

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Partnering for Success: A Tale of Two Storytelling Festivals

Over the past 22 years I have been involved with the launch of four storytelling festivals, two of which are still running. Both of these festivals have succeeded for similar reasons and while there are many

factors that are key to the success of any festival this article is meant to set forth what I believe to be the primary factor that has been key to the success of both of these events.

That factor has been the involvement of a committed and passionate partner.

The Sounds of the Mountains Storytelling Festival, held near Roanoke Virginia, celebrated its 21st year on April 8th and 9th and is going strong. The host of the festival is Camp Bethel, a Church of the Brethren Summer Camp and Year-Round Retreat Center where I spent many summers of my youth and which is the district camp for 93 churches. In 2001, when I was on the camp's and the District's Board of Directors, my wife Carol and I proposed a storytelling festival as a fundraiser for the camp. This was something that would allow me to merge two things that I greatly loved and enjoyed, Camp Bethel and storytelling. After explaining to the full camp board what a storytelling festival was and after more than a little convincing and cajoling, I was able to get a green light to proceed.

Carol and I felt confident about the viability of a festival at Camp Bethel because of what the camp brought to the table, so to speak. The camp has a

beautiful mountain setting on 473 acres, a large venue for the stage, access to dozens of volunteers who share a passion for the camp, a built-in audience of loyal Camp Bethel supporters, and access to sponsors who would be willing to support the camp financially. It should be noted that few if any of the board members, church members, volunteers or sponsors had ever heard of a storytelling festival or were familiar with the art form and its revival. All of these folks were, however, passionate about Camp Bethel and its programming and were willing to support an event that was consistent with the camp's programming and mission and that would assist the camp financially. As a result, an organization that had no prior connection to or involvement with storytelling now hosts one of the premier storytelling festivals in the southeast. The festival has become an important fundraiser for the camp, all the while introducing literally hundreds of people to the art of storytelling.

Planning is now underway for NCSG's fourth annual Old North State Storytelling Festival in partnership with the Town of Cary. The first festival, in November of 2019, was an immediate programmatic and financial success with 3 of the 4 shows at the historic Cary theatre selling out and it also turned a profit, which is almost unheard of for a first-year storytelling festival. We have battled and survived through Covid issues for the 2020 (online only) and 2021 festivals, and the outlook for the future is bright and promising with the town cultural arts staff, as well as the mayor and town council, enthusiastically embracing the event and working diligently and passionately with us to make it a success.

The partnership with the Town of Cary brings similar benefits as Camp Bethel to the presentation of

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the festival, by providing the Cary Theatre as the venue, along with sound, lighting and support staff, theatre volunteers, ticket sales, a well-established marketing machine and access to very generous grant programs. But, perhaps the most important thing that each of these partners bring to their respective festivals is a passion for success driven by interests and goals that do not arise out of



Cary Theatre, Cary, NC - 2021 photo by Steve Tate

a passion for the promotion of storytelling as such, but are compatible with or complementary to the art form.

The Sounds of the Mountains Festival is first and foremost a fundraiser for the camp and it has succeeded as such over its 20 years thus far. The first years were touch and go and long-term success was uncertain, but once the word spread the festival found its legs and has taken off and has a bright future. While the festival is consistent with and complementary to the goals and mission of Camp Bethel, if it were not a financial success, that is, if it were simply a breakeven enterprise promoting storytelling, it would not have continued beyond the first few years. Similarly, while the town of Cary is not primarily concerned with fundraising and profitability, the Old North State Storytelling Festival is just the sort of event that the Town of Cary Cultural Arts organization wants to get involved with given its mission and goal to further the promotion of arts of all forms and to make programs available to the citizens of Cary that further their interest, exposure and knowledge surrounding the arts. So, both of these partners have come to the relationship with different goals and missions but in both cases those goals and missions mesh nicely with the promotion and themes of storytelling.

While the primary mission of the NCSG is “To create and nurture a thriving community of storytellers through performance and education” and while the storytelling festival is a major program of the Guild in furtherance of that mission, given the Guild’s modest

budget it is imperative that the festival be a financial success as well as a programmatic one. Additionally, to the extent that the festival exceeds its budgetary costs, those profits can be used to fund other programs of the Guild. Having a partner that is as committed to and passionate about the Old North State Storytelling Festival as the Town of Cary is gives me a very optimistic

outlook for its long-term success, and its contribution to the Guild’s mission, goals, programs and finances.

Of course, in both cases, the festivals have a significant dependency on grants, sponsorships and generous financial contributions, but, neither of the festivals has a single donor, without who’s funding the festivals could not continue. I view this also as a very significant factor in their long-term viability. Dedicated volunteers and committees are equally important to the festivals’ success and neither could continue without them.

It is my hope that anyone considering promoting a storytelling festival or similar event would take this information into consideration as they proceed with their planning. I also hope that the programmatic quality and success of our Old North State Storytelling Festival will encourage more Guild members to become a part of its success.

So, I invite every member to get involved with the festival in any way you can, whether financially, as a volunteer, or in the promotion of the festival to your friends, family and social media network. Feel free to contact me, or any of the festival committee members, Willa Brigham, Larry Pearlman, Steve Tate, Dianne Hackworth or Sam Pearsall to see how you might contribute to the festival’s success. . .

Thank you all!

Alan Hoal

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Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton, NC 28658. E-mail: sylpayne@bellsouth.net - Deadline for Fall Issue: September 15, 2022.

JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

Editor, Sylvia Payne
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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: *Chuck Fink, Linda Gorham, James Gregory, Michael Reno Harrell, Alan Hoal, Kathy Jessup, Tim Lowry, Ray Mendenhall, David Joe Miller, Jim Payne, Mike Perry, Anna Twiddy, Greg Whitt and Deborah Winkler.*



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

Guild members **Kanute Rarey** and **Denise Mount** were featured tellers at the **Bear on the Square Festival** in Dahlonega, Georgia, on April 23, 2022. They brought ghost stories, legends, lies and other tales to the stage . . . In January **Catherine Yael Serota Shealy** and **Larry Pearlman** conducted a workshop series for residents in a local retirement community. During their workshop they trained the residents how to create and present stories, especially personal narratives . . . **Connie Regan-Blake** will be performing at the 50th annual National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, and has the distinct pleasure of being on stage for all 49 Festivals so far.

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." - Maya Angelou

WHAT WORD IS BEST?

from the editor's desk

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." – Mark Twain

I have collected a number of quotations by Mr. Twain, and this is one of my favorites! I find it rather profound. I delight in reading quotes that make you stop in your tracks... and think. This is definitely one of them.

About ten years ago I took a weeklong storytelling class led by Janice Del Negro. She encouraged her students to improve their traditional folktale or story creation by paying attention to Wordsmithing. She requested students to bring two important items to assist with their work, a word thesaurus and a dictionary.

Since that time, I enjoy playing with words. Often there may be a single word that is used several times in a solitary paragraph. Searching for a synonym or referring to a thesaurus, I usually unearth an alternative word to use. At least I try, though I don't claim to use the 'right word'. I don't pretend to be an expert on English.

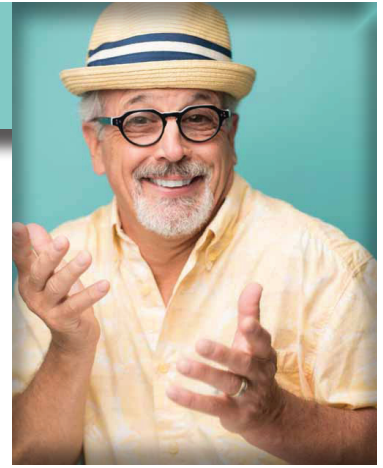
Incidentally, *Writer's Digest* claims the right and most powerful words tend to be the shortest. Some are so basic they are deeply rooted in Old English. Examples given are the following two words: relatives and gratitude, dating back to the 1600 and 1400 hundreds AD.

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary describes a wordsmith "as a person who works with words, especially a skillful writer." Merriam-Webster also tells us the first-time wordsmith came into the English language was in 1873.

Following my interest in choosing the 'right word,' in writing, I was foolish enough to query the history and origins of our English language. Whoa! It became so mind boggling I gave up... I am certainly not an expert in anything, least of all English.

Nonetheless I am always challenged by curiosity.

FOLDED FOOTNOTES: BY MIKE PERRY



Rambling thoughts meant to amuse. From the mind of Mike...

I have come to accept that in my brain there lives a sticky word web.

Sometimes, I read a word or hear a sentence, and without warning it enters my head where it sits quietly, slowly festering, niggling away persistently, demanding attention. It will not leave me alone until I've examined it, tearing it to pieces and often killing it in the process.

For example, I was pounding out words, trying to craft a story the other day when I stopped to wonder, 'Am I becoming a better writer?' That was all it took. That verb, '*becoming*' got stuck in my word-web, and like an earwig it persisted in tunneling into my brain.

BE-coming. Be-COMING. Becoming? A broken word-record. Suddenly my brain asked, 'Who decided these two verbs belong together?' *Be-coming?* This ailment of mine, this sticky brain word web will not let go of its victim until it is satisfied.

I set to work with my mental scalpel. *Becoming* = *be+coming*. It's a simple compound word, usually used as a verb to express some truth, '*I am becoming older*' for example. Hard to accept for sure. Even as an adjective, *becoming* can be difficult to embrace, '*Do I look less becoming as a result?*' Certainly, an explanation is in order.

'Be' defines pure existence.

Buddhists claim it as the ultimate answer. Simply, 'be.'

Shakespeare used it as a question, 'To be...or *not to be*...'

Coming? The second verb is the present participle form of 'to come.' This gerund, this 'ing' form means 'soon,' as in, '*Coming mother!*' Any child will tell you that there is no hurry here. In their world and mine

as well, it will happen, I'm coming, but not quite yet.

So? I side with Shakespeare, 'Becoming or not becoming? That is a question. Can it '*be*,' that is to say '*exist now*,' and still be '*coming*,' as in '*not quite yet*?' Can we '*exist soon*?' Are we in the process of, '*almost now*?' Can these two states, now and later, coexist? We are asked to accept that it is both? How is that possible?

Perhaps the Beatles got it right, 'let it be.' After considerable (and you may say confusing) thought, I chose to accept common usage and embrace '*becoming*' as a viable state. Unsticking the verb from my word web however, I am still stuck with the question, 'Am I *becoming* a better writer?' I don't know the answer to that, but I'm certainly *becoming* more concise in vetting my words.

I can't expect you to understand this mental malady of mine which causes me to question, to dissect, to attempt an explanation for everyday words. Heck I don't understand it either. I am however *becoming* more tolerant of its usefulness, and hope you are saying the same.

Be well, and do tell

Mike@MikePerry.biz

Mike Perry's broad and adventurous career experience has taken him from the circus to the Census Bureau, from major motion pictures to maintenance man. He has taught Elementary School, and performed as a corporate edu-tainer. Mike was one of our tellers at the Old North State Storytelling Festival, November, 2021.

What's Happening with Linda Gorham!

The University of Chicago's Logan Center for the Arts "School Matinee Program" recently presented the following virtual program, newly created and performed by storyteller, Linda Gorham.

"Black Girls Who Paved the Way" - the stories of six young Black girls/teens who made a difference in this country: Part 1: Ruby Bridges and Claudette Col-

vin. Part 2: Wilma Rudolph, Venus & Serena Williams, and Amanda Gorman. These Black girls stood up for what they knew was right. They followed the law and ignored those who tried to stop them. They pursued their athletic dreams despite challenges. They had something to say, and they said it.

**NEW
COMMISSION
BY TIM LOWRY**



Tim Lowry is hard at work on a new commission. He is developing a story on the life of American inventor Thomas Edison, focusing on the determination and drive of America's greatest inventor. The show will have its world premiere during Tim's residency at the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, TN which takes

place August 2-6, 2022. The invention earned him \$40,000! His dissatisfaction with a poorly equipped laboratory motivated him to invest all of the money in a machine shop where he could tinker and experiment to his heart's delight. In tinkering with the telephone, not satisfied with the sound quality, Edison hit upon the idea for the phonograph. Not satisfied with the phonograph, which only recorded sound, Edison experimented with motion pictures. And of course, there was his dissatisfaction with living life in the semi-darkness of lamplight which motivated his invention of the incandescent light bulb for which his name is practically synonymous.

Mr. Edison often claimed that the secret to his great success was the ability to focus. In fact, he could become so singularly minded about a particular challenge or puzzling detail that he would forget to eat, go without sleep, and completely ignore his family responsibilities. Even though this often-caused friction between himself and others, Edison saw the ability to focus as a virtue. There is a story about a young journalist who interviewed Thomas Edison about his life. He learned that when Edison was a young boy, he suffered a high fever and on another occasion was boxed roughly about the ears. This combination of unfortunate circumstances resulted in profound hearing loss. The journalist wanted to know why Edison did not create a practical hearing device for himself. Edison replied, "Think of all the nonsense I haven't had to listen to by not being able to hear it." He felt that his hearing loss was an asset, not a liability. It helped him maintain his focus.

Perhaps the secret to greater achievement lies in these simple truths illustrated in the life of Thomas Edison.

1. Maintain focus- What can you eliminate from your life that is keeping you back, weighing you down, slowing your progress? Make a list of distractions. Pick one thing. Get rid of it.
2. Never be satisfied- What systems, products, procedures, or tools are no longer working for you? What is the source of your discontent or dissatisfaction? Make a list. Pick one thing. Fix it.
3. Think big- What grand and immense discoveries would you like to uncover? What great accomplishments would you like to achieve? Make a list. Pick the most outrageous goal.

place August 2-6, 2022. Check the website of the ISC for more details: <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/storytelling-live/>

**Lessons in Productivity from the
Life of Thomas Edison
By Tim Lowry**

Of all the characters in American history, I find Thomas Edison to be one of the most fascinating. His inventions are marvelous and his accomplishments are extraordinary, but it's his outlook on life that I find most inspirational. Late in his career Edison was quoted as saying "I think the world is on the eve of grand and immense discoveries before whose glory the record of the past will fade."

Mr. Edison certainly had every reason to believe such a statement. After all, many of the most marvelous advancements in science and industry were his brain children. The extraordinary output of his very busy mind is staggering to the imaginations of most men. However, Thomas Edison did not see himself (1,093 patents aside) as an extraordinary individual. He simply thought of himself as extremely motivated. "Show me a thoroughly satisfied man," he once stated, "and I will show you a failure."

Never happy with the way things were, Thomas Edison was constantly striving for the way things should be. His dissatisfaction with mathematical inaccuracies motivated him to invent a machine for correcting mistakes

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What's holding you back? Is it your inability/unwillingness to maintain focus? Is it your passive acceptance for sticking with the way things are? Look back at list #1 and #2. Do you see a correlation?

I dare say that if you can master the three things listed above, you will go far and accomplish much of what you can imagine. People will call you a genius! But remember what Thomas Edison said. "There is no such thing as genius. What people choose to call genius is

simply hard work— one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."

Now, if you will excuse me, I have work to do!

Storyteller & artist, Tim Lowry is well known for his one-man show, Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Tim performs this show at the International Storytelling Center, which has been one of their favorite holiday performances. He is presently working on a new show which will have its world premiere during his residency at the ISC August 2-6, 2022. He may be contacted at: timlowry@bellsouth.net

Mae C. Jemison, America's First Black Female Astronaut by the Editor

Little Mae was the 'baby' of the family, born October 17, 1956. She was only three years old when her family moved from Decatur, Alabama to Chicago, Illinois. Her parents believed their children would have greater educational opportunities in their new location. Her parents, Charlie and Dorothy Jemison, a roofer-carpenter and school teacher respectively, were totally supportive of their three young children's education. The Jemison's encouraged them to develop their talents and learn new skills.



By the time Mae was in kindergarten she had fallen in love with science, especially astronomy and declared her heart's desire was to be a scientist. She spent many hours in her school library reading all she could get her hands on about science and astronomy. Her childhood dream was to reach the stars.

Mae set high standards for herself at an early age. She was always striving to achieve difficult goals and accomplishments. While studying at Chicago's Morgan Park High School, she was determined to pursue a profession in biomedical engineering. She excelled in her studies and graduated at age 16 with a scholarship to attend Stanford University. Upon graduation from Stanford in 1977, she acquired a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering.

Her next step was to achieve her medical degree at Cornell University. Prior to completing her medical degree, she developed an insatiable craving for experiences in helping others and gaining knowledge from other countries. She accomplished this by studying abroad in Cuba and Kenya and when the opportunity

presented itself, she worked in a Cambodian refugee camp in Thailand.

After receiving her medical degree from Cornell in 1981, and her internship at the University of Southern California Medical Center, she became a Peace Corps medical officer in Sierra Leone and Liberia. While there she spent time teaching and conducting medical research.

After her return from the Peace Corps, she opened her private practice as a medical doctor. It wasn't long before she took notice of Sally Ride, the first American woman in space. So again, Dr. Mae Jemison stretched to higher stars and applied to NASA for the astronaut training program and was one of 15 accepted out of approximately 2,000 applicants. She became the science mission specialist on STS-47 Spacelab-J, a cooperative mission between the United States and Japan that launched on September 12, 1992.

The launch of the *Endeavor* space shuttle carrying Dr. Jemison and 6 other astronauts was historic. *Endeavor* orbited the Earth 126 times and as the first black woman astronaut, Dr. Jemison, spent over 190 hours in space on the shuttle.

While in flight, she ran bone cell science experiments as well as additional projects she and the crew were assigned. After her flight into space she made this statement during a press conference, "My parents were the best scientists I knew, because they were always asking questions."

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Following her six years as an astronaut, Dr. Jemison founded *The Jemison Group*, a consulting technology firm which explores and develops standalone science and technology programs, integrating the critical impact of socio-cultural issues with revolutionary technologies.

Thanks to her dedicated love of science and teaching, we also have *The Dorothy Jemison Foundation for Excellence* (DJF). This foundation is a non-profit organization founded in honor of Dr. Jemison's mother. This organization works to appropriate and execute the requirements of excellence Jemison promoted and translates them into programs to enhance achievement and individual excellence throughout the world.

Through the Foundation, Dr. Jemison initiated an international science and technology camp, *The Earth We Share*, that encourages middle school and secondary school students to consider the impacts STEM subjects have on society while building their skills in science, mathematics and technology. This program has involved students from across the globe!

Another important educational program within this Foundation is the *100 Year Starship* project. Dr. Jemison's focus is to get humans to the nearest star. This focus will move humans ever closer to achieving Dr. Jemison's dream of reaching the stars.

By the editor

SUN CITY BY JIM PAYNE

Herman and Eloise Berkowitz decided to purchase matching Segways. Those "2-wheeled electric scooters," as Herman called them. Sky blue and cream, two tone. Pretty snazzy. It was an easy decision, really. Smart decision. Sun City, Arizona wasn't that big, anyway. They hardly ever drove their Buick anymore.

Eloise despised the clear plastic seat covers in the Buick. "The plastic burns my butt when it gets hot," she'd holler. And it did, like sitting on a hot griddle. Always carried a big, flowered beach towel with her to sit on when floating around town in the big car. Herman could never get the rear-view mirror and the driver seat to line up with each other. He'd always have to lean way over to the right to see who was behind them. "Did you see how close that guy was?" he would mutter to Eloise. Since they were rear-ended back in Jersey in '58, Herman was real interested in rearward traffic.

The Buick still ran of course, but gas wasn't getting any cheaper. It would be their backup. When the occasional all-day drencher came through, they would park the Segways in the garage and use the Buick. Only one small problem complicated things. Well, two small problems actually. Herman would get vertigo frequently while moving quickly into a vertical orientation. Didn't happen hardly at all when he was driving, riding the bus, or sitting in the park. Eloise, on the other hand did not suffer from vertigo. She suffered from a lack of get-up-and-go. She loved to lounge. To recline. "All this housework wears me out," she would exclaim from the sofa to Herman. Then why the decision to purchase the Segways? Boredom. Boredom in

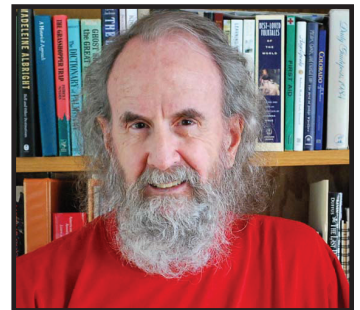
some unfathomably way had propelled the Berkowitz's from sitting, to standing their way around town.

It took some time, but in three weeks they harnessed their unlocked gusto for life and took off, so to speak, in their quest for upright directed adventure, with the warm - in the early morning hours - wind blowing through their hair. "Look Ma, no hands!" Herman would cry out with glee as they went down the sidewalk.

Having mastered their immediate neighborhood's sidewalks, to the peril of any pedestrians, they moved out like ripples on a pond, to the outer reaches of town.

Celebrity status soon claimed them and quiet, private time together was rare. "Where did all these weirdo's come from?" Herman would ask Eloise. She lamented, "I don't know, honey, but they can go back right now!" After 6 months, being two wheeled stars had worn thin and Herman and Eloise decided that maybe the Buick wasn't so bad after all. The Segways stood in the garage for another 3 months, before they were bought. By a good-hearted couple, looking to add some zest to their lives.

Jim Payne is a poet and short story writer. He currently serves on our NCSG board. He may be contacted at: jpaynehorizon@gmail.com



"People will pay more to be entertained than educated."

-Steve Allen, comedian

Think about the people you know who have excellent penmanship, beautifully manicured gardens, or even perfect hair. These skills and attributes did not come by chance. They practiced. They experimented. They tried. They failed. They tried again. Even most 'perfect hair' isn't genetic. Only their hairdresser knows for sure!

It is the same with humor. They say only about 35% of folks have some ability to 'think funny.' If you are smiling right now, you are one of them – or maybe not. But there is hope. We can learn to be humorous, or more humorous, if we work at it. It is possible for all of us to expand our 'think funny' quotient.

I enjoy storytellers who are humorous. Simply put, funny stories, and stories with funny moments, keep my attention. When I anticipate humorous interjections in a story, I'm more alert. I listen better. I don't want to miss anything.

There's more. I am more attracted to humorous storytellers. I want to talk with them after the presentation. I want to have dinner with them (*well, at least a cocktail*). I want to be their friend. And ... this is a big one ... I will travel farther and pay more to hear them. *Did I get your attention?*

"To be successful, the audience must like you very much. They must have a feeling like, "Gee, I wish he was a friend of mine. I wish he was my relative."

- Jack Benny

Here's the formal definition:

"Humor is the capacity to perceive, appreciate, or express what is funny, amusing, incongruous, and ludicrous. It exposes the unexpected and arouses amusement." *Arousal? Now do I have your attention?*

But is humor easy? Not necessarily. Truth is that humor has rules. Rules?! Kinda kills the whole concept, doesn't it? Well, don't kill the messenger, but here's what I learned:

1. Make sure your audience is ready for humor. They must be in a funny state of mind. If you have a set of your own, you may want to include your most humorous story after one that builds up or develops the humor quotient of your audience. If you are part of an olio, inform your emcees so they can use a segue that prepares the audience for a funny story.
2. Do not poke fun at anyone or any group who may be considered vulnerable. Authority figures such as teachers, bosses and government officials are usually safe, but be careful about political sensitivities. Other safe people are those your audiences feel are smarter, better looking, luckier or richer than they are. These are suggestions. Know that to be safe, just poke fun at yourself.
3. Know your audience. You want your stories and your humor to be appropriate for the age, sex, demographics, interests, political leanings, and even the idiosyncrasies of your audience. People will not laugh at issues that don't relate to them or that go over their heads.

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4. Finally, successful humor requires honesty and sincerity. Do not try for a laugh, just deliver your lines, and allow your audience to 'take them or leave them.' I like to think of successful humor as a special gift delivered with love.

"Like a welcome summer rain, humor may suddenly cleanse
and cool the earth, the air and you." - Langston Hughes

You can incorporate humor in your stories by using word choice, appropriate emphasis, timing, silence, pauses, vocal variety, non-verbal reactions, and body gestures. In addition, it may seem obvious, but do not forget to smile. Smiling sets a tone of joy. It also lets people know they can take what you said lightly.

In addition to thoughtful delivery, you may also want to try the following humor techniques:

- **Anachronisms or Misdating** – incorporate references into your story that don't fit the time frame.
- **Asides** – add comments that appear casual as if you were just reminded of them. Most effective speaker humor is planned, even if it appears spontaneous.
- **Banter** – use dialogue to make communication livelier.
- **Blendwords** – coin your own words to fit the image you want to project.
- **Callbacks** – make a second or third reference to something funny you said earlier. The original comment must have gotten a laugh and must be able to stand on its own.
- **Catch Phrases** – insert a common phrase in an unexpected manner.
- **Catch Tales** – mislead your listeners by implying a dreadful ending and then surprising them with a sudden trivial conclusion. This describes the classic jump tale.
- **Comparisons** – use similes and metaphors to describe something by likening it to something else. Aim for comparisons that are outrageous and ludicrous. Not the ones we may already know.
- **Double Entendre** – use phrases that have double meanings – at least to those with twisted minds.
- **Fractured or Twisted Fairy Tales** – creatively alter a familiar tale. Make sure your audience knows the basic tale.
- **Irony** – use words to express something other than, and especially the opposite of, the literal meaning.
- **Malapropisms** – misuse a word in a most unexpected way, especially by confusion with another one that has a similar sound.
- **Puns** – use a word or words that are formed alike, or sound alike, but have different meanings.
- **Props** – use selective props. If not overdone, they can add more than words can ever say.
- **Rhyming** – add creative rhymes or raps. Rhyming is a high-level type of humor. Know that the audience can appreciate it in small doses.
- **Rug Pulls** – use a series of three to provide a surprise. Usually, the first two items make sense; the third should be completely incongruous.
- **Twist Wits** – mutilate quotations, quotes, famous sayings, and proverbs by adding fresh, creative extensions.

Finally, give your audience time to laugh. All your humorous techniques and delivery will fall flat if you do not allow your audience time to enjoy what you said. Take your time. Plan your humor and practice your timing!

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It was Mark's first night in jail. After the lights were shut off, someone from another cell yelled "128." Everyone in the jail laughed hysterically. Then another guy yelled "34." Once again hysterical laughter.

Mark asked his cellmate John. 'What's going on? Why is everyone laughing?' John said, "Everyone's been here so long, we don't bother to tell jokes anymore. We just yell out the joke number." "Hey," Mark replied, "I'd like to try it. Can you give me a number?" "Okay, sure ... try 62."

Mark yelled "62." Nobody laughed. He tried again louder, "62." Once again silence. "Hey, what happened?" asked Mark. Why is nobody laughing?" John's answer was simple. "Some guys can tell 'em; some guys can't. Timing is everything!"

Linda Gorham spends an insane amount of time listening to comedy channels on Sirius XM in her car on her way to play golf and tennis. She used to teach a humor workshop, but it was too much work. Now she spends her days in semi-retirement trying to figure out what semi- retirement really means. Maybe she'll write an article about that one day. www.LindaGorham.com



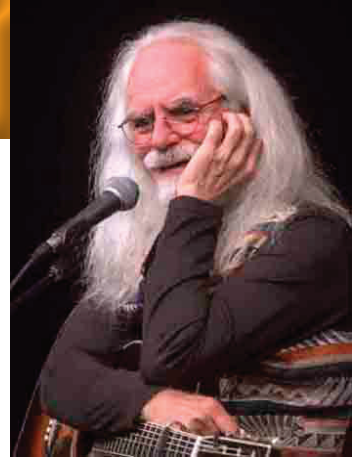
Gift of Storytelling by Ray Mendenhall

For me, storytelling is about finding the "we" that which is common and good in us all. It is about finding that which is true and heroic in the world and in people. Len Cabral, a professional storyteller, once shared that he goes to prisons to tell stories on a regular basis. His theory is that people in prison have not heard some of the stories that reward right and promote the heroic and good. By telling such stories in prison, Len is trying to change the culture and climate in the inmates' lives. So, it is with stories, what Jung called the "collective unconscious," those things that we all share in common at some level,

emerge in stories in ways that shape us and change us. Please join me in these times of conflicting ideologies and negative speech to tell the stories that shape the heart, mind and soul and promote the best of human virtues.

Ray has written, spoken and led workshops on storytelling for children, youth and adults. Storytelling and the Storytelling tradition is close to his heart. He has been heard to say, "coming to storytelling for me was like coming home. It is a place where I truly live." You may contact him at: rwmend@gmail.com

Need a New Story? by Michael Reno Harrell



My generation is, I think somewhat of a dichotomy in that we have seen greater strides in technology than any previous generation, and at the same time we were and still are the generation who loves objects from previous generations, which is to say, antiques.

As a young married couple in 1968, my wife and I furnished our first apartment not with only second-hand items, but also with what very well may have been fifth or sixth-hand furniture and knick-knacks. We spent our Saturdays scouring junk stores and antique emporiums mostly looking for old oak furnishings from the turn of the century.

I'll bet any of you born before 1960 or so remember when, before there were Habitat for Humanity stores and three-acre antique malls there were little owner operator antique stores in every town. These wonderful treasure troves always harbored what seemed to us twenty-somethings to be pieces of ancient oak furniture although that stuff was only about fifty years old at the time. Boy, fifty years doesn't seem like such a long time now does it?

We would buy some drop-front secretary or perhaps a chest of drawers, the old shellac finish blackened with age. On the way home with our prize we'd stop at the hardware and pick up a can of paint stripper and a selection of steel wool pads. The piece would then be parked in our gravel drive or in our dank basement if the weather were bad. There it would be liberally slathered with whatever lethal chemicals that can of stripper contained. After a few minutes that skin-peeling solution would bubble up the ancient finish while emitting a cloud of noxious fumes, which could burn the eyes out of a rubber doll and make a skunk's nose hairs curl. Then donning pairs of yellow Rubbermaid gloves, we would scrape and steel wool and toothbrush that volatile mess until the surface beneath slowly began to glow with a golden hue. A good deal of elbow grease would then quickly be applied with an assortment of tee shirt rags dipped into wood alcohol to remove the dripping goop before the stuff hardened into a crusty substance akin to welding slag. This cleanup ritual would be followed by the application of several coats of a mixture of paint thinner, a few drops of

cordovan liquid shoe polish and boiled linseed oil and, voilà; what was once a castoff would have been transformed into a thing of beauty.

And it had a history, i.e. it had a story. And we were now a part of that story, the only part of the story that we knew to be factual. But then, why would one ever let the lack of facts influence a good story?

So, in the evenings instead of twisting tinfoil around a bent set of rabbit ears in a futile attempt to tune in something worth watching on our tiny black and white TV, we would sit and listen to Peter, Paul & Mary or The Band or the Beatles on a little Philco flip top record player and make up stories about where each of our refinished furnishings had lived, and who had purchased them new for some nice home in some nice town somewhere.

We'd trace where our various pieces might have gone once the original owners (how about we call them the "Morgans") moved to a nicer home and updated to the new postwar modern style furniture. After all that old oak stuff had gone out of fashion. Piece by piece the Morgans had sold off and given away the oak pieces to folks here and there.

We made up a young couple, Bob and Mary Wilson who had served Christmas dinners to his cousin, Mark and Mark's girlfriend and her sister and her sister's now ex-husband on our round topped, claw-footed table back in the distant past. From there the table found its way into some second hand store where it had sat for several years until the store owner, a lady named Clair Winslow, passed away and the contents of the place were auctioned off on one rainy Saturday in November of 1954.

Our table was bought at that sale by a fellow named Phil Paxton who had driven over from Newport on a whim after reading a flyer about the sale posted in the window of Cas Walker's Supermarket. Mr. Paxton repaired Kirby vacuum cleaners and used the table as

Continued next page

a workbench for several years until he took a job with the phone company and gave up repairing vacuums. From there the table was handed down to Mr. Paxton's second son, Tom who promptly sold it in a yard sale to the lady who owned the little antique store in our home town where it sat until my bride and I gave it a new home.

Several years later when we decided to downsize our worldly possessions to only those items which would fit into the confines of a thirty-two-foot sailboat, we gave the table to a young couple, Richard and Gladys Murphy who we met at a seafood festival in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina. They carried the old claw-footed table with them in a U-Haul van to their new lives in

Hutchinson, Kansas where they both had gotten jobs teaching music in the school system there.

And where it went from Hutchinson, Kansas and what ever happened to the young music teaching couple is another story. And that story can be yours for the telling. See anytime you need a new story to tell, all you need to do is to simply walk into that big antique mall in your town and pick yourself a story. Or pick this one up from where I left off. As I said, why would anyone ever let the lack of facts influence a good story?

Michael Reno Harrell is an award-winning songwriter, as well as a veteran storyteller and entertainer, and he's from the South... the Southern Appalachian Mountains to hone it a bit finer. You may contact him at: mike@michaelreno.com

Arguing with a Fool Submitted by James Gregory

This is not my story it was sent to me by my Son, a Baptist Minister

The donkey told the tiger, "The grass is blue."
The tiger replied, "No, the grass is green."

The discussion became heated, and the two decided to submit the issue to arbitration, so they approached the lion.

As they approached the lion on his throne, the donkey started screaming: "Your Highness, isn't it true that the grass is blue?"

The lion replied: "If you believe it is true, the grass is blue."

The donkey rushed forward and continued: "The tiger disagrees with me, contradicts me and annoys me. Please punish him."

The king then declared: "The tiger will be punished with 3 days of silence."

The donkey jumped with joy and went on his way, content and repeating "The grass is blue, the grass is blue..."

The tiger asked the lion, "Your Majesty, why have you punished me, after all, the grass is green?"

The lion replied, "You've known and seen the grass is green."



The tiger asked, "So why do you punish me?"



The lion replied, "That has nothing to do with the question of whether the grass is blue or green. The punishment is because it is degrading for a brave, intelligent creature like you to waste time arguing with an ass, and on top of that, you came and bothered me with that question just to validate something you already knew was true!"

The biggest waste of time is arguing with the fool and fanatic who doesn't care about truth or reality, but only the victory of his beliefs and illusions. Never waste time on discussions that make no sense. There are people who, for all the evidence presented to them, do not have the ability to understand. Others who are blinded by ego, hatred and resentment, and the only thing that they want is to be right even if they aren't.

When IGNORANCE SCREAMS, intelligence moves on.

Jim Gregory bills himself as a teller of Mountain Stories and Tall Tales, but his stories stretch from the "Fast Bull" Stories about his family and neighbors in the Appalachian Mountains to "Blind Dog Willie" in the streets of New Orleans. He may be contacted at: Jimgregory2@me.com or jimgregorystoryteller.com



DRUMMING WITH STORYTELLING

by GREG WHITT

I'm Greg Whitt and I'm new to not only NCSG but also to storytelling. It was a great treat to share the stage with so many talented tellers at the Old North State Festival this past November. Watching some of my heroes was an education in a wide variety of styles. The ones that most captured my attention were those that added movement and sound to the tale.

Sound is often delivered as song. Songwriting has long been used to tell stories. The craft of bards and griots has carried this through the centuries. Since I primarily work in the world of music, that's familiar and fertile ground. As a percussionist, I'm exploring the use of rhythm and foley to bring my own stories to life. When done well, the reproduction of everyday sounds nicely enhances the listener experience.

Spring 2022

I often drum while telling stories and those instruments make for a great and obvious affect: footsteps, falling down, a crash. Even the old “ba-dump bump—ching!” adds a comic touch. And there are more-subtle approaches, too: changing the pace of the underlying rhythm to shift the energetic dynamic: faster for excitement, slower to calm. We do this with our voices and it's intensified with the drum. Add some audience participation with a dance break to liven things up! A bar chime can add a heavenly tinkle to bring a bit of the mystical into a story. A minute of flute music sets a mood before the tale even begins.

Beyond that low-hanging fruit, however, are the more interesting but easier-access-sounds that can be used as props. A bicycle bell is an auditory reminder of youth and the neighborhoods of old. A pair of crutches gives a great impression of first-person mishap. The creak of a rocking chair adds a bit of front-porch or parlor wisdom. Gritty rocks rubbed together are a castle door. The crinkle of cellophane sounds like a fire in the fireplace. The jangle of keys mimics a knight in armor.

Some might consider this a bit gimmicky, and yet audiences seem to love it. If they've already given a willful sus-

pension of disbelief, why not leverage that willingness to deliver a bit of over-the-top theatrics that surprises and delights? Such showmanship just may give others permission to show up more boldly and vibrantly in their everyday world, and I say that's a good thing.

Such sounds can be added in the moment, but it's also easy to add them to recordings after-the-fact. Because COVID has forced so many of us into online delivery it's an easy leap to start creating pre-recorded content. Admittedly that's not nearly as much fun for an audience or a teller, and yet there's a demand that can be readily met and easily monetized.

As I write this in my backyard studio, I'm simultaneously teaching an elementary school residency via YouTube. I regret that I'm not there in person, and yet I'm thrilled to have a residual income from a product created once and that pays me time and again with-



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out ever leaving the front door. My home studio consists largely of a \$20 green screen, \$20 in LED lighting, a \$100 webcam, a \$100 UBS microphone, and some free editing software on my laptop. The sale of my first virtual program easily paid for these costs and then some.

If you aren't already, consider reviewing your repertoire to see where a bit of sound might augment your work. And if you aren't already, I highly recommend taking a stab at documenting your work and polishing it for online sales.

At the beginning of the pandemic audiences were very forgiving of the learning curve. Now that we're a couple of years in, they're looking for a savvier production standard. Even so, a few hundred dollars will have you creating pro-quality video that will serve both you and your audiences.

Greg Whitt has received three competitive Regional Artist Project Grants in the field of folkloric music. Greg teaches through rhythm, song, and story from around the globe. He shares folk stories and travel tales filled with life lessons that are good wisdom for modern society.

Learn more about Greg Whitt at: www.drumforchange.com.

50th anniversary of the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough by David Joe Miller

As you are aware, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough. I attended the very first one, at age 13. I just now hung up the phone after talking to Jimmy Neil Smith and we were discussing that first festival and the following revival of storytelling in America. We had a nice long chat!

Jimmy Neil is now in assisted living in Johnson City, TN. He's doing "okay," getting stronger, but he's lonely and misses seeing people in downtown Jonesborough. The facility does accept visitors as long as you mask up and go through screening before entering.

I'll be visiting soon but I've also been sending him cards and notes/letters... mainly remembrances of storytelling happenings and Jonesborough happenings of the past.

He LOVES getting cards and letters! Would you please consider sending him one, now and then???

JIMMY NEIL SMITH'S ADDRESS:

Christian Assisted Living
C/O Jimmy Neil Smith
Room # 208
213 University Parkway
Johnson City, TN 37604

As you know, Jimmy Neil is the founder of the National Storytelling Festival and the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough. He is also a former mayor of Jonesborough and under his leadership the Jonesborough Library, New Town Hall and Jonesborough Visitors Center were constructed. It's difficult to imagine Jonesborough without the contributions of Jimmy Neil.

Please consider keeping in touch with him, even if it's just a single greeting card... it'll mean a LOT to him.

Thank You!
DJM

*David Joe Miller, Writer based in Asheville, NC.
Created the Jonesborough Storytellers Guild in 1994.
davidjoemiller.com*

What's Happening with Chuck Fink!

New Podcast from Chuck Fink and his wife, Cindy:
In Love with the Finks.

Join Chuck and Cindy Fink as we explore the fun and funny side of our 41-year marriage. Yep, fun attitudes and immaturity keep us young at heart and soul, and

makes for a long and happy series of stories. This is the 1st episode, "Making Lemonade out of Lemons" of our Podcast, In Love with the Fink's.

Click here to watch "Making Lemonade out of Lemons":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTY2W-earME>

Southern Piedmont Region by Deborah Winkler



The Southern Piedmont Region hosted a free Zoom workshop, on February 26, with Judy Sima that was offered to members of the NCSG. Each member was free to invite one guest. The NCSG Funding Money for the Regions made this possible. It was a pure delight to work with Judy as she expertly ran her workshop “Turning Memories into Treasures”! We had some fine participants in attendance!

Zoom breakout rooms were used three times so that participants were able to work with a partner on a personal story. In this way, they had a real chance to work

the process Judy was sharing. Returning to the main room, in-between these sessions, gave participants the opportunity to share with the entire group. Judy graciously offered to Zoom meet with the participants a second time so that they could tell their story from the workshop.

On April 23rd Judy conducted the follow-up session for February participants to share their personal stories which began from her initial workshop.

Wing Haven Gardens and Bird Sanctuary, in Charlotte, is truly a special place with an interesting history. Jill Goodrich, the Director of Education and Outreach, graciously partnered with us so that we could have our event in the gardens on April 9. We did end up using the education building while telling to the adults.

Our first session was for adults. Lona Bartlett called us to listen by playing her Native American flute! She kept us alert and chuckling with her telling of Why the Opossum’s Tale Is Bare. Trish Dumser dazzled us with an impeccable telling of O’Henry’s The Last Leaf. What a treat! Catherine MacKenzie led us into The Magic

Garden of the Poor which really did give us a magical experience! She brought all of our senses into the story and especially called up our compassion. My story was about Rachel Carson’s life with a few connections to Wing Haven.

Our second session was for the children. Lona brought out a Tiger puppet to tell The Crow and the Pitcher. This Tiger was lovable! We were all enthralled from start to stop! Trish told a story of how a bear and rabbits had a different idea of how to work a garden and then share the harvest. Trish’s bear was just mesmerizing! Catherine gave the special gift of her telling of The Empty Pot. Catherine’s cheerful energy gathered everyone into the moment by moment blooming of the story! My story told of flying squirrels in a nocturnal zoo house called The World of Darkness.

It was grand to gather together around storytelling in a garden, though it was a bit chilly. Let us hope there will be more of this to come!



Deborah Winkler, Catherine MacKenzie, Trish Dumser, and Lona Bartlett. Photo courtesy Steven Bartlett

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

“You have to understand, my dears, that the shortest distance between truth and a human being is a story.” — Anthony de Mello, from One Minute Wisdom



GUEST AUTHOR
KATHY JESSUP

As one of Canada's oldest storytelling organizations, Storytelling Alberta takes great pride in celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. In anticipation of reaching this important milestone, we formed an organizing committee months ago, and began dreaming of ways we could celebrate our achievement. Ideas were flying fast and furious, with members across the province connecting over the "Zoomiverse". From the beginning, it seemed obvious to everyone that sharing stories should be at the heart of our anniversary events, and so we moved forward with plans for a series of story circles, concerts, and workshops. Of course, the Covid pandemic continues to be a bit of a wild card, but we hope to provide both in-person and digital offerings over the coming months.

Two of the most popular ideas that emerged out of our brainstorming sessions are a pair of story video series, now running on YouTube. The public can also view them on Storytelling Alberta's website, where they'll find series descriptions and performer bios alongside the videos:

- **Around the World in 40 Tales** features performances by Storytelling Alberta members, past and present. Each Thursday, a featured teller live-streams

STORYTELLING ALBERTA: CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

NCSG's Catherine MacKenzie was a featured storyteller at the Alberta Festival. Though she's now based in North Carolina, Catherine spent a number of years in Alberta where she was active in the storytelling community.

a story on Facebook, introduced by the series Host, former Storytelling Alberta president Doreen Vanderstoop. The live-stream is recorded and then uploaded to a designated playlist on Storytelling Alberta's YouTube channel.

- **Tribute Tales** is a series featuring tellers "from away," with a new video debuting every Tuesday. This one is my baby, and I'm having great fun finding tellers to participate, and curating the line-up to make the most of the wide variety of stories and telling styles being offered. **Tribute Tales** features pre-recorded stories, where tellers begin with a short intro explaining their connection to Storytelling Alberta, pass along their anniversary wishes, and then proceed to tell their tale. These videos also run, as a separate playlist, on the S.A. YouTube channel.

I always marvel at the success of **Tribute Tales**, because the series could not have succeeded without the goodwill of participating tellers. My audacious concept involved asking storytellers from across Canada, and points beyond, to take time out of their busy lives and *gift* us a recorded story. Tellers are specifically invited because they have a personal connection

with our group. Perhaps they've presented at our retreat or festival, maybe we hosted them at a house concert or story cafe, or they could be former members who have relocated somewhere beyond Alberta. But they all have one thing in common; in some way they've been a part of our group's history, and enriched our storytelling journey. As I began to form a list of people to invite, second thoughts began to creep in: *Was it rude to ask someone to give us a story for free? What would tellers think of my bold idea?*

I needn't have worried! Our storytelling friends in Canada, the USA, and even Iceland, responded to the invitation with enthusiasm and generosity. Your very own North Carolina Storytelling Guild member, Catherine MacKenzie, is one of our featured tellers. Catherine was a member of our group for several years before moving to North Carolina in 2005, and we all looked forward to her **Tribute Tale** when it launched April 5th!

My initial hope was to have 40 storytellers participate, in honour of our 40th anniversary. I'm delighted to say that I've already reached that amazing goal, and the "yes" replies are still coming in! Today, as I look over my growing list of participating tellers, I am flooded with happy memories. It's hard to believe that I've been a member of Storytelling Alberta for over 25 years, and during that time I've

Continued next page

been fortunate to meet, and learn from, so many fine storytellers along the way. It all comes down to building friendships, forged by our common passion for telling and listening to stories. I am deeply grateful to the tellers who received our invitation and quickly agreed to join the project. As a result, **Tribute Tales** has become a virtual trip down memory lane for our membership, as each week they look forward to the surprise of which Storyteller they'll hear from next. I keep the line-up a surprise and only reveal the next teller one day before their video's launch. So be sure to keep Catherine's date under your hat!

As the pieces of my **Tribute Tales** project fall in to place, I have come to a powerful realization:

What began as gifts from outside storytellers to Storytelling Alberta, has actually become a wonderful opportunity for our group to pay it forward. Each one of these fine tellers has been a part of Storytelling Alberta's foundation story. As they honour *us*, we, in turn, wish to honour *them*- by sharing the **Tribute Tales** far and wide. After all, what better way to celebrate your anniversary than to throw a digital storytelling party, and invite all your friends from around the world to click their mouse, join the circle, and enjoy great stories whenever they want? Through YouTube, these

Click on each series' title for details & videos.

Website: <https://storytellingalberta.com/>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs6FxdbVG4bm9buMq6-bOPQ/playlists>

videos will be easily accessible to anyone/anywhere/anytime. It's the ultimate non-stop kitchen party!

So, to the members of North Carolina's Storytelling Guild, here's our open invitation: Please join us in celebrating Storytelling Alberta's 40th Anniversary. Each week new stories are added to the YouTube playlists for both series - you can drop in for a visit as often as you like!

Yours, in story Kathy Jessup

*Producer/Curator: Tribute Tales
Storytelling Alberta 40th Anniversary
Celebration 2022*

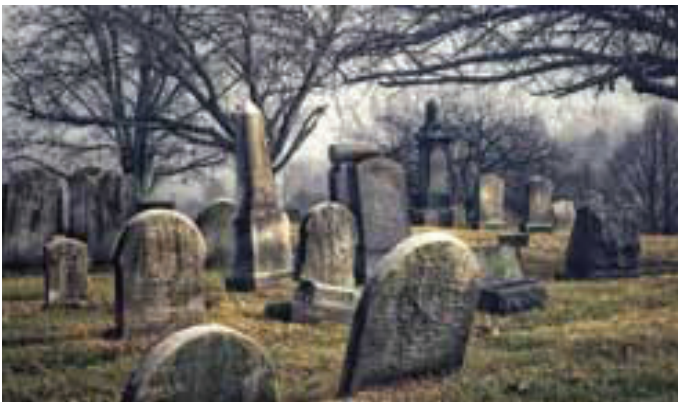
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What's Happening with Tim Lowry!

Congratulations to Tim Lowry – Award Winner

Two of his digital products received top honors in the 2022 Storytelling World Awards.



GRAVEYARD TALES OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

Over two hours of spooky stories filmed on location in the historic graveyard of St. Paul's Church in Summerville, SC. These tales are designed to crawl up your spine and tickle your funny bone. Bonus features include craft demos, book reviews, games, album downloads, and more!

Guild members can go to Tim's website and type in the coupon code SPOOKY at **check out for a 50% discount:**

www.storytellertimlowry.com

Or you can use this link when purchasing the **Graveyard Tales of the Lowcountry** the **price is cut by 50%.**

Coupon Code: https://www.storytellertimlowry.com/offers/Eh4Ao62F?coupon_code=SPOOKY



CHARLES DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL

See, hear, and taste one of the world's most famous ghost stories as Tim blends dramatic scenes from the novel with cooking demonstrations from his own kitchen. Bonus features include a holiday pudding recipe, reading list downloads, and a few surprises!

a big movement or gesture. While I was convinced that I was delivering the great, sweeping gestures necessary for my story, and suitably projecting and altering my voice, the video recording indicated otherwise. This was the first of many unexpected difficulties I encountered in the class, which I tended to find more insightful than I did discouraging.

I mention issues with my voice. Though we are not accustomed to viewing it in this way, speech is very much the product of a series of movements—they simply occur in the interior of the body rather than the exterior—and so I have to be as careful in my planning of speech as I do all my other movements. While speaking is obviously more of an everyday part of my life compared to choreographed gestures and movements, having to negotiate the mental energy I needed to figure out the verbal delivery of my story with the effort I was putting into acting it out proved to be a persistent issue. Concurrently performing a sequence of different movements has always been a weakness of mine. We do it every day—cooking, in which

you generally have to perform a precise sequence of small movements, sometimes simultaneously, immediately comes to mind—but since it requires so much conscious thinking on my part, it remains very challenging for me. Storytelling, for me, was a lot like cooking in that respect, especially as I moved on from my preschool-level story to the subsequent stories I had to tell in our class. These required still more from me, as they were designed for older audiences and thus were longer, more nuanced in their emotional range, and contained more details. This latter element brought many of its own challenges. On top of everything else, dyspraxic people often struggle with their memory; my results on my diagnostic test proved I was no exception to this tendency.

Ultimately, my strategy for dealing with this particular issue was much the same as my strategy for the other difficulties I have discussed here. What worked consistently was devoting enough time to practicing my stories. One of the harder pills to swallow when I received my diagnosis was the advice that I would likely always need to

devote more time than the average person to learning new things, but this advice was couched in the encouraging assertion that I *could*, in fact, learn. Prior to my diagnosis, this had always been a doubt of mine; I had repeatedly tried new activities and other pursuits and had always encountered some stubborn difficulties that had then seemed impossible to identify or define. Storytelling was one of the first entirely new activities I took on after my diagnosis, and encouragingly, I found that this guidance about time was, in fact, correct. Taking the extra time to really focus on and remember the details of my story, my gestures, and my other choreographical choices was key, as was recording and studying my performances. Once I had internalized these lessons, my goal of being able to fluently tell stories became much more attainable.

Anna Twiddy is a second-year student in the library science master's program at UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Information & Library Science (SILS). She focuses on academic libraries in her work, and also works as an intern in Duke University Libraries' Research & Instructional Services department. She lives in Chapel Hill. Anna may be contacted at:
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What's Happening with Kanute Rarey and the Hayesville Storytellers!

In March, Storyteller **Kanute Rarey** welcomed the Kennesaw State University (KSU) Storytellers to their monthly storytelling gathering in Hayesville, NC. These KSU Students brought their life stories and other tales to the stage followed by an open mic with writers, poets, singer song writers and storytellers.

**The Old North State
Storytelling Festival
November 4-5, 2022
at the Cary theater,
Cary, NC**

International Storytelling Center - Storytelling Live!

19th season of Storytelling Live! just began the first week of May 2022. Their performance season features 26 nationally-known storytellers in live afternoon concerts every afternoon at 2 p.m. (Tuesday – Saturday) from May through October. Special events are also offered throughout the season, including workshops,

evening concerts, children's concerts, and holiday programs in December. **Virtual options are also available this year.** Open the following link: <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/> and click on *Storytelling Live*.

Life of a Fanatic and Birth of a Fan

by Chuck Fink

This is a love story for you whether you are a football fan or not. It was a sad day in Mudville. My “Who Dey” Bengals lost the Super Bowl game in the last minute to The L.A. Rams. But that is just a postscript to this story.

And one more, PS for inquiring minds. The saying “Who Dey” was born in the Bengals Super Bowl season of 1981. Cincinnati is a German city like so many in the Heartland. Hudepohl Beer joined such stalwart local breweries as Burger, Schoenling, Christian Moerlein, Weidemann, and of course, Bavarian. Beer. Hudepohl vendors at both Reds and Bengals games would shout out “Hude here”, “Get in the Mood. Get some Hude”, or my favorite, “Last call for Alcohol. Get some Hude.” At a playoff game before heading to the Super Bowl in 1981, the fans turned Hude, to Who Dey, and the legend began.

In sports, a “homer” reflects a fan deeply in love with his or her hometown team, win or lose. In case that reference does not end in Simpson, nor begin with Grand Slam. My “homeritis” began when I was a little boy going to Crosley Field with my dad to watch the Reds play in the 50’s. We always sat behind a girder that blocked my view, but I didn’t care much because I was at the ballpark. Then in the 70’s The Big Red Machine roared into town, winning two World Series. I attended two World Series games and a big playoff win against the Pirates to seal the deal in 1971. Of course, I played hooky from work to witness all the Reds drama.

But my true love was the Bengals as I grew past 18 years old. I attended their very first game against the NY Jets in 1968 at the University of Cincinnati Bearcats outdated and small 33,000 seat football stadium, Nippert Field. Since then, in the great American tradition of misappropriation of taxpayer dollars, The Reds and Bengals have had 2 new stadiums since the days of Crosley Field, and Nippert Stadium.

As a Bengals fan, there were many more years that I was forced to love my homies as losers than winners. This, however, is a double love story of this true Cincinnati “homer”. At one point in the 90’s The Bungles, as they were nicknamed, had the worst record in all of professional sports. In 2019, two years before the 2022 Super Bowl season, the Bengals record was an appalling 2-14, and last year they ended the season 4-12. This year the new scrappy and confident Bengals landed in the pinnacle of pro football. This year wasn’t just a turnaround, it was born from the Twilight Zone.

I suffered through so many seasons until 1980, and since 1989. At last, 1980 sprung to action as CPR for the Bengals, and as a riveting love story for my family. Two monumental events shaped a new reality for me and The Bengals. I got married and they went to the Super Bowl, January of ’81.

Let’s spend a moment with my now bride of 41 years. Cindy went to a high school and college that had no football teams. She knew nothing of the sport, and all sports except field hockey. When her grad

school friend heard she was marrying a football fanatic her friend gave her this phrase to cheer on the Bengals. “Pump up the Defense, the offense gotta score”. Now Cindy is a professor emeritus in the field of communication. So much for that, because her cheer came out as, “Pump up the offense. The defense gotta score”. Basically, I watched my beloved Bengals on TV as they lost to the San Francisco 49’ers, alone, even though Cindy was watching with me. Watching is too generous of a word. It was more like she was fading into sleep with her eyes wide open. But my baby doll surprised me for our 2nd anniversary with the purchase of Bengals seasons tickets. Man did those tickets come in handy in 1989.

We have 2 sons, Drew and Greg. Drew’s first word in 1986, was “Boomer”, as in Boomer Esiason the Bengals quarterback at the time. The rest of this story is about Greg. Because of the season tickets, we went to the AFC cham-



WHO DEY!
Chuck’s Son, Greg

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pionship game against the Buffalo Bills in January, 1989. The weather was a pleasant 30 degrees and windy. The cookie cutter stadium, Riverfront Stadium in Cincy, was sold out. Our seats were along the 20-yard line. The Bengals won, but that didn't matter too much to Cindy and me.

Cindy was 9 months pregnant. My 5 foot nothing wife of 9 years looked like a 12-year-old with a watermelon under her blouse. She sat next to me, thinking "When will this self-imposed torture end"? Then it hit her. "I have to go to the ladies' room". It was halftime, the busiest of times for waiting to use the facilities. If you've ever been to a large arena or stadium and you're a

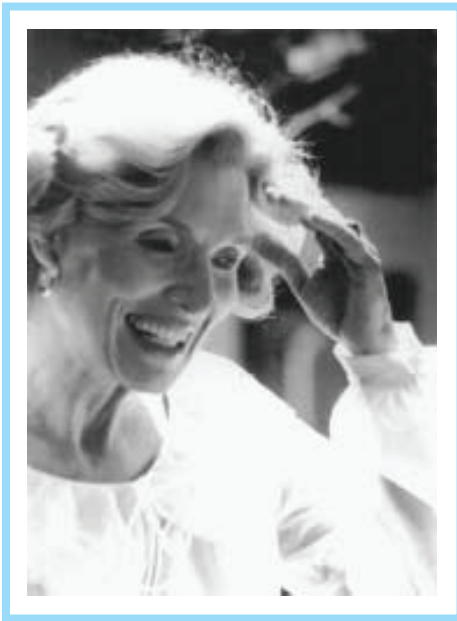
woman you know that lines to the ladies' room at halftime seem endless. When the long line of women football devotees, or beleaguered tagalongs (take your pick) saw my wife, they formed a gauntlet of love to let Cindy waddle to the front of the line. When she returned to sit beside me, she looked like she played 4 quarters against The Buffalo Bills all by herself.

The Bengals crossed the finish line with a victory. We drove to our suburban home around 7:00. Late that night Cindy's water broke. I cut through gas stations and park-

ing lots to get her to Good Samaritan hospital about a 25-minute drive...normally. As this abnormal chain of events unfolded, Gregory Ethan Fink, the newest Bengal fan of 1989 made his grand entrance at 1:15am the morning after the 1989 big game.

Today, Greg lives in Los Angeles, site of this year's Super Bowl and home to the LA Rams, the lucky damn winner. Greg is still a die-hard Bengals fan. Take a gander at the newest Bengal fan of 1989, taken just prior to the big game of 2022.

Chuck recently started his new Podcast, with his wife, Cindy. Prior to retiring from a career as a trainer and organizational consultant Chuck wove stories into his classes, consulting, and to any willing listener. He may be contacted at: charlesfink1@gmail.com Podcast at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTY2W-earME>



Nancy Roberts, author of Ghosts from the Coast and many other haunting tales. Photo: Ernest Ferguson. The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

After many years as a public librarian, one of my favorite genres is folklore. At times patrons requested information about North Carolina. Each year, fourth and eighth grade students came seeking materials for school assignments. Their quest sometimes

CUSTODIAN OF THE TWILIGHT ZONE BY THE EDITOR

led to North Carolina folktales and ghost stories. One popular author of North Carolina folklore was none other than Nancy Roberts. Her books were widely circulated for student assignments as well as reading enjoyment for all ages.

As a bestselling author, magnificent storyteller and performer, Roberts was often defined as the 'First Lady of Folklore,' author of more than twenty-five books. A number of her publications are suspenseful, often haunting. She had such rich knowledge of American folklore that Southern Living magazine christened her as a 'custodian of the twilight zone.'

Through the years the *JTHT* has featured an article called: *What's Happening With...* highlighting Guild storytellers. Eighteen years ago, I had an interview with Nancy Roberts and she became our fea-

tured storyteller in the March 2004 issue. She was also an NCSG member at that time.

Following the publication, Nancy invited me to come to Charlotte and have lunch. I was more than thrilled to accept her invitation. She drove us to a pleasant Chinese restaurant where the food was delectable.

But, let's digress just a moment. We were greeted at the door by the host, a pleasant young man, who escorted us 'almost' to the balcony floor. The balcony overlooked the main floor below. The young host was leading, followed by Nancy, then myself. Just as we started climbing the second flight of stairs, Nancy hesitated, turned back to me, with a puzzled expression on her face. "Where did he go?"

I stared at her, "I have no idea. My eyes were following his feet ahead of yours, as we climbed the

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stairs. Suddenly his feet vanished. He was there; then he wasn't!" There was a landing between the first and second set of steps. To the left of the landing, was a small dining area where guests were seated. I glanced at them. But our host was nowhere to be seen, nor was there an empty table where he could have seated us. Not sure what to do, we continued on to the balcony tables, where we took a seat at the second table. We never saw the young host again.

The routine of the restaurant was for the host to escort you to your table, place your napkin wrapped silverware on the table, seat you, and at the same time, leave the bill with you. I noticed two ladies pouring water into glasses and serving them to other guests nearby. Yet Nancy and I sat there... being completely ignored. We continued to look around, searching for a staff member. Finally, one of the 'water ladies' ambled over to our table, and gave us an inquisitive look.

Nancy, in her dramatic flair, expressed her exasperation by throwing her hands into the air

and exclaimed, "Our host just disappeared into thin air. We have no idea what happened or where he went." She described it the best she could, which wasn't likely to be believable. They must've thought we were daffy.

Finally, we were all set up. We walked down to the main floor, filled our plates, returned to our table, and visited during our meal. Following the meal, we visited the lady's room, talking and laughing about our bizarre occurrence. We were so bewildered and giddy by that time, we walked straight out the restaurant door, and forgot to pay. Suddenly a man came rushing out the front door shouting, "ladies, ladies, you cannot leave, you forgot to pay the bill, you forgot to pay the bill!" Oh, this was so embarrassing. We went back inside and Nancy paid the bill.

After returning to Nancy's home, we enjoyed the rest of the afternoon visiting. We laughed while recounting storytelling experiences. After her husband, Jim, came home from work, he sat down to visit. After an hour or so, I knew I must leave so they could prepare their evening meal. But we were in the midst of a

wonderful conversation. Before I could speak, Nancy said, "please, we want you to stay and eat supper with us." How could I resist? They were such a charming couple. We were having a great evening when suddenly, I realized it was going on 11pm.

I was in awe, and nearly brought to tears when Nancy insisted they should pray for my safe trip home. I will never forget how gracious and kind they were. I had also learned that both Nancy and Jim were ordained ministers. They held weekly church services in Charlotte, for residents facing uncertainty and hardship.

Sometime after my visit with Nancy, I decided our vanishing host must have been a ghost from the past. It's the only explanation I had. After all, I was dining with a 'custodian of the twilight zone'!

Sylvia Payne grew up hearing her mother tell family stories. A former children's librarian, she has been telling stories and presenting workshops for over 40 years. She is a former NC Humanities Road Scholar, a program which ended due to COVID.

Submit Storytelling Events for NCSG's Website Events page

You may submit storytelling events or festivals 'ANYTIME of the YEAR' (*Event must be open to the public*). The Guild webmaster must have the following information:

1-Name of Event, 2-Event Location, 3-Website Address, 4-Date and Time, 5-Contact Phone Number

Submit a minimum of 3 weeks PRIOR to EVENT

to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net

Accepting Articles

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

You may send an article up to a maximum of 1,200 words!

Article Deadline: September 15, 2022

Submit to: sylpayne@bellsouth.net