



OLD NORTH STATE STORYTELLING FESTIVAL 2023 BY WILLA BRIGHAM

Congratulations on the Success of the 5th Annual North Carolina Storytelling

Guild Festival. It was a monumental feat of great joy, laughter, singing and soul searching. Thanks to the partnership with the town of Cary, we have a permanent home for this awesome event. Our sponsors and committees all work together.

Four SOLD OUT shows is a testament to the audiences love of this venue and its storytellers. Our array of tellers was just what the Dr ordered. They were funny, engaging, mystical, enlighten, engaging, heartfelt and downright entertaining.

We were blessed with great audiences, a great planning team and backstage staff who took fantastic care of the performers.

Greg Whit introduced each teller with wit and charm. Lipbone Redding had us clapping and singing

to his awesome grouping of body music, sassy guitar and spoon stumping rhythms. An entire orchestra came out of his mouth! While entertaining us with his hilarious adventures from the subways of New York to Mexico and a variety of venues in between.

One listener said..."This was so much fun! I brought two granddaughters to the Saturday morning show. They were literally on the edge of their seat listening to Donna Washington's BooHag story! We loved all the performers!"

Larry Pearlman took us on an excursion of baseball in the 50's, the birth of a water fall, the shortest Broadway career in history and a dramatic example of how people can change for the better.

Our charming performers included Lona Bartlett, Larry Pearlman, Lipbone Redding, Donna Washington, and Kim Weitkamp, with Emcee, Greg Whit.

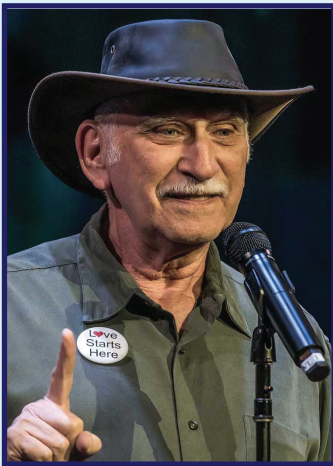
Willa Brigham, is an avid writer of short stories, poetry and songs. She is the host and TV personality of the Emmy winning television show, "Smart Start Kids" produced by WRAL-TV and a nationally recognized inspirational speaker. Willa's website: <https://www.willabrigham.com/>



Left Photo:
Grand Finale

Right Photo:
Audience





Larry Pearlman



Donna Washington



Lona Bartlett



Kim Weitkamp



Greg Whit



Lipbone Redding



Lona Bartlett & audience



Donna Washington & audience

Photos by Dan Routh

JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

Editor, Sylvia Payne
1621 Nathaniel Street,
Newton, NC 28658
NCSG Website:
www.ncstoryguild.org

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

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Calendar listings are free.

Vision Statement

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

Mission Statement

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

Goals

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

Correspondence should be addressed to the editor and will be considered available for publication, unless noted, "not for publication." The editor reserves the right to revise contributed articles for style and length.

Fall Cast of Characters

Sylvia Payne - Editor

Contributors: Lona Bartlett, Willa Brigham,
Chuck Fink, Linda Gorham, Donna Catton-
Johnson, Brenda Kay Kedford, Joan Leotta, Lee
Lyons, Ray W. Mendenhall, Marva Moss, Jim
Payne, Larry Pearlman, Mike Perry, Andy Russell,
Deborah Winkler.



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

This past June, The Asheville Storytelling Circle Presented *Stories for a Summer Evening* at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, Black Mountain, NC. Storytellers were **Zane Chait**, **Kyra Freeman**, and **Chuck Fink** with **Emcee, Kirsten Mitchell**. These great storytellers are NCSG members as well . . . **Janel Behm** was one of six performers on the bettersaidthandone.com online show "Nothing Personal" . . . **Naomi Faw**, **Janel Behm** and **Andy Russell** were featured tellers in August for: Moonshine Stories: Tales for A Full Moon on August 30th. This program was sponsored by: <http://Storytelling.org>

**"If you don't know the trees, you may be lost in the forest, but if you don't know the stories you may be lost in life."
Siberian Elder**

STORIES ARE BORN EVERYDAY

from the editor's desk

Not long ago I was caught off guard when I corresponded with a storytelling friend. She had written a story about a horse she had ridden as a young girl. She declared he had a "hilarious laugh that was completed with a giant snort".

Later I touched base with her. I told her how much I had enjoyed her story. I had no intention of telling her about my grandpa's horse. But something strange happened. Before I realized it, I traveled back to another place; another time. I saw the whole scenario in my mind. It became real. I had this sudden thought, "What am I doing? And why am I doing it?"

I began to type the memories as I thought of them. I couldn't stop. My fingers would not remove themselves from the keyboard. Before I knew it, I had a story in the rough before me. This specific event had not risen to my consciousness in many years. Yet her great story had inspired me to polish my own.

What stories have you seen or heard recently in your wanderings?

Submit articles for JTHT Spring 2024 issue to: Sylvia Payne, JTHT Editor, 1621 Nathaniel Street, Newton, NC 28658. E-mail: sylviapay98@gmail.com - Deadline for Spring Issue: March 15, 2024.



FROM THE PRESIDENT - Steve Tate

During intermission, I walked over to Nate. He was crying.

Putting my arm around his shoulder, I asked, “What are you feeling, son?”

“It means so much to me...to be here with your people. To hear these powerful stories and see everyone taking it all in...no screens, no fancy distractions...just people talking and listening from the heart. And that last story...I realize the bittersweet feeling...I love you and Mom so much...and I won't have you forever!”

“It means so much to me...to be here with your people.”

On October 21, I was honored to perform my “Old John” story as a part of Connie Regan-Blake’s [“Taking Your Story To The Stage.”](#) It was my fourth time participating in this unique three-day workshop. What a privilege to learn from Connie, a pioneer in the Storytelling Revival and a long-time member of our Guild! I joined six other tellers from North Carolina, Florida, Wisconsin, Virginia, and Georgia. We each told our workshopped story to a sold-out enthusiastic audience filling the [Black Mountain Center for the Arts.](#)

It was significant to me that my 46-year-old son, Nathan, was in that audience. He has had only a few opportunities to hear me tell in public.

I was the third teller. My story chronicled how I was initiated into our rural community by accidentally destroying my neighbor’s family heirloom tractor. Next, Juanita Brown’s compelling story took us on the journey of her 93-year-old mother, Millie’s final days of purposeful dying surrounded by family and friends.

The power of in-person storytelling. It has always been one of the most meaningful activities we humans can do. It always will be. Our world, and our US culture in particular, needs it now - perhaps more than ever. As Nathan and I and all those folks in Black Mountain experienced, it connects us as we laugh, and cry, and remember together. Storytelling inspires us to be more human...to be better people together.

That is the purpose of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild. Our BRAND NEW WEBSITE www.ncstoryguild.org, the [Journal of Tar Heel Tellers](#), our [Winter Workshop](#), [Spring Retreat](#), [Old North State Storytelling Festival](#), [Storytellers Directory](#), [Story Hubs](#), [Regional Events](#), [Scholarships](#), and [Grants](#)... all these and more help us fulfill this purpose. We are so glad you are a part of all we are doing together as the North Carolina Storytelling family.

As your President, I can’t say it any better than Nathan did:

“It means so much to me...to be here with you people.”

Steve Tate



BY
ANDY
RUSSELL

BYNUM FRONT PORCH STORYTELLING

*Andy said he had lots of fun telling
at Bynum Front Porch.*

Andy Russell was a featured teller at Bynum Front Porch on May 13, along with Susie Crate and Gaines

Steer. Bynum Front Porch, near Pittsboro NC, was featured in an article by Robin Kinston in the Spring issue. "Bynum Front Porch is a special place," Andy says. "It always makes me think of the general store my grandfather would take me to in Cool Springs when I was a boy." This was a special Mother's Day show, and the crowd was ready to hear some stories!

At the end of the night, Cynthia Raxter, producer of the Bynum Front Porch Storytelling series, took the stage to say this, "Whenever the storytelling is really, really good here... I get goosebumps. And I want y'all to know that I've got goosebumps all the way down to my tippy-toes right now. This has been a fabulous night." Bynum Front Porch features storytelling on the second Saturday of each month, September through May.

Andy Russell was born into a family and a culture rich with stories and storytellers. Every family gathering was filled with stories of history and hard times, simple pleasures and heartfelt emotions. Even though he resides in Florida, he grew up in the Western section of Piedmont North Carolina. Many of Andy's stories have related songs to complement the story. He is pictured with one of his rescue animals, Panda. She sings alto, but not very well. Andy may be contacted at: andy@andyrussellstoryteller.com

STONE SOUP FESTIVAL - MAY 2023 BY ANDY RUSSELL

Andy Russell was selected as one of the New Voice tellers at the Stone Soup Storytelling Festival in Woodruff SC this past April, along with Julie Bradshaw, Sandra Measels, and Amanda Lawrence. Lona Bartlett reprised her role as emcee and all-around fun starter. New NCSG member Gwendolyn Napier was one of the featured tellers, along with Loren Niemi, Mo Reynolds and Nancy Tolson.

Right: Festival location in Muse Building

Lower Left: Tellers are Pat Patterson, Julie Bradshaw, Sandra Measels, Amanda Lawrence, Andy Russell, Lona Bartlett

Lower Right: Andy
Photo credit: Deborah Belcher



I grew up in the Baptist Church in Hayesville, North Carolina. Almost everything was considered a sin by some folks in the 1950s. The three deadly sins were: owning a television, dancing, and attending ballgames.

My family owned one of the first televisions off Swaims Road. Our living room was jam packed on Saturday evening with the neighbors. They flocked to watch the brand-new invention. People talking, performing on the huge, black- and -white tube TV. Sometimes we only got two channels. You had to watch between the frequent static. Lines zigzagged across the screen.

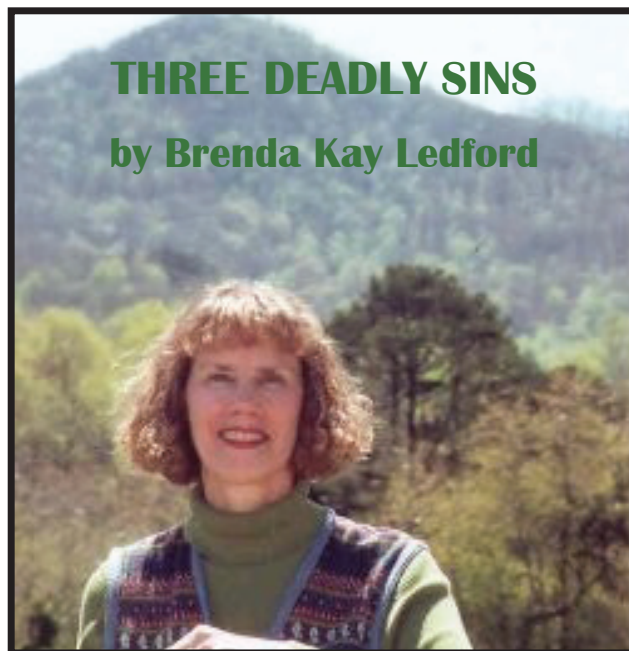
My mama would tell my brother, Harold, "Go outside and turn the antenna. Go right. Go left. No turn back. STOP!"

Some preachers were bitterly opposed to owning a television. They thought it was a deadly sin to buy one. They called the antenna on top of roofs "the Devil's horns!"

Some religious folks went to visit one of these preachers. They noticed a box in the corner of his living room with a sheet covering it. They discovered it was a sinful television. The preacher denied ownership of the TV and claimed it belonged to his son.

Another thing some folks considered a sin was dancing. When I attended Western Carolina University to get my degree in Early Childhood Education, I was required to take physical education as an elective. One semester the only physical education class available for me to take was Folk Dancing. Despite my religious upbringing, I enrolled in this. I was so self-conscious that my legs felt like sticks on the dance floor. I just knew some of the church members would catch me dancing and hightail it to tell the preacher.

Another deadly sin was attending ballgames. My mama and I signed up with a local bank to take a trip to see the Atlanta Braves. We laughed like two little girls riding the bus to see the ballgame. When we got to the parking lot at Turner Stadium, Mama's false teeth almost fell out of her head.



The parking lot was full of church busses. Dozens of church members were attending the ballgame.

Mama poked me in the ribs and said, "We're not the only sinners coming to watch the Atlanta Braves."

As we entered the gates, they handed us little towels printed with "The Atlanta Braves" on them. Fans waved the towels and shouted for their team. I got so excited, that I stood, jumped up and down, and hollered, "Go Braves! Go Braves!"

Mama yanked my shirttail. "You better pipe down. Those law men are staring at you like you are crazy. Sure would be too bad if they hauled your butt to jail and slung you under the cell."

But Mama and I had a ball attending the ballgame. No body kicked us out of church for committing that deadly sin. They were in the same boat as us.

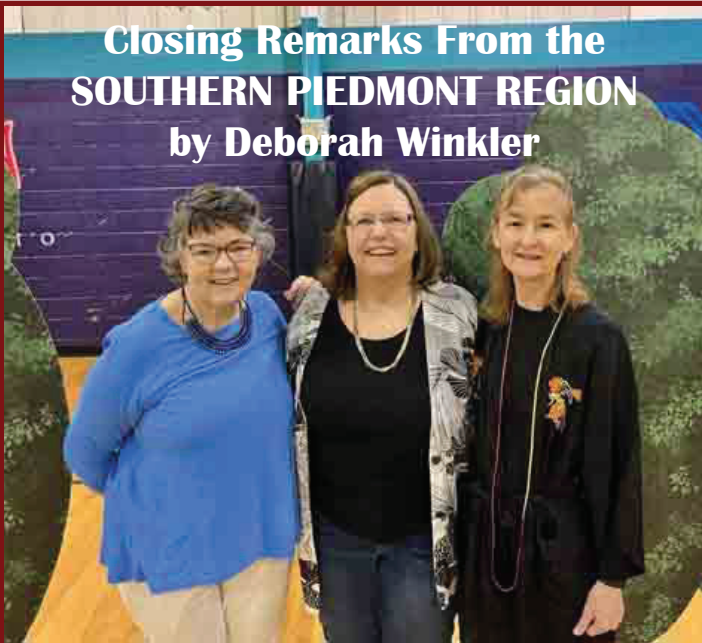
Times have changed, but back in the 1950s, owning a TV, dancing, and attending ballgames were deadly sins.

Brenda Kay Ledford is a retired educator, published writer, author, blogger, and award-winning poet/writer. She enjoys telling stories about her family and Appalachian culture. She may be contacted at: ledfordbrenda@hotmail.com. She blogs at: <http://blueridgepoet.blogspot.com>.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR STORYTELLERS!

Roadhouse Storytellers performed at the Page-Walker Arts & History Center in Cary, NC, as part of the Performances at the Page Series, on September 9, 2023. The performers were Robin Kitson, Ray Christian, Jessica Robinson founder of Better Said Than Done, and Sam Pearsall. Those who attended not only listened to great storytelling, but also enjoyed desserts and beverages.

Closing Remarks From the SOUTHERN PIEDMONT REGION by Deborah Winkler



Lona Bartlett, Catherine MacKenzie & Deborah Winkler

The Southern Piedmont Region had its final Regional Event at the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Charlotte on April 10, 2023. Catherine MacKenzie, Lona Bartlett and I had the pleasure of telling stories to a group of elementary children and then to middle school aged youth. Part of the fun for me was watching how Catherine and Lona each pulled them into the worlds of their stories! Catherine kept the elementary aged group wondering with her version of 'Soap' then Lona treated them to 'Tiger Has Cookies and Milk' with her famous Tiger puppet. 'Mountains of Gold and Jewels' (from Borneo) was my offering. The middle schoolers accompanied Catherine with singing as she brought

to life 'The Sword of Wood'. Lona played her Native American flute before luring them into her telling of the Cherokee story 'Opossum's Tail'. My story took us to Japan with 'The Burning Rice Fields'.

The Southern Piedmont Region put its Regional Funding money to good use by offering a Zoom workshop to the entire Guild. Lona Bartlett shared her many years of experience and her special charm to present ADDING DRAMATICS TO YOUR STORIES FOR THE TINY AND THE TALL on June 24, 2023. Lona not only told us but showed us how dramatics puts life into the delivery of a story! She demonstrated how to create characters without describing each one by using voice, body posture and movements, pace and facial expressions. I took more notes than I can offer here. This workshop got us excited to experiment with these possibilities!

The NCSG is making brave changes to meet the future with enthusiasm. The Guild will now operate with two regions, Eastern and Western. Being a regional representative gave me the tremendous opportunity to get to know some of the truly terrific people who are members of this vibrant storytelling Guild. Being on the NCSG Board offers one the benefit of linking arms with very fine individuals. Minds meet and imaginations mushroom!

Deborah Winkler served as the Southern Piedmont Area Representative from July 2017 through June 2023. Deborah has organized ZOOM gatherings for the S. Piedmont Region with various topics. At times she organized learning workshops and invited all Guild members. You may contact her at: winklerdeborah@yahoo.com

THANKFUL in ALL THINGS by Larry Pearlman

My back pain is visiting this morning, as it has for 11 years

And I am thankful

The arthritis in my thumbs makes it painful to grip

And I am thankful

Shoulders dealing with balky rotator cuffs make Pickleball challenging

And I am thankful

I am not thankful FOR these aches and pains

But they are minor in the fabric of so many things

that I am thankful for

And I give thanks for those numerous things/ people every night and every day

But a wise man once told me that it is not enough

To give thanks for our blessings

To be a beacon of Love in the world

We need to be thankful IN all things

So, when the computer goes wonky, the car won't start, or, as the song says, the dog bites and bee stings I remain thankful.

More from Larry - page 10

**A REAL ACCOUNT OF A
FICTIONAL INTERVIEW WITH A
TALL TALE TELLER
BY MIKE PERRY**



It has come to my attention that many of the loquacious raconteurs who choose to share stories group their tales into two categories: fiction and nonfiction. From the start I have always found this to be confusing, not the delineation of the two categories so much as the words: ‘fiction’ and ‘nonfiction’. Really? Who thought these were good descriptions of veracity and falsehood? This was the best Noah Webster could offer?

When saying the word nonfiction a few times, “Nonfiction, nonfiction, nonfiction,” I’m immediately struck by the prefix ‘non.’ Which of course is negative, meaning not. Not-fiction is supposed to equate to the truth, what is real. But, I seem to hear ‘nonfiction’ and ‘not really’ as synonyms. Even if they’re not, isn’t there some doubt implicit, unstated, underlying the truth when stated in a negative way? Nonfiction? That’s the truth?

Am I the only one to suggest that nonfiction, ‘not fiction,’ is really saying, ‘It’s not a lie?’ And if so, pointing out what isn’t a lie, is not the same as saying, ‘this is the truth.’ It merely points out that it is not a lie. But what IS it? If a child says, “I’m not lying!” Great, I think. But is he or she telling me the truth? Really?

The negative prefix ‘non’ seems to cast doubt on everything that follows doesn’t it? And by casting the slightest doubt, how can I trust that nonfiction is in fact the whole truth? Is searching for the truth the same as looking for the not-not-known? Nonfiction. Isn’t there a more positive word to invoke the truth than this?

If it IS the truth, why don’t they just come out and say it instead of not-fiction, non fiction. If a negative is used anywhere it should be with falsehood, Non-fiction is not true, so is ‘fiction’, but then so is the word false. Why not just say ‘falsehood and truth’?

The whole ‘non’ thing sets the wrong precedent. If you said, “I rode my noncar over here today, I’d reply, “Did you ride your bike? Your motorcycle? Scooter? Velocipede?” You can see where a guessing game would ensue, or at least a misunderstanding since I’m only saying ‘noncar’, that is, ‘not a car’, never clearly telling us what it is. So what is it? Why not just say uber, taxi, bus, or train?

It’s true that fiction is false, that is to say that fiction is not true. Now that is specific: ‘not true.’ So while a fictional tale is not true, a nonfiction story, that is to say ‘a true tale’ can be defined as being ‘not false or not-not-true.’ It’s like playing duck duck goose with veracity. The truth becomes a child’s guessing game. Not-not-not- not...true!

Since storytellers seem to be fond of using fiction and nonfiction to describe their stories, and to better understand my dilemma I present here a fictional account of an interview with a real storyteller, or better stated:

A Real Account Of A Fictional Interview With A Tall Tale Teller

I shook the little fellow’s hand, and looking down at him without being condescending, I asked politely, “What kind of stories do you prefer to tell?” I expected him to say, not true, that is, fiction or the not not-true kind, nonfiction. Either way once and for all I sought answers, definitions, hoping for the truth to be told. (or not)

Instead? He replied, “I’m a tall tale teller.”

This gave me pause. “You can’t be a tall tale teller,” I said, “since I have at least a four-inch height advantage.”

“No,” he said, “not a tall tale-teller, a tall-tale teller.”

Continued next page

“Oh?” I said, confused by the distinction he tried to make. “A tall tale teller?”

“Tall tale tellers can come in any size” he said, “just as short stories are often quite long.”

He was obviously unaware of the confusion he was causing as he now managed somehow to include the vertical and horizontal in trying to stretch both himself and his stories.

I was having a problem separating not true from not-not true in his explanation of who he was, who he was not and what he did and did not do. So, I made a final attempt to clarify.

“In all honesty,” I said, “are you trying to tell me that a short person can be a tall tale teller and short stories often aren’t short at all?”

“Now you got it!” he said.

Flummoxed by his response, I added, “I don’t know if you’re telling the truth or not, but it sounds like you’re asking me to believe that you are a short tall tale teller who prefers both not true and not not true tellings of long short stories.

“Not-not true?” He said. Then he paused in an effort to address my confusion until, continuing he added, “Look, double negatives equal a positive in nearly every language on Earth, but you’ll never find a double positive to equal a negative.”

“Ya right!” I said.

He walked away. And that’s the truth.

Mike Perry’s broad and adventurous career experience has taken him from the circus to the Census Bureau, from major motion pictures to maintenance man. He has taught Elementary School, and performed as a corporate edu-tainer. He was one of the tellers at the Old North State Storytelling Festival, November 2021. He may be contacted at: MikePerry.Storyteller@Gmail.com

STORYTELLING ONLINE

Artists Standing Strong Together – on Zoom

<https://www.artistsstandingstrongtogether.net/upcoming-events>

November 2023 Sacred Storytelling

Nov 19, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM EST - Zoom Meeting

A time of grateful remembrance when we honor artists who are no longer with us in body, but remain in our hearts and our ears. [RSVP](#)

Spaghetti Dinner: Tales of Twists and Twirls

Nov 29, 6:26 PM – 10:26 PM EST - Zoom

the ASST Monthly Special Program ~ always something new and different! [RSVP](#)

International Storytelling Center

<https://store.storytellingcenter.net/andy-bil-regi-virtual-12-8-20232000370v-1316/>

Watch Andy Offutt Irwin, Bil Lepp, and Regi Carpenter Virtual

December 8, 2023

This virtual ticket offers one link to a recording of a live show for this these tellers. You will be emailed the link from support@exponent.com on Friday morning. The video can be watched from 2 pm EDT on Friday until midnight EDT the following Monday.

Jingle Tales & Tunes

Regi Carpenter, Andy Irwin, and Bil Lepp

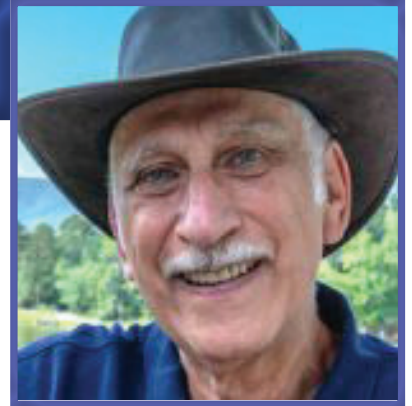
All ticket sales are final..

Watch: Taking the Tradition On with Janice Del Negro

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Gx9EW_NbMHs

MEASURING UP?

by Larry Pearlman



Ever feel like you don't measure up? I know I have. I'll listen to Donna Marie Todd tell the story of becoming a widow or Donna Washington talk about "Chairs in the Trees" and think, "I need to be telling stories with more depth and more soul." I'll listen to Josh Goforth or Greg Whitt and think, "I should add music into my stories." I'll listen to Donald Davis and think, "I should tell more stories about my family." I'll listen to Bil Lepp or Wallace Shealy and think, "I should be creative and make up some real whoppers." I'll listen to Sherry Lovett or Megan Wells and think, "Why don't I learn some great stories from other cultures?"

And you know what? I could probably do those things. Well - maybe not the music piece. But what is the heart and soul of storytelling? I think it's authenticity. Sharing stories that are YOU. Finding what you love and giving it expression. The world doesn't need another Bil Lepp and I couldn't be one anyway. But

maybe, just maybe, the world might enjoy an authentic Larry Pearlman. And I know just where to find one!! I'm betting the world will be a better place with YOU showing up and giving your gifts from your heart.

Don't get me wrong. I think we can all be better by watching, listening, and learning from other storytellers and incorporating what we learn into what we do but the core of my stories has to come from my core and the core of your stories has to come from your core. And when it does....ain't it grand?!

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



PUPPETS ARE "PEOPLE" TOO BY RAY W. MENDENHALL AKA THE JOLLY MAN

I never cease to be amazed by the power of puppets. Puppets have personalities, puppets engage people and people engage puppets. Children especially suspend reality and relate to puppets just like a person. You can be standing right there, manipulating the puppet but the kids (and even adults) will talk to the puppet as if you aren't there, as if the puppet has a voice of its own. Years ago when I was a seminary student I worked one summer in a church. It was Bible school time and I was in charge since that was my job description. My wife, Ann, had just made me a Grover puppet so I decided to use the puppet in the program. Every morning Grover greeted the children and talked to them, sometimes he gave the announcements. It was a great thing. One day, the teachers came to me and said, "You need to get Grover to talk to the kids about being too rowdy during class." Grover needed to do it because the chil-

dren listened to Grover better than they listened to the grownups.

I have been setting up recently at our local farmers market to promote an upcoming Storytelling Festival. The first week I stood around, played my guitar and sang. It didn't attract much of a response. The next week I took a couple of my puppets. The puppets would speak to people and low and behold people would respond, not just the children but the grownups as well. The puppets drew a crowd. I am currently working on using puppets more in my storytelling. As I go back to working more with children, I truly think puppets have a broader place and broader appeal in Storytelling. They draw a different kind of focus, a different kind of interaction and create a different atmosphere. They stimulate the imagination. They pique interest and are engaging. After all for so many of us old and young, Puppets are "people", too, with their own story to tell. Perhaps we should help them "tell" their story and so doing tell our own.

Ray has written, spoken and led workshops on storytelling for children, youth and adults. Storytelling and the Storytelling tradition is close to his heart. You may contact him at: rwmend@gmail.com

WILD WEEK

BY LONA BARTLETT

Every year, most often during the July 4th holiday, Dianne Hackworth organizes and executes a creative storytelling week in the mountains of North Carolina that she has named Wild Week; appropriate since we gather at Wildacres.

Dianne invites a renowned storyteller to come and lead participants in weeklong intensive training. This year Janice Del Negro was the leader of the pack. What an amazing time we all had learning from her. Janice taught us with a lovely blend of organized teachings while also giving us free creative time.

Our workshop days began with a brightly colored handout that prepared us for the workshop that day. With a poem, a quote, and a song of the day (that we listened to) on the neon paper we were able to

set our minds on the focus of the day. This gave us structure and a goal. Janice also brought thousands of beads that we could select from to make a string of story beads to help us all to remember that we have a purpose in the storytelling community. She passed out faceless journals along with supplies to decorate the cover and make the journal our own. We worked in small groups and created stories. We got to visit with good friends and create new bonds with other artists of the spoken work.

The kitchen prepared our food, we walked among the trees and spoke of fairies. We laughed, some of us cried, there were stories told on stage and around the campfire. It was a full week of concentrating on our passion. Ultimately, we learned that we are in this storytelling world together.



*Left Photo:
Janice Del
Negro*

*Right Photo:
Jane
Dorfman and
Lona Bartlett*



Continued next page



*Left Photo:
Jane Dorfman*

*Right Photo:
Robin Kitson
and
Janel Behm*



Robin Bady



Megan Wells

Lona Bartlett combines traditional storytelling, puppetry, music and her degrees in education to weave stories that entertain and teach. She loves to bring excitement and insight to the stage and classroom. Lona's puppet creations and scripts now span four continents. You may contact her at: lona@lonabartlett.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR STORYTELLERS!

We extend congratulations and praise to storyteller, Lona Bartlett who recently returned from a trip to Ireland. Not only did she spend time visiting Ireland, Lona was the American guest teller at:

**THE GLENS STORYTELLING FESTIVAL - IRELAND
19TH- 22ND OCTOBER 2023.**

The festival had a great range of events with six featured tellers including *American guest, Lona Bartlett, Kate Corkery, Frances McCarron, Orla McGovern, Colum Sands & and Liz Weir, MBE.*

<https://www.armstory.org.uk/glens-storytelling-festival>

Have you ever had a bottle of wine and can't believe what comes out of your mouth? I think that's because there is a story in every bottle and I have a story about a Beaujolais Nouveau from 1972.

I was young and newly married and my knowledge of French and wine was Boones Farm Apple, wee-wee?

Since I was not a wine connoisseur, I didn't know that the Beaujolais Nouveau comes out every year at midnight, the third Thursday in November just before Thanksgiving. Due to a creative marketing scheme in the sixties and seventies, this everyday wine of the workers was turned into something more. There was a race to Paris between the wineries in the Beaujolais region. The first wine to get to Paris at midnight would win the prize and their wine would go out all over the world and there would be dancing and celebrating the harvest.

My mother-in-law taught me a lot. She was a shopper, consumer and collector of the highest order. She collected antiques of every description and when she wasn't collecting, she loved to travel and bring home gifts for everyone. When she wasn't traveling, she held court in her fine, high four poster bed covered in the latest catalogs like Gucci or Saks Fifth Avenue. She knew I grew up in a house with one thick catalog, the Sears and Roebuck, so on my gifts she would accidentally leave the price tag to make sure I knew just how good a gift I was getting.

From one of her trips she brought me this bottle of Beaujolais Nouveau. Oddly, it had no price tag, but knowing her penchant for the finer things in life, I assumed it was something like a Rothschild and displayed it proudly on our bar. There, it collected dust for seventeen years and like our marriage, in wine speak, it was getting "dull" and "flabby" and the only thing "maturing" was me.

When I divorced, I stood in my living room sort of saying goodbye with one final look when I spied that bottle of wine. Ah ha!, something of value we had forgotten to fight about. I grabbed that bottle off the shelf, kicked the door shut on my old life and planned on celebrating after I unpacked. I moved at least four more times and with every move, I threw away useless and unused items, but I always carefully packed that bottle, saving it for some special occasion.

Another ten years passed when I began dating someone seriously. David liked nice wine. He had one of those wine refrigerators and poured his wine in to a decanter to let it breathe. One day we made plans to move in together.



The Beaujolais Nouveau, a wine story by Lee Lyons

"Wait," I yelled. "This is the wine opening occasion for which I've been waiting."

With great fanfare, I ran to the kitchen, got out my best crystal and poured. With the sun setting on the river, we gazed into each other's eyes and made a toast, "to love." As soon as the liquid hit our lips, we started coughing and spitting. It tasted worse than vinegar. It tasted worse than castor oil. It had a distinct aroma ofhorse....manure.

David did the math and said, "Oh my God. This Beaujolais Nouveau is over twenty-seven years old. Don't you know what Beaujolais Nouveau means?"

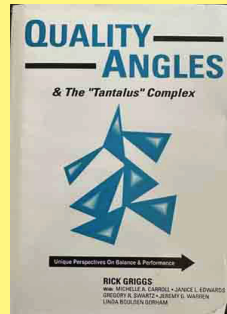
I shook my head as he continued. "The new wine. It is not the kind of wine you serve with liver pate. It goes best with saucisse au pain. In Southern, that's pigs in a blanket. It has a shelf life of one to two years at most. Unlike antiques and children, it does not improve with age."

Finally, we began to laugh at my stupidity, but inside I wasn't laughing. As soon as David left, I got that bottle out of the trash. Perhaps this was a lesson worth keeping from my ex mother-in-law. While I'd been waiting for something special, life had been happening every day. Sometimes the things we hold onto are never as good as we think and sometimes they never happen at all. Why wait to use the good china, take the trip, or let

Continued next page

the people you love know how you feel? Life, like a bottle of Beaujolais Nouveau, is to be enjoyed right away.

Author, Lee Lyons is a member of the Asheville Storytelling Circle and has performed at Tellabration at The Asheville Folk Art Center, Listen to This with Tom Chalmers at 35 Below, and The Joy Group (Just Older Youth) at her church. She may be contacted at: Mountainlyons@aol.com



2023 Finding Personal Success - Quality Angles and the Tantalus Complex by Linda Gorham

In 1994, when I was living in the San Francisco Bay area, I co-authored a book with five other people. Called Quality Angles & the Tantalus Complex, it examined personal and professional quality performance from a variety of perspectives. My contribution was to find people with unusual occupations and write vignettes on their careers, their success, their philosophies, and especially their advice for others. This was before the Internet. I combed through local newspapers and magazines to find interesting folks willing to talk with me. Then I had to find a way to contact them, and finally I had to get them to be interviewed. Whew!

My twenty-three vignettes included their suggestions for others seeking personal and career success. Here are a few brief excerpts (including the person who inspired me to leave corporate life for good and become a professional storyteller):

John, Ice Cream Taster (whose tongue was insured for a million dollars): It's easy to slap a new flavor together – that's 90% of the job. But (as for anything we do), it's the last 10% of extra care, love and commitment that gives the fineness and the balance – that's quality!

Cheryl, Professional Screamer: I'm living proof that when you enjoy something, with some diligence, you should be able to turn your passion into an income. And I suggest that no matter what you do, take some time to concentrate. When I concentrate and relax, I think more clearly, I act more swiftly, and I scream better.

Mark, Professional Water skier: If you don't like what you're doing, get out. You've got to be happy in your work to do well.

Pat, Navy Blue Angel Pilot: You must have personal integrity, you must be able to honestly accept your faults, and you must enjoy your job.

Victoria, Professional Fund Raiser: Make a list of everything you do well. It may be difficult at first, but if you really look within, you'll be surprised at how much you do well. Read your list and feel good about yourself. Allow yourself to say, "I'm great; I can be me better than anyone else in this whole wide world."

Bryan, Professional Bull Rider: Tough times never last, tough people do. No matter what you do – bull rider, lawyer, or street sweeper – be the best. You've got to believe in yourself all the time. You can't want anything. You've got to go get it.

And ... one more ...

Diane Ferlatte, Professional Storyteller: A good storyteller relies upon her audiences' reactions to determine the suitable embellishments that bring the stories alive. Storytelling is like a bridge. It connects the teller with the audience. I do more and get more when I can see their faces. Their facial expressions give me more to work with.

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. Website: www.LindaGorham.com

Spring Workshop, Wildacres Retreat Center by Donna Catton-Johnson

In May, 2023, I attended the Spring Workshop at Wildacres Retreat Center in Little Switzerland, featuring Megan Wells. What a wonderful place to hold a retreat! The mountain scenery on the drive there was spectacular and the center itself is nestled at the top of the mountain.

And what a wonderful counselor for storytellers is the nationally-known storyteller, Ms. Wells! She treated each storyteller in the group with the utmost respect, listening raptly to each of our stories and complimenting each strength in our performances.

After an initial rehearsal, as it were, we were each given notes as to how to engage our audience even more fully in our tales. The suggestions were completely tailored to each teller's presentation, no two alike. Megan's technique in teaching us how to improve was gentle, never didactic, so subtle. She drew out of each teller the story she or he wanted to tell in a way that made each of us shine. I highly recommend her to any raconteur who wishes to strengthen their effectiveness as a performer.



As for the Wildacres center, go there if you get the opportunity! The food, the rustic amenities, the friendliness of the staff, all were superb. I hope to attend again and again.

Donna is a storyteller, an freelance award winning actor, director, costume designer and former visual art teacher. Last year she moved from the Coastal area of South Carolina to the beautiful Mountains of North Carolina. Donna is an active NCSG member. You may contact her at: dramatree@gmail.com

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July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

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CAT NIP BY JIM PAYNE

I'll admit that I like to lay about. I lay about the front porch. I lay about the front yard. I especially like to lay about the barn. I say this because when I'm working, that is when I'm patrolling my property, I'm on top of my game, I'm alert, I'm watchful. Doing this over the course of a day, I get tired. I need to lay about to recharge, to re-energize, to be ready for the night shift.

Now, my sidekick Theopolis, or Theo as I call him, does not lay about. Ever. He's 100% on, or he's asleep. Works for him, doesn't work for me. Theo is I'd guess about 75 pounds of Doberman Pincher cleverly disguised as an 18 pound brown and white Jack Russell Terrier. I, on the other hand, am a svelte, 26 pound, well-groomed black and white Border Collie, named Wyatt. Better than Spot. How'd Theo and I get such names? You'd have to ask Mary, our owner. I don't have a clue.

One Saturday in July, one very hot Saturday in July I was laying about the front yard. Theo, as usual at 2 pm in the afternoon, was asleep nearby, apparently running a very fast race. An insistent flea, trying to establish a home base on my stomach, had almost all of my attention, when all of a sudden the front porch screen door opened and closed with a loud crash and Mary Louellen, or as Theo and I called her, Mary came charging out of the house into the front yard, hollering our names. It seems that something was amiss within the house, something about a mess in the kitchen, that Mary thought Theo and I might know about.

Theo and I, of course, because of our morning and early afternoon reconnoitering around our property, did not. We did, however, after a quick on-the-fly conversation ending at the barn, have our own ideas about the culprit. It had to be Guinevere, Mary's gray Persian cat. G, as Theo and I called her, did not have

our calm disposition, sense of duty to place, nor our appreciation for laying about. She liked to get into things, to rearrange

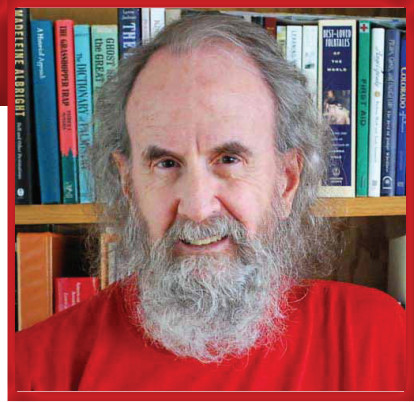
things, to gather things together in a jumble of items she called her art collection. Whatever that is.

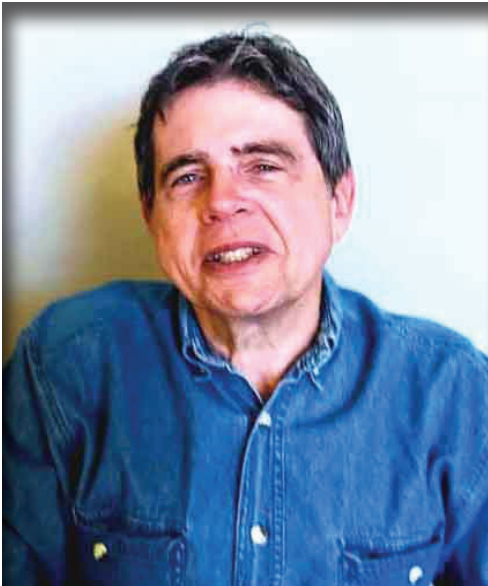
It seemed like someone, or something had opened cabinet doors, and pulled the dishtowels off of their hangers, dumping them on the floor. The disheveled pantry and the stove top also showed evidence of mischief. Although Theo and I were not allowed into the house, we were under immediate suspicion, as G had, we surmised created clues, locating them in the aforementioned areas, as to our indiscretion.

Mary was not pleased. She was not happy at all with our quick exit from the front yard to the barn, to ponder our situation and come up with a solution. She raced around the house into the back yard and headed for the barn. Just as she neared the barn door she heard the sound of a loud crash coming from the kitchen. She changed course mid stride and ran to the back porch door, opened it and went inside. Theo and I crept cautiously toward the back porch to see what was going on. Just as we arrived at the back steps to the porch, G popped out of her cat door with a mouse in her mouth and a satisfied look in her eyes.

Mary stepped out of the back door, stopped at the top stair with clenched fists at her sides, and glared at all of us. I looked at Theo. Theo looked at me. Cats!

Jim Payne is a poet and short story writer. He formerly served as a NCSG board member. He may be contacted at: jpaynehorizon@gmail.com





The Weaverville Community Center by Chuck Fink

first performance of any type to open the Center in October 2021. All shows are free, with tips strongly encouraged.

So far in 2023, The Weaverville Community Center has hosted 6 shows, featuring such artists as Michael Reno Harrell, Josh Goforth, Jill Totman, Wallace Bohannon, Connie Regan-Blake, Kim Weitkamp, Cynthia Berryman-Fink and Chuck Fink

September 7th, the freshly minted storytellers from a class taught by Chuck Fink shared stories they've crafted, rehearsed and strutted their stuff. It showed these newbies were like seasoned veterans.

On October 31st, two of the biggest names in storytelling graced our stage at The WCC. Connie Regan-Blake and Kim Weitkamp told stories solo, debuted stories crafted and told for the first time. This was a special show. Seating was first come, first served.

On November 30th, Weaverville Community Center hosts a very special storytelling show to wrap up

the year. The theme is Recovery and Redemption. The inspiration for this show is a man coached by Chuck Fink, Drew Carter. Drew, now 40, had a traumatic brain injury at 18. His story is riveting. Wallace Bohannon will share how he continues to recover from PTSD due to his service in Vietnam, racism, and poor life choices. Wallace shared some of these stories at other shows, now he will share how he has been working to overcome these personal hardships. Chuck Fink will tell his story of his continuing and never-ending recovery of 53 years from bipolar condition. Ray Christian returns to The WCC for the third time. Ray will explain how he has worked to recover from PTSD following the Iraq War, and overcoming poverty, racism, and physical pain. During this holiday season, this show will encourage listeners working to overcome life's difficulties, that life can be fulfilling and spiritual. So, come watch as these 4 storytellers share in the spirit of Thanksgiving and Christmas/ Channukah/ Kwanzaa, taking us from deep sadness and fear to feeling life now is a reflection of life well lived.

Next year we will host Tim Lowry and Lee Lyons with Stories from the Palmetto State, and more shows to be announced.

Chuck has appeared in numerous shows throughout the Asheville area and Jonesborough TN, telling personal stories filled with angst, drama and a healthy dose of humor. You may find Chuck and wife Cindy online at Chuck's YouTube station, Chuck Fink Storyteller. He can be contacted at: charlesfink1@gmail.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR STORYTELLERS!

This past June, Gwendolyn Napier was interviewed by Jeffrey Griffin on WSJS Radio, Winston-Salem, NC. Gwendolyn's interview was followed up by a short story which she shared with the radio audience. She is a performing and teaching artist, and a native of Atlanta, Georgia.



Pine Top Tea by Marva Moss

The fresh, green needles at the top of a small pine tree were said to be tender, and free of any signs of animal nibblings, therefore, they were considered to be the best needles for making pine top

tea.

One afternoon, Mama, our grandmother, announced that she wanted to make pine top tea! That was exciting news. The announcement would soon send four youngsters racing into various pine thickets near the farm. We knew exactly what to look for. It was our chance to chop down a tree or two, in search of the best pine needle clusters. As children, we considered it to be a mission to be carried out.

Pine top tea was our favorite tea! (Come to think of it, that was the *only* tea that we knew of). We hurried from the farm house to carry out our part of the tea-making process. Grandmother got a large pot ready, and filled it with water. In a short time, blue gas flames under the pot caused the water to boil, in preparation for making pine top tea.

When we returned from the pine top search, each of us believed that he or she had chosen the perfect sprig of pine needles. Mama seemed a bit surprised at the amount of pine needle clusters we had cut. From each child, she chose a few sprigs of needles. She gave the needles a good rinsing, then put them into the large pot. As the tea boiled, we children really struggled with our attempts to wash the stickiness of the pine needles from our hands.

Spoons, and cups of different shapes and colors, were placed on the long kitchen table. About a half cup of tea was poured into the cups, for the tea loving five. The kitchen was filled with a warm, wonderful pine smell.

Stirring helped dissolve the small amount of sugar placed in each cup. Finally, the twirling and tinkering of each spoon became silent. Then spoons were filled with hot, green tea. Breathing a few strong puffs of air onto the tea-filled spoons, the pine top tea was sipped or gulped down! How delicious! We enjoyed our cup of tea, and hoped that the large pot held lots more **Pine Top Tea!**

Marva is as a storyweaver, educator, and creative writer, she spins a 'story web' to stimulate imaginations, and generates a love for listening, reading and writing. She is a former Guild Board Member and very active in the NC coastal area. She may be contacted at: owlcottage@atmc.net

STEPPING LIGHTLY

Stepping onto the stage as someone else—it's something we all do as story performers. In fact, we often take on the roles of three, four or even more characters within a single story. But being one person during an entire show, takes a little bit of specialized preparation. I love both and I hope that once you've taken a look at this, you will consider doing the same!

I am preparing a new costumed character that I hope will bridge my roles as writer and performer and bring a fresh



by JOAN LEOTTA

aspect to my performance repertoire to kickstart my role as a performer in 2024—Louisa May Alcott. Yep, the great writer.

I want to highlight her role as a Civil War nurse. Ironically the treatment for the illness she contracted while serving her country contributed to her early death and considerable suffering up to that death.

Why a Costumed Character? And Why am I reaching to such heights?

Well, I love Louisa May Alcott. I read her poems and have read about her work as a

Continued next page

Civil War nurse. Moreover, I have already done quite a bit of research on Civil War nursing for a show I did for Fringe in Pittsburgh many years ago but have rarely performed. The script deals with a death of one of the young patients and it is too close to my own experience as the mother of a son who died. But I have performed other Civil War era shows with my humorous show on Belle Boyd and the generic nurse.

So, the amount of research to be done is not as daunting as one might think. Louisa will be my fourth costumed character. I also perform as Narcissa Whitman (first pioneer woman on the Oregon trail), Molly Dobbs, not a real person, but a combination of lower class Colonial women. She meets George Washington in my story, Belle Boyd's Aunt (a humorous account of the young spy's antics) and the nurse in *A Time to Heal*, the story of a woman caring for both sides, something which Louisa also had to do.

Many of you already do character reenactments as one-person shows. So, what's different here? I am planning to make this show about a rarely discussed aspect of the author's life. And, as a writer myself, I hope to bring some special insights into her lesser-known work, including her poetry. Yep, she wrote poetry too! I look at the script as a long persona poem, to be delivered onstage, one of my favorite places to be. And to interact with audiences of all ages as Louisa. I will be stepping lightly, I hope, onto stages and into the minds and hearts of new audiences.

Questions to Ask When Preparing a Costumed Character.

1. **Do I like the person I will be portraying? You will be spending a lot of time with him/her.**
2. **Am I prepared to do the research for either a real person or a generic person of the era? DO I have special knowledge of the character that will help me bring her across to the audience when I step on stage?**
3. **What age should my person be? How will I get around any large age discrepancies between my own actual age and hers? Make-up? Other?**
4. **What costume and other props will I need?**

For instance, for this show. I have a basic costume, although I need more items and hope that a grant from the Brunswick County Arts can help me with financing that aspect of my work.

5. **Do I have the ability to research beyond my script to be able to answer questions about the character while in costume?**

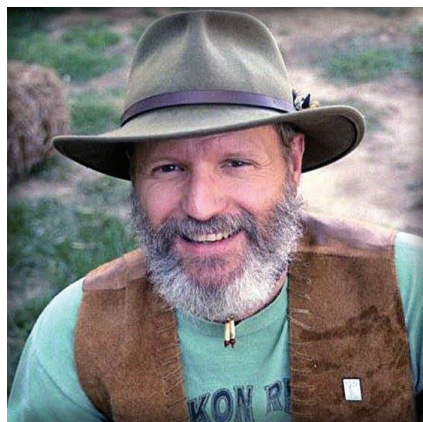
6. **When writing the script, have I considered the audience's needs to learn more, to have breaks of humor if there is a lot of "serious" material?**

7. **Have I structured a believable beginning and end for the show that account for my being the only person on stage?**

Joan Leotta, an award-winning author, formerly served on our Board as a Coastal Regional Representative. She was runner up in the Robert Frost National Poetry competition, 2022. She may be contacted at: joanleotta@gmail.com

WRIGHT CLARKSON SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The family of Wright Clarkson has donated \$1,000 to the NCSGuild, especially for SCHOLARSHIPS to our Winter Workshop. Wright loved storytelling and storytellers, and he loved coming to Winter Workshop. If you or someone you know could benefit from this scholarship, please help us spread the word! Go to: <https://ncsg.wildapricot.org/Sys/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fScholarships>



<https://youtu.be/1fh3akydNpI?si=qAOuCMOC4rQ8sn9E>

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JTHT 19

North Carolina Storytelling Guild presents
THE ART OF EDUTAINMENT STORYTELLING
WINTER WORKSHOP with Sue O'Halloran
At Fort Caswell Retreat Center

January 19 - 21, 2024

Register today at

www.ncstoryguild.org/events

Come join us for a weekend of deepening the connections in our North Carolina Storytelling Guild. Together, we will practice stories that illustrate pivotal moments of change related to social justice issues and our personal experiences. Our facilitator, veteran storyteller Sue O'Halloran, will

demonstrate how she approaches her stories that revolve around themes of race equity. These principles will apply to any cause that calls to you whether you are an active advocate or just beginning to take on stories with deeper themes. From Sue's examples, you will be able to distinguish between stories that preach in a negative and patronizing way compared to "preaching" as an artistic form that combines education and entertainment into stories that respect, enlighten, and emotionally move your audience members to take action.

Sue O'Halloran is a writer, story artist, television personality, and keynote speaker whose stories explore the complex issues of social justice. Sue is author of several books and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) curriculums plus producer of multi-cultural shows, video and films including *Tribes & Bridges at the Steppenwolf Theatre* and *More Alike Than Not: Stories of Three Americans – Catholic, Jewish and Muslim*. She was the produc-



er/director of the first online story festival in 2012 that reached fifty-two countries. Her Racebridges website showcased 260 video stories by professional story artists telling America's untold stories and received over half a million visitors each year.

Sue's best endorsements come from her audiences: "Sue

opened our minds to a much broader view of why society excludes different groups and energized us to deepen our commitment to transforming our world!"

Sue has been a featured teller at the National Storytelling Festivals and as a National Storytelling Network keynote speaker and community-building facilitator. She lives in Lady Lake, Florida, and can be found at:

www.susanohalloran.com

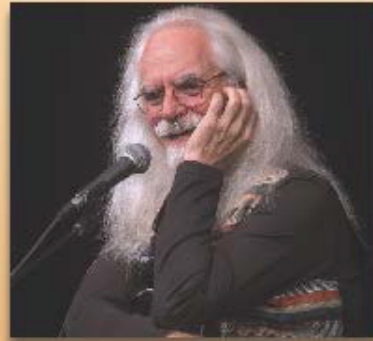
The Fort Caswell Retreat Center will once again serve as the location for the North Carolina Storytelling Guild Winter Workshop. The retreat center is located on the grounds of the Baptist Assembly at Caswell Beach, on Oak Island, near Southport, NC. The center offers historic facilities with modern amenities and relaxing views. Rooms are shared, with two people per room (two double beds and a private bathroom). Meals include a Friday night dinner, full breakfast and lunch on Saturday, our famous Saturday night supper of Stone Soup, a continental breakfast on Sunday, and a bounty of snacks! Space is limited to 30 people. We expect to sell out for Sue's workshop! Register today at www.ncstoryguild.org/events

TELLABRATION!®

with the Asheville Storytelling Circle

At the Folk Art Center on the
Blue Ridge Parkway

Featuring
**Michael Reno
Harrell**



WITH ASHEVILLE STORYTELLING CIRCLE MEMBERS:



Chuck Fink
Em Cee



Kirsten Mitchell



Lee Lyons



Kathy Gordon

Sunday, November 19, 2023 2-4pm

Tickets \$10 at EventBrite
or for reservations or information
call 828-274-1123 or 828-777-9177



Asheville Storytelling Circle presents TELLABRATION!® November 19th at the Folk Art Center featuring Michael Reno Harrell with Kathy Gordon, Kirsten Mitchell, Lee Lyons and Chuck Fink as Emcee.

<https://ashevillstorytellingcircle.org/>

Accepting Articles

Articles, stories, and storytelling news are needed for
NCSG's Spring 2024 issue of the
Journal of Tar Heel Tellers.

Deadline for Journal submissions: March 15, 2024
Send to Journal Editor, sylviapay98@gmail.com.