

# Journal of Tar Seel Tellers

Volume 25  
Number 2  
ISSN 1077-307X

Spring 2019  
NC Storytelling Guild  
Official Newsletter

## WINTER WORKSHOP BY VICKY TOWN



Doug Lipman

Storytellers from across North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia gathered for the North Carolina Storytelling Guild's Winter Retreat January 25-27 at the Fort Caswell Center.

In addition to attending the workshop, members laughed, chatted, made toast, engaged in a fierce game of White Elephant, ate award-winning cheese, made toast, took pictures, told stories, walked on the beach, made toast, sang along with Jon Sundell, and made toast. All participants agreed that the toast was the best they had ever eaten! Shelia Evans even asked for the recipe on behalf of her boyfriend. "It may take him several years to master this delicacy, but I am willing to wait," she explained.

This year's session, **Finding Your Storytelling Strengths**, was led by master storyteller Doug Lipman ([www.StoryDynamics.com](http://www.StoryDynamics.com)) from Longmeadow, Massachusetts. During the three day weekend he invited the tellers to think deeply about their creative process while learning more about the science behind the power of story

creating and storytelling.

Doug explained that storytelling allows for the transfer of neurological experience---neural coupling---from teller to listener. It is not a linear process but one rich in images. Stories are grown not assembled. During this central act of storytelling the listener creates internal images quickly, effortlessly, and uniquely. Furthermore, although stories are inherently participatory and diversity-friendly they are composed of images rather than words and the first job of the storyteller is to stimulate the listener to imagine.

But how?

Oral language broadcasts simultaneously on multiple channels: tone, pace, volume, posture, facial and body movements, and space.... and more! Remember the five senses? Doug presented a deeper look at sensory modalities which include time, touch, pain, wits, hunger and thirst, suffocation, acceleration (change of direction or speed), temperature, kinesthesia, and vestibular.

The tellers had an opportunity to put theory into practice when they shared a memory



Lona Bartlett

of a moment when they felt like their real self.

One of the core beliefs that Doug shared was the **Helping Listening Agreement**. The purpose of the agreement is to create a safe, non-judgmental, learning environment in which the teller maintains control of the session. He outlined and modeled the role of the Helping Listener, the role of the Teller, and what happens after listening.

Afterwards, the group practiced helpful listening and giving appreciations when they told their version of **David and the Spider**. Through it all, Doug continued to ask probing questions: What did you notice? What was easy? What was hard? Did your story change in any way because there was a listener present?

The group was able to jump right in telling this new story because of Doug's lesson on **BRIO--Brief Reminder of Image Order**. Each teller took a few minutes to use words, phrases, stick figures, pictures and/or diagrams to story board the spider story before sharing with a partner.

Later Doug encouraged the class to go deeper by stating the story's **MIT—Most Important Thing**. Questions to consider included the following: what do you love and value most about the story? What does it mean to you? What draws you to it? What effect would you like it to have on your listeners? What would you like to communicate?

He stressed that the MIT is the touchstone for all decisions made when crafting the story.

Doug modeled and taught concepts about safe learning environments and stressed the importance of listening. He encouraged storytellers to find people to listen to their stories

in person or via Zoom, record their stories, and perform new stories in smaller settings in order to absorb the non-verbal and verbal feedback. He stated he spends a small amount of time practicing alone, choosing instead to practice with listeners because stories need time to grow organically.

At the end of the Saturday afternoon session Lona Bartlett volunteered to be coached by Doug. He demonstrated and taught his principles and structure for coaching: believe in the storyteller's success, provide emotional safety, help free the creative intelligence of the storyteller, listening, appreciations, and suggestions.

After supper the participants were treated to another story and song by Doug followed by a question and answer session about performance, creativity, and preparation.

The Sunday morning session flew by as Doug shared marketing strategies which stressed celebrating what makes us unique and matching what gives us joy with people who are hungry for it. His take on marketing was a positive spin on sharing good news with those who want to hear it.

Amid cheers and a standing ovation, Doug concluded by thanking the group for our hard work and a delightful visit.

Special thanks to Dianne Hackworth and Terry Rollins for continuing to produce this lovely event and for inviting Doug Lipman for the 2019 retreat!

So perhaps it wasn't a retreat after all, but more of an advance! Thank you Doug!

*Vicky Town is an interactive storyteller, writer, and teaching artist who has been delighting audiences with her unique blend of physical comedy and love of language since 1988. She was the scholarship winner to attend this workshop. She may be reached at [www.vickytown.com](http://www.vickytown.com)*

### Winter Workshop Photos courtesy, the Editor



Vicky Town & Sheila Evans



Larry Pearlman & Zane Chait

## Workshop Photos Courtesy, the Editor



*Doug Lipman & Dianne Hackworth*



*Linda Goodman, Marva Moss, Cyndi Morgan*



*Joan Leotta & Lona Bartlett*



*Claude Kayler & Steve Tate*



*Marva Moss & Vicky Town*



*Becky Stone & Claude Kayler*



*Lower Left: Group  
Lower Right: Jon Sundell*



## JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

Editor, Sylvia Payne  
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NCSG Website:  
[www.ncstoryguild.org](http://www.ncstoryguild.org)

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

ISSN 1077-307X

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

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.

## Spring Cast of Characters

Sylvia Payne - Editor

Contributors, Azalea Bolton, Beth Carter, Linda Goodman, Catherine MacKenzie, David Joe Miller, Sam Pearsall, Brian Sturm, Vicky Town, and Deborah Winkler



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

**Connie Regan-Blake** held a CD release performance party on Sunday evening, March 10th, 7:30 pm at Isis Music Hall in Asheville, NC. Her new CD: Leap and Laugh! Tales of Adventure . . . Woodruff, SC's Stone Soup Storytelling Festival was held in Woodruff, SC on April 26-28. Congratulations to **Eric Bannan** and **Sarah Beth Nelson** as two of their New Voices for their festival . . . For the second spring, **Deborah Winkler** organized a storytelling event in NC's Southern Piedmont Area. Nature Stories were told while surrounded by nature at the Reedy Creek Nature Preserve and Nature Center in Charlotte, NC . . . **Denise McCormack** has booked several weekend dates next year in a Philadelphia Theater for her 2-hour one-woman show, a mix of personal and traditional/literary tales. This July Denise will be a showcase performer at NSN's July Summit & will host a swap there.

All sorrows can be born if you put them in a story or tell a story about them.  
— Iask Dinesen

## Hair Curlers & White Lightning

from the editor's desk

Recently I read a story written by a friend that struck a chord with me as she wrote about her childhood. It reminded me of the time I went with Mama to town so she could get a permanent wave. And no, they weren't called perms back then.



Photo courtesy, Jim Payne

At that time a permanent wave machine was used. Mama went to the back of the beauty shop and sat down in a chair with a bizarre looking circular metal frame hanging overhead. Swinging from this frame were dozens of black stretchy cords with thingies dangling on the ends. Those thingies were actually hot curlers used to roll up Mama's hair following a chemical application to her hair. It looked like something used to punish the Bride of Frankenstein!

I would have run screaming from the shop the first time I saw this, but what stopped me from it was seeing other women calmly sitting beneath these contraptions reading magazines. I figured the beautician had poured white lightning down their throats to get them good and drunk.

If this wasn't punishment enough, another step went with the process. Mama moved from this seat to another one. She sat quietly as a large metal helmet was pulled down over her head, to set the waves as her hair dried.

I swore my Mama would have to break my arm and a leg to get me beneath these two deadly contraptions. Not wanting a handicapped child, she never tried!

Submit articles for JTHT Fall 2019 issue to:

Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton, NC 28658.

E-mail: [sylpayne@bellsouth.net](mailto:sylpayne@bellsouth.net)

Deadline for Fall Issue: September 15, 2019.



## President's Message *by Charlie St Clair*

putting together this fabulous 20th Anniversary event.

Alan Hoal, our President Elect, and his intrepid band of volunteers; Willa Brigham, Dianne Hackworth, Ron Jones, Sarah Beth Nelson, Sam Pearsall, and Robin Kitson are putting together a festival to be held in November, 2019 in the town of Cary. Hopes are high that this will become a permanent annual event, especially since Alan has 18 year's experience running the Sounds of the Mountains Festival in Virginia.

But the Guild events are not only festivals. We also present two informative annual workshops, one in late January at Ft. Caswell in Oak Island on the coast and one in late April at Wildacres near Little Switzerland in the mountains. Thanks to Dianne

Hackworth and Terry Rollins for organizing these events for the past 20 years. This past January they booked Doug Lipman who presented a workshop about discovering your storytelling strengths and using them in your storytelling process. Eighteen Guild members attended.

On April 26 through April 28 our own Sherry Lovett led us in "Unleash Your Story" as we worked on crafting our stories and tailoring them to our audiences.

It has been an honor to be your President this past year. At our annual meeting and picnic this June I will turn over the gavel to Alan Hoal, who will continue to lead us toward the next 20 years (at least) of storytelling excellence.

*Charlie St Clair*

We had a wonderful 20th Anniversary Festival last November at the Hendersonville Library featuring Cynthia Brown, Marvin Cole, Sheila Brown Evans, Sandra Gudger, Dianne Hackworth, Gwenda Ledbetter and Sylvia Payne with special guests David Holt and Connie Regan-Blake. Fifteen additional guild members were showcased in the morning and music was provided by the Lillian Chase String Band and Cindy Carpenter and Elena Diana Miller. Becky Stone was awarded the People's Choice Award. Thanks to Elena Diana Miller and Janice Davin for

## Nasruddin Folktales by the Editor

When I began attending the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN, in the 1980's, I was fascinated when storyteller, Laura Sims told Nasruddin folktales, known as Sufi tales.

Nasruddin was an actual person according to: <http://muslimheritage.com/scholars/mulla-nasruddin-khodja>

He was considered to be educated, wise, and witty, living in the Muslim world during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century in what is now known as Turkey. This man is sometimes given the moniker - "Turkish Trickster."

Nasruddin stories began in the Turkish tradition and soon extended over the Ottoman provinces and gradually across the world. The charm of his humorous tales are that they teach a lesson and they're philosophical. A number of these tales are told as jokes. The jokes may be great as short fillers at the beginning or ending when a storyteller only has a couple minutes left on stage.

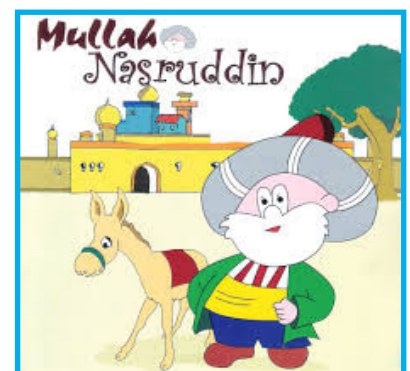
A google search will give several ways to spell "Nasruddin." On some sites his name is called Nasreddin Hodja. You can find some of the Hodja's stories as retold by D. L. Ashliman at:

<https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hodja.html>

Here are two additional sites:

<http://u.cs.biu.ac.il/~schiff/Net/front.html>

<https://nesaraaustralia.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/jokes-of-mulla-nasrudin.pdf>



# Storytelling in Asheville area is HUGE!

Here's how you can keep up with what's happening by David Joe Miller

Three years ago, I realized that spoken word shows in Asheville were simply not being publicized to the point of reaching a broader audience. The shows that I was producing, as well as others, attracted a good-sized audience but very few "new" listeners.

The local and regional publications were featuring music, theater and comedy but only the occasional small mention about storytelling or poetry events. The events appeared in the calendar sections of those publications, but not regularly. The need for another media outlet was evident. I created [www.storytellingcalendar.com](http://www.storytellingcalendar.com) to fill that need.

It's a very simple, calendar web site that lists spoken word events in the Asheville and Jonesborough areas. Recently we've been including Boone, NC, after Dr. Raymond Christian began producing a Story Slam in Boone at the Boone Saloon, every other month.

Asheville has never lacked in storytelling events or activities, just the opposite. Many events are occurring, and they are drawing sizeable audiences but still, many people have no idea where and when these events are taking place. The calendar

web site is a perfect way to find out about these wonderful storytelling and poetry events!

As stated on the web site, I offer this service free of charge to any organization or individual having a spoken word event in Asheville, Boone or Jonesborough... or the immediate areas of those cities. I then publicize and advertise the web site within the region and a bit beyond.

My contact information is on the site. Please visit and see what all is happening in our neck of the wood. Here is a short list of TEN ongoing storytelling shows in our region!

- The Moth Story Slam at The Mothlight, Asheville: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month.
- Synergy Story Slam at The Odditorium, Asheville: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month.
- Boone Saloon Story Slam at Boone Saloon in Boone, NC. About every other month TBA.
- Listen To This Storytelling at Asheville Community Theatre: Last Thursday of each month.



- Asheville Storytelling Circle Story Swap: 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month.
- Jonesborough Storytellers Guild Show at the ISC Theatre: Every Tuesday night.
- Spoken Word OPEN MIC in Jonesborough, Historic Eureka Inn: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month.
- Hendo Story Club Show in Hendersonville: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month.
- Second Sunday Storytelling Show in Hendersonville: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month.
- ReGeneration Story Slam of ETSU in Johnson City: 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month.

Visit [www.storytellingcalendar.com](http://www.storytellingcalendar.com) for more listings.

*David Joe is the former staff storyteller for the National Storytelling Association in Jonesborough, TN. In 1994 he created the Jonesborough Storytelling Guild. He produced Asheville's very first Spoken Word OPEN MIC in 2015. You may contact him at: [davidjoetells@yahoo.com](mailto:davidjoetells@yahoo.com)*

## What's the Story of Storytelling?

The "Little Red Riding Hood" folktale has inspired numerous adaptations over the years. Anthropologist Jamie Tehrani, who grew up in Dubai, heard this story as young child. Years later Tehrani, while studying rural tribal culture in Iran, discovered a generous

number of folktales which were inquisitively similar to the ones he heard as a child. Surprisingly his depth of research resolved years of debate concerning the origins of "Little Red Riding Hood."

Read about it in: **March 2019 Harper's Magazine issue:**

**The Story of Storytelling**  
**What the hidden relationships of ancient folktales reveal about their evolution—and our own**

By Ferris Jabr  
<https://harpers.org/archive/2019/03/the-story-of-storytelling/>

# Eyes of God

©Linda Goodman, September 29, 2018

*Matthew 25:40 (NIV)*

*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me."*

I Could not help but notice her when she came into the room. She was a thin older woman whose hair had been bleached blonde. What made me notice her, though, was her eye makeup. Her dark black eye liner had been applied heavily all the way around both her eyes. She looked like a raccoon. Her husband was with her, and they walked to the back of the room and took seats there.

Ever since my husband and I had moved to Richmond, Virginia in September, 1998, I had wanted to teach my *Storytelling In the Ministry* workshop at the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center (VUMAC) in Blackstone, Virginia. In 2000 I sent in a proposal to the powers that be, and my workshop was selected to be one of the classes available to students attending the February, 2000 Lay Speakers School. I was informed that at least six students must sign up for the class in order for it to be a part of the weekend. I asked that class membership be capped at twenty students. This was the number that would ensure that each student would be allowed enough time for some deep storytelling work during the three day workshop.

The twenty seats in my class filled up quickly. Those who did not get into the workshop were put on a waiting list, in case someone had to drop out. I was on cloud nine! My bucket list was one bucket shorter.

My class covered three types of stories: Bible stories; traditional stories with Biblical themes; and personal (testimony) stories. I had made my reputation as a skilled storyteller by writing and telling personal stories around the country. My stories were carefully crafted, and I told them straight from my heart. This was why so many had signed up for the workshop. Everybody had a personal story to tell, and I heard incredible stories that weekend; stories of miracles; stories of heartbreak; stories of joy.

The last person to share a story that weekend was the woman with the raccoon eyes. As she stood up in front of the class, I again wondered why she had applied her makeup in such a gaudy way. I just knew it was going to take away the power of her story. The other students would most likely be so distracted by her eye make-up that they would not be paying the needed amount of attention to the story.

The woman introduced herself to the class in a shy manner. She also introduced her husband and publicly thanked him for being her driver for the weekend. She had not driven since she had retired several years earlier from her job as an ER nurse. The story she planned to tell had occurred while she was still a nurse.

Her story began:

"I was just beginning my shift, when three people were rushed into the ER," she explained. "On the way to visiting their family, there was an accident. A thunderstorm had erupted suddenly and caused the man, who was driving, to run into a

tree. Upon reaching the ER the man who had been driving and the woman beside him (his wife) were pronounced dead. Their six month old baby was still living, but the doctors examining him were convinced that the baby would not live long."

*How horrible!* I said to myself. I leaned forward so that I could see her better. Her facial expressions and graceful movement drew me deeper into her story.

The woman continued:

"One of the interns did some quick research and was able to discover the names of the family members. Further research resulted in the names and phone number of the baby's grandparents. The doctor went into his office to call them. When he came back into the ER he told us that the grandparents were several hours away and could not possibly get to the hospital before the baby died. I asked him what I could do.

"The doctor looked at me and, with a grim smile, told me that the grandparents had made just one request. They wanted their grandchild to leave this world wrapped in love. They wanted someone to hold the baby until it passed. 'Nurse, do you think you can do that?' the doctor asked.

"I tried to explain to the doctor that if I held that child as he asked, I would be haunted by nightmares for years to come. I could not do as he had asked me because I was scared. Already I was feeling shivers creeping up and down my spine.

"The doctor said he understood, but would like me to give it some more thought. After all, the grandparents had



asked for just that one thing.

"I did think about it. I felt guilty. I felt helpless. But in the end, I agreed to hold the baby, as its grandparents had requested.

"I sat down in a rocking chair in a dimly lit room. The baby was brought to me and laid on my lap. I snuggled it gently in my arms. I ran my right hand through its soft, white hair. I waited.

"I held the child in my arms for what seemed like hours; but in fact, only a half hour had passed when I felt the baby shiver. I looked down into the child's face. ITS STEEL BLUE EYES WERE OPEN! THEY WERE LOOKING INTO MY EYES! They seemed so deep; so calm; so holy as the child's spirit left its body. I felt like I was looking into the eyes of God."

At this point, the story was

over. The woman raised her head from the invisible baby she had been tending and looked out into the audience with her steel blue eyes. That raccoon makeup made them look iridescent. They were so deep; so calm; so holy. I felt like I was looking into the eyes of God.

*Linda Goodman hails from the Virginia Appalachian Mountains, is an Author, Storyteller and Playwright. She told at the National Storytelling Festival for their evening Ghost Story Concert. One of her dreams, which came true! You may contact her at [happytales@aol.com](mailto:happytales@aol.com), or visit her website at <http://www.lindagoodmanstoryteller.com/>*

**I** recently saw an episode of "The Waltons." Grandma had suffered a stroke and was unable to speak and tell people what she was thinking. She tried to answer the phone when no one else was around and couldn't even say "Hello." She got so frustrated because she was unable to communicate that she started writing her thoughts down in a journal. Seeing this scenario being acted out on TV got me started thinking about how true that is in our lives as we come into contact with people each and every day. We see how they appear on the outside, but we don't really know what's going on in the inside. They could be facing a life-threatening disease, financial difficulties, marriage problems, and the list goes on and on. We can ask people how they are doing but still might not find out what's really going on in their lives.

Isn't that how it is with most of us? If people ask us how we're doing, we usually say: "Fine. How are you?" I tell

people all the time that when people ask me how I'm doing, I know deep down they don't really want to hear my problems and if I started complaining they would make sure they never asked me again. I hope, however, that I'm a good enough listener so that people feel like they can tell me their problems and know that I care. I think that's the biggest question when we interact with people. Do we act like we really care?

It's true too that we should never judge anyone by how they look on the outside. I've met people whose looks were almost perfect but inside they were rotten to the core. Then, I've met others who looked far from perfect but inside they had a heart that was pure gold. Which way would you prefer that people remember you? Even people that have physical beauty are not always gonna have those good looks. I've seen pictures recently of movie stars who died this past year and no matter how good they looked when they were young, those

## LOOKING AT THE INSIDE BY AZALEA R. BOLTON



pictures taken when they are older show that they were no longer beautiful or handsome as before.

I love to read books and I can often be found at the library looking for one that I haven't read before. Just like everyone else who is looking for a good book, the first thing I do is turn it over and read the back or the



inside cover where it tells you what the book is supposed to be about. That little preview of the book either sparks my interest to check that book out so I can read it, or it causes me to decide I don't want to read that one at all. Those little previews don't tell you everything; however, and sometimes when I start reading it I find out that preview fooled me completely. I guess that old saying is true then: "You can't judge a book by its cover." I suppose that's one reason too why it's important what kind of picture is put on the front of the book. It either catches your eye or it doesn't.

Over the years I've found the type of fiction that I like to read. I have certain authors that I love and keep my eyes open for their latest books. However, if I reach the point where I try a book by an unknown author and I don't like their work I don't want to read anything else they've

written. If an author is good enough, though, I might go back and re-read their books again. If I do that; however, it seems I always see something there that I didn't see the first time I read it.

The one book that I especially see something new in every single time I read it is the Bible. Even when I read the story of the birth of Christ back in December, it seems like I picked up on things I had never really seen there before. I suppose that is why we need to read the same passages over and over again - so we can try and comprehend all of the lessons there that God has in store for us.

Right before Christmas I went into The Christian Bookstore to choose a new study Bible for myself. The staff members there were very helpful about helping me choose exactly what I wanted. I hadn't really even thought about what color I wanted it to be on the outside until they showed me what

colors were available. I could have chosen one that was pink and tan on the outside, but I decided that was not for me. I ended up choosing just plain old black. That plain old black Bible, though, is another good example of not being able to judge a book by its cover. The knowledge found within that book cannot be equaled by any other book that has ever been written. The stories found there are as exciting as any novel that you would want to read. The heroes there are sometimes almost bigger than life, but are also just as flawed as we are today.

During this coming year I'm going to try and be better about not judging a book by its cover and not judging others by how they look or how they're dressed. What about you?

*Azalea R. Bolton is a resident of Richmond County, member of the N.C. Storytelling Guild, and member of the Richmond and Anson County Historical Societies. You may contact her at: [abolton10@carolina.rr.com](mailto:abolton10@carolina.rr.com).*

## How Much Description is Too Much?

by Brian Sturm



- though suggestions for excellence abound - and many of those are broken for artistic effect or by accident. One of the struggles all storytellers face is how much description to offer listeners? Some tellers find a natural balance (enough but not too much) or as Goldilocks would say, "they get it 'just right.'" Others puzzle it through and worry about whether they are burdening their listeners with descriptive elements or leaving them empty-headed and unable to visualize the settings and characters in the story.

**Values of Description:**  
The principle value of

**S**torytelling is an art! As such, individual differences in

performance styles are as myriad as the performers themselves. Rules are few

description is that it enables listeners to picture the details of the story and, thereby, become more deeply immersed in the narrative world the storyteller is trying to create. These descriptive details appeal to the listeners' senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) and thereby bring to life, or make more immediate and present, the world of the story. As the aphorism claims, "seeing is believing," and this holds true for story listeners as well; the better they can visualize the heard story, the more apt they are to "willingly suspend their disbelief" (to paraphrase Coleridge) and allow the fantasy in the stories to engage them fully. There is a realism to the lived experience of immersion in story that supports this sense of belief in the story world (Sturm, 2000).

Description plays a role in understanding figurative language in stories. Metaphors and similes rely on the juxtaposition of two different frames of reference, what Arthur Koestler calls "bisociation" (Koestler, 1969). Just as two planes in a three-dimensional graph intersect, so, too, does the creative metaphor "work" at this confluence. For example, the wonderful second line of "The Highwayman" poem by Alfred Noyes claims, "the moon was a ghostly galleon, tossed upon cloudy seas." This vivid metaphor requires readers to superimpose their understanding and associations of the moon with those of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish sailing ship. Without the added description following the comma, readers might be confused by this metaphor, not know how to connect these images; the moon is "bright," "round," and

"ever changing," but none of these concepts makes much sense when applied to a galleon. The extra description "tossed upon cloudy seas," shows the needed connection: the moon is like a galleon as it appears to move through the clouds.

Description is valuable because it helps listeners connect to unusual settings,



characters different from themselves, and concepts that are foreign. Anything unfamiliar in a story becomes less so as it is described, in part because the added detail allows listeners to form connections to their own experience and their personal image-banks. Listeners essentially say, "Oh that unknown thing/experience is like this known thing/experience, so I can understand it." Cooney et al. (2017) speak of a "novelty penalty." In a series of studies, they explored whether people enjoyed hearing new stories or familiar ones, expecting that novelty would be preferred. They found that people preferred familiar stories (not ones they had heard before but ones about experiences like their own) because the cognitive effort to make sense of the stories was lower. They could fill in information gaps with their own knowledge and prior experiences, and these memories resurrected the associated emotions, filling the listening experience with emotive resonance. The

familiar stories also established bonds of common experience between tellers and listeners, one of the primary reasons we share tales in the first place, and they allowed listeners to compare their reactions to their own experiences to those of the storyteller and/or story characters. Too much novelty is difficult to process; sensory description increases the likelihood that listeners will find something familiar in that novelty.

Even if the setting is familiar, description also enables listeners to comprehend where the story characters are and how they are *interacting* with their environment. The best way to share descriptive, environmental details is to have your story characters interact with them and describe that interaction: describe important elements of the forest as characters collect wood for their evening fire, describe the castle wall as characters figure out how to climb it, etc.

Finally, description helps the storyteller visualize the intricacies of the setting and differentiate between story characters. In this way, it can serve as a memory device, helping solidify and unify the mind's storyboard of images. Details also help develop the myriad nuances of performance to our tellings: gestures, facial expressions, stance, character voices, etc. These performative elements are reliant on detailed examination and understanding of story settings, characters, and plots. While details may facilitate our process, we must remember that they can also derail the processes of our listeners, and our listeners' needs surpass ours. We must be willing to, as the writers'

community often says, “slay our darlings” in the interest of our audience’s needs.

### **Drawbacks of Description:**

The primary drawback of description is that it can be overused to the point that listeners have less creative space in which to form their own visualizations. The argument commonly made against television (versus reading) is that the images provided by the TV dissuade viewers from fabricating their own from their imaginations; what we are given, we don’t need to create. A story with lots of descriptive detail, then, may reduce the imaginative effort of the listener and, thereby, possibly decrease their imaginative involvement in the tale. Kuyvenhoven (2009) speaks of what listeners bring to story in her storytelling pedagogy book. She mentions a classroom performance of the African story of Abiyoyo and the subsequent discussion with the child listeners about their own images of the giant. She writes:

They [the children] filled in their pictures of the giant on the basis of just two details from Linda [the teller]: he was “bigger than a mountain” and his “feet could make lakes.” From these two starting points, the giant sprang to full life in each child’s storyworld.... [The children’s descriptions were] richly detailed and joyfully creative.... To be sure, all the children’s descriptions of the giant were consistent with the details Linda gave about his size, character, and actions. The

outline of story events was common across variations. But the details of appearance and movement were as varied as the students in the room (139-40).

Description also slows the narrative down, in that the action must stop while the description is given. Novice writers and storytellers often insert descriptive segments into the most intense action scenes in their stories: chase scenes, fight scenes, etc. We should use extra caution (and err on the side of minimalism) when trying to merge description and highly volatile action sequences. The person being chased by a giant most likely won’t notice



the sunset or the birds chirping or the beautiful reflection in the puddle underfoot, unless there’s an escape value in noticing it; they don’t have time, and they are focused on other things.

On the other hand, generic descriptions hold little value compared with more precise ones. “It was a nice day in the forest,” may provoke some visualizations, but “the morning sunlight sent beams of light dappling over the mossy ground,” has much more evocative potential. The latter helps us see a specific scene more clearly. Description is most valuable when it is focused and *useful* to the characters in the story; if your characters need the descriptive information, so, most likely, do your listeners. In short, spend time describing things that are *important* for your listeners to know, not

just extraneous details, and make sure you are able to answer the question, “Why is this description important for this particular story?” Perhaps it develops an important character trait or showcases a character arc. It may help visualize an important setting or help listeners transition between scenes. If the description is not overly important to the story, it is probably best left unsaid.

### **Conundrum:**

The storyteller, then, has a dilemma. Too much description may hamper the plot, bog the tale down, and decrease the imaginative “work” of the listeners. Alternately, too little description may leave the listeners struggling to visualize, confused by figurative language, and alienated from novel settings or concepts. How do we strike the right balance?

First, we must trust our listeners to “get it,” if we provide the *relevant* descriptive details (i.e., what they *need* to know); less is often more. If we provide just enough of the right details, listeners will revel in the chance to fill in the details we have not provided. We need to believe in their ability to create their own setting, building on the few details we offer them because it is usually NOT important that listeners see exactly what we see as tellers; close is good enough, and better if you want them imagining.

Second, we need to decide not only *what* details to offer, but *when* to offer them. Dumping the setting description at the beginning of the story quickly becomes unwieldy. A complete physical overview of your character when she first appears in your story will also bore your listeners. Your audience needs to hear

descriptive details *when they are necessary for understanding or visualizing*, and not all at once. Figure out what they need to know and then decide when they need to know it. This is a uniquely individual and artistic decision. Two tellers will structure the same story differently depending on what they want to accomplish.

Third, with the minimalist approach, we should monitor carefully the feedback we get from our audiences to know when to add further detail (the puzzled expression, the tilted head and furrowed brow, the raised eyebrow and the turn toward a neighbor, or the child who blurts out, "I don't get it."). If you see the details in your mind during rehearsal, you can easily improvise them during performance. In short, *you* must know all the details, but you only *share* the relevant ones.

Finally, we should organize our descriptions so that they make logical sense. Often this follows the adage, "give the big picture first, then zoom in on the details." This enables listeners to place relevant details into an existing larger framework, and it's an effective way to draw attention to important details; if you take the time to zoom your audience's attention in, it *must* be important.

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

## St. Simons' Storytelling Festival by Catherine Mackenzie

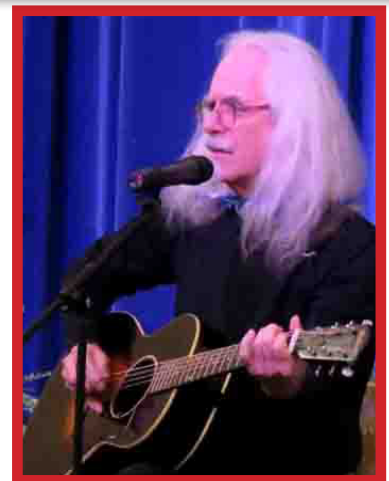
As soon as I saw the advertisement for the St. Simons' Storytelling Festival, I knew I wanted to go. First was the venue: Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island in Georgia is a beautiful Methodist church camp, serving the community since 1950, and perfect for a festival. The 233 motel rooms right on the property easily accommodated the 240 guests. We were fed handsomely in the large dining hall where we could mingle with folks from 14 states.

Then there were the tellers. Three of my favorites: Donald Davis, Bil Lepp and Michael Reno Harrell, as well as Regi Carpenter who I was looking

forward to meeting, and Andy Offut Irwin as MC.

And finally there was the date, February 16-18, 2019... the weekend before my 47<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! Then came my total knee replacement scheduled for Jan 8, 5 weeks before the event. Should I cancel? I'm so glad I resisted that temptation. The festival, coordinated by Donna Chisholm and Andy Offut Irwin, was fantastic.

The weekend started with a workshop by Regi Carpenter titled, "Have you ever done something stupid?" What a perfect story starter, but unfortunately we didn't arrive in time to take part.



*Michael Reno Harrell  
Photo courtesy Stephanie Sims.*

The evening concert featured all four tellers. Bil Lepp with his casual "hands in his pocket, ball cap, t-shirt and jeans persona" had us in stitches. Regi Carpenter was a perfect counterpoint with



Audience. Photo courtesy Stephanie Sims.

her soft-spoken poignant story of growing up a "Carpenter Kid." Donald Davis apologized for a cold he'd picked up visiting a school. He was anxious to get better, both for us and for his upcoming wedding on Tuesday! We were treated to a peak at his world, presented in his inimitable style. Michael Reno Harrell entertained us with story and song. It was fun to see how the four tellers and Andy interacted. It was obvious they enjoyed each other with the casual bantering. One thing I always admire in a storyteller is the ability to incorporate bits and pieces from the previous tellers stories, and all four were masters at that skill.

Donald Davis preached on the Cain and Abel story at the Sunday morning worship service, relating how familiar

the story of sibling jealousy is to each of us who has a brother or sister, and how sometimes absence makes us appreciate our tormenter. After a short break, Bil and Regi told stories for an hour each.

After lunch, eight tellers took advantage of the open mike to present stories. I'm sure it was wonderful, but I needed to ice my knee! It's always hard to fit everything that's available into one's available time.

There were several options to choose from after that. Don and I opted to take an historic trolley tour of St. Simons Island to explore the site of Fort Frederika as well as Christ Church and cemetery, which has been offering continuous worship service since 1736. Consequently we missed the workshop titled, "Loop-dee-

loo, skippy-stone, straight line storytelling," by Bil and Andy. Other choices for that time were "Stretch and Receive" relaxing exercises with Christina Godwin and a Guided Beach Walk with Catherine Ridley.

We reassembled in the auditorium to listen to Donald and Michael as they told stories for an hour each in the afternoon, and all four tellers shared the stage after dinner. Monday morning, Michael told a hilarious story about a high school senior class production of the Nativity where a town drunk was "saved." The weekend ended with Andy whistling us out. What talent all these tellers have.

The fifth annual St. Simons' Storytelling Festival will be held from February 14-16, 2020. Bil Lepp and Donald Davis will be returning, joined by Sheila Jordan (who will highlight the Gullah Geechee community) and Ann Rutherford. The venue, the tellers, and the Valentine's Day date make this a "not-to-be-missed event." Check the "Epworth by the Sea" website for this and other events held there.

*Catherine MacKenzie 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 may be contacted at: [cmmackenzie50@gmail.com](mailto:cmmackenzie50@gmail.com)*



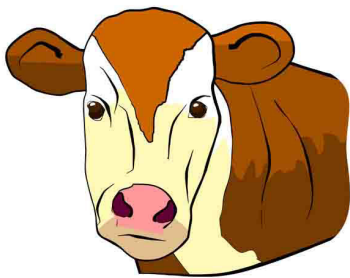
## MY GRANDFATHER TALKED TO WARTS BY BETH CARTER

As a child I was fortunate to grow up spending a lot of time with my grandparents. I enjoyed hours of listening to stories of their life together. My grandmother was an extremely kind and open person and took pleasure in sharing the

history of her family with me, but my grandfather was a different sort. He was not overly friendly, and kind was a stretch. He spent the hours from 5 am until 5 pm working hard and did not have the patience or time to indulge me in storytelling. He was a man of

few words and, he primarily spoke to me with grunts or comments to "pipe down" as he watched tv from his reclined position on the couch. When he was home, kids were to be seen and not heard.

My grandfather was a tiny man in stature no taller than 5 foot 5 but his presence demanded respect. He possessed a booming voice which was known to frighten young and old alike. When he turned 40 all the hard work paid off and he was able to purchase an old dairy farm out in the country. During our visits, we often went with him to the farm and helped him out with the animals, the



garden, and other chores. He drove an old rickety green dodge pickup truck with very poor suspension. The 12 miles to the farm felt more like a roller coaster ride than a Sunday drive. One on occasion my sister and I were helping him move some cows and one got stuck in the gate. Our grandfather picked up a discarded chain laying in the dirt and wrapped it around the cow's neck then directed us to push the cow's rump as he pulled. I always believed he loved his cows more than people and this confirmed my thoughts. My sister and I were just 2 elementary aged city girls but out of respect and a little fear, we followed his instructions. After several

pushes and pulls, the cow's body popped from its trap in the gate leaving the old cow happy and free. As we excitedly turned to our grandfather for his expected praise, we saw instead on his face pain and surprise. Our grandfather first quickly removed his left leather glove. He then slowly and carefully removed the right. To our horror, his hand was covered in blood and his index finger was severed above the knuckle. I realized as he held the chain, he must have unconsciously looped his finger through one of the links. When the cow lunged forward his finger was pinched off. He grabbed a dirty cloth from the bed of the truck and wrapped up his injured finger. The 3 of us flew that old Dodge back home where our grandmother doctored him up. I often wondered what happened to the discarded glove with the severed digit still inside.

One Sunday afternoon when I was about 10 years old, he not only scared but surprised me when he called me by name to follow him outside into the yard. My mind raced to recall what horrible thing I must have done to have him single me out from my other cousins. Up to this time, I don't think I ever heard him refer to any of us by our given name. If one of us did something that required his attention it was usually bad, and we all were dealt with as one. Upon hearing my name, I turned to the others with an expression of confusion and concern on my face. They all shook their heads "no" in response indicating their confusion as well. When we reached the coolness of the afternoon air, he directed me to sit under the vine-covered arbor. He pointed his nub at

me, "take off your shoes" he instructed. He inspected my feet and then "show me your hands" he growled. "I want to take a look at your warts. I heard you've had em a while, must be pretty bothersome". All I could do was nod my head in silence. My grandfather then reached beside me to the ground and picked up a broken stick fallen from a nearby tree. He began waving the stick over my hands and bare feet mumbling some gibberish I could not understand. He kept his eyes closed and this process continued for 5 or so minutes before he abruptly stopped. "Put them shoes back on and let me know when them warts fall off," as he walked back into the house. Before I could get my shoes on my cousins flew out the other door and ran to my side. "Are you ok?" they all questioned. "We saw Moody pick up that stick and we all about fainted," said my little sister. "What did that crazy man do to you?" I explained in as much detail as I could remember the sequence of events. They all stared in awe and wonder and looked at my hands. "Are they gonna fall off right now?" asked my cousin Sidney. "I don't know!" I replied, "he said for me to let him know when they were gone. "Were you scared?" came next. I thought about it for a minute and replied, "once I realized I wasn't gonna get a whippin I was fine. When he mumbled the weird words quietly, I felt a little freaked out, but I wasn't scared."

We all re-entered the house together in shock.

Our grandmother smiled sweetly to each of us and we wandered down the hall to the den. We sat there for hours discussing if he had lost his mind or become some kind of voodoo priest. Our imaginations went wild with the possibilities.

I made my sister promise not to tell our parents what happened that evening, I was kind of worried they would think Moody had gone off the deep end. In my heart, I really believed he could make the warts disappear.

I had suffered with seed warts for a long time. They were located on each side of each of my 20 digits and caused me much physical and emotional pain. During that time my mom had tried every

remedy available to remove them. The doctor explained to her it was just a virus that had to run its course but that didn't make me feel any better. I was so embarrassed that I often wore gloves and never went barefoot. Kids at school were relentless with their laughs and comments about my supposed lack of personal hygiene.

Exactly 2 weeks from the day my grandfather spoke to my warts I woke up wart free. Elated I ran all through the house waving my hands and kicking up my feet for all to see. I then explained to my parents what had happened during our visit. "Well I'll be," responded my dad. "I always heard folks say daddy could talk off warts, but I never believed em." "I don't care how he did it, but

it worked, and I have gotta call him and thank him for healing me!" Daddy dialed the number for me, and I waited in excitement for him to answer. As soon as I heard his voice I shouted, "thanks! thanks! thanks! Moody the warts are gone!" All I heard in reply was "good" and then a dial tone. I shook my head in amazement and placed the phone on the receiver and the topic was never discussed again.

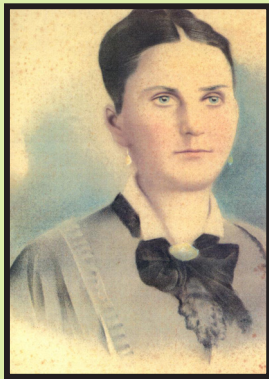
*Beth Carter is a public school Speech Language Pathologist, providing services for students from 3-22 years of age. She frequently shares her passion for oral storytelling with them. Beth has authored two children's books entitled, The Lonely Little Sea Shell and The Promise of the Buckeye. She may be contacted at: [bethcarter1958@yahoo.com](mailto:bethcarter1958@yahoo.com)*

## What's Happening with Our Storytellers

### TRAVELING TO IRELAND

Connie Regan-Blake spent 10 days on tour in Ireland this past winter. It was a delight for her to be a featured storyteller at the 7th Annual Sneem International Storytelling & Folklore Festival, held in the Ring of Kerry in County Kerry, south-western Ireland. Following this event famed Irish storyteller, Liz Weir hosted Connie for a performance and workshop in Belfast, Ireland.

Connie has a special connection to Ireland. Pictured here is her great grandmother, Rosie



O'Donnell Daniel, who was born on a ship coming to America from Ireland. Needless to say, Connie was thrilled to return to her mother country.

### ON STAGE - BLACK MOUNTAIN

Recently several NCSG storytellers, Kyra Freeman, Steve Tate, and Christine Westfeldt, among others, took a storytelling workshop led by master storyteller, Connie Regan-Blake. At end of the session she hosted her annual, *A Slice of Life: An Evening of Stories* where these folks performed on stage during an enchanting evening of storytelling. This exciting event took place at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, nestled in the picturesque mountains near Asheville.



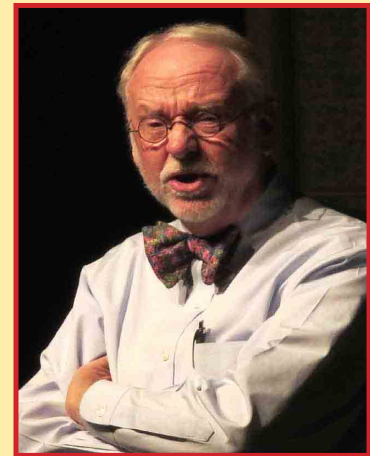
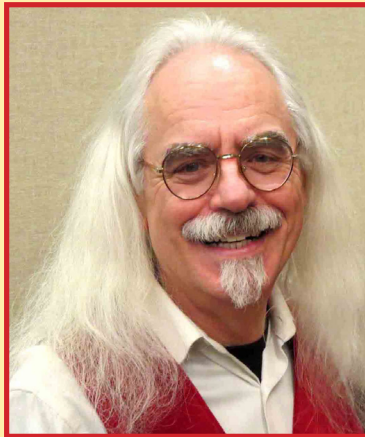
## Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts

<https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>

A few years ago this website was mentioned in the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers*. It's important to mention this site again, especially for some of you who weren't yet Guild members. Also for any storyteller wanting to locate folktales you haven't been able to find. This site may also be helpful for locating several versions of a particular tale.



# Old North State Storytelling Festival



## Featured Tellers: Michael Reno Harrell, Donna Washington, & Donald Davis

Join fellow storytelling gatherers, listeners, and tellers in Cary, North Carolina this November!

The North Carolina Storytelling Guild in partnership with the Town of Cary presents the Old North State Storytelling Festival on November 1-2, 2019.

Nationally known tellers, Donald Davis, Donna Washington, and Michael Reno Harrell are

headlining the festival.

All Festival activities except workshops will be located within the Cary Theater at 122 East Chatham Street, in Cary. Workshop activities will be located within the Page-Walker Arts and History Center at 119 Ambassador Loop, not far from the Festival location.

Details later. <http://ncstoryguild.org/>

## Roadhouse Storytellers® - An Accidental Success Story by Sam Pearsall



Andy Offutt Erwin

Wednesday night March 20th, Roadhouse Storytellers celebrated its second birthday while every member of the audience held their sides to avoid splitting with laughter! Here's how that came to be...

I am always looking for a place to tell my stories. And as my stories are aimed

mainly at adults, that turns out to be a problem. Adult venues are hard to find, especially for new tellers. Annual festivals may not feature more than a handful of tellers, most of whom have been on the festival circuit for decades. Bar-based venues can be noisy and expensive (high cover charges), and audience expectations may

run more toward stand-up comedy and x-rated material.

Then one night at the Raleigh Drum Circle, one of my fellow drummers told me she had heard of a storytelling event held periodically at the Pittsboro Roadhouse in downtown Pittsboro, NC. So, I called Greg Lewis, the manager, and asked

if I could tell at his event. He had no idea what I was talking about. There was no storytelling series at the Roadhouse after all. I asked if he would like to consider starting one, and made an appointment to drive over the next week. We decided to give it a try, although neither of us had any experience with this sort of thing. The



Sam Pearsall



Roadhouse had Wednesday nights free. Greg reckoned this was a chance to populate his dining room on a night that normally gets little business. Greg agreed to set up the back-dining room so customers could eat their dinners and patronize the bar while story tellers held the stage. We agreed that he would not charge cover for these events, since we had no idea if anyone would pay it. That meant we would not be able to pay the tellers anything except for their share of the tip bucket, out of which neither he nor I would take a share. Greg agreed to comp me and the tellers for our dinners.

I had no idea how to proceed, but I had told stories at both the Raleigh Front Porch story telling series produced by Gale Buck and the Bynum Front Porch series produced by Cindy Raxter, so I decided to emulate their examples. I started by inviting tellers I had watched at these venues, including of course Gale and Cindy, and then I invited other tellers I saw at other venues. Typically, five tellers perform at each concert. Each has approximately 20 minutes, but I'm not strict. Lately, we've had a couple of one-person shows (Alan Hoal, Andy Offutt Irwin) and two more are in the works (Cindy Raxter, me).

Now, a little over two years later, Roadhouse Storytellers® is a growing success. It is the registered trademark of a very successful storytelling series that has featured 43 tellers from four states in 11 shows. We have performances five or six times per year. The tip bucket routinely yields about \$50 per performer, and Greg regularly gets 40-70 extra Wednesday night patrons

who buy dinners and drinks. Beginning about a year ago, a volunteer videographer has been recording all performances, and Roadhouse Storytellers has its own web page ([samstories.org/roadhouse-storytellers/](http://samstories.org/roadhouse-storytellers/)), its own Face Book page ([www.facebook.com/RoadhouseStorytellers/](http://www.facebook.com/RoadhouseStorytellers/)), and its own YouTube Channel ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCXwuHOyo2IAIzDi-VhZlxcg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXwuHOyo2IAIzDi-VhZlxcg)).

Eventually, folks began calling and writing to ask if they could tell at the Pittsboro Roadhouse. Folks who have told there are beginning to ask when they can come back. We've booked performances through September 2019, and more than a dozen tellers are on the list waiting to be booked for dates after that. Meanwhile, I've learned a little bit about how to publicize events on Face Book, in local papers, and on places like Chatham Arts Council.

Starting out with the need to find a reliable venue and dependable audience for adult storytelling, we ended up with something major – something much bigger than I wanted or planned for. Sometimes this feels like I've got a tiger by the tail. Sometimes it feels like too much work. But over the last two years, something else has happened. As the audiences have grown, and as folks tend to come back for second and third visits, people are arriving earlier and staying later, circulating among the tables and greeting each other again after a time apart. Tellers who come in from out of town often stay in my guest room or with someone local. There is a community of storytellers and story listeners growing up at the Pittsboro Roadhouse. As this growth continues and as people come

to know each other and love the event more and more, we may lash on more performances and recruit more tellers, so if you're interested, just get in touch with me!

On March 20th, Andy Offutt Irwin helped us celebrate our 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday with a poignant, hilarious one-man show featuring two great story trees: "Electric Football" and "Ike's Sleigh." Several folks remarked that, as he told each of these long stories, he passed by many branches where whole universes of more stories clearly waited to be explored. Andy said, perhaps a dozen times, "But that's another story." Of course! Every story leads to more stories.

John Crowley, the author of *Little Big*, once wrote that, with every good story, "the further in you go, the bigger it gets." This has become the perfect descriptor of our experience at the Roadhouse community, and we have adopted it as the motto of the Roadhouse Storytellers series.

Come to tell and to listen!

*Storyteller Sam Pearsall, a retired ecologist, is an active member of the Guild. He is the producer of Roadhouse Storytellers™ at the renowned Pittsboro Roadhouse in downtown Pittsboro. He may be contacted at: [samlindapearsall@gmail.com](mailto:samlindapearsall@gmail.com)*

*Most true happiness comes  
from one's inner life,  
from the disposition  
of the mind and soul.  
Admittedly, a good inner life  
is difficult to achieve,  
especially in these trying times.  
It takes reflection and  
contemplation and  
self-discipline.*

William L. Shirer

# My Animated Muse Encounter

by Jim Payne

As has happened many times over the years, several Storytelling Guilders gathered at the Little Switzerland Cafe. We arrived here after spending the weekend at Wildacres in suspended animation. Animation from the 'Real World' was held at bay as we animated our Wildacres minds and hearts led by our Chief Animator, Sherry Lovett. Stories – we're storytellers after all – birthed by our different muses emerged from struggles and light, to become new truths we nudged into the world. Cerebral, muscle and bone exercises helped us gather, clarify, and expand our story lines, characters, and messages.

This work, this toil and effort happens each year during the Guild's Spring Workshop weekend at Wildacres Conference Center. It happens in, and because of, the warm embrace of the North Carolina mountains near Little Switzerland. It happens in large part because, we workshop attendees – animators of lore – have answered the siren call of the Hills. When you hear it, will you also come to Wildacres and work with your muse?

*Jim Payne is a writer, a poet, and serves on the NCSG Board as Finance Chair. He photographed a number of photos during this retreat. You may contact him at: [jpaynehorizon@gmail.com](mailto:jpaynehorizon@gmail.com)*



**Retreat Photos  
At Right -  
Sherry Lovett,  
Workshop Leader**





## Events Sponsored by NCSG

### November 2019

#### November 1-2: *Old North State*

**Storytelling Festival.** The North Carolina Storytelling Guild in partnership with the Town of Cary presents the Old North State Storytelling Festival on November 1st and 2nd. Featured tellers will be Donald Davis, Michael Reno Harrell, & Donald Davis. <http://ncstoryguild.org/events.html>

### Other Events

#### May 2019

**May 7-11: Barbara McBride-Smith** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

**May 8: Spoken Word Open Mic** at Historic Eureka Inn, downtown, 127 W. Main St. Jonesborough, TN. 2nd Wednesday of each month. Sign up at 6:30 for the 7pm show! Continuing every 2nd Wednesday through December. More information at <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com> or [davidjoetells@gmail.com](mailto:davidjoetells@gmail.com)

**May 14-18: Milbre Burch** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

**May 17: Storyteller Tim Lowry** to perform at the Henry Timrod Library, 217 Central Avenue, Summerville, SC. Contact: <http://thetimrodlibrary.org> or 843.871.4600.

**May 17-18: Shoals Front Porch Storytelling Festival.** The Storyteller Showcase performers will Donald Davis, Dolores Hydock, Bil Lepp, and Josh Goforth. Also Featuring: Gee's Bend Quilters, Sean of the South (Sean Dietrich), FireKid (Dillon Hodges and Heidi Feek). Shoals Community Theatre, 123 N Seminary St, Florence, Alabama. Tickets go on sale January 1, 2019. <http://www.shoalsstorytelling.com> or 256.760.6381.

**May 18: Storytelling, Mother Earth – Circles of Caring.** Featuring Southern Piedmont storytellers from the North Carolina Storytelling Guild. Saturday at 2pm. Reedy Creek Nature Center, 2900 Rocky River Road, Charlotte, NC. Nature Center contact: 980-314-1119. NCSG contact: Deborah Winkler at [winklerdeborah@yahoo.com](mailto:winklerdeborah@yahoo.com)

[www.thecentral.com](http://www.thecentral.com) or 509.460.9279.

### June 2019

**June 6: Hendo Story Club Open Mic.** A new show just opened its doors in March 2019. An exciting venue which features storytellers and musicians, and showcases our storytellers. An open mic that will happen on the first Thursday of each month, at 7:00pm. Theme: "HOME RUN." The wind-up. The pitch. The satisfying crack of connection and the roar of the crowd. Bring us stories of your shining moments in time. Throw your name in the hat for a chance to tell your story to relate to this theme. Cost: \$10 at the door. The Center of Art & Inspiration, 125 S. Main Street, Hendersonville, NC. Contact [info@thecentral.com](mailto:info@thecentral.com) or 828.697.8547.

**June 7-9: Ocracoke Festival.** This celebration features musicians, storytellers, artisans, and characters of Ocracoke Island and beyond who come together for one incredible weekend of performances and fun! Ocracoke Festival is recognized throughout our region as an extraordinary event in a one-of-a-kind setting. <https://www.ocracokealive.org/general-info-and-tickets.html>

**June 9: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays @ The Center.** Performance by Michael Reno Harrell. One of a series as a professional storyteller takes you on a journey through time, evoking history, memory, and connection. Lose yourself in the art of storytelling and accompanying music. Each month a different storyteller brings a unique program with storytelling and music. Time: 3pm. Price: \$15. The Center for Art & Inspiration, 125 S. Main Street, Hendersonville, NC. Contact: 828.697.8547. Tickets: [www.thecenterai.com](http://www.thecenterai.com)

**June 12: Spoken Word Open Mic** at Historic Eureka Inn, downtown, 127 W. Main St. Jonesborough, TN. 2nd Wednesday of each month. Sign up at 6:30 for the 7pm show! Continuing every 2nd Wednesday through December. More information at <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com> or [davidjoetells@gmail.com](mailto:davidjoetells@gmail.com)

**June 18-22: Tim Lowry** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

### July 2019

**July 4: Hendo Story Club Open Mic.** An exciting venue which features storytellers and musicians, and showcases our storytellers. An open mic that will happen on the first Thursday of each month, at 7:00pm. Theme: "SCANDAL." One of the best ways to understand a particular culture is to look at what people get upset

about. What experiences have you had with scandal? Throw your name in the hat for a chance to tell your story to relate to this theme. Cost: \$10 at the door. The Center of Art & Inspiration, 125 S. Main Street, Hendersonville, NC. Contact [info@thecentral.com](mailto:info@thecentral.com) or 828.697.8547.

**July 10: Spoken Word Open Mic** at Historic Eureka Inn, downtown, 127 W. Main St. Jonesborough, TN. 2nd Wednesday of each month. Sign up at 6:30 for the 7pm show! Continuing every 2nd Wednesday through December. More information at <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com> or [davidjoetells@gmail.com](mailto:davidjoetells@gmail.com)

**July 14: 2nd Sundays @ The Center. Marvin Cole performs as Mark Twain.** One of a series as a professional storyteller taking you on a journey through time, evoking history, memory, and connection. Lose yourself in the art of storytelling and accompanying music. Each month a different storyteller brings a unique program with storytelling and music. Time: 3pm. Price: \$15. The Center for Art & Inspiration, 125 S. Main Street, Hendersonville, NC. Contact: 828.697.8547. Tickets: [www.thecenterai.com](http://www.thecenterai.com)

**July 14-20: Summer Storytelling Retreat & Adventure, with Connie Regan-Blake.** Come to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville for 7 days of story-listening & story-telling along with coaching, community & supportive exploration. This 14th annual workshop welcomes all levels of expertise, from beginner to experienced teller. Participants discover ways of being in the world that nurture your creative flow while developing skills to:

- Find, create, learn, and polish stories
- Effectively integrate voice with image, gesture, and emotion
- Embody a story and break free of memorization
- Engage in companion listening and learn to give self and partner appreciations
- Activate your body as a key component of a well-told tale
- Use your voice, breath, and silence to support the audience's listening journey

<https://storywindow.com/calendar/> or 828-258-1113.

**July 16-20: Andy Offut Irwin** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

**July 25-28: National Storytelling Network Summit** will be held in the San Francisco

Bay area, in Fremont, CA. <https://storynet.org/nsnevents/conference/>

### August 2019

**August 1: Hendo Story Club Open Mic.** An exciting venue which features storytellers and musicians, and showcases our storytellers. An open mic that will happen on the first Thursday of each month, at 7:00pm. Theme: "TRIUMPH." Play the theme of Chariots of Fire for these stories. You worked for it, you trained for it, you suffered for it – or maybe you did none of the above to get there. What makes a triumph a triumph? Throw your name in the hat for a chance to tell your story to relate to this theme. Cost: \$10 at the door. The Center of Art & Inspiration, 125 S. Main Street, Hendersonville, NC. Contact [info@thecentral.com](mailto:info@thecentral.com) or 828.697.8547.

**August 13-17: Connie Regan-Blake** will be Teller in Residence at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

**August 14: Spoken Word Open Mic** at Historic Eureka Inn, downtown, 127 W. Main St. Jonesborough, TN. 2nd Wednesday of each month. Sign up at 6:30 for the 7pm show! Continuing every 2nd Wednesday through December. More information at <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com> or [davidjoetells@yahoo.com](mailto:davidjoetells@yahoo.com)

**August 20-24: David Holt** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

### September 2019

**September 11: Spoken Word Open Mic** at Historic Eureka Inn, downtown, 127 W.

Main St. Jonesborough, TN. 2nd Wednesday of each month. Sign up at 6:30 for the 7pm show! Continuing every 2nd Wednesday through December. More information at <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com> or [davidjoetells@gmail.com](mailto:davidjoetells@gmail.com)

**September 30-October 3: Donald Davis** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

### October 2019

**October 4-6: National Storytelling Festival.** Some featured tellers will be Donald Davis, Josh Goforth, Andy Offutt Irwin, Bil Lepp, Rev. Robert Jones, Barbara McBride Smith and others. Downtown Historic Jonesborough, TN. <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

[storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/](https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/)

**October 9: Spoken Word Open Mic** at Historic Eureka Inn, downtown, 127 W. Main St. Jonesborough, TN. 2nd Wednesday of each month. Sign up at 6:30 for the 7pm show! Continuing every 2nd Wednesday through December. More information at <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com> or [davidjoetells@yahoo.com](mailto:davidjoetells@yahoo.com)

**October 15-19: Linda Gorham** will be **Teller in Residence** at the International Storytelling Center. Performing a daily matinee at 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday. 100 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. Contact: 800.753.2171 or <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

**October 18-19: Storytelling Festival of Carolina.** Storytelling Arts Center of the Southeast, 131 S Main St, Laurinburg, NC. <https://www.storyartscenter.org/>

Be sure to check the Guild website for updates to the calendar. Updates happen once a month: <http://ncstoryguild.org/events.html>

## STORYTELLING CAN TEACH BY DEBORAH WINKLER

When Deborah lived in Washington (the state), she ran with a small group of storytellers. She wrote this at that time as they called ourselves the *So They Say Storytellers*.

SO THEY SAY

STORYTELLING CAN:

TEACH

BOND

CELEBRATE

CAUTION

HEAL

DIRECT

AMUSE

ENTERTAIN

ENCOURAGE

EMBRACE

INFORM

SHARE

ENLIVEN

INFLUENCE

EMPOWER

ENLIGHTEN

UNITE THE HEAD WITH THE HEART

SO THEY SAY

Deborah Winkler is currently serving as the Southern Piedmont Area representative. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year she has organized a family storytelling event at the Reedy Creek Nature Center in Charlotte, featuring a number of storytellers in the Southern Piedmont Region. You may contact her at: [winklerdeborah@yahoo.com](mailto:winklerdeborah@yahoo.com)

### Accepting Articles for FALL JHTH

Articles, stories, and storytelling news are needed for NCSG's Fall 2019 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:** September 15, 2019

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