved to his brother-in-law that he could see with his ears. Willa loves hats and we were treated to a fashion show as she told the story of a particular hat she coveted.

**Kevin Kling’s** stories pull us from the past into the future. Many are autobiographical. He showed us how a life of ups and downs can be lived honestly and openly. A humorist, Kevin kept us laughing throughout his performances. He explained his accent saying that if he were a zodiac sign, he’d be “Minnesota with Iowa rising.” He put us at ease explaining that he only has four fingers on one hand, thus he can’t give a high five, but high fours he can give aplenty. There were serious themes as well. “Man among men,” dealt with bullies.



Cary Theatre, Cary, NC

“If Pots and Pans could talk,” dealt with insecurity. In another story, a young boy saves the lives of a train full of orphans traveling from New York to the mid-west. And then there are the educational tidbits thrown in, such as the facts about Lake Superior.

**Milbre Burch** is dedicated to stories of social justice, diversity and inclusion. She travels the world telling stories

of women as “a woman’s voice is a powerful voice.” She loves to tell traditional tales from a different point of view such as an Irish version of Cinderella featuring Billy Beg and his giant boots. In this and a story of Irish immigrants to the United States, Milbre’s use of an Irish accent draws us into the story. The cautionary Persian tale of a widower and his three daughters and the Pink Pearl, show us that misunderstandings can be overcome with love and perseverance. “Sleeping Ugly” is a story she told at the very beginning of her career. Her dramatic movements enhance her words. We all mimicked her hand motions as she told the cumulative story of “Why mosquitoes buzz in people’s ears.”

**Josh Goforth** delighted us with stories and songs of the mountains which he learned growing up in Madison County, North Carolina. He taught himself the piano by age four, mastered the guitar by age nine, and now plays twenty instruments. In his relaxed humorous style, he told family stories accompanied by the banjo, fiddle, mandolin and guitar. We felt as though he was speaking directly to each of us as we sat on the front porch with him. Josh had us clapping, tapping our feet and singing along with him. We learned some verses to “Whoop ‘em up Cindy” that his grandfather warned him not to sing to his MaMaw. When he told us about his grandfather, we could picture the wad of tobacco in the old man’s mouth. Josh, so versatile musically, sang the ballad of the “Story of Rose” in the traditional way: a capella.

**Gregg Whitt** has been seriously drumming for twenty years. Now, as he puts it, “he helps teach people to bang on things and make noise.” He used a variety of drums and rhythm instruments to punctuate his stories and lend a background beat. We could feel the

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beat in our chests. Gregg has studied traditional drumming in various countries around the world and shared some of his adventures and stories he collected in Morocco and Cuba. He was able to enter Cuba despite the embargo because he was doing folklorist research. His attempt to bring home a coveted eight-dollar traditional metal guataca instrument through customs and security check points made a wonderful story.

**Janel Behm** has the enviable job of resident storyteller at a resort in Florida. Her theater experience is evident in her storytelling as she tells barefoot, her movements complementing her words. She told family stories such as how her father, brought up in orphanages and foster homes, learned not just to be a father but to be a great dad. From a young age she craved a nickname, anything but “Nellie,” Janel thought, but she changed her mind when her stepsons gave that name new meaning. A traditional folk tale about a childless queen who meets an old crone who emerges from an old oak tree kept us mesmerized.

**Mike Perry** took us on an alphabet journey and a tongue twisting story of Billy the biscuit maker. He used magnetic biscuits on a metal pan to illustrate the story. Mike also recounted the story of Tobias-the-rag-man who saved up his money to buy a field where he planted garlic only to have them stolen before he could harvest them. The wise judge had an unusual way of dealing with the problem.

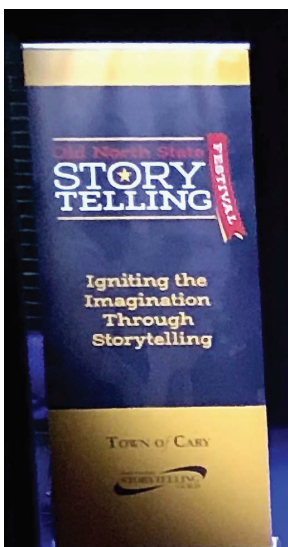
**Alan Hoal**, a consummate volunteer, is the current president of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild. He is a master of the tall tale. He told a tale of friendship, love, heroism and heartbreak... which of course, was a fishing story. And Whiskers was quite the fish! “The Great Caffeine Spill,” is the story of an environmental disaster in Pumpkin Patch, Virginia, which didn’t get national coverage, but of which we are now aware. Alan also told us the story of Old Dry Frye, a circuit riding preacher, with a penchant for fried chicken. If you’d like to hear these amazing tellers yourself, a beautiful chaptered event has been crafted for you to **watch at home at your convenience, and will be available from November 15<sup>th</sup> through December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. You may purchase tickets at**

<https://www.oldnorthstatestorytellingfestival.com/tickets>

And save the date now for our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Old North State Storytelling Festival, November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the Cary Theater in Cary, North Carolina.

*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](mailto:mmackenzie50@gmail.com)*

Festival Photographer: Steve Tate



Festival Banner



Josh Goforth – Madison County, North Carolina

## JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

Editor, Sylvia Payne  
1621 Nathaniel Street,  
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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: Willa Brigham, Linda Gorham, Chuck Fink, Alan Hoal, Catherine MacKenzie, Marva Moss, Jim Payne, Larry Pearlman, Mike Perry, Kanute Rarey, Connie Regan-Blake, and Deborah Winkler.



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

The **Asheville Storytelling Circle** invited Kim Weitkamp to be their guest storyteller at their 2021 Tellabration on November 21st . . . **Michael Reno Harrell** spent part of this Covid pandemic reverting back to another of his many talents- drawing. You may peek at his new artwork at [michaelrenoart.com](http://michaelrenoart.com) . . . **Donna Washington's** new book, "Boo Stew," recently received a delightful review in the NY Times by Nick Bruel: <https://tinyurl.com/NYTBooStewReview>

**PLEASE NOTE:** The ASHVILLE STORYTELLING CIRCLE Tellabration has been canceled for this year, 2021 - Rescheduled for November 2022, Sunday before Thanksgiving.

## DIGGING UP ANCESTORS

from the editor's desk

Most of us have personal and family stories; some passed down by parents, grandparents and other family members. But wait... what about all those unknown stories? The ones we've missed from ancestors who date farther back in history. Some years ago, I began to search, but for what, I truly did not know. But just maybe there could be a possibility...

Fourteen years ago, I made a trip to a public library in a nearby county. In their genealogy room, I discovered a reference book authored by an ancestor I'd never heard of. *The Knox Family*, by Hattie Goodman, copyright 1905. Knox was my maternal grandmother's maiden name. When I saw my grandmother mentioned, I knew I'd found a piece of "gold". It holds a partial history of my many times great-grandparents, an uncle, and other ancestors. They emigrated from Scotland and Ireland to America around 1740. All their descendants are included up until date of publication. I was speechless!

I have recently stitched together a short story about my many times Great Uncle Patrick Gracey, who was born on Jan 3, 1700 in Coleraine, Northern Ireland as a Protestant. He is a brother to my many times Great Grandmother, Jean Gracey Knox. And my search continues...

You will find many times Great Uncle Patrick's story on page 20.

Submit articles for JTHT Spring 2022 issue to: Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton, NC 28658. E-mail: [sylpayne@bellsouth.net](mailto:sylpayne@bellsouth.net) - Deadline for Spring Issue: March 15, 2022.



## President's Message

**Hello NCSG Members!**

I hope that this message finds you all safe and well.

The last 20 months have been an incredible challenge for the Guild and for each of us individually. There is hardly anyone who has not been personally touched in some way by the tragedy that is the Covid-19 pandemic and the new variants. I have personally lost a best friend as well as an extended family member to the disease. We have all also been challenged to find new and creative ways to adjust personally and professionally to the restrictions brought about by the pandemic. I would like to call on everyone to share your stories with Guild members as we encourage and assist each other through these tough times.

The NCSG Board has been working to adapt as well with creative use of the ZOOM platform to hold workshops, storytelling sessions and other events. We have recently partnered with the Amazon Smile program and you can now designate the NCSG to receive a small donation from each of your purchases.

<https://smile.amazon.com/>

We have also used this opportunity to take a look at new ways to fulfill our mission and are designing a new sponsorship program that we will be rolling out in the near future. Regional representatives have also been given authority to fund storytelling events in their respective regions in an amount up to \$500 per year. Please reach out to any of the NCSG Board members to learn how you can become more involved with the NCSG and the promotion of storytelling at this critical time.

Oh, and don't forget, our 4th annual Old North State Storytelling Festival is scheduled for November 4 & 5, 2022 at the Cary Theatre with an exciting lineup of national and Guild tellers. We hope you can attend either in person or online. (*Refer to Festival website below!*)

Best wishes to you, your families and for all of your storytelling efforts and activities.

Sincerely,

*Alan Hoal*

President NCSG



<https://www.oldnorthstatestorytellingfestival.com/>





## Connie's Golden Storytelling Jubilee!

### **Celebrating and Connecting: Reflections by Connie Regan-Blake**

I want to share an anniversary with you – and thoughts about connecting through storytelling.

In the Fall of 1971, I was hired as a fulltime storyteller at the Chattanooga Public Library in East Tennessee. Four years later my cousin, Barbara Freeman and I hit the road, telling stories, and giving workshops as full time, professional storytellers. After 20 years, I went solo again and now, I am celebrating my [‘Golden Jubilee’](#) - 50 years of making my living, telling stories!

In those early days, I was a participant and a witness to a huge shift in the world of storytelling as we moved from libraries, front porches and intimate settings to main-stages at folk music and then storytelling festivals with microphones and hundreds, sometimes thousands of listeners.

Half a century later, the art form continues to transform. And it is still about connecting.

In a creative response to the pandemic, I am thrilled to find that using today’s technology

we can all continue to build and enjoy this larger global community of story-tellers and story-listeners in a virtual setting. The benefits of connecting across the country and the world are enormous - and gratifying! (Just have to factor in time zones!)

I am happily anticipating returning to being in the same space for telling and listening, but I believe online storytelling is here to stay! Major festivals like the National in Jonesborough, TN and Timpanogos in UT have already committed to having virtual options right alongside live performances. All of us storytellers can broaden our audiences across the US - and to countries and continents beyond our own. Families and friends can continue to gather online when separated by distance or health restrictions.

With some help from my “techie” friends Simon Brooks and Cooper Braun, I have developed a way to share with others the art and practical skills of telling, engaging and connecting with listeners in this new Zoom world. The feedback from the participants has been very gratifying and the whole process is enriching for all of us.

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Here's what storyteller Jane O Cunningham had to say after attending one of my virtual intensives:

*"Thanks to your workshop, I am becoming more and more comfortable telling and recording my stories for my family on zoom. I even told a story for a program at North Carolina State. Afterwards I gave myself many appreciations, including that I had sense enough to take your workshop. It opened a door for me to continue sharing my stories."*

If you are ready to dive in deeper with your on-line storytelling, I continue offering my intensive, ["Sharing Your Story through a Virtual StoryWindow"](#) that focuses on the Zoom format. As you know, storytelling can benefit many walks of life including writers, teachers, sales professionals, poets, grandparents, storytellers, youth workers, ministers, students, attorneys, presenters, and more. So, if you have a story you are ready to tell to the world or know of someone else who might enjoy this creative time, please sign up for my 'occasional newsletter' to hear about upcoming workshops. And connect directly with me to see if one of my workshops might be a good fit for you or a friend.

And now I am celebrating 50 years! What a glori-

ous, wild, creative ride this has been!! Traveling, telling, teaching and meeting many of you as I entertain audiences in 47 states, 18 countries, and 6 continents. . . . so far!

I have put together a number of my [scrapbook photos](#) of some of the very first storytelling festivals, my early correspondence and hand-written touring schedules along with photos of some favorite tellers in younger years! I invite you to browse through them and walk down that memory lane with me. There is also a space for you to leave a comment, reflection or how storytelling has impacted your life.

Storytelling - it has filled my heart with many treasured memories and stories . . . and a gratefulness that keeps expanding. Hope to see you in the audience – or share the stage before too much longer!

<https://storywindow.com/>  
[Connie's Golden Jubilee page](#)  
[Connie@StoryWindow.com](mailto:Connie@StoryWindow.com)

*Connie Regan-Blake is one of America's most celebrated storytellers. You may learn more from the three links above!*

# STORYTELLER ELIZABETH ELLIS BRINGS HER STORYTELLING MAGIC TO THE MOUNTAINS

by Kanute Rarey

If you were looking for a wonderful week of fun and stories you missed it in August. Master storyteller Elizabeth Ellis brought her wealth of storytelling talent to western Carolina that month. She appeared Friday, August 20th in Hayesville, North Carolina at the monthly OPEN MIC Night - Stories on the Square at the local Corner Coffee and Wine Shop. Her appearance was sponsored by storytelling group, MOUNTAIN AREA STORYTELLERS.

Ellis was invited to tell Saturday, August 21, at the Macon Area Folk Festival in Franklin, North Carolina. Sunday she was welcomed back to share her spiritual stories with the congregation at Hayesville's Good Shepherd Episcopal Church.

And, the last week in August, Elizabeth, along with Kanute Rarey assisting, brought her years of incredible depth of experience to lead a week long workshop on capturing and telling family stories at John C. Campbell in neighboring Brasstown, North Carolina.

What a great treat for storytelling in Western North Carolina.

Elizabeth Ellis, a Tennessee and Kentucky native now lives in Texas. She is an American storyteller and author

known for her live performances of traditional tales, literature, Texas and Appalachian history and folklore and personal memoir. She is also the author of two leading storytelling books, *From Plot to Narrative* and *Every Day A Holiday*. The books are considered "cornerstone"



Elizabeth front center, Kanute Rarey standing directly behind Elizabeth. Photo courtesy, Kanute

references for folks wanting to compose stories for family and friends or for a live audience. The books are each "easy reads" and are written in an entertaining style.

Ellis has been awarded the Circle of Excellence Award by the National Storytelling Network and has been recognized by the organization as a Master Storyteller. Additionally, she is a regular performer at the annual National

Storytelling Festival and the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee. She was a featured storyteller again there at the annual festival this October. As a well-known teacher she is also a frequent workshop leader locally at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina.

*Kanute Rarey writes and performs his stories from his heart. That work is a product of his life experiences and imagination. Kanute finds joy as he entertains and educates through storytelling. He is responsible for keeping storytelling going with the "Mountain Area Storytellers." And publishes a monthly newsletter announcing news and upcoming events. He is a frequent contributor and may be contacted at: [kanutetells@gmail.com](mailto:kanutetells@gmail.com).*

## INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING CENTER, JONESBOROUGH, TN Submit Your Story

Everyone has a story and we'd like to hear yours and feature it in our StoryVault Podcast. Each month we'll post a different theme for StoryVault submissions. [LEARN MORE](#)

<https://www.storytellingcenter.net/our-stories/submit-your-story/>



# POETRY

## MY HEART WILL REMEMBER by Marva S. Moss

Today I'll let the sunshine  
kiss my face.  
I'll watch the clouds  
untouched and free  
and know that I'm a part  
of this wonderful world -  
made for all - made for me!

Today, I'll listen to birds  
make happy songs  
and sounds.  
On wings of a beautiful butterfly,  
I'll let my spirits soar!  
My heart will remember  
happy times,  
and wish for many more.

*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 taking college courses. She may be contacted at: [owlcottage@atmc.net](mailto:owlcottage@atmc.net).*

## THREADS OF LIFE by Jim Payne

Her delicate fingers danced over her loom  
Creating works of rainbow hued art  
Illuminated by her joy of life

Her rhythm and imagery  
Was soulful in its completeness  
Sustaining her vision of glory

Her loom sang to her as she wove dreams,  
Loss, and triumph into the weft and warp  
Of her creations

The world danced at her beauty  
And shared her story  
Binding hearts to hearts

Jim Payne is a retired librarian, a poet and short story writer. He currently serves on our NCSG Board. He composes poems while mowing grass at his farm.

## What's Happening with Our Storytellers!

ASC President, **Donna Marie Todd** was a featured presenter at the NSN National Storytelling Virtual Conference in July! She was one of three workshop leaders for: *Hear Our Voices: Personal Stories Promote Diversity Awareness*.

**Congratulations to Donna Washington of North Carolina and Sheila Arnold of Virginia**, who received a **2021 Oracle Award** for their Distinguished National Service in Storytelling.

This award is presented to those individuals, members or groups who contribute their time and energy in an exemplary manner on the national level to forward the work of the National Storytelling Network. This award was presented as a joint achievement of Sheila Arnold and Donna Washington for their ongoing work with Artists Standing Strong Together (ASST).

A wonderful summer job happened for **Donna Catton-Johnson** this summer. She told ghost stories on the Big Red Bus in Myrtle Beach! Two enterpris-

ing young women imported a double decker bus from London and had the roof removed. The bus traveled a couple of routes in Myrtle Beach on summer afternoons and evenings with a docent aboard. There was a historical tour and a ghost tour. Donna was the storyteller for the ghost tours which ran on Friday nights at 8:00 for an hour and a half. The bus visited two area cemeteries and Donna regaled the riders with stories of spirits from the region and other spooky tales. It was a breezy time spent atop the bus and proved popular. What fun!

**Donna** also was invited to her second year as ghost storyteller for Lakewood Campground in Surfside, south of Myrtle Beach. She spun spooky stories each Friday night in October on Lakewood's mini-island. The staff went all out for this month-long event, decorating the island with ghosts and goblins and witches, and maintaining fire pits in various spots. They sold s'mores kits and soft drinks and played a list of Halloween-themed music in between the story times. A great time was had by all.



# PRESENCE

by Deborah Winkler

**P**RESENCE: Bringing your Boldest Self to your Biggest Challenges, by Amy Cuddy, presents some ideas that could be useful to storytellers. As storytellers, we all strive to be fully present

for every performance. This book offers tools to help us to be in full command of our own authentic personal power in order to unite the audience with us and with our stories.

Expanding our bodies is one approach to assist our effort to be fully present. This is especially helpful directly before a performance. Amy Cuddy tells us, "Expanding your body physiologically prepares you to be present; it overrides your instinct to fight or flee, allowing you to be grounded, open and engaged." This is a way to reduce anxiety and to feel empowered. Expansive poses have been shown to raise testosterone ("assertiveness hormone") levels while lowering cortisol ("stress hormone") levels. This is very helpful in challenging situations.

Good posture, keeping that spine in a straight line, is perhaps the simplest way to expand your body regardless of what you are doing. If you practice yoga, you are surely practicing a number of expansive positions. A woman, influenced by Amy Cuddy's work, adapted the expansive pose to call it 'starfish up'. She and her family members 'starfish up', to stand like a starfish, when they are nervous or about to face a challenge. Holding a pose such as this for a few moments, in private, prepares the body to feel more powerful.

PRESENCE has many studies and stories to fully explain the many ideas presented. If you do not have time to read the book, there are Ted Talks and You Tubes online. Of the ones I watched, my favorite was the January 2016 You Tube of Amy Cuddy with Susan Cain, author of QUIET: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking. For my part, I am enjoying toying with these ideas!

*Deborah Winkler has served as the Southern Piedmont Area Representative since July of 2017. Prior to Covid, she twice organized a family storytelling event at the Reedy Creek Nature Center in Charlotte, featuring a number of storytellers in the Southern Piedmont Region. During Covid, Deborah has organized monthly ZOOM gatherings with various topics. She has also organized two learning workshops, inviting all Guild members. You may contact her at: [winklerdeborah@yahoo.com](mailto:winklerdeborah@yahoo.com)*

## Coastal Region – Solstice by the Sea Festival

This past summer, Joan Leotta, Coastal Representative, led the Guild's Coastal Region in the **Solstice by the Sea Festival** on Oak Island. The festival was organized by the Brunswick Arts Council. Among the many art activities, Joan, Marva Moss and Donna Catton-Johnson performed storytelling, while Marva also shared her poetry.



## Backroads Pilgrim by The Editor

Growing up in rural North Carolina, I had opportunities for different experiences. One experience that I will never forget is the time I met Charles McCartney. I was around 10 years old. Like myself he grew up on a farm. Unlike myself, he left the farm and began his adventures at 14-years of age. His is the story of how a pure and simple farm boy became popular.

As storytellers we may be familiar with folklore stories that surround southern culture. But it's the rare individual who becomes an icon of Southern Folklore. One of those is this 20<sup>th</sup> Century man, Charles McCartney.

He was said to be a wanderer, and an eccentric itinerant preacher, who drifted from state to state. He traveled rural back roads of the South from the mid 1930's through the '60's. Wherever his travels led him, he aroused curiosity. Word about him swept through communities, and into neighboring towns.

His manner of travel was rare, when motor vehicles were the usual means of transportation. McCartney walked along the roadside with his caravan, an odd-looking wagon, pulled by goats. Usually more goats followed behind. Most people never identified the man with his given name. He became known far and wide as... **The Goat Man**.

His wagon could have been mistaken as a wreck on wheels, on its way to the junkyard. Traveling as a vagabond, and often sleeping inside the wagon at night, he ultimately became widely known throughout the South. Newspapers ran rampant with headlines, photos, and interviews with McCartney. Reporters sometimes included quotes from locals who turned out to observe this curious manifestation.

Junk was stacked inside the wagon. All sorts of gadgets dangled along the outside. Items like used lanterns, old license plates, and recycled pots and pans. He amassed all sorts of rubbish found along the roadways to sell so he could buy food as he traveled from town to town.

Throughout his travels he carried his two favorite books, *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Holy Bible*. He often preached come Sunday mornings, attracting crowds as he traveled mostly back roads throughout the Bi-



**Charles McCartney - The Goat Man**

ble belt. Eventually he became known as a **Southern Folk Legend**. One of McCartney's favorite sayings was, "People are goats, they just don't know it."

It's been said he was a folk and religious figure in Georgia, for more than 40 years. His fiery sermons were messages of fire and brimstone for sinners. It was also in Georgia, where he established the Free Thinking Christian Mission church.

Exaggerating at times he boasted that his goats had traveled to 49 states. He also claimed they didn't make it to Hawaii. He said his goats couldn't swim that far. If they could, they would just end up eating the grass skirts off the hula dancers.

Many of his stories had a tendency to change as he traveled from town to town and state to state. Folks never knew exactly where the real truth lay. He embellished his stories freely. He loved being the center of attention and enjoyed meeting and talking with people wherever he went.

McCartney grew up as a peculiar child. Former classmates remembered him as being strange. He didn't fit in with the other kids. He grew tired of the insistent drudgery of farm life. He was inspired by his favorite book, *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe was a youthful impulsive wanderer, who became shipwrecked. So, McCartney left the farm at age 14, seeking adventure and fortune.

He ended up in New York and married a 24-year-old Spanish woman, an expert knife thrower. He decided to partner with her in a show, charging admission to onlookers. He became her target, drawing gasps and



*Continued next page*



moans from a speechless audience, as her knives landed closer and closer to either side of his head.

In time he grew weary of this northern adventure-some life. He and his Spanish bride moved to the Midwest and settled down on a farm. She quickly became discontented with mundane farm life and left him.

Fortune was not on his side, as he lost the farm during the Great Depression. He found work as a woodsman cutting down trees, until a tree fell on him, mangling his left arm. He passed out from the pain and the bleeding and co-workers, checking his vital signs, thought he was dead. He ended up on the undertaker's table to be embalmed, and the stick of the needle awoke him. To the undertaker's astonishment, he leapt from the table and dashed from the mortuary. His arm remained useless for the rest of his life. This brush with death re-awakened a religious quest for answers to life's purpose for him.

During his second marriage, his wife and young son traveled with him. This union was fleeting. She didn't care for the nomadic lifestyle and soon left him. One newspaper account claimed McCartney sold her for \$1,000. His son remained with him for some time.

McCartney sold postcards of himself with the caravan. Postcards were an enterprising way for him to make a few pennies to purchase a meal or a cold drink. He needed an occasional change from drinking lots of goat milk. Sometimes locals gave him food.

With his long hair and beard, some folks claimed he was the perfect image of a figure portrayed in a religious painting. Some devout residents were convinced that he was Jesus Christ and brought gifts to him. There were others who definitely disagreed!

Near the end of his vagabond travels, he claimed to have traveled by foot, anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 miles. In the late '60's, he was badly beaten by rogues who also slit the throats of some of his beloved goats. After this dreadful deed, his travels as the 'Goat Man' came to an end.

Sometime before McCartney died, he was asked by a reporter what he learned while on the road: *"They are worldly goods. And worldly goods don't amount to nothing. The body and mind go back to dust. But the spirit—it goes on forever."*

*The Backroads Pilgrim was researched and written by the editor, Sylvia Payne.*

## **LISTEN TO TWO GREAT STORYTELLERS - Bill Harley and Noa Baum on Youtube**

**International Storytelling Video of Bill Harley**  
Watch the Video of storyteller Bill Harley live at the  
2018 National Storytelling Festival here.

**NOTE: Our very own, NCSG Storyteller, Linda Gorham is the emcee  
who introduces Bill in this storytelling session!**

Approximately 30 minutes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5GlvTtAPOw>

## **WATCH NOA BAUM'S TEDx TALK**

**Beyond Labels: Bridging Differences Through Storytelling**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vsg7VTUjYLI>

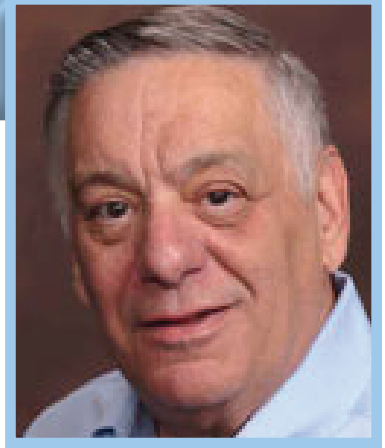
When Israeli-born Noa Baum moved to the U.S. and unexpectedly formed a friendship with a Palestinian woman, she realized the importance of listening to the story of the "other" - even if that other is the enemy. She discovered that storytelling transforms perceptions, and from that epiphany Noa shares how she uses storytelling to connect across conflict in our communities and work places.

Can storytelling change our response to differences?

## CATCHING UP WITH... Vincent Vezza

*Editor's interview with Guild member, Vincent Vezza.*

**Guide:** Q: My questions to Vincent A: Vincent's creative answers



**Q:** I see that in your brief Guild biography, you mention your father's career was as a military officer. What did you think of moving and traveling across the globe?

**A:** It was a lifestyle that enriched my view of the world. I was born at an Army hospital in Frankfurt, Germany soon after the end of the Second World War. A year later I was carried by mother onto a troop transport and (sailed) to America. I was too young to remember that voyage, but thanks to my parents was able to keep alive their memories of the trip. The journey and many of the stories attendant to being a military dependent are captured in my debut novel.

In the following years I was privileged to travel the states by train, and auto in the days before interstate highways. I was old enough to remember my first trip on another transport across the Pacific Ocean. Mom carted me and my sister to Okinawa where Dad was stationed at the time, just as the Korean Conflict was heating up nearby.

Travel and moving in a military family have a certain predictability. Most of the assignments were on base. Cookie cutter PX, Officer's Club, Base housing, Base school, etc. The few times when we lived off base gave me an opportunity to experience (civilian) life.

Dad made sure that we visited every historic site and battlefield during our journey. Mom, a war bride born in Belgium who spent her teen years in Brussels during the NAZI occupation, made sure that I understood the true cost of conflict.

Moving, travelling, making new best friends, experiencing different cultures, witness to the consequences of war, separation from dad during some of his deployments, staying in touch before smart phones and internet...all experiences that I capture in two words that serve as the moniker for my Hidden Treasure Novels imprint...CHANGE HAPPENS.

**Q:** You received a BA degree in Political Science and an MS in Education. How did publishing and technology enter the picture?

**A:** My interest in politics began as a product of the childhood travel and events that shaped our world since that time. My passion for education was formed by my parents, the teachers, and instructors who influenced my life. After a brief stint in the classroom, I forged a career in educational publishing. I presented books on history and social studies to educators.

In 1984 I joined the newly formed education group of Apple Computer, Inc. Our mission was to help educators leverage technology to improve instruction. I recall when a teacher on a technology selection committee asked me if I was going to talk about the Apple IIe or the Macintosh. My reply, "here to talk about F.A.M.P.S.", an acronym I coined that stands for Find, Analyze, Manage, Present, and Share information. The computer amplifies what you are already doing in the classroom.

**Q:** You mentioned to several of us, during a regional meeting of Southern Piedmont Region that you taught history. What led you into teaching?

**A:** I wanted to share the story behind each story with my students, to encourage them to appreciate the history of their society.

**Q:** What bag of tricks did you utilize to encourage students to study history?

**A:** No tricks, but I discovered that (what if) questions usually engendered thought-provoking conversation.

**Q:** I see that you are a member of the Eastern Cabarus Historical Society. What encouraged you to join this organization?

**A:** The ECHS is a wonderful resource within walking distance of my home. The museum is housed in two restored structures of a once thriving men's college that flourished before the Civil War and beyond, into the twentieth century.

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The museum houses memorabilia and artifacts that represent the period. The society also provides a robust calendar of events, on site and on-line. Recently I was honored to host a workshop on the basics of storytelling, with a focus on historical content.

**Q:** Your website, *Hidden Treasure Novels*, stirs up curiosity. Why this name?

**A:** Hidden Treasure Novels represents the imprint that I created in 2015 coincidental to the launch of my debut novel, *The Hidden Treasure of Dutch Buffalo Creek*, a story that deals with change. The website includes a recommended page that features my subsequent work, and the works of several authors in my circle of authors.

**Q:** How did the idea come to you for the story, “*The Hidden Treasure of Dutch Buffalo Creek*”?

**A:** The book deals with war and peace, love and hate, conflict and conflict resolution. It starts with the find of a bayonet in a local creek. The weapon was left there by a Hessian soldier during the War for American Independence. A bayonet in our family served as a prompt. The principal character in the story spends the better part of a year trying to discover the meaning of the bayonet, and the lives touched by conflict in a multi-generational storyline.

**Q:** How did your pen name, Jackson Badgenoone, come about?

**A:** Jackson comes from the universe of the never-born. She would have been conceived in the late eighteenth century. Her job is to record the lives of people named Jackson who lived during the following centuries. By the twenty-first century she decided to expand her recording, leveraging the world of the internet.

She realized that she needed a last name to make that happen. She applied for the name, Badge Number One, since she was the first from the neverborn universe to act as a recorder of events.

The progenitor permits her the name of Badge NO One, since she was never born. From that point forward, Jackson Badgenoone, acts not only as observer, but manager of several other Badgenoone souls called to observe other people during the same timeframe.

**Q:** What has been one of the most *difficult* challenges you’ve faced in creating stories?

**A:** Research.

**Q:** What has been one of the most *exciting* challenges you’ve faced as a writer?

**A:** Weaving multiple themes into a story.

**Q:** What has been your most rewarding experience over the years?

**A:** Creating a story telling realm that sheds new light on events.

**Q:** What prompted you to become an oral storyteller?

**A:** I realized during several book readings that there was another way to tell each story, one that would allow me to tailor content, focus, and pace for each new audience.

You can discover more about Vincent’s work by visiting his website at: <https://www.hiddentreasurenovels.com>

## Change of View by James Payne

He hadn’t been to Manhattan in six years, and wanted the trip over as soon as he arrived.

He needed to be present for the reading of the will. As the only child, over the years he assumed that he might inherit something from his father.

He was given title to a ranch out West, and an office tower on West 86<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue. Needless to say, he was intrigued by the ranch. He would have to think about the office tower. He didn’t have to think long about the ranch. Back at the hotel, he called the airport and booked a flight.

Disembarking from the plane in Wyoming, he marveled at the sharp tang of Spring in the air. Walking away from the plane, he looked at the sunlit clouds draped over the Tetons and said to himself, “Well, Dad I’m here, let’s go look at your ranch.”



Our Sympathy goes out to Donna Catton-Johnson on the death of her father. He was 93 years young.





## TAKING A DETOUR FROM COVID BY CHUCK FINK

Covid, besides being deadly, is also a bit of a tease and a reboot. For my wife and I, 2020 was not a good year for milestone events. I turned 70 on March 14<sup>th</sup>. She wined and dined me that night

at a special mountain restaurant in Asheville as she anticipated throwing me a rather large surprise party. Cindy, my wife, invited 84 people from all over to come. She lined up friends and family to “roast” me. Cindy contracted caterers and bartenders. RSVP’s poured in. Amidst pandemic shutdowns, stark reality caused my logical and realistic life partner to throw in the towel. The real surprise for that planned surprise party turned out that there was to be no party. She had to cancel the event with more than 75 people ready for a festive celebration on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Oh yeah, I was surprised. It was like someone cancelled Mardi Gras’.

Then there was our anniversary in August, and not just any anniversary, but our 40<sup>th</sup>, marking Cindy’s 40-year journey to sainthood. Did I mention I’m not the easiest man to live with? We planned to “re-live our honeymoon” by going to the same tiny motel on the shore of Southwest Harbor Maine that began our marital bliss 40 years prior. Yet again, Covid reared its ugly head and caused the re-enactment of our honeymoon At Mount Desert Island to fizzle out like a wet fireworks show. Clearly, it was time to punt.

But compared to the misery and deaths millions experienced and continue to experience, ours were just minor setbacks indeed. So, now I had to deal with the downtime and tendency to isolate. I’m one that could have easily given in to the temptation since I can enjoy taking it easy. Let’s make that, I’m lazy.

I had an idea to add meaningfulness to my stalled life. I started a storytelling radio show, “Storyville” on a local station in Asheville on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Donna Marie Todd was my first guest. The idea for the show began when I served as a guest talking about storytelling and life as a storyteller on another show on the same station. After the show, the host told me that he thought I would be an excellent host of a show about

storytelling. The station management agreed, and the ribbon to Storyville was cut open. I enjoyed each and every guest teller who visited Storyville and graced the airwaves, Facebook, and my YouTube page: Chuck Fink Storyteller. But I felt there were issues making my job as a 71-year-old volunteer host more stressful and difficult than I expected.

First were the FCC requirements. Included among the rules: Absolutely no cussing, no direct promotion of any paid event, and no superlatives allowed. Those rules forced me to do a lot of editing. Then there were the station norms. Each show had to run an hour. I had to separate the audio from the video, and basically serve as producer, editor, and host. My volunteer job ended up costing me hundreds of dollars, and far more working hours than I ever anticipated.

So, after a year on air with such guests as Alan Hoal, Larry Pearlman, Ray Christian, Michael Reno Harrell, Kim Weitkamp, Andy Offutt Irwin and so many more, I decided to make a change. As I was discussing ideas for a podcast with my wife, she told me of several podcasts she listens to including one with Bruce Springsteen, and former President Barak Obama. The lightbulb in my head exploded.

So, I asked Cindy if she would consider co-hosting a podcast with me. Like a fiancé after getting the ring, she cried out “I love you so much”. She then hugged me and planted a wet one on my lips. We were in business.

The nice thing about taking on a new, rather massive project like this one is that it keeps me moving ahead with meaning and purpose. We hope to post our inaugural podcast show in October or November. We think the show will be titled “Chat it up with Chuck and Cindy”. I must craft new stories, rework, and master old stories. I must learn new technology (always a piece of cake for this senior citizen). Then, I’ll have to learn more about online marketing and the variety of dreaded social media platforms. You may get a kick out of those platforms, but I’ve only been on Facebook, and even then, I click and post with more a sporadic tendency than a diligent commitment. Yet, having a presence on social media is an absolute must for podcast audience reach and success. So, learning the ins and outs of social media is a must. Best of all for me is that

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with our new podcast we will still host other storytellers who fit a particular theme for a show, such as love, kids, marriage and family humor, healing and recovery, and more. The welcome mat for tellers near and far will always be there, just like it was in Storyville

So, the pandemic launched two new storytelling and communication projects. Those storytelling projects turned out to be far more productive for me than searching the pantry and refrigerators for an hourly, high calorie snack. The pandemic brought my wife of 41 years and I even closer together with work and play. Our brains and attitudes are in high gear.

I forgot to mention the biggest change of all. My son and daughter-in-law blessed us with the arrival of Samuel James in mid-August. Our family circle expanded with his first cry that seemed to shout, "Hey everybody. I'm here so let the party begin."

Sometimes with tragedy, crisis, and pandemics, focusing on one's purpose in life keeps one's head above water and away from misery lane. And that's the way it was in the life of this old storyteller from Weaverville during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020.

Now, enough of the pollyannish stuff. We all need this murderous pandemic to quickly die out and allow all of us to get back to our normal lives and more time-honored motivations, like good health and happiness. More than anything, I'm sure like me, others reading this story have one common desire. Let's get back to storytelling with live, healthy audiences eager to see and hear us spin our yarns to their delight.

*You can see past episodes online at Chuck's YouTube page: Chuck Fink Storyteller. Prior to retiring from a career as a trainer and organizational consultant Chuck wove stories into his classes, consulting, and to any willing listener. He may be contacted at: [charlesfink1@gmail.com](mailto:charlesfink1@gmail.com)*

## Wishes by Willa Brigham

**B**e careful what you wish for, you just might get it. As a child my wish was to travel across America. As an adult I've had the opportunity to live around this great country with my family. With each move we bought a new house. I would wish for something in the new house the previous one didn't have.

Once I wanted a house on a hill. I should have been more specific because I got a house on an incline. When winter came the hill froze and I couldn't get the car up to the house. When the rains came it flooded at the bottom. As the snow began to fall for 25 consecutive days every child in the neighborhood took our lawn for a winter wonderland.

With the next move I wished for a house with waterfront property. I dreamed of a clear, clean brook or stream slowly making its way to some large, well-kept trout infested lake. What I got was a house with a swamp in the back. With all of our looking for new homes, how did we miss that? There was a huge sign posted "Protected Wet Lands". What do you grow in "protected wet lands"? only the biggest mosquitoes you have ever seen. These mosquitoes hummed in my ear while taking their children out to dinner, on me. Citronella and peppermint spray became our very best friends.

Another house, another move. This time I wanted a picture post card cutie in a well-kept neighborhood. I

wanted sculptured shrubs and manicured yards with colorful flowers. Not too far from the city with enough room to enjoy a small

garden. We found it, right across the street from the neighbor who did not believe in cutting his lawn. His foot tall weeds were home to a condo full of mice, living well and thriving in his back yard. These little critters came to visit us often without invitation. One night we spent an hour erecting a wall of books to direct the little annoyance out of the library. All of those books and it still didn't know how to follow directions out of the house. It jumped over the wall and sent two full grown adults jumping and screaming with broom in hand. After laughing ourselves silly over our fear induced consternation caused by a three-ounce monster we did the next best thing. One forty-five cent trap made our home a mouse free zone and gave us back our dignity.

*Willa Brigham is an inspirational speaker, performing artist, writer and Two Time Emmy Award Winner. This busy artist has five award winning CDs of stories songs and poems. She was a featured teller at NCSG's November storytelling festival this year. She may be contacted at: [willastory@aol.com](mailto:willastory@aol.com)*





## CHOOSING TO TELL TALES VIRTUALLY BY MIKE PERRY

**A**s COVID cast its virtual pall, there was no choice, my 'new normal' had to expand to include virtual storytelling. But what exactly did this mean? I typed 'define virtual' into my comput-

er and clicked. Spending half a second scanning the options I selected the first answer to appear among 1,880,000,000 results: 'Almost or nearly as described, but not completely or according to strict definition'. I thought, *hmmmm*, this sounds about right. I chose and copied that definition, but did I choose correctly?

Technology presents thousands of choices daily. I click and apply and update and use technology as though it, technology, is the answer even as questions multiply. When applying technology to storytelling I wonder, what is being gained? What is compromised? What is lost? Algorithms continue to elbow into 'free choice', curating what was previously liked or selected. Still, I maintain there is room left to freely select and apply what I want.

But what do I want? By my chosen definition *virtual* storytelling is 'almost or nearly' storytelling. Does this mean that virtual storytelling is one step removed from live and personal appearances? Virtual may be 'nearly', but I want *real* interaction. I want a live, warm presence, not some virtual avatar. Like choosing a story, a costume, a persona, I want my appearance to reflect and imbue an emotional impact, an effect that tells and sells my story, my character, and my message.

Virtual is visual, and storytelling, being aural, lends its strength not to TV, but to radio. It engages the imagination mainly through the spoken word. So, how is that bridged? My choice? Add more visuals. Virtual or otherwise, setting and costuming establish place and character. They offer entrance to the teller's world by teasing the audience, grabbing their eye and interest. I want them to ask, "Where is he?" "Who is that guy?" "What is that stuff?" Visuals, whether virtual or real, offer additional opportunities to engage the audiences' curiosity.

Many tellers choose virtual backgrounds with great success. A virtual background can work well to complement a storyteller's persona and style. Often their use requires additional computer software and training. I choose instead to add a 'real' setting to my virtual storytelling presentations. I want a pile of objects, a theatrical junkyard of stuff. Regardless, the virtual answer is not technology, the virtual answer to a successful on-screen appearance is choice, and like the definition of 'virtual', there are thousands of choices for you to make. It can be daunting to choose the look and feel of your online appearance because each decision can impact your presentation in some small way.

Marshall McLuhan, the guru of media study, said, "We shape our tools and thereafter they shape us." As I continue to shape my storytelling appearances, virtual or otherwise, I am simultaneously being shaped by them. More choices require making more decisions, but in the process, more control over the virtual impact of storytelling upon audiences. I remain confident that virtual online personas and virtual storytelling will continue to shape and shift just as stories do, each offering benefits to tellers and audiences alike.

To improve and remain relevant as tellers we must remain flexible and fluid. New tools, and new audiences are waiting to be engaged in new ways, creating new opportunities and breathing new life into new and old stories alike. As you continue to choose and implement, to shape the message, to shape your telling and the audiences' interest, you will be shaped by it. I suggest, do not choose to embrace technology, but embrace the many choices being offered virtually.



*Mike Perry's broad and adventurous career experience has taken him from the circus to the Census Bureau, from major motion pictures to maintenance man. He has taught Elementary School, and performed as a corporate edu-tainer. He may be contacted at: [MikePerry.Storyteller@Gmail.com](mailto:MikePerry.Storyteller@Gmail.com)*

### **Mike Perry.Biz**

YOUTUBE: 'The Un-Noun Custodian', Mike Perry promotes a virtual library appearance online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsyF04ag384>





## PINOCCHIO'S NOSE GROWS

© BY LINDA GORHAM  
2021

**T**ruth in advertising. It's a simple concept yet so many have, perhaps conveniently, forgotten how dishonesty can ruin careers. There are celebrities who lied to get their children into colleges, horse trainers who lied about drugging Kentucky Derby winners, and politicians who denied election results.

You've heard the responses, "Oops." "Sorry." "I misspoke." And you've heard their consequences as they were jailed, banned from their sport or ... well ... are still in office.

This phenomenon is not just for the high-profile professions. The temptation to exaggerate our experiences and qualifications occurs in every field – yes, even in the storytelling world. We too, could use a 'truth in advertising' reality check.

- Are we bilingual because we tell The Barking Mouse?
- Are we bona fide musicians if we occasionally bang on a drum, shake a tambourine, or blow into a recorder?

- Does taking a workshop with 'fill-in-the-blank-big-name-storyteller' make us similarly talented?
- If we have told with 'fill-in-the-blank-big-name-storyteller', are we also qualified to be headliners?
- Do we have the right to give ourselves the title Master Storyteller, Griot, or Baba?

Are we tiptoeing into Pinocchio's Nose Grows situations? Are we portraying ourselves honestly? Are we standing behind our own credentials? Are we creating experiences and qualifications we don't really have? Are we afraid that if we don't blend in with the increasingly crowded world of storytelling that we won't be noticed?

We all spend hours creating, editing, and tweaking our resumes, brochures, websites, blogs, and all the other marketing tools at our disposal. We check for typos, punctuation, and grammar. How about one more check ... for honesty and individuality?

We each want to stand out. That's a human trait. It reflects a desire to grow and get the jobs we feel we deserve. But it is my hope that we want to stand out on our own skills, experiences, and talents.

Find your own voice. Figure out who you are and what you have to offer. Ask yourself, "What makes me extraordinary and unique?"

- What type of stories do I tell?
- What kind of emotional energy do I convey?
- What do I offer that is distinctive?
- What is my look, my colors, my signature style?

- What descriptive words do I want someone to say after seeing me perform?
- What do I have to offer that sets me apart from others?

Be remarkable in your own right and you will never feel the need to define yourself by your relationships with others. There are plenty of ways for you to express your own creative uniqueness.

Seth Godin defined the concept of individuality in his book [Purple Cow](#). Godin's thesis is that we have all seen plenty of black and white cows. Dime a dozen, right? Just think how excited we would be to see something new, something unique, something that stands out – something like a purple cow!

Is there room for individual and event purple cows in the storytelling world? Absolutely!

Purple cow-type storytelling events are growing fast.

[The Moth](#) is a purple cow. The Moth started as a group of people sharing stories monthly in someone's living room. The concept is to have very short, often humorous, first-person stories, selected by lottery, that are told in small bar-type clubs. Since 1997, The Moth has held over 500 different storytelling programs a year in more than 25 US cities plus London, Dublin, Sydney, and Melbourne.

A Fringe is a purple cow. The Fringe concept started in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1947 as an alternative festival that played concurrently, but outside the formal location, of the Edinburgh International Festival. Fringes don't focus on a single genre. They are 'performing-arts smorgasbords' that embrace theater, dance, puppetry, and spo-

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ken word. Storyteller Tim Ereneta wrote a great description of [Fringe Festivals](#) and the [National Storytelling Network](#) has been promoting the fringe concept for 15 years. The 2022 NSN Fringe performers have already been selected by lottery from applications received.

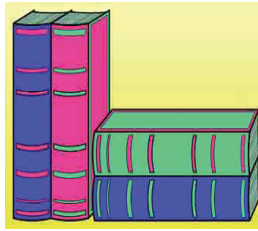
Individual storytellers are purple cows too. Today we see storytelling combined with dance, music, mime, and puppetry. We see more movement, more staging, and extreme body language. There are no limits.

In 1994 I was part of a group of writers who wrote and published a book called [Quality Angles](#). This book, geared to business executives, was a thesis on what it takes to be successful and balanced in the business world. My contribution was to find and interview people with unusual jobs – Purple Cow type jobs.

Finding them in the pre-Internet age was a challenge. I searched news-



for leads. In the end, I found twenty amazing people. Among them was an



ice cream taster whose tongue was insured for \$1,000,000. I also found a woman who was a professional screamer, a full-time rodeo clown, and ... guess what ... even a professional storyteller. Imagine making money tasting ice cream, screaming in movies, protecting cowboys, and ... telling stories!

Interviewing these professionals was an eye-opening experience. They were all gutsy, determined, and not afraid to take risks. I asked them about the challenges of having unusual jobs and I asked them what advice they would give to others interested in doing the same.

paper archives, library reference books, and bookstores. I also asked everyone I knew

“Be unique,” they said. “Be known for excellence. Provide the highest standard of what your customers need. Provide your skills in a new way to show your customers the possibilities beyond what they think they require.” And from my ice cream taster, “Keep your reputation strong; be known as a person of integrity.”

My mother was famous for saying, “The truth will set you free.” I don’t think she would mind if I alter her mantra just a little bit. Honestly evaluating who you are and what you have to offer is key. Truth in advertising will set you free.

*For the past 30 years Linda Gorham has engaged audiences internationally with poignant and humorous family stories; interactive folktales; notably twisted fairy tales; and riveting, well-researched historical stories. Each performance is infused with Linda’s unconventional humor and her signature ‘sophisticated attitude’. In 2018, Linda was added to the Wall of Storytelling Faces and Voices at the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee.*  
[www.LindaGorham.com](http://www.LindaGorham.com)

## NEWS OF INTEREST

**Don’t Forget-** The **Asheville Storytelling Circle** has rescheduled their Tellabration for November 2022. Kim Weitkamp is invited back again for next year, along with ASC members Catherine Yael Serota, Charlie St. Clair, Elena Miller and Candler Willis when we hope to return to the Folk Art Center on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

**Look what Donna Washington’s newest book** garnered from the New York Times: “Like all fairy tales, “Boo Stew,” written by Donna L. Washington and illustrated by Jeffrey Ebbeler, is best read out loud. Washington creates a timeless swamp community called Toadsuck that’s populated by both people and amorphous, shadowy creatures called “Scares.” – “Fright Life” by **By Nick Bruel**, October 15, 2021 in *New York Times*.



## Oh, So Close by Larry Pearlman

I've got a title of a story for you: Oh, So Close. I'll bet if I gave you all just 5 minutes to think about it you could come up with a story from your own life using that theme. Let me tell you mine.

First a bit of baseball history. Let's talk about the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers. For you younger folks - the Dodgers were not always in Los Angeles. They played in Brooklyn from 1884 until they broke my heart and moved to LA in 1957. For those of you who know something about baseball in the 50's, who had the most homers in that decade? Would you guess Mantle? Mays? Aaron? ... Nope - Duke Snider - Brooklyn Dodgers. Who were the only two men who had over 1000 RBI's in that decade? Again - Most of you would guess incorrectly. It was Duke Snider and Gil Hodges - Dodgers - Dodgers. Wikipedia says that Duke Snider is the only player in Major League history who hit at least 4 home runs in two different World Series. Who was the first pitcher to win both the Cy Young Award and MVP in the same season? ...Don Newcombe - 1956 Brooklyn Dodgers. Oh - and you just may have heard of the Dodgers 2nd baseman in 1955 - a 1st ballot Hall of Famer named Jackie Robinson who is the only player to have his number retired by every major league team.

Now here's a question that any of you who know baseball from those days should get right. What team dominated the 1950's in the World Series? Yep the New York Yankees. They won six out of ten including 1950, 51, 52, and 53 but 1955 was the magical year that the Brooklyn Dodgers won the NL pennant by 13 1/2 games and then slew goliath by beating the NYY in 7 games - the first time since 1941 that the Yankees had lost a World Series while winning 8 times. Johnny Podres was the Series MVP having won 2 complete games including a shutout of the mighty Yankees in game 7.

But before that wondrous World Series there was a sunny June day that Jack Pearlman took his son Larry to Ebbets Field to watch my idols play a game against the hated cross-town rival NY Giants. Like most 8-year old's, I had come to the game with my glove hoping to catch that foul ball - hopefully hit by the Duke. I had also brought my own ball hoping to get an autograph. So, before the game started, I made a beeline for the area right behind the Dodger dugout. There he was - The Duke of Flatbush - standing right in front of the dugout. The only thing separating the fans from the dugout was the top of a short fence. Without thought, I jumped over that fence onto the roof of the dugout, thrust my ball towards Snider begging him to sign it. "Sure kid", he said with that million dollar smile he had, and then signed it. But instead of handing it back to me, he handed it to Gil Hodges who signed it and handed it to Jackie Robinson

who signed it and handed it to Roy Campanella and on it went down the bench until almost the entire 1955 Dodger team had signed it including Don Newcombe who was the starting pitcher that day and went on to win 20 games that year as well as hitting seven home runs - amazing for a pitcher.

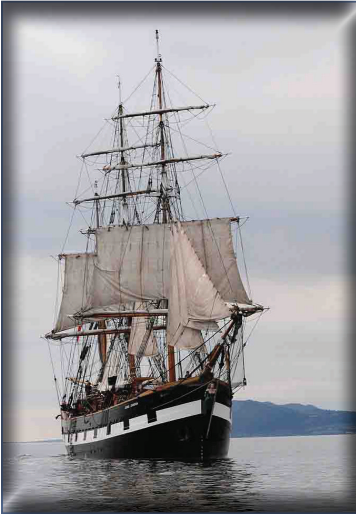
As the ball was coming back down the bench towards me, a cop had hold of my ankles and was yanking me off the dugout. I held on for all I was worth but my skinny 8-year-old body was no match for New York's finest so he soon had me under control, tears flowing out of my eyes so hard I couldn't speak to explain anything. Then I saw my salvation. The great Dodger broadcaster Vin Scully came over and told the officer he would handle the situation. Saved, I thought.

But you remember the theme of this story, right: Oh, so close. Mr. Scully called over a vendor, took a program from him, signed it, gave it to me and patted me on the head telling me to enjoy the game. To this day, I'm convinced that if I could have stopped crying and just told him what had happened, I would have that priceless ball today. Of course, if that had happened, this story would have a much different theme.

*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](mailto:larrypearlman42@gmail.com)*



## GREAT GREAT UNCLE PATRICK BY THE EDITOR



The wooden ship was a diminutive speck in the ocean, swallowed by vast waves of the Atlantic. Wind slapped the sails like resounding thunder. Crowded with men, women and children, the ship rolled and tossed about at the mercy of the

sea. Wind and storms overpowered their journey, taking them three long months to reach America. Water and provisions had run out. Passengers were miserable.

Great Uncle Patrick Gracey wore a pair of new buckskin pants that were rather tight, when he left Ireland. The pants lapped over considerably when the sailing ship reached America. The family first settled in Pennsylvania. More and more emigrants continued to settle in this area. It became crowded with people. Land was difficult to find. Although many American Indians were peaceful, they resisted efforts of the Europeans claiming their land. One of Patrick's daughters-in-law and her child were scalped by Indians, while another child survived. Other descendants say it was Patrick's own daughter and baby. So, Patrick and the Knox family decided to journey southward.

Patrick settled near the headwaters of Back Creek, in what was Rowan county (now Iredell), North Carolina, some three miles northeast of Mooresville. He was said to be a good man. Bibles were scarce in those days, so he often took his Bible and went among his neighbors, reading the Scriptures to them. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and brought his certificate of membership with him. He

presented it to the pastor when he joined the Centre Presbyterian Mooresville church.

He was a great lover of coffee, though it was a luxury in those days. When he visited his daughter, she would always give him coffee. On handing back his cup for a second time he would exclaim in his Irish brogue, 'That's a vast, that's a vast, Nellie.'

Born on Jan 3, 1700 in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, Patrick Gracey was the father of 10 children and uncle to President, James Knox Polk. Patriot Patrick Gracey, at age 81, fought under General Nathanael Greene, against Lord Cornwallis at Guilford Court House, NC on March 14, 1781.

He rode his horse a distance of seven miles to visit his daughter, only six weeks before he died on January 9, 1810 in Iredell County, North Carolina at 110 years old. He was buried at Centre Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Mooresville, NC, near my home town.

He must have been a remarkably strong man to have made the journey on horseback at such an advanced age. To my knowledge, my mother never mentioned our many times Great Uncle Patrick. She must not have known about this remarkable trailblazing uncle!

*The Editor- My search marches onward.*



"I don't think that faith, whatever you're being faithful about, really can be scientifically explained. And I don't want to explain this whole life business through truth, science. There's so much mystery. There's so much awe." – **Jane Goodall**

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## ***Accepting Articles***

Articles, stories, and storytelling news are needed for NCSG's Spring 2022 issue of the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers*.

We ask that you include storytelling events that you are aware of (*must be open to the public*). They will also be included 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, 2022

Send to: [sylpayne@bellsouth.net](mailto:sylpayne@bellsouth.net).