

Journal of Tar Seel Tellers

Volume 26
Number 2
ISSN 1077-307X

Spring 2020
NC Storytelling Guild
Official Newsletter



It was another remarkable weekend at Ft. Caswell with presenter, Tim Lowry, leading us in a workshop titled, "Ladder to the Moon," adapted from work by Ben Haggarty. We ignored the drizzle outside on Friday night, as we enjoyed the warmth and camaraderie of friendships new and renewed.

As always Dianne and Terry delighted us with their introduction of Tim, who is the first presenter in 21 years of Winter Workshops to return to make a second presentation. He combined great information with lots of fun, so that we were able to leave the weekend renewed and refreshed without feeling overwhelmed.

The title of the topic "Ladder to the Moon," is taken from an international urban myth that pictures communities gathering to celebrate a momentous event by telling stories that naturally progress from personal narrative to history, to fables and folktales, to legends and epics, to creation myths. We each had the chance to consider the list of stories we tell and sort them into these categories. It was interesting to consider the weight each category has in our repertoire.

Personal Narratives are gaining in popularity on the national storytelling circuit, but Tim warned that it is best to be steeped in folk and fairy tales and their structure before delving into this genre for performances. There are three steps to developing personal narratives. The first is to be sure the initial idea is compelling and has entertainment value. The second, structuring the story, is relatively easy. The third step, and perhaps the most important, is to answer for the audience "So why are you telling me?" "What makes the story have universal appeal?" We drew floor plans of the homes in which we grew up, in order to spark memories for possible stories.

Tim generously offered his time at meals, with anyone interested, to discuss items from the workbook that accompanies the book "Making Your Life as an Artist" that we downloaded before coming to the workshop. The topics were: Planning, Mission, Money and Time.

After telling us a brief story and then retelling the story with only a kazoo as a voice, Tim handed out several scenarios for volunteers to do the same. It was great fun.



Continued

To introduce the topic of historic stories, we went outside to play several historic games and

We considered what might possibly be considered North American epics. It's a genre that most of us do not have in our repertoire.



Saturday night we were delighted to listen as Tim shared a personal narrative, "Smokey and Stinky," and a Russian folktale, "The Snow Maiden."

Sunday morning is traditionally reserved for sacred stories. Tim told us that "As you create you reflect the work of the creator." In silence with only the soft sound of classical music, we decorated our kazoos. We then imagined the sounds of creation as Tim read from portions of

enjoy the sunny January weather. We learned that Pre-Columbian native folklore did not follow the rule of three, but left the ending unfinished, as they believed that the story could only be told to that point of time. Lakota people, using pictographs, did the same thing as the story was told in a spiraling circle from the middle. We were reminded that stories of when we were young might be historic stories to today's generation.

C.S. Lewis' book, *The Magician's Nephew*, where Narnia is reborn from the Lion's song.

With much to think about and a project to finish, we left beautiful Fort Caswell with dreams of returning next January to experience magic once again.

A game of Family Feud introduced the topic of Folktales. Tim had interviewed 100 people who answered the questions: what are you thankful for, what do you fear, and what is your favorite folktale? It's interesting to speculate how the first two answers influenced the third.

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 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: cmmackenzie50@gmail.com



Above: Terry Rollins, Donna Catton-Johnson, Cynthia Brown, and Dwight Henry



The remarkable Tim Lowry leading one of our workshop sessions.

Continued



Names follow by numbered photo: 1- Dwight Henry, Becky Stone, Kanute Rarey. 2- Alan Hoal, Terry Rollins, Dianne Hackworth. 3- Alan Hoal, Larry Pearlman, Donna Catton-Johnson. 4- Tim Lowry teaching Ray Mendenhall how to tell a folktale with a Kazoo. 5- Tim Lowry, Terry Rollins, Dianne Hackworth, Cynthia Brown, Robin Kitson, and Catherine MacKenzie.



Our CRAZY PHOTOGRAPH

We don't know what happened to Terry Rollins (center, wearing white hat). Guess he was still asleep!

JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

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Newton, NC 28658
NCSG Website:
www.ncstoryguild.org

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

ISSN 1077-307X

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

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, Lona Bartlett, Azalea Bolton, Kevin Cordi, Michael Reno Harrell, Kanute Rarey, Robin Kitson, Joan Leotta,

Catherine MacKenzie, Ray Mendenhall, Marva Moss, and Donna Marie Todd



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

Larry Pearlman recently took a fantastic trip to the Galapagos Islands to see all the amazing animals there . . . **Michael Reno Harrell** has a new CD, *Bluebirds and Crows*, recorded live at Schultz Recording Studios in the Sequatchie Valley of Middle Tennessee. You can find it at <http://www.michaelreno.com/storefront.php> . . . Congratulations to **Gwenda LedBetter**, who celebrated her 90th birthday in February. She is so well-loved by the Asheville Storytelling Circle, that they held a special party for her, complete with a cake and lots of stories . . .

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

Roots

from the editor's desk

During this time of social distancing, I had no quandary about my project. My genealogy research had been sitting on the back burner too long.

After gazing at a baroque hatbox, it beckoned me to peek inside. It was occupied with old photos my grandmother had saved. Some from the turn of the century. A few were actually old tintypes. Thankfully, she knew the importance of naming her photos.

My cousin in Indiana, and I, are frequently in touch, sharing exciting bits of genealogy, especially these past two months. I immediately sent her my newly discovered photo of her grandparents, who are my great aunt and uncle. They looked youthful, sitting on their porch with a baby and a toddler. Beside the porch was a young black boy sitting on a mule.

She was ecstatic! Unfortunately, her grandparents had passed away prior to her birth. This was the first time she had seen a photo of her grandfather. This photo became the catalyst for the story she shared. I picture the story this way:

Stella and Oscar were married in the spring of 1898. As newlyweds they were settling into a new life together. Stella looked out on their porch one morning and spotted a small basket, with something wrapped in a blanket. Inside was a little black baby.

"Oh my," she thought, "this child must be hungry." Somewhat stunned, she carried it inside. "This baby surely can't be a wedding gift," she remarked to Oscar.

Soon they understood. This baby needed a home and someone to share their love. They took him into their loving home, and raised Wilson as their eldest child. He fought in World War I, and each month sent money home for his family to put in a savings account for him.

After my cousin's birth, Wilson mailed a baby gift to her mother; one dozen diapers. When Stella passed away, Wilson was there to share his sorrow and say goodbye. I understand why this baroque hatbox beckoned to me. It held not only ancestral photos, but gifts of gold.

Submit articles for JTHT Fall 2020 issue to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net
Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton, NC 28658.
Deadline for Fall Issue: September 15, 2020.



President's Message *Alan Hoal*

Hello fellow Storytellers.

While writing this message I find myself in an unfamiliar situation. I find myself almost (I say almost) at a loss for words. The Covid-19 virus

has impacted all of us in a variety of challenging ways. Most of us have suffered canceled gigs and lost income, or canceled festivals or other events for which we are responsible. At the same time, we are sharing the same experiences and fears of people throughout the rest of the world. We are sequestered in our homes, relying on technology to connect us to our friends and family. Some of us have vulnerable loved ones whom we cannot be with and who may not survive. The face-to-face contact, communication, and interaction that are so important to us and to our art are being hobbled by this disease, but it need not hobble our creativity and imagination. Social distancing does not mean a distancing of community or relationship.

As has been said many times, "we are all in this together." This is an opportunity for us, as storytellers, to practice our art at a time when its healing power and social value are most

needed. I encourage you to think of creative ways in which you can use story to navigate through these rough waters and to help others do the same. Maybe you can record a story with your phone and post it on Facebook or YouTube, don't worry about editing or having technical perfection. Maybe you can share a link to a favorite folktale or short story that holds special meaning for you. You may want to share a link to another storyteller's post. You are all creative by nature, be creative!

Make note of the stories that come out of this very experience. What special acts of kindness have you witnessed or performed? What challenges have you overcome and how? Which stories in your repertoire can have special application to the threats we are all facing? Think of the wisdom that has been passed down from your elders when they faced similar tests. Think of the stories of faith that have meant so much to you in such times as these. Most of all, for your sake and the sake of our community, share, share and share.

As has also been said many times "we will get through this," and we will, and I believe we can come out of this as wiser, more thoughtful and more respectful storytellers. In the meantime, hunker down, keep safe, wash your hands and heed the medical professionals.

Blessings to you all.

Alan Hoal

President, North Carolina Storytelling Guild.

Our Sympathy goes out to Cynthia Brown on the death of her husband, Fred Brown.

Dear Friends, I wanted to thank everyone for your calls, messages, and cards of sympathy for my recent loss of my husband, Fred Brown. Fred was a strong advocate for storytelling for decades. He supported and worked with us at the beginning and as we were building our N.C. Storytelling Guild. Although he didn't perform on stage, he should have because Fred told great, funny stories.

His memory will live on, his voice not silenced but muted.
Cynthia Moore Brown



Finding New Ways to Tell Stories

by Michael Reno Harrell

Like so many in my age group, (And of course by that I mean older. i.e. older than white thread), I had to be dragged into cyberspace holding my breath and tied up in a burlap sack. If it hadn't have been for the fact that they have pictures of vintage guitars on the internet, I probably never would have sat down in front of a computer screen the first time. The first smart



phone that my wife, "Management" brought home laid on the kitchen counter for over a week before any CSI unit could have detected even one of my fingerprints on it. That all slowly changed over the years as I became aware that for an information junkie like me, the internet really did have a good deal of worthwhile stuff intermingled in that trash heap of hyperbole.

Traveling around the storytelling and music world, I have had the opportunity to be invited to lead workshops at various festivals. Often those workshops include queries regarding performance. That inevitably leads to a discussion on just where one might practice the art of storytelling. I suppose you can see where this is heading.

Let me start with my personal epiphany on the subject. Last November, Management and I were on tour in California. At the end of a wonderful string of performances, spending time with old friends and sightseeing, we wound up visiting family in Santa Barbara. Just about an hour south of there is the Los Angeles suburb of Tarzana, which is the home of Norman's Rare Guitars. I'll just bet you can guess where I decided to spend a free afternoon.

I had known about this store full of eye candy for years and about its owner Norman Harris. Norm is one of the country's most notable collectors of, as well as a walking encyclopedia on

vintage stringed instruments. When I walked into that facility, I had a reaction akin to a Kardashians walking into Tiffanys. Once I could get my breath, a young salesperson walked over, and recognizing the look on my face said, "Just take down anything you want to look at and sit down on that couch and try it out." That's kind of like putting a bunny in your little girl's lap to see if she would like to have one.

I was on my fifth or sixth bunny when Norman walked in. He stopped and listened to what I was noodling around on and introduced himself. He and I struck up a conversation, me telling him that I was out there on tour from North Carolina and he saying that he was a southern boy himself, having moved to the Golden State in 1970 with a rock 'n roll band. He mentioned that he liked my playing and asked if I would like to record a short interview for his You Tube channel. Of course I readily agreed. Another young employee appeared with a video camera and Norman introduced me. I told a bit about myself and what I did. We finished up with me singing one of my more humorous songs about the aging process.

The staff and customers applauded and Norman said, "Let's do another one!" (He and I are the same age so he got all the age references.) So, we did another one. Then I was asked if I'd like to do a longer interview for an internet network that Norman and some other instrument geeks had started called, "The All Guitar Network." We wound up doing a couple of those and Norman asked if I would be interested in starting a show on the network where I would interview interesting people in my travels around the country. I said something to the effect of, "Duh, sure!" All the while having no idea what was involved technically in such an endeavor.

Continued

Upon arriving home, I sat down to try and decide how this babe-in-the woods was going to find his way around the technical obstacles of the mountain I had committed to climb. After a quick realization that the answers to those questions were not hiding in the cobwebbed corners of my brain, I called for help. I rung up one of my oldest friends, Chris Schultz, the proprietor of Schultz Recording Studios in Pikeville, Tennessee and cried, "HELP!"

As good friends are want to do, Chris said, "Come on down." And so I did.

Chris not only deals in audio, he also does video recording and editing. I came home with a road case filled with audio/visual equipment and copious notes on what to do with all that. After stubbing my toes several times, things began to get better. I'd shoot footage and go back to Chris and he would show me more technical stuff and advise me on camera angles and mic placement and editing.

The interviewing part seemed natural to me. I was simply getting folks to tell me their stories. But my old folky brain still was having trouble grasping all that tech stuff that I desperately needed to be better at.

After many, many hours of roadwork, interviewing and sitting in Chris's studio editing,

Chris and I have become mates on this storytelling journey. We're sharing other people's stories through technology and it is more fun than these two old friends have had together in decades.

So far, we have recorded a dozen interviews, started my own You Tube channel called "Michael Reno Harrell, Mostly Acoustic," are in the process of putting together a podcast and have sent our first four episodes to allguitarnetwork.com.

For an old guy who came into the high-tech world kicking and screaming I have found that a part of my story is sharing other people's stories through the internet.

So, I guess what I'm trying to say here is that there are stories out there to share, hiding in all kinds of corners and there are all kinds of ways to share them.

And that's my story.

Michael Reno Harrell is an award-winning songwriter, storyteller, published author and all-around great entertainer. He will be a featured teller for the second year at NCSG's Old North State Storytelling Festival. You may contact him at: mike@michaelreno.com.

OUR STORIES ARE OUR STORY BY RAY MENDENHALL

As I cross the threshold of my 70th year (today in fact as I write this), I am given to reflect on many things. One of the things that I have reflected on is the stories I choose and tell as a storyteller. Over the years I have come to believe that the stories that we tell are in some ways biographical. They connect with our lives: who we are, what we stand for, what we believe. As I have surveyed stories from time to time, I find stories that leave me cold while at other times I find stories that begged to be told. The difference I believe is how such stories speak into and out of my life, how they connect or touch my life in some way. The stories that we tell and how we tell them say something very deeply about us. Even if we tell a classic or even well-worn fairy tale or folktale

there is something in it, I believe, that connects with the very fabric of who we are and how we view the world. That is why we choose to tell them, and the way we tell them as opposed to how someone else tells them, the details and the emphases, the parts we include and leave out reflect something about us as a person. It is at the very least something interesting to consider. I encourage you to think about the stories you tell and reflect on how they might mirror you and your life. It could be quite revealing and rewarding.

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

BE A TURTLE, HAVE A CUP OF TEA

BY LONA BARTLETT



I don't know about you but I've been overwhelmed! All of my gigs have been cancelled because of The Virus (audible gasp from audience) just like every other storyteller I know. However, as I went online, I saw many of my colleagues being able to reinvent themselves quickly. They are making videos, posting stories, writing papers, gathering people

into groups, getting things online. It felt like everyone was doing something to keep their business running... except me. I was feeling like I couldn't breathe. It wasn't just because my income suddenly went down to zero, or that the world was being quarantined, it was that after seeing what everyone else was doing, I didn't know what I should do. Should I post lessons online, what would I post? Maybe I can reschedule my gigs for later, but how long will we be in quarantine? I was so confused I even thought that maybe I should quit storytelling all together. It seemed as though I was the turtle standing in the middle of a 'herd' of hares (FYI a group of hares is actually a drove but herd fits my mood better). Then it hit me, I needed a cup of tea and a break from social media. After a second cup of tea and a cookie I asked myself this question, "What have you been waiting to do until it was warm and you had the time?" There it was, I needed to clean out and organize my puppet and construction sheds. They had been waiting for me all winter. I spent 2 days moving boxes around and getting sheds a bit more in order. No, I am not finished with them yet but they are looking much better.

Covid-19 will cause us all to do things differently. I have found myself on loads of ZOOM meetings, sometimes 4-5 a day. I constantly get posts on what colleagues are doing. I have a computer, tablet, and phone ... all connected to the internet. It still overwhelms me; I feel like I can't keep up. But it is in those overwhelming moments I have to go back to that cup of tea and remember I have a direction; those puppet and construction sheds. What have you been putting off and waiting to do until you had the time? Writing a story, learning an instrument, going back and reading all of those notes you took when you attended a workshop? Take the time and do it. Read that novel, research that new story. Step back from what everyone else is doing and do what you need to do. I've realized that I might not win the race against all those hares but I will most certainly finish it.

Give me a call we'll have a cup of tea online, which is an acceptable distance.

Lona Bartlett combines traditional storytelling, puppetry, music and her degrees in education to weave stories that entertain and teach. Her puppet creations and scripts now span four continents. You may contact her at: lona@lonabartlett.com

What's Happening With Our Storytellers

Congratulations to **Connie Regan-Blake**, who was recently interviewed by oral historian, Ellen Brooks, of the State Archives of North Carolina. Connie is included among the "North Carolina women who have achieved amazing things in multiple disciplines to help make

the world a better place." As a result, Connie's interview will be transcribed and made available online as both audio and text. Her interview is a part of the project, "She Changed the World: NC Women Breaking Barriers."

Ideas for Your Storytelling Garden

by Robin Kitson

Out in the big world of storytelling there is work beyond the bread and butter places of libraries, festivals, house concerts, supper clubs, civic groups, and schools. This article is about two arenas where work lies waiting for storytellers who want to step out and do something different. Certain areas of storytelling are usually performed outside of the typical arenas. The two areas I am most familiar with are Storytelling in Organizations, and Environmental Storytelling.

Storytelling in Organizations often relates to some version of sales. In the world of sales there is an adage, "Logic tells but emotion sells." People "buy" based on one of five buying motives: pride, fear, need, love and profit. All are obvious but one, profit. A profit buyer is motivated by a "deal". Profit buyers love the words "two for one", and "sale". Sometimes profit buyers buy things they don't really need just because they get an emotional thrill from getting a deal. All those motives are based on emotion. Now which people are the most skilled in creating emotions? That's right Storytellers!

In business, storytelling can be used to motivate, promote, and shift a paradigm. A leader who can tell a good story meets with far less resistance to change or new idea than one who just says, "Make it so". In my career with the military I noticed that the best storytellers were generals. Though I don't know it, I suspect generals go to storytelling school. To learn more about Organizational Storytelling, check out the special interest group within the National Storytelling Network and search the terms "Business" and "Storytelling". In an internet search you will find

people who make a full-time living telling stories in corporate America.

Growth also exists in the arena of Environmental Storytelling. My life's work before

and after I learned about storytelling was in saving utilities for corporations, the military, and universities. All three of those entities usually have a sustainability goal. People who work in sustainability are charged with helping lower the carbon footprint of the organization. That job is a sales job. Again, sales is about using emotions to sell an idea. The idea in this case is "Do this not that". Listing facts and goals make people yawn. Storytelling can help people who work in the sustainability office get their message across. To see a good example of Environmental Storytelling go to YouTube and view "Storytelling and Climate Change | Judith Black | TEDxBerkshires".

I have found work in both areas. I am a seed planter, so pass these ideas on to fellow storytellers. In a world where government cares less about funding art programs, it can't hurt to investigate other income streams.

Robin Kitson serves on the Board as President-Elect, and is a long standing Guild member. She is well known for her Cajun stories from the Ninth Ward in New Orleans where she grew up. You may contact her at: nanirobin@gmail.com



How Time Slips Away by Jim Payne

Dust mites danced in shafts
Of sunlight streaming through
Stained glass windows

Across the trash strewn floor
Scampered mice threading the maze
Unaware of portrait eyes watching them
Claim his mansion as their own

Storytelling Ted Talk

David JP Phillips
The magical science of storytelling David
JP Phillips | TEDxStockholm

Presentations expert David JP Phillips shares key neurological findings on storytelling and with the help of his own stories, induces in us the release of four neurotransmitters of his choice.

Locate by googling the underlined title.

SUMMER RAIN SHOWERS BY MARVA MOSS



As the season of gardening is upon us, I recall gardening fun! Often, in earlier times, children had to find ways to make working outside, fun.

Each summer day, many years ago, our grandmother decided in what field, we would be working. She had several field choices. There was a peanut field, a sweet potato field, and the small vegetable garden field, near the family house.

Our dress code for field work on a hot summer day, included our frayed sunshades, in that era, sunshades were old, beat up straw hats, not sunglasses. Our shoes were in the same condition – we called them our field shoes. They too, were old and beat up, but the soles protected our feet from the hot soils of the fields.

With our hoes or rakes, we began our early morning work day, before the temperatures forced us to return home. The four of us - four grandchildren, ranged in age from six to nine or ten years old, two boys and two girls. We were steady workers,

but required a few moments of play, now and then.

Some days while working, Mama would call our attention to rain clouds. “It looks like rain children,” she said. “It’s time to head for the house.” She didn’t have to tell us twice! We were always happy to hear those words!

Dropping our tools, we began the race ahead of the rain. We held on to our sunshades, while sailing down the trenches of the field rows. Rain was falling on distant fields. Soon, it would be falling on us! Glancing back again, and again over our shoulders, the rain appeared as a clear, high, giant wave, as it grew near. Then came the pounding sounds of rain drops! They hit dry soil, crop leaves, grasses, and the five of us! Rapid movement of the shower chased us as we ran faster and faster toward home! Within moments, we felt big, warm raindrops, on our faces, on our hats, and our clothes. And within minutes, we all dived under okra plants – our favorite, rainy day fun place! (Mama knew well, our routine during summer showers. She continued her trot for home, along the pathway toward the two-story family house).



Our favorite place to play on the farm was in the okra patch. Mama was proud of her okra patch. The tall plants grew along four or five short rows. They were made up of high mounds or

beds of soil. The fuzzy leaves and okra pods sometimes made us itch, but we didn’t mind.

While under the okra plants, we recalled Mama’s reminder. In her very worried voice, she spoke, “Be careful, or you’ll knock the blooms off my plants!” Those big yellow blooms would soon reveal tiny baby okras.

Beneath the okra plants, we crawled along the rows, breathing loudly after our run. We filled the leafy shelter with laughter and giggles, while listening to the beautiful sounds of the rain, as it fell on the big okra leaves, above us. While sitting under the plants, we pretended that we were sitting in the rain – without getting wet! We children agreed that the okra-plant-setting was the best place to be, during a summer shower!

The rain stopped after about ten minutes, then, we emerged from our fun shelter, and returned to the field to finish our work, hoping to hear Mama call out again, “It looks like rain children. It’s time to head for home!”



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

LOUIE AND THE FULL MOON

by Azalea Bolton



The full moon was so beautiful last week that it's hard to think about it being a bad thing. Some people; however, truly believe that a full moon affects how people and animals alike behave. They will tell you about the fact that more babies are born on a full moon – whether they are animal or human. There are also some who will tell you that people just plain ole have “moon spells” when there is a full moon up there in the sky.

In Latin, the word lunar means moon and the word lunatic is derived from it as well as loon and loony. I'm sure you've heard the expression “crazy as a loon,” to describe someone or something and it was certainly not intended as a compliment.

Then there are folks who would say since the human body is about 60% water, then it stands to reason that moon phases would affect us just as it affects the ocean tides.

The story I'm going to tell you today is about how that beautiful

full moon affected a big orange tabby cat named Louie.

You see Louie didn't really belong to anyone in particular. He just didn't want to be tied down. He always slept in the same old ramshackle barn that used to house cows and horses but had long since been deserted. During the day, Louie rambled all over the countryside but had one stop he always managed to make.

Every day, rain or shine, Louie always went by to see the gray tabby cat named Ghost and her family that lived at the end of a long sandy dirt road. You see, that special cat friend had a litter of kittens that were varying shades of tabby, ranging from orange to gray and somewhere in between. Ghost got her name because she seemed to have a habit of disappearing for a while and then showing back up with three or four kittens in tow.

One day when Louie woke up; stretched and jumped down out of the loft of the barn, he decided the first place he would go was to see Ghost and her kittens. He knew, too, if he got there soon enough he might be able to get some of the food that was always left outside for strays such as himself. Sure enough, he was lucky to get a little food. It was enough anyway to get him by until later. Then off Louie went on his usual rounds throughout the surrounding countryside, where he visited with his friends and looked for any food he could find along the way.



When it was night time again, Louie made his way back to the old barn where he was ready to settle down and get a good night's sleep. You see it had been a really long day and he had never found enough food to satisfy his hunger.

The trouble was; just about the time Louie finally settled down to go to sleep, up over the horizon popped that great big full moon. It seemed to light up that old barn so that every time Louie tried to close his eyes all he could see was that bright light right in his green eyes. He turned this way and that way and tried over and over to go to sleep, but he just could not settle down. Finally, he just decided to get up and walk out that long sandy road once again and check on Ghost and the kittens and then try again to get some sleep.

As Louie walked along the road towards the house, he could hear dogs howling everywhere. Wherever he looked it seemed as if he could see dogs with their heads back, baying at that full moon. He wasn't afraid of them however, because they were so busy they didn't pay him the least bit of attention.

When he reached the brick house at the end of the road, he lay down in the edge of the yard under a rose bush and looked all around. He just felt as if something was wrong but he just didn't know exactly what it was. He watched the house for a little while and then he noticed a strong smell that seemed to be coming from up towards the roof.

Louie knew that Ghost and her kittens and her human family were in grave danger. He took off just like a streak and headed

Continued

towards the house. He knew that the people in the brick house had installed a pet door for Ghost to use so he headed straight towards it and didn't even hesitate but just ran right in.

When he got inside the house, smoke was already filling up the laundry room. When he looked into the box where Ghost lay with her kittens asleep all around her, he knew he had to act fast or the smoke would overtake them all. He took his paw and kept tapping Ghost on the cheek until she finally roused and started moving around. Each of them picked up a kitten in their mouth and took them outside and put them on the ground and then went back in and got another.

When all four kittens were safely deposited outside, Louie knew he just had to do something about those humans still inside the house. He turned around and went back inside the house

and crawled along as close as he could to the floor. When he got to the back bedroom he could see two humans asleep in the bed. He meowed loudly trying to wake them up but to no avail. Finally, he jumped up on the bed and pounced on top of the man there. When Louie could see that the man was awake, he jumped down off the bed and crawled as fast as he could back to the pet door and to the fresh air outside.

As Louie lay there trying to get his breath, out staggered the two humans from inside the house and collapsed onto the grass. About that time, Louie could hear sirens headed toward the house which now had flames coming out from the top of it. Louie decided to try and get back into the edge of the woods before all of those strange people arrived. Just as he got out of sight, up came the fire trucks, with all their racket going that hurt his ears.

Louie had saved the day but he didn't want any recognition for it. All he wanted was some peace and quiet again and a good night's sleep. Of course, it was nice to have all those meows of appreciation from Ghost and her kittens. It seemed after that night, too, the humans in the brick house always managed to leave him some food on their deck and it was nice to not worry about being hungry anymore.

So, you see, good things can happen on a full moon, just as it did when there was one so bright that a big, orange tabby cat just couldn't sleep because it was shining right into his gorgeous green eyes!!!



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.

What is success?

To laugh often and much;
To win respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure

SUCCESS

the betrayal of friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a

redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;
That is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

What's Happening With Our Storytellers

Asheville Storytelling Circle Celebrated 25th Anniversary

Congratulations to the **Asheville Storytelling Circle (ASC)**, who celebrated their 25th Year Anniversary on March 15, 2020. The celebration was held at Crowfields Clubhouse

in Asheville, complete with a potluck gala. Their guest of honor was none other than Kiran Singh Sirah, President of the International Storytelling Center, Jonesborough, TN.





FROM PANDEMIC TO POSSIBILITY

BY
DONNA MARIE
TODD

Isolation. Fear. Financial Ruin.
Government Incompetence.
Panic.

Have you caught any of these yet? They're as contagious as the virus. It seems COVID-19 is challenging everything we hold dear. Our ways of life, our families, trust in our country's leadership, our finances, health, security and safety, even our 1st Amendment right to assemble and to worship freely. All have been impacted by COVID-19.

We were supposed to be better prepared than this. Why didn't our corporations heed the warnings from abroad and manufacture more toilet paper and hand sanitizer?! How many days can Americans live on frozen wieners, beans and

rice, anyway? Have you heard that Corona beer is making record sales and profits? And to answer the latest debate: obviously, liquor stores are essential businesses. Half the country would go mad without them.

And speaking of that... How are your nerves doing? Mine are getting a little fraggled-out, frankly. One can only cling to hyper-vigilance for so long. We're only human, as this rapidly replicating virus already seems to know.

The word "virus" actually has its roots in the Latin word for "poison." Wendell Stanley was awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1946 for his seminal work in first isolating a virus, the tobacco virus oddly enough – talk about two poisons having a meet-up. Stanley determined that viruses lacked the essential systems necessary for metabolic function. To put it another way, a virus is not actually alive until it enters a host. A virus exists on an odd border between chemistry and life. In fact, you might say that a virus lives a borrowed life. COVID-19 is borrowing *its* life from us.

Now rather than beat you over the head with infection numbers and death tolls, I'd like to ask you a question: If COVID-19 is borrowing life from us, what can we borrow from COVID-19?

That sounds like a strange question and I did admit that my nerves are getting fraggy due to isolation but the question itself is solid.

What new opportunities have you already borrowed from

this pandemic? Has the fear of infection and death reminded you of the pristine value of life? Have you become aware of how much you cherish those around you: your partner, your family, your friends? Without the need to commute, have you regained lost sleep in those days spent working from home? Is staying home giving you an extra hour of rest in the morning and added relaxation at night? Have you found yourself connecting more deeply with your spirit? Have you caught yourself contemplating the meaning of life and re-evaluating what really matters to you?

Grab a sheet of paper and write down the things you have borrowed from the pandemic called COVID-19. In times like these, it's important to realize that God is always moving, asking us to make changes for the better. So take a few minutes to contemplate any new awareness that this novel virus has brought to you. When we move from pandemic to possibility, we engage our spirits in the ongoing work of God. When we consciously engage our minds with questions like these, we also release our panic-stricken reptilian brain and begin to think about life's possibilities from a saner point of view.

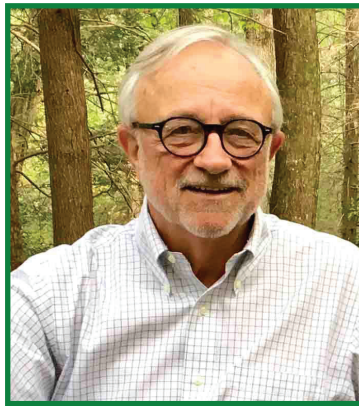
Donna Marie Todd is a multi-faceted artist who delivers perfectly-crafted performances that combine her talents as a speaker, writer, storyteller and singer. She may be contacted at: donnamarie@donnamarietodd.com

***Wonder is the
beginning of
wisdom. -Socrates***

Tellabration Reports from Our Members

TELLABRATION! 2019 - A Great Success! by Kanute Rarey

Mountain Area Storytellers brought the world wide celebration of storytelling to Hayesville Saturday, November 16th. Storytellers spent the afternoon sharing personal and family stories and tall tales to a full house at Moss Memorial library in Hayesville. A big thank you to library director, Mary Fonda, and her staff and to Friends of the Library for their yummy deserts which everyone got to enjoy. Also thank you to the eleven storytellers for their entertaining performances.

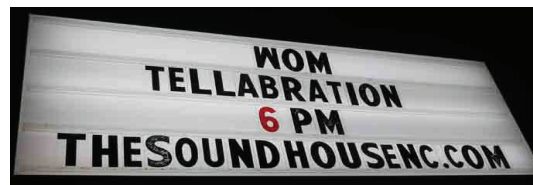


Featured storyteller, Denise Mount (Lawrenceville, GA) and fellow tellers Sandy Benson (Hayesville), Gayle Cox (Shooting Creek), Julie Garner (Hayesville), Craig Kitchen (Murphy), Melanie Knauff, (Dahlonega), Tom Lawrence (Blairsville), Alex Peers (Warne), Kanute Rarey (Hayesville), Cayce Terrell (Dahlonega), and Debra Wolf (Franklin), experienced an afternoon of story adventures.

Kanute writes and performs his stories from his heart. To find out more about his storytelling events in the far west of our state, email Kanute at kanutetells@gmail.com

Coastal TELLABRATION! by Joan Leotta

On November 6, 2019, we held a no-cost Tellabration, thanks to the generosity of the venue the



and Writers' Network groups to attend.

One other professional storyteller, Marva Moss,



Joan Leotta

Sound House in Shallotte and the generosity of the folks contributing their talent. It was previewed in the local press and several came because of the press notice.

About forty people attended the event which ran from 6-8 PM on the regular Open Mic night at Sound House, but an hour earlier than usual, in hopes of attracting some families. I also gave a storytelling seminar at the local Toastmaster group a month in advance of the event hoping to attract some of them to perform and in addition, invited the writers from my poetry

and I performed. The rest read from their own work or performed a song or read from a literary source. Everyone was committed to the continuation of spoken word. I MC'd the event. I hope to create more story ops in 2020 in our county, especially for families and children to listen and tell.



Marva Moss

Joan Leotta, an award-winning author, is currently serving on our Board as the Coastal Regional Representative. She may be contacted at: joanleotta@gmail.com

Tellabration Reports Continued

Asheville Storytelling Circle Tellabration by the Editor

ASC's Tellabration, held at the Folk Art Center in Asheville, was a smashing sell-out nearly a week prior to their performance. To quote from ASC's President, Donna Marie Todd, "Wow! What a Tellabration this was! We SOLD OUT our entire house the week before the show thanks to some excellent support from local media and the ASC members who posted fliers in their neighborhoods."

Sandra Gudger commented, "We have been presenting Tellabration since 1996, 25 consecutive years, the first one being the year following the formation of ASC. And, it has always been at the Folk Art Center and we are grateful for their support through the years."

"The most exciting part, for me, is taking calls for reserved tickets, which begins about a month before the event. I enjoy talking with the callers, many of whom tell me the number of years they have attended. Our audience is great, and are very appreciative of the tellers."

"We have many volunteers and since we have been doing this for 25 years, they know exactly what needs to be done, and they do it well."

So, as you can see, it takes hard work, and a "village of storytellers" to make this production successful. The entertaining tellers were: Michael Reno Harrell, Gwenda LedBetter, Fiddler Lillian Chase, Zane Chait, and Donna Marie Todd, with Sherry Lovett as emcee.



NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK 2020

April 19-25, 2020

<http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/national-library-week-tools>

Library's Most challenged books from ALA

Top 10 Challenged Books: The Office for Intellectual Freedom has published lists of the most challenged books since 2001, compiled from media articles and censorship reports.

***George* by Alex Gino**

***Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin**

***A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* by Jill Twiss, illustrated by EG Keller**

***Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg, illustrated by Fiona Smyth**

***Prince & Knight* by Daniel Haack, illustrated by Stevie Lewis**

***I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas**

***The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood**

***Drama* written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier**

***Harry Potter series* by J. K. Rowling**

***And Tango Makes Three* by Pete Parnell and Justin Richardson illustrated by Henry Cole**



Originally published in June 15, 2019

One must continually reflect when they chose to take on the 'mantle of storyteller' or decide to use stories in their work and daily life. For over 25 years, I work to honor this mantle. This includes not only telling stories, but researching and reading about using narratives. I listen deeply to named and unnamed storytellers and narrative practitioners. Most of all, using story is often my first response to addressing my life and my work.

In the interest of encouraging all of us to grow as storytellers, I share challenges that I have made and are making in this wonderful journey into narrative. I invite you to consider these challenges. The intention is to guide you to know more about the wide circle contained in the storytelling and storytelling making process. If we widen our understanding of how story is used, we can strengthen our awareness as we build not only our comprehension but our community.

Do not be quick to define what stories you tell. I recently read an excellent book on

CHALLENGES TO THOSE WHO RESPOND WITH STORY- A CALL OUT TO STORYTELLERS BY KEVIN CORDI

"Give my best to all tellers in North Carolina. I appreciate the good work in this state. Be well. Tell well. Seek Joy. Find Comfort. Together we make a difference with stories." Kevin Cordi

telling personal narratives, but a section of the book spoke to how telling folktales and fairytales can't reach an audience the way a personal tale can. I do believe they can have different impacts, but the importance is they have impacts. The book implied that personal narratives have more power. I don't believe this. Storytellers often chose 'the type of storyteller' they want to be without ever diving into the new ways stories are being told. I would invite you to experiment with the range of stories and slowly, ever so slowly discover your direction. Perhaps you will find, like I advocate, what accomplished teller Jackie Torrence once said to me, "It is not a matter of who you are as a storyteller, but do you have the right story for this person right now." I let this guide me as I work to honor what it means to be a teller.

Do not be quick to define where you tell stories. People are quick to define the places they want to tell stories. I have heard, "Oh, I would never tell for teenagers, I could never get through that battle armor." This is the wrong mindset. We often decide we won't go to schools because when we were there (some 20, 30, or 40 years ago) and back then, it was not a place where guest artists were welcomed. We may have a bad school experience. I have news. This is not every school and

much has changed since then. My friend and colleague Katie Knutson advocates telling in new places for new growth. How do you know that a bar room at an open mic night would not be a welcomed place for your work? Does your traditional mindset prevent you from this? It is because your experience as a teller is limited in the scope of telling environments. As you develop as a teller, tell at parks, bars, open mics, libraries, retirement centers, teen gatherings, weddings, and riverboats. Holding the honor of storyteller means responding to those who need stories. Let us not restrict our experience simply because we have not been there before.

Accept that the definition of storyteller has changed, is changing, and will continue to change. Storytellers told and tell in tents. Storytellers are consultants in business. Storytellers tell and work in hospitals. Too often I have heard that when people tell others they are storytellers, they immediately ask about dressing up and sitting in a circle telling to little kids. This is a storyteller. We should accept this. We should honor this work. However, if this is not the storyteller you are at the time, help educate others about what you do. I have found more and more people accept the diversity

Continued

that is in the work of storytelling. I don't often find resistance to my work. Perhaps it is because story is integrated in me. It is true that writers, actors, and journalists take on the name of storyteller or at least say their work is storytelling. However, we need to educate in what way our role of being a storyteller is different and our tools for storytelling accentuate that role. People have called themselves storytellers for years. This has changed over time. However, honor the mantle within the work that you do and your work will find more of the respect it deserves. (This is at least the campaign that I work to follow.)

Storymaking is fundamental to the work of storytelling. For years, I spent more time working on building a performance from my work, at the expense of valuing what it took to craft the story. As storyteller, we are also story makers. We need to invest in the time to design our work from careful research, exploring multiple directions, examining perspectives, and experimenting with choices. Storymaking is integral to what we do. Spend more time on this process before moving on to telling.

One should consider, talking stories out loud before writing it down. When I started the storytelling process and I wanted to create my version of a traditional tale or recall a personal tale, I always turned to writing it down. This is the way we are trained in school, write your ideas down and when you have a workable draft, the teacher will review it. However, after serving as the Co-Director for the Columbus Area Writing Project at The Ohio

State University and studying storytelling at the same university, I have learned the value of talking aloud ideas and working with both writing and talking at all stages of the story making process. I have also developed a new "story mediation," with others to coach or guide the story process.

Storytellers can expand their work when they realize that telling does not have to be the outcome. Storytellers work in many circles. Stories can be used to promote inquiry. I recently used multiple perspective stories to help high schoolers think deeply about "cruel and unusual punishment." You can read about this at <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2019/a-different-kind-of-pedagogy> I have worked and see stories used to



help children address how children adjust to having parents suffering from AIDS. I used stories to help guide writing practices. The outcome of this was not performance but inquiry, healing, and oral editing. Stories are used to understand business practices and community development. We can expand who we are and what we do when we extend the range of how we use stories.

Deep listening builds better tellers. A well-known storyteller was asked how do you become a great storyteller? He replied, "I tell some stories, I listen to thousands, this makes

me a better teller." There is a stark difference between hearing and listening. Listening is a practice that you must work on to improve. Walk onto a busy street and listen to the rain. Deeply concentrate on blocking everything except the teller. You have to work to hear the rain, the same is true to listening to not only the tale but the teller. The same type of listening applies to your work. Listen deeply to what you are saying and what you are not. Developing as a deep listener is a practice that builds you as a teller and as a person.

Reflection is the key to success. Educator/philosopher Parker Palmer said, "Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am." However, we are often in too much of a rush to listen to what we are doing. Make space and time to revisit your practice. Reflect and revise. Reflect and honor successes. Reflect and rework when needed.

Play should be essential to the work. Play is not a 'rehearsal for life,' it is so much more. It is the opportunity to re-see, revisit, re-charge, re-view and re-act differently to your work as a storyteller. It is more than a "do over," it is a time to use play, the real work of story. Give yourself permission to play with your ideas and story directions with partners and you will be amazed at your growth.

Kevin D. Cordi, Ph.D. is a reflective and active story mediator and reflector. He believes in the inherent work of story but understands it is a practice that requires time, effort, and company. He is a storyteller and author who has been awarded The Film Advisory Board of Excellence Award and The Storytelling World Award. He is also the National Storytelling Consultant. You may wish to visit Kevin's website: <https://www.kevincordi.com/>



Friday & Saturday November 6-7, 2020

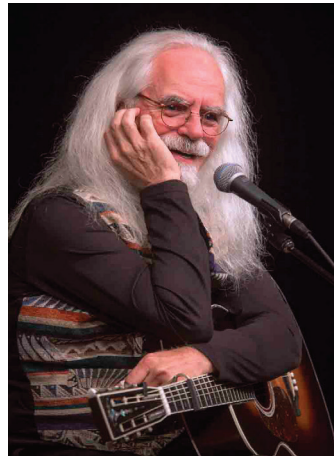
The 2nd Annual Old North State Storytelling Festival is still, currently, planned for November 6 & 7 at the Cary Theatre, featuring Bil Lepp, Mitch Capel, Connie Regan-Blake, and Michael Reno-Harrell, in Cary, NC.

The Town has The Cary Theatre reserved for the festival in November. Despite the current uncertain times, they are nonetheless still working on compiling their Fall program guide, which will include the Old North State Storytelling Festival.

Mitch Capel - photo unavailable



Bil Lepp



Michael Reno Harrell



Connie Regan-Blake

What's Happening With Our Storytellers



Alice's Adventure

Several months ago, **Alice Cunningham** sat in the audience at the High Point Theater in High Point, NC. The attraction was comedian and motivational speaker, Kelly Swanson, as she presented her show, "Who Hijacked My Fairy Tale."

Kelly requested the ladies who attended, to don their most tacky outfits, and of course, Alice attended in the tackiest garb she owned. And guess what? Alice won the prize - a photo with Kelly AND a copy of Kelly's book, "Who Hijacked My Fairy Tale." Congratulations Alice!

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

- Albert Camus

Accepting Fall Articles

Articles, stories, and storytelling news are needed for NCSG's Fall 2020 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, 2020. Send to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net

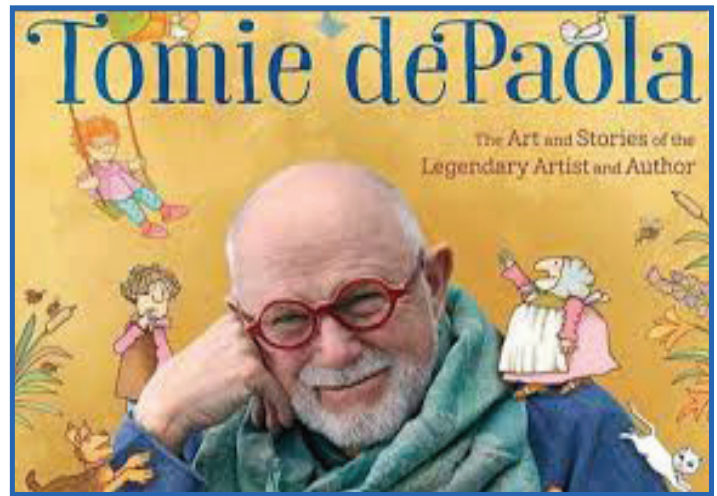
The world recently lost one of the greatest children's author/ illustrators of the 20th and 21st Century. His work was well loved, not just by children, but by adults, and definitely not to exclude storytellers or children's librarians. As a former children's librarian, I was especially endeared to *The Clown of God*. It is one of many books he illustrated with Christian themes. According to author Barbara Bader, Mr. dePaola was the "most mild-mannered of creative personalities."

The Washington Post stated, "Tomie dePaola, whose picture-book tales of bullied children, Christian saints and a magically overflowing pasta pot delighted generations of young readers and sold millions of copies, died March 30 at a hospital in Lebanon, New Hampshire. He was 85."

According to his literary agent, Mr. dePaola suffered a fall in his studio the week before he died. Death was caused from surgical complications.

Early in his career, Mr. dePaola taught art and theater, in addition to his writing and illustrating. He published more than 260 children's books during his career of over 50 years. He was so adept at his profession that he illustrated ten or more books within a year's time upon several occasions. He credited his Irish-Italian heritage and global folklore as the inspiration of his work. He retired from full-time teaching in 1978 to devote his time to writing and illustrating books.

Tomie dePaola received quite a number of awards and honors as an American author and illustrator. Due to his "lasting contribution to children's literature," he became the United States nominee for the biennial, Hans Christian

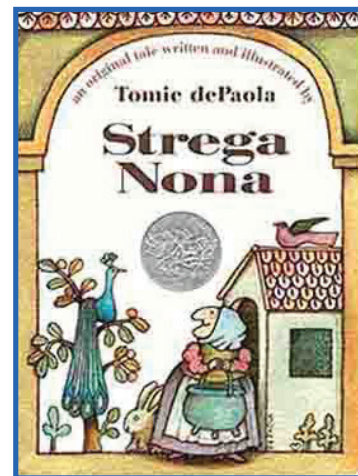


Death of Notable Author and Illustrator by the Editor

Andersen Award, in 1990. This was the greatest international distinction for his work. His 2018 book, "Quiet," received a Caldecott honor award.

Strega Nona is one of his most popular folktales. He was "drawn to folktales because they are about people. They teach a life lesson and the characters succeed by hard work."

For Mr. dePaola's official website go to: <https://www.tomie.com/>



Strega Nona, dePaola's popular folktale, won a Caldecott Honor in 1976.



Strega Nona herself. Her helper, Big Anthony is pictured on far left.



Big Anthony, *Strega Nona's* helper, learns a big life lesson after allowing the pasta pot to boil over.

COVID-19 NOTICE
 Due to continuing uncertainties concerning storytelling events, no Storytelling Events page is included in this issue.