

NCSG's  
20TH



ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION

## Relighting the Spark - Storytelling Retreat

*Article and top photo published in June JTHT 1998*



*Masterminds to organize a North Carolina Storytelling Guild,  
Cynthia Brown, Terry Rollins, Dianne Hackworth  
(Photo courtesy Terry Rollins)*

**S**torytelling sparks were relighted in Guilford County during the weekend of March 28-29, at a retreat held at The Summit. Twenty-two tellers from across North Carolina attended the event. Cynthia Brown welcomed everyone and lit the ceremonial candle. Mark Russell and Terry Rollins provided a warm, safe space for sharing as they presented *Nurturing Your Storyteller*. Dianne Hackworth facilitated an informative session on Marketing, and after lunch, workshops on Music (led by Cynthia Brown and Ron Jones) and Festival Emceeing (with John Drury), were presented. An outdoor Story Swap came next with many tellers sharing new material, as well as old favorites. After dinner, an evening concert was provided by Brown, Jones, Drury, Hackworth, Rollins and Russell, and

Gwenda LedBetter. JTHT publisher Terry Rollins was also presented with a Certificate of Appreciation "for excellent service to NC Storytellers" from Dianne Hackworth on behalf of the High Country Yarnspinners. After the concert, many of the participants stayed up late into the night sharing stories and memories.

Sunday morning brought breakfast and more sharing, before the group met to organize the NC Storytelling Guild. The retreat ended with all participants lighting candles from the original one Cynthia had lit to open the weekend. Lots of hugs and farewells were shared as this magical event came to a close. "Let's do it again this autumn!" became the mantra.

The board met on May 31 to establish the mission and goals for the Guild, to determine board member duties, length of service, membership dues



*After twenty years they survived - Cynthia, Terry &  
Dianne Hackworth in 2018*

and benefits, and other points of business.

It was decided that the fiscal year for the Guild would run from July 1 - June 30. The currently appointed board members will serve through June 30, 1999. Elections will be held in the spring. Also, to maintain continuity of the office of President, the President Elect will assume the role of President, and the outgoing President will remain on the Board as ex-officio. Also, the office of the Treasurer will serve a two year term, while the Secretary serves a one year term. Members at Large will serve two year terms; however, three current members will only serve one year terms to set in motion a yearly rotation.

Upon discussion of a newsletter for the Guild, Terry Rollins offered to make the Journal of Tar Heel Tellers the official newsletter for the Guild, beginning with the September issue.

To support the activities of the Guild and the publication of the Journal, dues were set at \$35 for a yearly individual membership.

A few of the officers in the NC Storytelling Guild.



From left: Charlotte Ross, Cynthia Brown, Mark Russell, Dianne Hackworth, Sylvia Payne and Helen Morris; that nice, quiet, well-behaved back row of participants!



L to R: Unknown, Marvin Cole, Mimi Cole, Charlotte Ross, Brian Collier, and unknown



Ron Jones & Cynthia Brown



L - R: Gwenda LedBetter, Sandra Gudger, Cynthia Brown



L - R: Terry Rollins, Mark Russell, Cynthia Brown, and Gwenda LedBetter





*Helen Morris, Terry Rollins, and Ron Jones*



*Charlotte Ross*



*L to R: Sheila Evans, Sylvia Payne, unknown, Bobbie Pell, Hawk Hurst and Ron Jones  
Photos on page 2 and 3, courtesy of Terry Rollins*

**The following tellers  
present at this gathering  
continue as Guild  
Members.**

- 1- Cynthia Brown**
- 2- Marvin Cole**
- 3- Mimi Cole**
- 4- Sheila Evans**
- 5- Sandra Gudger**
- 6- Dianne Hackworth**
- 7- Ron Jones**
- 8- Gwenda LedBetter**
- 9- Sylvia Payne**
- 10- Terry Rollins**

**Quote in June 1998 JTHT Relighting the Spark Storytelling Retreat  
March 28-29, 1998 - Browns Summit, NC**

**"Don't content yourself with being just an ordinary truthful person; learn to tell stories."**

**— from a program for the annual meeting of the North Carolina Storytellers League, 1916.**



*Dianne Hackworth*

## JOURNAL OF TAR HEEL TELLERS

Editor, Sylvia Payne  
1621 Nathaniel Street,  
Newton, NC 28658  
NCSG Website:  
[www.ncstoryguild.org](http://www.ncstoryguild.org)

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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 & Articles

Sylvia Payne - Editor

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

On November 17, 2017 **Robin Kitson** was interviewed by StoryCorps for 40 minutes. Can you imagine Robin talking that long? Her story, *A Story to Polish Your Heart*, was recorded and retained as a part of their archives. StoryCorps was launched in 2005 by the Library of Congress, where stories are debuted each week on NPR . . . **Willa Brigham** told stories from her CD, *Stinky Johnson*, at Barnes and Nobles in Cary, in early spring . . . **Connie Regan-Blake** hosted her "Taking the Stage" workshop participants to an enchanted evening of storytelling at Black Mountain Center for the Arts, where they performed *An Evening of Stories*. Two of her six students were **Dottie Jean Kirk**, and **Jane O. Cunningham**, members of NCSG . . . **Linda Goodman** recently organized the "First Liar's Contest," held in Waxhaw, NC. **Janice Davin** was the 'Featured Teller,' and congratulations to **Lona Bartlett** who was chosen by the judges and voted by the audience as the best LIAR.

*"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*

## NCSG's 20th Anniversary

from the editor's desk

It doesn't seem possible that NCSG began twenty years ago. My how time flies! Within the past few years, I've spoken with many people who have confirmed my suspicions that the older we become, the faster time flies. Maybe it's just a fact of life.

Today my thoughts stretch back to stories of yesteryear. This past weekend I drove back to my home town to attend my high school alumni reunion. I rarely see any of these folks, so it was a shock to look into "ancient faces" I barely recognize or not at all. My mental picture was the youthful teenagers I remember from eons ago. So you may imagine, when I saw "old men" who were fat, ugly and completely bald, I had no clue who they were. You see, the majority of us grew up as hard working skinny farm kids.

Now, back to fact that time seems to fly. Nannie Lou, an

old friend whom I hadn't seen in a few years finalized my suspicion. She was the oldest alumni at the gathering. In several months she will reach the ripe youthful age of 102. She gave me a big hug and asked me to visit her. When I mentioned that the older we are, the quicker time flies, she gave a confirming response. She just nodded her head up & down, looked me in the eye, and laughed in agreement.

I look forward to sharing stories from our community when I visit with her. I may even share a little history about the Guild's 20th Anniversary.

In this issue you will find a taste of Guild history that stretches back to the beginning. But... more history is forthcoming. Sherry Lovett has readily agreed to publish a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet later this year. Thank you Sherry! So... here's to the Guild's 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday. And here's to the Guild members who have made the past 20 years so memorable!

Submit articles for JTHT Fall 2018 issue to:

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

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

Deadline for Fall Issue: September 15, 2018.





## President's Message by Elena Miller

**Y**ear before last when I was asked if I would become President Elect of NCSG I said I would need to think about it. Three days later I called Janice and gratefully accepted the challenge. I am so thankful I did. It is quite an honor. Thank you for your trust in my leadership.

The first project was the 2017 Festival. Terri Ingalls, Sylvia Payne, Jim Payne and myself focused on launching the 2017 NCSG Festival in Mt. Airy, which came to life in Andy Griffith Playhouse on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Thanks to all of you who helped make this festival a success.

On a cold rainy day in January Sheila Kay Adams, a seventh generation ballad singer, author, claw hammer banjo player and well known storyteller from Madison County, breathed life into the Winter Workshop at Fort Caswell January 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> as she read from her book and discussed "Just the Thought of Going Home." This was followed on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> with our Spring Retreat at Wildacres. Janice Davin, a retired teacher, professional storyteller and past President of NCSG, taught an enlightening workshop on practical strategies for planning and improving your stories. Our annual meeting/picnic is coming up on Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup> at Vandalia Presbyterian Church in Greensboro. Come hear the report on our activities of the past year 2017/2018. It is important to be there since this is our special 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we will be enjoying lunch, punch

and cake together in honor of our 20<sup>th</sup> year.

The upcoming 2018 Festival is especially important since this is our 20<sup>th</sup> year as the Guild. The festival will be near Asheville in Henderson County's Main Library in Hendersonville and will be followed by a celebration at Mezzaluna Restaurant in Hendersonville. Charter members of NCSG will be showcased as our featured tellers. You will receive more details later. Be sure to become a part of this exciting event and return your sign-up sheet to Janice Davin as soon as possible.

As I write this my thoughts turn to the many meaningful accomplishments and projects of our past year. As I look back to our beginning I also look forward to a triumphant future for NCSG.

*Elena Miller*

### NCSG ANNUAL MEETING AND PICNIC

**Details Coming Soon**

**DATE: Saturday, June 9th**

**TIME: 11am – 4pm**

**LOCATION:**

**Vandalia Presbyterian Church**

**101 W. Vandalia Road**

**Greensboro, NC**

### NCSG Presidents

1998-2000	Dianne Hackworth
2000-2001	Cynthia Moore Brown
2001-2002	Janet Harlee
2002-2003	Terry Rollins
2003-2004	Trish Dumser
2004-2005	Ron Jones
2005-2006	Kelly Swanson
2007-2008	Savaya Minifie
2008-2009	Ray Mendenhall
2009-2010	Claire Ramsey
2010-2011	Sandra Gudger
2011-2012	Frankie Adkins
2012-2013	Lona Bartlett
2013-2014	Sherry Lovett
2014-2015	Sandra Gudger
2015-2016	Janice Davin
2016-2017	Terri Ingalls
2017-2018	Elena Miller

### JTHT Beginning

Some of you may not know that storyteller and Librarian, Terry Rollins, was the mastermind behind this publication, the Journal of Tar Heel Tellers (JTHT). As the organizer and publisher, his premier issue was published in June 1994, and was copyrighted by the Library of Congress. Mark Russell, a friend of Terry's, was the computer guru and together they made this journal happen. Thanks for your ingenuity fellas!

Terry's purpose was fourfold:

- to link all storytellers of NC together;
- to provide news, interviews, an events calendar, and other items of NC storytelling importance;
- to serve as a resource center for all NC storytellers;
- to serve as a vehicle for promoting Tar Heel storytellers, libraries, folklore, oral tradition and reading.

### JTHT Subscribers Become Guild Members

Terry, as publisher and editor, had a number of subscribers to the JTHT, with myself being one of his subscribers. Five years later, in his June 1998 issue, Terry made a surprise announcement, "Current subscribers to the Journal will continue to receive the remaining issues of their subscription at no extra cost, and will automatically become members of the Guild."

### JTHT becomes the Voice of NCSG

Terry also made a second announcement proclaiming, "The Journal of Tar Heel Tellers is now the voice of the NC Storytelling Guild." By turning his 'baby' over to the Guild he made one special request: the masthead on the front page must always remain the same. The words, Journal of Tar Heel Tellers, must maintain the original font, "Matura MT Script Capitals" and remain over a light blue shape of our state.

*A bit of History by the present Editor, Sylvia Payne*

**W**OW!!! Is this fantabulous or what?!! North Carolina Storytelling Guild! A dream come true! As appointed president of this guild, I'd like to welcome all of you who have become charter members and those of you who are going to join.

There have been so many folks helping to make the formation of NCSG possible. First, all you dreamers who would get together at storytelling events discussing how terrific it would be to have a statewide organization to keep us in communication with tellers across the state. Then, of course, Terry Rollins who did something about it by creating the Journal of Tar Heel Tellers and aptly putting us in touch with NC storytelling events and people. And everyone who attended the Relighting the Spark storytelling retreat and with a resounding YES! put the gears in motion for this organization to begin.

Since then, the appointed NCSG Board of Directors has met for many productive hours - brainstorming, thinking, planning, designing, formulating, and

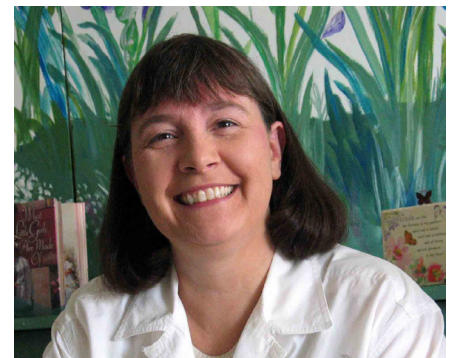
putting together a plan of action they perceive you, the membership, will desire for your Guild. Note, I said YOUR Guild, for that is what this is, a guild for the membership.

The Board is open to all ideas, suggestions, and dreams you have, so pass on to us your opinions on all matters of NCSG.

The NC Storytelling Guild is in its beginning stages, but oh! the places we'll go! May there always be a story in your life. And life in your story!

*Dianne Hackworth,*

*The only person who has served two consecutive terms as NCSG President - March 29, 1998 thru June 30, 2000!*



## Second Annual NCSG Conference Held

May 21-22, 1999 by John Drury

**W**ildacres Retreat was the location of this year's North Carolina Storytelling Guild Conference. The location, high (3300 feet) in the Appalachian Mountains was a perfect setting for this important conference. Everyone found Wildacres an inspiring and relaxing place to work on their storytelling.

Friday evening started out on a high note with an excellent meal provided by the Wildacres staff. The now traditional "Terry's Game" followed the meal. The game, started by our own Terry Rollins at last year's conference, is actually an exercise in extemporaneous storytelling that has the added benefit of introducing everyone.

On Saturday, after a hearty breakfast, everyone got down to business. Throughout the day, a number of very informative seminars were held. These workshops were designed by the Guild to help each storyteller further develop his or her storytelling ability. The subjects covered and the instructors were: Adapting a Folktale led by Ron Jones; Collecting Folklore led by Charlotte Ross; Telling Your Personal Story led by Ron Gullledge; Marketing 101 and 401 led by Dianne Hackworth; Putting Together Your Program led by Sylvia Payne and Helen Morris; and Puppetry led by Cynthia Brown.

After the seminars, there was an Open-Mic session in the auditorium. This session was designed to allow

conference attendees to try out new material or rework older stories on a knowledgeable audience.

After the Open-Mic session, everyone made a beeline for the dinner table where a lot of networking was accomplished between bites of excellent food. After dinner, the attendees as well as other guests at Wildacres went back to the auditorium where all the NCSG Board members on hand put on a storytelling show, emceed by John Drury. This show was professionally videotaped by a company out of Boone. The Board, at their next meeting, will decide what uses will be made of this tape. Closing out the evening was another Open-Mic session back in the group's conference room.

After breakfast on Sunday, there was a general meeting, where the Guild Mission Statement was discussed and voted on, passing with few objections. Later on in the meeting, it was decided to register the Guild's domain name (web address) before someone else claimed it. This address will remain without a web site until the site can be developed, which is expected sometime this year, at which time individual web pages will be made available to the Guild members.

*John W. Drury is a storyteller, writer and publisher who formerly lived in Todd, NC. John's article appeared in the June 1999 Journal of Tar Heel Tellers.*

## First GUILD Storytelling Festival

November 12-13, 1999 by Sylvia Payne

For a number of years now, there has been a revival of storytelling around the country. This spark, which spread far and wide, has finally ignited storytellers around the Tar Heel state to hold the first annual North Carolina Storytelling Guild Festival. A festival where storytellers could come together and share their stories with others. After much planning and hard work, this dream came to fruition.

The excitement began on Friday evening, November 12, 1999, in the auditorium of the Greensboro Historical Museum, in downtown Greensboro. Storytellers and story listeners gathered to listen to Orville Hicks, the featured teller for this evening's

event. Orville engaged the audience in laughter the entire evening. He amused listeners with tales about his growing up in the mountains of western North Carolina, which was interspersed with many of the Jack Tales that he learned as a boy. He said that he learned many of his stories from his mother and from master teller Ray Hicks. Some of the stories told were Jack and the Heifer's Hide, Jack and the Robbers, Hardy Hardhead, and others. It was difficult to determine who enjoyed the evening most, Orville or the audience, since laughter came from the stage about as often as it came from the audience.

On Saturday afternoon, November 13, 1999, the festival continued in the new Greensboro Public Library, next door to the museum. The afternoon started out with a story swap, enabling guild members who so desired to share a story with the audience. After the story swap, regional storytellers were featured, alternating between performing for parents with young children, and performing for older children and adults.

Tellers representing the different regions were: Willa Brigham from Cary, Sheila Evans from Red Springs, Mary Gray from Boone, Janet Harlee from Asheboro, Carl Schwanke from Charlotte, and William Wilder from Greenville, SC. These storytellers entertained audiences for nearly four hours with stories ranging from hilarious to the very serious. Also heard were folktales, family tales, historical

stories, and original stories. Sandra Gudger from Asheville was also scheduled to perform, but unfortunately, was unable to attend. Daria Barbieri of Greensboro kindly filled in for her.

Finally back in the museum auditorium, Saturday night brought this successful first annual festival to a close with ghost stories. Stories that gave you a chill, stories that made your spine tingle, and stories that made your skin crawl. Ghost stories were presented by Helen Morris, Cynthia Brown, John Golden, Sylvia Payne, Ron Gullledge, and Dianne Hackworth.

Our thanks go out to the Greensboro Historical Museum and the Greensboro Public Library for allowing our first festival to be held in such nice, pleasant surroundings.

*Sylvia Payne is a storyteller, who lived in Greensboro in 1999.*

## History

### First Winter Workshop - February 2000

"Our first Winter Workshop With... Heather Forest was a huge success! We all expected great things from Heather, but she far surpassed all expectations! Thanks to John Golden for setting up the location and to Heather for meeting all our needs! And to all who attended making it a truly special workshop." The preceding paragraph was Dianne Hackworth's quote from her President's message, in the March 2000 JTHT newsletter.

The workshop date was February 4-6, 2000. Members who attended Heather's workshop were in awe of her in-depth coverage. An important quote from Heather that I found in my notes was, "Get out

of your way when you are going to tell a story – you can't be too noisy or no one can hear you." She made a second, but similar statement the following day, "Do not get in front of your story so that you distract the story."

The workshop was held on the Baptist Assembly grounds at Fort Caswell, NC, near Southport. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina owns and operates this historical fort. Located at the tip of Oak Island this fort is listed on the U. S. National Register of Historic Places.

*Compiled by present JTHT editor, Sylvia Payne.*

## History

### NCSG's Spring Retreat: Storytelling 101

by Ron Jones

*This workshop took place at the Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC - June 3-5, 2005*

**S**o, are you the oldest or the youngest? Or are you the middle child- or the only child? Do you eat to live or live to eat? Are you a chocoholic? Are you a TV sitcom watcher or a documentary watcher? Have you ever jumped from an airplane? Do you know all the words to Puff the Magic Dragon? Well, that's how it all started out on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Catholic Conference Center outside of Hickory. And no, it wasn't a gathering of the Psychoanalysis

Society of America. It was the opening evening of Storytelling 101, a workshop for the novice as well as the seasoned teller- and everyone in between!

Workshop presenters Tim Lowry and Dianne Hackworth led the group of 25 storytellers on a roller coaster ride exercise meant to get everyone acquainted with one another and to get the storytelling juices flowing. And it did! By the end of the evening everyone was in a frantic race to get a



half-sheet form completed with as many initials as possible from folks who knew or had accomplished ideas or feats listed on the sheet. And that in turn got the storytelling flowing as participants explained how they knew a fact or why they had jumped out of a plane—even though the plane was sitting still...on the ground! It was a veritable scavenger hunt of personal stories.



Ron Jones

On Saturday morning the participants were self-divided into two groups: novice storytellers and experienced storytellers. Dianne and Tim then led the groups through discussions, demonstrations, and exercises that focused on the basic skills and techniques of storytelling and the resources and venues for the art form. Each group had the opportunity to work with both workshop leaders.

Tim used his **HOW TO BE A SUPER STORYTELLER (IN FIVE EASY LESSONS, MORE OR LESS) A STORYTELLING HANDBOOK** as an outline for his presentation. Especially for beginning storytellers Tim focused on the basic tools - visualization, characterization, and animation. He also covered choosing a story, creative ideas using puppets and props, as well as dealing with the issues of nerves, how not to tell, and grabbing the space as a storyteller.

Dianne focused on the business end of storytelling with the experienced tellers discussing marketing techniques, setting fees, and building an audience. With the storytelling novices she led them through a fable exercise resulting in their learning and

telling a story in a very short period of time using very basic storytelling techniques.

Apart from the workshop itself, there was an abundance of storytelling. On Friday evening, after the opening session, a story swap began that ran into the wee hours of the morning. On Saturday evening a storytelling concert was kicked off featuring Tim and Dianne, followed by stories by workshop participants.

After the Sunday morning wrap up, stories of inspiration were shared by the group. Tales of families and experiences common to us all were told. From mama learning to drive told by Janet Harlee to a moving story that sprang from a photo album that carried us across continents to war and back, told by Tim Lowry.

I'm sure as we all packed our cars and headed up or down the hills on Sunday afternoon we carried lots of new ideas and inspiration to help us grow as storytellers. But most of all I'm sure we all headed home with new friends- and of course- new stories to tell!

For those who missed the workshop...be sure to pencil in January 27-29, 2006 for the NCSG Winter Workshop with Janice Del Negro who will lead a workshop on "Reimagining the Folktale" at Fort Caswell, just south of Wilmington, NC. Keep a lookout for the workshop announcement and registration form coming this fall.

*Ron served as NCSG President - July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005. He worked with a number of libraries for many years teaching them how to organize storytelling festivals.*

## History

## The Memories Live On

*Five storytellers share their memories of that first Brown Summit gathering - March 28-29, 1998*

### **Marvin Cole - Incident at NCSG's First Meeting**

Mimi and I were at the initial meeting of the Guild. I will tell you a quick happening at the first NCSG meeting. We were on some kind of patio/porch setting and along with us was a Cherokee Storyteller. She was from our area but moved on pretty soon I think to Texas. Anyway, we were hassling over some aspect of the document we were

writing — perhaps the name — and it was going back and forth and seemed to upset the Cherokee teller. At this point some crows started telling their own stories very loudly nearby and the Cherokee lady said "See, even the crows are upset that we are haggling." I think perhaps we drove down together for that meeting.

*Not only does Marvin Cole portray the likeness of Mark Twain but he carries Twain's sense of humor and wisdom in real life.*

### Memories by Sandra Gudger

We were on a sheltered patio, storytellers from all across North Carolina. Some of them I knew and the others I had been eager to meet. There was a gentle rain, a nice accompaniment to the stories being told. I was excited to be there with this group which had come together to create something new for North Carolina, a statewide storytelling guild!

*Sandra Gudger has served two separate terms as Guild President. During NCSG's storytelling festivals in Brevard, NC, she faithfully served as our festival co-cordinator.*

### Spinning Words by Gwenda LedBetter

At seven am a thick fog hides the condos across the pond. No sound of geese honking. With the present out of sight, I think back twenty years to the birth of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild. I went with Sandra Gudger, Douglas Haynes, and Marvin Cole down to Brown Summit, near Greensboro to sit on metal folding chairs with Diane Hackworth, Terry Rollins, Cynthia Brown, Sylvia Payne, Ron Jones and others to create a new statewide storytelling ....? Guild! Yes. After a couple of hours, of speaking names into the circle that was what we decided to call it. We told stories, of course. I told one about a butterfly and one evening, Sandra and I were walking toward the cafeteria when we saw her.

She was thumb-sized  
Long elegant legs  
Off some ancient Egyptian vase  
Afraid of her? a little  
Afraid for her? Enough  
to push her off the tarmac  
trying to save her delicate frame  
from becoming a dot  
on the asphalt. Where her body  
had been was an ant, a fly  
another spider  
too far gone to identify  
"No more dinner tonight, my dear."  
Sandra said, with  
a final poke. Unperturbed  
by our intervention, the spider  
moved with royal dignity  
into taller grass  
while we stared down  
with our rumps in the air  
at the procession of a queen.

The talent of a spider to spin a thread out of herself and send those stories on was what we were doing in that circle of metal chairs. And the spinning has continued for twenty years.

*Gwenda LedBetter's first telling at the National Storytelling in Jonesborough, Tennessee was in 1979. She has traveled across the country telling and conducting workshops. She conducted NCSG's Winter Workshop in 2001, and received NSN's Oracle Award in 2006.*

### Brown Summit Was Just the Beginning by Dianne Hackworth

I attribute it to being in the right place at the right time with the right people. I had moved to Boone from Tennessee in 1991 and found few storytelling events occurring in that area. Upon meeting up with Charlotte Ross and Orville Hicks, we realized if we were going to have places to tell, we would have to create them ourselves. So we dug in, doing just that. Following that path led us to other tellers in the state and a few storytelling events.

The two events that stand out in my mind were StoryVine in Charlotte organized by Beth Hutchinson and Ron Jones' Wake County Storytelling Festival. These two events brought together storytellers from across the state, where I came to know Terry Rollins and Cynthia Brown. In between telling sessions, we and other tellers had brief chances to bemoan the fact we never got together except at these events and didn't know about the other events in which others were involved. Terry created the fantastic Tar Heels Journal to enable us to stay better connected, but we were all hungry for more.

Long story short (I know, too late), Terry, Cynthia, and I were encouraged by others to put together an event bringing tellers from across the state to not perform, but to participate in workshops to improve and keep our storytelling on fire. Of course, in the back of our minds, we were hoping this would be a springboard for a state guild. Don't you love it when dreams come true!

We chose Brown Summit for our gathering, it being in the middle of the state and having conference facilities and rooms for the little sleeping that occurred that weekend. We planned workshops, using tellers we knew could lead them.



The response for this first event was astounding! Tellers from hills, hollers, coves, towns, and cities gathered to Re-light The Spark. Turns out, everyone was on the same page. Before heading home on Sunday, we held a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a guild. Not only did the group choose to do this, letting no grass grow under their feet, they also right then and there selected a board to put this idea into motion immediately!

*Dianne Hackworth was the Guild's first President serving two consecutive terms. She is co-coordinator of our Winter Workshops and coordinator of our Spring Retreats at Wildacres Center in Little Switzerland, NC.*

### **Cynthia Brown's Story**

It was one of those sunny spring days in May, bursting with flowers, birds, and warm breezes in the park. The tired but joyful storytellers sat eating lunch after a fun day full of stories, crowds of children and fun in Charlotte at Mecklenburg County Public Library's annual "StoryVine" Festival in the park. Beth Hutchinson had done her usual incredible job of setting up the storytellers with hundreds of student groups for a day of small group shows.

Terry Rollins from the coast, Ron Jones from Raleigh and I were having a grand time visiting and catching up with old friends. We lamented that we couldn't get together as much as we'd like, due to all of us working full time and traveling as storytellers. I shared with the guys that if we had some sort of gathering for ourselves to just share, network and socialize it would be great. From there came the idea of us, yes us, setting up something. Terry knew Dianne Hackworth was from the mountains and thought if we included her in plans we'd have all the state regions covered. Dianne had experience too in setting up festivals like we three did. The ideas blossomed into an organization for the state which would knit together the many talented tellers all over the state.

It was a leap of faith, that first meeting. There was so much work involved but we decided to set a date and place and have a "retreat" for tellers to come to from all over the state. Greensboro's central location helped us choose Brown Summit Conference Center. After an excitement building visit, we had to pay a deposit. What if no one came? We'd be out the money besides the disappointment. But, again, a leap, of faith. Terry's existing "Journal of Tar Heel Tellers" was already a good way to get everyone invited. Ron knew everybody state-wide so....

The four of us as seminar leaders, planned a schedule, and worked on it all for months. To our delight, we had 22 storytellers interested and enrolled. Wheeeee we were off! The schedule was a fun mixture of us four, with some of my candles, mood music, and décor thrown in. Needless to say, it was a big success. It was a warm and nourishing weekend for the soul, brain, and professionally. Those wonderful folks and their common love of storytelling bonded...

What grew out of that was the foundations of the NC Storytelling Guild. We set up the name, officers, and plans for forming NCs first formal statewide storyteller's organization.

We had an interesting diverse group there of teachers, librarians, construction bosses, Gwenda Ledbetter (yes, the already famous national storyteller) and performers, folks from all over the state. Many are still very active to this day. Several have moved out of state, sadly we have lost a few who passed and then there are others who found new paths. I am always warmed by the fact we are like a big family- when we get together. Even if it has been months or even years, when we hug and start sharing, it's like we just saw each other yesterday.

Yes, that group was the foundation. Most of us became officers and board members over the years. The beginnings were a lot of monthly meetings around my dining room table. There were heated long debates, sweet sharing and lots of legal red tape to get, writing by-laws, tax exempt status, lawyers, accountants, and delicate feelings. But it was worth it and we all forged a long, strong organization we can all be proud of. For two decades NCSG has grown and thrived and has talented members.

So that said, as they say, "...the rest is history!..." and I am so thankful for the memories.

*Cynthia Brown was the Guild's second President from July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2001. She has collected ghost stories for most of her life, and is the author of three books of ghost stories and folktales.*

### **NSN Resources**

National Storytelling Network offers  
Resources online:

<https://storynet.org/resources/>

They also offer online Storytelling Articles:

<https://storynet.org/resources/storytelling-its-news/digital/>

## David Joe Miller's Successful Spoken Word OPEN MIC!

*series continues in the Storytelling Capital of the World, Jonesborough, TN!*

by David Joe Miller



David Joe Miller

**I**n early 2015 I produced our very first Spoken Word OPEN MIC at a music venue and bar in downtown Asheville. There was already a story slam in Asheville, the long running Synergy Story Slam that predated The Moth coming to Asheville so, I really didn't see the need to offer a story slam but there was certainly a need for a Spoken Word OPEN MIC!

At first we publicized the event for storytellers, poets, comedians and writers. We drew the line at music though. There were already several open mics in town for musicians and bands but nothing for spoken word artists and, since storytelling and spoken word are my main interests, we focused on those genres.

In the beginning, participants were urged to arrive by 6:30 and drop their name into the hat for a 7pm showtime. Each participant would have ten minutes of stage time. At that time we really didn't have a system to alert the participants of their ten minute stop time, other than me... walking toward the stage, getting their attention and waving them to end their set. Now we use a bell. At the nine minute mark we ring the bell once, gently, to alert the participant. At the ten minute mark we ring the bell twice, a little more loudly. If the participant continues past the eleven minute mark, we simply ring the bell continuously until they stop and exit the stage. We've only had to do that once though.

Now we use a signup sheet. I number off 9 spots on a sheet of paper and the participants can sign up for the slot they choose. Some prefer to go last, some first and others will choose a slot in between. Some of our regulars will message me, telling me they are running late but on their way and they'll ask me to sign them up. I always do for regulars or storytellers that I know. We draw some folks out of Virginia and traffic can sometimes delay them so it's understood that if that happens, all they have to do is message me and I'll sign them up.

Opening the event up to all spoken word was a way to be inclusive but, it just wasn't working. The blending of all those genres just didn't come off really

well as a show. The stories and poetry worked well together but the comedy was sometimes very dark and best suited for a late night audience. The writers work would sometimes be incredibly boring to listen to

and a good many writers had very low, soft voices and were not handy with a microphone. Eventually we stopped marketing the event to writers and comedians and instead focused more on storytelling and poetry. Even now the OPEN MIC! draws about 90% storytelling and 10% poetry.

In 2017 we lost our free venue in Asheville. The event is free to the public. We had already started producing an OPEN MIC! in Jonesborough at the McKinney Arts Center when we lost our Asheville venue. I do pay a small amount of rent in Jonesborough but, as venues go, it's very reasonable. I'm currently in negotiations with our ticketed venue here in Asheville to allow us to have a Spoken Word OPEN MIC! without paying rent. I'm hopeful that we'll work something out soon. In the meantime, Jonesborough will continue to be our only, monthly location.

The Jonesborough OPEN MIC! has been welcomed with enthusiasm and excitement. Each event the audience numbers 25-30 people of which 7-9 sign up to tell. One of the best parts of being in Jonesborough happens during the Teller-In-Residence program at the International Storytelling Center. Sometimes the Teller in Residence shows up to listen. Due to their contract with ISC, they can't participate but they can certainly attend and listen! So you never know who's going to be in the audience. Jimmy Neil Smith attends on a regular basis as well.

I feel that the main draw of our Spoken Word OPEN MIC! is the inclusiveness. ALL types of stories and poetry are welcomed. We promote it as having only one rule. The participant must keep their clothes on! Otherwise, anything goes. There is no theme, no competition and no censorship. We do include in



our publicity that the event is best suited for audience members and participants sixteen years of age or older because there may be adult content. The event is always free and I intend to keep it that way as long as expenses don't climb out of reach.

To find out more about our OPEN MIC! and ticketed WORD shows, as well as other storytelling and poetry shows and workshops in the Jonesborough and Asheville areas, visit our free website <http://www.storytellingcalendar.com/>. If you'd like to list your Jonesborough or Asheville area event, just send me the information and I'll be happy to add it to our calendar.

Spoken Word OPEN MIC's are just FUN! It's a great way for spoken word artists to try out new material in front of a live audience and it's simply a wonderful way for your work to be heard. If you're in the area, come visit. Check the calendar for upcoming dates and keep an eye open for our Asheville venue soon. If you'd like to start an OPEN MIC! in your area and you'd like some advice, feel free to reach out to me at [davidjoetells@yahoo.com](mailto:davidjoetells@yahoo.com). I'm happy to share.

*David Joe is the former staff storyteller for the National Storytelling Association in Jonesborough, TN. In 1994 he created the Jonesborough Storytelling Guild. See his contact information above.*

## Bynum Front Porch Storytelling by Cynthia Raxter

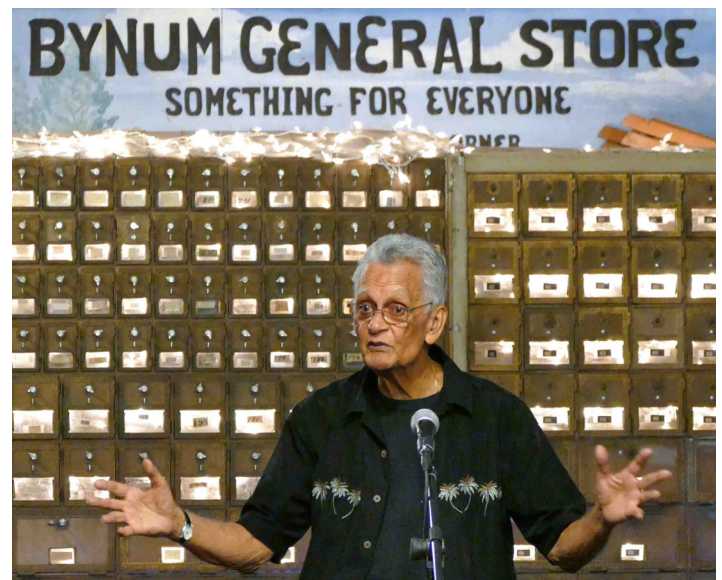


*Jess Willis in front of the historic Bynum General Store*

**B**ynum Front Porch Storytelling shows are in the historic Bynum General Store on second Saturdays, 6:30 - 9:00 PM, September - May. It features tellers of all styles: folk tales, true stories ... and the best liars in the state!

It's a fine evening! There are 3-4 storytellers... and a long intermission for visiting and refreshments! A comedian hosts, and keeps everyone laughing. It's like a party with your best friends - and your friends are really good storytellers!

The storytellers have won National Storytelling Festival contests - or more Moth slams than anyone - Emmys and Grammys... They hold the hearts of many fans. But - also telling are newbies and just regular folks that like to spin a good yarn!



*Ken Corsbie on stage at the Bynum General Store*

The evening will leave you amazed at the power of storytelling. The series is produced by Chatham County storyteller Cynthia Raxter - contact her if you have questions - or would like to be one of the storytellers! [cynthiaraxter@gmail.com](mailto:cynthiaraxter@gmail.com) <http://cynthiaraxter.blogspot.com>

The historic Bynum General Store is located at 950 Bynum Road, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Treat yourself to an evening of storytelling in Bynum - very soon!

*Cynthia Raxter is a storyteller and comedian, specializing in stories of growing up on a farm. She is the organizer of the Bynum Front Porch Storytelling shows which takes place at the historic Bynum General Store. See her contact information above.*



## Winter Workshop with Sheila Kaye

by Ann and Ray Mendenhall January 2018

The melodic tones of the old ballad rise as Sheila Kaye Adams hammer claws her banjo.... "I'm going back to North Caroliner, I going back to North Caroliner, I'm going back to North Caroliner and I don't expect to see you anymore." The tune strikes a deep place in us for the Mendenhall's were back in North Carolina for the winter workshop, to connect with old storytelling friends and to sit at the feet of Sheila Kaye Adams. Songs were just the gravy of the weekend for Sheila Kaye Adams guided us on a journey, the adventure, one might say, of telling our own stories.

This was the nineteenth winter workshop for the guild, celebrating its twentieth year as an organization. The weekend began with the annual introduction of our presenter by Terry Rollins and Dianne Hackworth which has become, over the years, a workshop favorite. Everyone wondered what wonderful and wacky way they would conjure up to introduce our leader. This year it was the NPR game show "Those in the Know" featuring true and false statements about Sheila Kaye Adams. The grand prize was a storytelling evening on Sheila Kaye's porch. Dianne asked and Terry answered, but alas, Terry was not "in the know," but the truth did emerge about Sheila Kaye and her many attributes and talents.

Sheila Kaye began right off honing our listening and telling skills by inviting us into a similar game. We would introduce ourselves by telling two things that were true and one that was false, the group would have the task of guessing the lie. If it had been a liar's contest there would have been many winners as no one guessed Sheila Kaye's lie and many of the crew bamboozled their friends. The best way to describe Sheila Kaye's approach to the weekend was an exercise in coaching us in telling stories. She modeled for us the important skill of active listening. As we shared, she picked up on many nuances and details, offering perceptive and positive advice, helping us to see how storytelling works and tried and true ways to shape our story to engage the listener. A storytelling workshop should teach you how to tell a story. If that is true then Sheila Kaye Adams led us down the right path. Sheila Kaye, of course, shared some of her stories with us,

but the focus of the weekend was on us as storytellers. Sometimes one comes to a workshop as an observer to see a master storyteller at work, but there were no observers in this workshop, everyone was a player, everyone was a participant. Sheila Kaye ended the first night with this assignment. Each of us was to write a title and the last sentence of a 5 minute story we would tell on Sunday, based on a personal memory.

Saturday began with loss or we should say, stories of loss. Sheila Kaye shared generously from her writings and personal memories. She spoke to us of the Appalachian traditions of death, dying, body preparation and funerals. Many of these ways demonstrate an acceptance of death and practices of closure. She shared her grandmother's view, prevalent in the mountain culture, that death was a part of life, "there is no death," her grandmother said, "just two births." Then she challenged us to write a story about losing someone close to us, "and," she said, "I don't want a bunch of dog and cat stories." It was to speak of personal loss and our reflections on it. For the rest of the session, we wrote our stories and those who wanted to, shared theirs with the group. It was a powerful time of deep sharing. Then with a twinkle in her eye, she shifted gears and challenged us to write a story with this first line, "He should have never let her in his apartment." It was to be a humorous story. After the break





we came back to share some pretty interesting tales that kept the group in stitches. Sheila Kaye reminded us that there are stories that are not funny. It is important



to tell these stories of pathos and loss. We tell these often for ourselves as much as for anyone. It is also important not to lose sight of humor. Saturday night, Sheila Kaye gave us a concert with old ballads and stories, a feast of the old and the new, the tried and the true complete with all seven verses to the "seven night drunk," the last three, which are not suitable for "decent folk, she channeled through her rather rowdy relative, Inez Chandler Chandler. "Imagination," Sheila reminded us, "is far more suggestive than anything we can say or sing." The highlight of the evening was when Jim Curry, a graduate student at UNC and great



Left photo: Jim Curry

fan of Sheila Kaye Adams, sang one of her old and many versed ballads he had learned from one of her recording. His performance was flawless. "This is how we keep them alive," Sheila Kaye said. "Without the young people learning them, the old ballads will die."

Sunday morning, we shared our stories. They ranged far and wide and spoke of many things. Then there was the wrap up. Among the gems that Sheila Kaye shared with us along the way were these:

The last sentence of the story is the most important.



Left photo: Sheila Kaye Adams and Lona Bartlett  
Photo courtesy Lona

Details are what make a story live, what makes it plausible.

It's important to go back to our memories. Our history is as important as what scholars share.

Storytellers change the world.

It's important to let the audience know when your story is over.

So now this here "story" is done. In the words of Sheila Kaye, "We're going to the house."

Ray is a storyteller and retired Presbyterian Minister, continuing part-time as a minister. Ann is a retired librarian and storyteller. They left North Carolina to be near their daughter and family in Kentucky. Ray may be contacted at: [rwmend@gmail.com](mailto:rwmend@gmail.com). Ann may be contacted at: [annc.mend@gmail.com](mailto:annc.mend@gmail.com).

Lower Group photo: Just before heading to Southport to meet for lunch one last time before going our separate ways.  
Photo courtesy Lona





*More Winter Workshop Photos by Lona & Sylvia P.*



Ray Mendenhall & Robin Kitson



Lona Bartlett, Catherine MacKenzie & Sylvia Payne



Cynthia Brown, Terry Rollins, Sylvia Payne, Dianne Hackworth & Ron Jones



Lona Bartlett & Kim Ellis



Sylvia Drake, Dianne Hackworth & Rusty Jay



Catherine MacKenzie, Robin Kitson & Sylvia Payne



Terry  
Rollins

&

Cynthia  
Brown

Sylvia  
Payne,

Lona  
Bartlett,

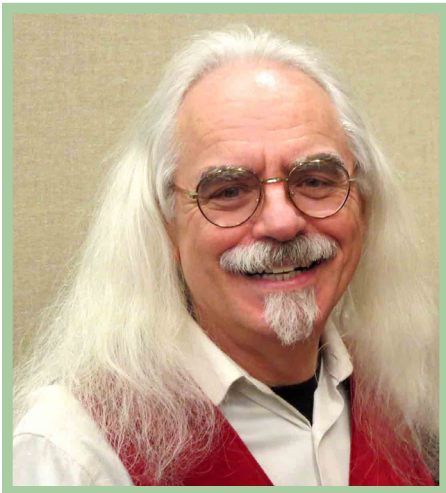
Charlie  
St. Clair

&

Sylvia  
Drake







## PREACHING TO THE CHOIR

by Michael Reno Harrell

**Y**ou meet the nicest people where stories are being told. Somehow stories just seem to attract the kind of folks that I enjoy spending time around.

I have been involved in some kind of performance since I was thirteen, whether it was acting and singing in school or theater guild productions or singing and playing in folk groups, I discovered early on that stories and songs attract interesting people. And that's where I wanted to be. So, with a new guitar case and an old suitcase, I hit the road looking for what Woody Guthrie had told me about in his songs, America and its people. Music took me to forty some states and to several foreign countries. And I loved it.

I came to storytelling later than many people. And I mean by that that I discovered that a person could actually perform stories in front of an audience of story fans. Then I discovered that people would travel long distances to tell and to listen to stories. But sadly, I didn't know such things existed until one evening in 2004.

I was on tour in Texas doing a series of concerts. I had made my living off and on for over forty years singing and playing guitar. I have performed exclusively

songs that I have written for the last twenty-five or so years. That makes me what they call a singer/songwriter, which means that my music falls into the folk genre.

On this particular night in that fall of 2004 I had settled into my motel room after a show somewhere in Texas and found that little laminated card that listed the channels on TV. I noted the listing for the local PBS station and punched 13 on the remote, thinking that Austin City Limits might be on. But instead of Willy Nelson I was looking at a somewhat stooped little old lady wearing a floppy red hat and a long patchwork skirt. She appeared to be standing on a stage in a large yellow and white striped tent full of people sitting on folding chairs. And she was talking about having to take piano lessons from someone named "Cousin Somebody" in some small South Alabama town. I was immediately sucked in to her story. After she finished her tale, a giant of a man in denim overalls and an old fedora hat sat in a chair on that same stage and told a story about a boy named, Jack and an adventure called, "Jack and the Heifer Hide." Who in the world were these intriguing people? And where was this tent? I needed to find that tent and I needed to find out how to get there when these people were telling their stories. As the program was signing off the announcer said, "You have been listening to Kathryn Tucker Windom and Ray Hicks. The program was recorded live at the National Storytelling Festival."

It was 3:00AM at home when I picked up the phone and dialed

Joan, (my wife and manager, though not always in that order). I heard a sleepy "Hello?"

I said, "Find out when and where the National Storytelling Festival is held. And if we are booked somewhere on that date, cancel the gig because we are going to be wherever this storytelling thing is going on."

Joan simply said, "Okay. Love ya. Zzzzzzzzz."

The following October I found a seat down front in a tent in a little town called Jonesborough and I discovered my people. I was surrounded by the most attentive audience that I had ever encountered. And I was mesmerized by the most wonderful storytellers in America.

That weekend changed my life. I decided that weekend that I wanted to be around these people, these tellers and listeners of stories. And since that weekend I have sought out those people. And now songs and stories have become my life. And because of those people my life is blessed.

So, here's to you. Here's to all of you story lovers out there who feel the same way I do about not only the stories, but also about the people who tell and listen to them. We are family.

Oh, I know. I'm preaching to the choir.

*Michael Reno Harrell can occasionally be found at the foot of Yellow Gap in Burke County, North Carolina...that is when he isn't out performing around the country. He may be contacted at [joan@michaelreno.com](mailto:joan@michaelreno.com)*

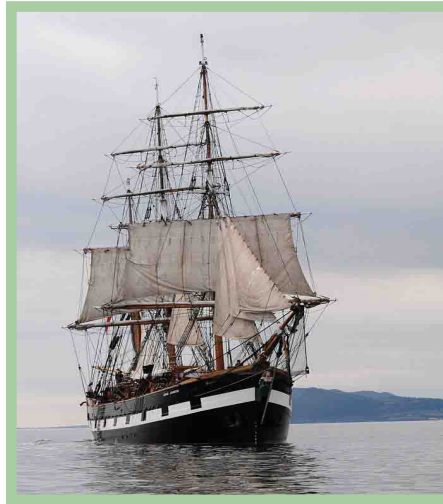


# THE WRECK OF THE SEA VENTURE

by Azalea R. Bolton

In 1607 the London Company established a settlement in Jamestown, Virginia. Then in 1608, supplies and more settlers arrived there to bring the population to around 200 brave souls. At this point there had already been many deaths, possibly due to lack of experience as to how to survive in this new world that they found themselves in. We can only imagine how it would be to try and live in this different climate and soil composition than what they had grown up with. Then, too, a lot of them were probably affluent members of society who were more used to giving orders than doing the actual physical labor that was required.

A good example of the kind of people that were needed to survive in this new world was given by Capt. John Smith, Third President of the Council of Jamestown; in response to a letter from the investors that arrived with the second supply mission. The London Company investors demanded that the colonists send goods to pay the cost of the voyage, a lump of gold, a member of the lost Roanoke Colony, and verification that they had found the South Sea. Capt. Smith sent a letter in reply that came to be known as "Smith's Rude Reply". Part of this letter says: "When you send againe I entreat you rather send but thirty carpenters, husbandmen, gardeners, fishermen, blacksmith, masons, and diggers up of trees, roots, well provided, than a thousand of such as wee have." I can't help but notice that all of these he listed were jobs done by working class people not anything



associated with the royalty of that day.

The London Company investors must have understood Capt. Smith's message. The third supply mission to Jamestown was better equipped and was the largest that had been sent so far. They had a new ship built called "Sea Venture" and put their most experienced man over it, Christopher Newport. This was a 300-ton vessel which was designed as an immigrant ship and her guns were put on the main deck instead of below deck where they were usually placed. This also meant the walls of the ship did not have to be double-timbered. The hold of the ship was sheathed (protective covering) and furnished for passengers.

The "Sea Venture" set sail from Plymouth, England on June 2, 1609, as the flagship of the seven-ship fleet; along with two pinnaces (small sailing ships) in tow. This fleet of ships had between 500 to 600 people on board along with lots of much needed supplies for the Jamestown Colony.

On July 24<sup>th</sup> the fleet ran into a strong storm (probably a

hurricane) and the ships ended up getting separated. One of the pinnaces, named "Catch" went down and all of those who were onboard perished. The "Sea Venture" fought the winds and waves of the storm for three days. It was soon apparent to those on board that the newly-built ship had a fatal flaw. Her timbers had not been allowed to set so the caulking did not hold. All the hands who were on deck started bailing, but the water continued to rise in the hold of the ship.

The ship's starboard side guns were dumped overboard to try and help raise the ship up out of the water, but this turned out to be just a temporary solution. The Admiral of the Company, Sir George Somars, was at the helm of the ship throughout the three-day storm. On July 25<sup>th</sup> he spied land. The water in the hold of the ship had risen to 9 feet and everybody on board was exhausted from bailing water. At this point, Sir Somars decided to deliberately drive the ship onto the reefs of Discovery Bay (eastern Bermuda) to prevent it from sinking. Apparently, this was the right choice since all 150 people on board were saved along with one dog.

One of those survivors on board the "Sea Venture" was my great, great, great (not sure how many greats) grandfather, John Thomas, who was called "John the Immigrant" in our family genealogy (since there has been a John Thomas in just about every generation since that time). I don't

think it was just fate that "John the Immigrant" happened to be onboard the "Sea Venture" or fate that allowed all 150 people to survive. I don't believe in fate myself. I believe that God is in control no matter what the circumstances and that he was in control even when that hurricane hit that ship and it almost went down.

Those survivors from the "Sea Venture" did not just sit around Bermuda and soak up the sun. What they did instead was start building a ship, so they could set sail again and try to complete their journey to the Jamestown Colony. They ended up building two small ships (pinnaces) which they named "Deliverance and Patience." They used the local cedar which was grown there in Bermuda. This wood was locally recognized to be as strong as oak but was lighter in weight. They also used materials that were salvaged from the "Sea Venture," especially the rigging.

These survivors ended up being in Bermuda for ten months while they completed the two ships.

During that time, they stored up supplies and food to take with them on the trip. To start with they only intended to build one ship but ended up building the second one, so they would have enough room for everybody and everything.

The "Deliverance and Patience" set sail from Bermuda, headed to Virginia, on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1610. On board the two ships were 142 people (don't know about the dog). Some other people chose to stay in Bermuda because they liked it there and at least two, named Carter and Waters, had fled into the woods of Bermuda to escape retribution for some type of criminal activity.

The two small ships arrived at the Jamestown Colony on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Much to their surprise they found only 60 survivors from the other ships that had preceded them. A lot of those 60 people were sick and dying because of disease, hunger and warfare with the natives.

Thankfully, John "the Immigrant" Thomas survived all the trials of shipwreck, hunger and disease to

eventually settle on Queens Creek in York County, Virginia on 350 acres of land. His descendants eventually ended up in Jackson Springs, NC. My grandmother, Annie Gladys Thomas, was one of those descendants. She was one of the twelve children born to John Martin and Eliza Jane Whitlock Thomas in Jackson Springs, NC.

I can't help but be thankful to all those brave people who were willing to board a ship that would hopefully bring them to the new world. I can only try and imagine how fearful yet exciting that would have been. I'm glad to know some of the history of John "The Immigrant." I realize however, that so many of those folks who boarded those ships didn't have a happy ending to their story like his did.

**Bon Voyage!!!**

*Azalea R. Bolton is a resident of Richmond County, member of the N.C. Storytelling Guild, member of the Richmond and Anson County Historical Societies, and co-author of the book "Just Passing Time Together." She may be contacted at: [abolton10@carolina.rr.com](mailto:abolton10@carolina.rr.com)*



**M**erle Davis, the lovely wife of Donald Davis, passed away on December 28, 2017.

## In Memory of Merle Davis

She was an experienced educator and workshop leader who stayed busy planning and implementing storytelling events and workshops.

According to Merle's obituary she spent half of her career as an elementary teacher in Charlotte, Chapel Hill and on Ocracoke. The other half of her professional life was spent as an arts administrator. During her last 25 years, she was the arts administrator for husband Donald's storytelling business.

Some of us got to know Merle some years ago when they both spent the weekend at Fort Caswell. Donald was our Winter Workshop presenter that year. Merle was so gracious, helping during Donald's workshop presentation and participating in all activities.

She will be truly missed by storytellers in North Carolina, and by storytellers throughout the country.

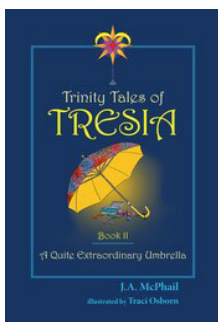
*Photo from the editor's file.*



Do you have material that you would like to see reviewed? If so, simply send us a complimentary copy and watch upcoming issues for your review.

## Trinity Tales of Tresia: A Quite Extraordinary Umbrella (Book II) by Jeannie McPhail

Author J.A. McPhail, has published the second book in her trilogy, Trinity Tales of Tresia. In Book II, A Quite Extraordinary Umbrella, young Brie celebrates her twelfth birthday with family and friends.



Among Brie's gifts is a plain black umbrella, with no sparkles or bright colors. Feigning gratitude, she uttered under her breath "what an ugly present." She was quite puzzled. She had been expecting a most sensational birthday.

Instead, this had to be the 'worse party ever.'

After her party, she and new friend David took a walk accompanied by her loveable Samoyed dog, Tara. They decided to explore Gator Hill, a ridge in the shape of an alligator. Carrying her umbrella along in case of rain, it fell beneath a rock on the hill, disappearing into an inky black cavern.

Suddenly Brie, David, and Tara, found themselves in a magical world of Tresia, a three realm universe. They found adventures in other worldly places, where they were no longer in the 'Earthen Realm' they understood.

They faced daunting challenges, and I found myself holding my breath as the story's climax approached. The following questions occurred to me. Can they escape the forces of evil? Will Tara, the little Samoyed, survive? Will they receive help from the winged creatures in the "Garden of Life?"

I saw ingenuity, metaphorical and spiritual insight as the driving forces allowing J.A. McPhail to create the second of her trilogy in the Trinity Tales of Tresia.

You may order at: <https://rowepub.com/trinity-tales-umbrella/> or <https://www.amazon.com/>

## NCSG SPRING RETREAT WITH - BEYOND BEGINNING MIDDLE AND END BY ROBIN KITSON

Janice Davin is a seasoned workshop leader. As a retired school teacher and nun, she certainly knows how to keep order, is organized and methodical. All seemed normal then... then came the lottery tickets....hummm. With that departure she called out numbers, which resulted in getting 3 prizes. "As you go to the table to get your prize, REMEMBER YOU CAN TAKE 3 items, but you can only keep two."

Next Janice showed her competitive side with an exercise. "You have 1 minute to list 25 popular stories go!" Noting the task was hard, she instructed us to cheat. She ordered "Get up. Walk around. Copy from each other. Once you have 25, sit down."

Janice is expressive, knowledgeable, organized, funny, and interactive. She possesses a big heart and deep



Robin Kitson and Janice Davin

emotional connection to words of courage and wisdom.

Indeed, she is a great teacher, game master, and lover of the numbers racket. Students learned a lot about process and creativity from a lady wearing a coat of many colors: teacher, nun, workshop leader, and lottery designer. Whodathunkit?

*"I am Janice Davin and I approve this message. The content is questionable but the humor is outstanding."*

Robin Kitson serves on the Board as the Piedmont Triangle Area Rep. and is a long standing Guild member. She is well known for her Cajun stories from the Ninth Ward in New Orleans where she grew up. You may contact her at: [nanirobin@gmail.com](mailto:nanirobin@gmail.com)



Dianne Hackworth & Trish Dumser

Janice Davin & Eric Bannon



Steve Tate, Sylvia Payne,  
& Alice Cunningham

Mary Lou Wilson & Steve Tate



## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR STORYTELLERS

### TELLER COMMENTS FROM THE CAROLINAS

**JONESBOROUGH, TN:** In January 2018, The International Storytelling Center website featured a news item, Storyteller's Corner. The International Center asked storytellers to share their dreams, goals, and stories for 2018. Responses were shared from six well known storytellers. We are proud to claim four of these six tellers are some of the very best from the Carolinas! They are Donna Washington, Mitchel G. Capel (known on stage as "Gran'daddy Junebug"), Michael Reno Harrell, and Tim Lowry.

### WORLD STORYTELLING AWARDS

**CARY, NC:** Congratulations to Willa Brigham, The World Storytelling Awards presented her story, Charlie Bucks Quilt (adult listening) with a 2018 HONORS AWARD. This is a touching story of making/giving a quilt to a friend. This story is found on the CD, Midnight Quilter, available at: <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/willabrigham>

### ROADHOUSE CAFE

**PITTSBORO, NC:** This spring, Sam Pearsall, producer of Roadhouse Storytellers, was emcee at the renowned Pittsboro Roadhouse Café. Five great North Carolina storytellers presented an evening of family entertainment, mixed with true tales, tall

tales from their own experiences or those of people they know. The performers were Willa Brigham, Alan Hoal, Robin Kitson, Sherry Lovett, and Chris Wise.

### ASC CONCERT

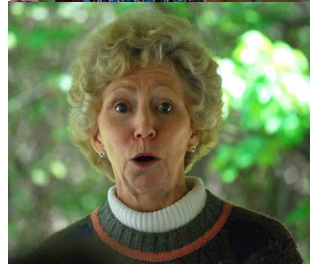
**ASHEVILLE, NC:** The Asheville Storytelling Circle held story concert, "A Patchwork of Stories," at the Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway in March. The concert was presented by **Stories on Asheville's Front Porch** and sponsored by the Wilma Dykeman Legacy and the Southern Highlands Craft Guild. The storytelling artists were Ray Christian, Elena Diana Miller, David Novak and Donna Marie Todd. Local comedian and radio personality, Tom Chalmers, served as host.

## SOUTHERN PIEDMONT REGION'S EARTH DAY CELEBRATION



*Left Photos - Clockwise:  
Deborah Winkler,  
Beth Carter & Sylvia Payne*

*Right Photos - Clockwise: Linda  
Goodman, Wright Clarkson, Catherine  
MacKenzie and Janice Davin.  
Photo courtesy, Jim Payne*



Nothing could have been more appropriate in celebration of Earth Day than to tell Nature Stories while surrounded by nature. That's just what the Guild's Southern Piedmont Regional storytellers did on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> from 2-4pm. Our regional area representative, Deborah Winkler, found the perfect place at the Reedy Creek Nature Preserve and Nature Center in Charlotte, NC.

Deborah connected with Kat Sweaney, the center's Environmental Educator, who was delighted to work with us to create this event. We told at the shelter just outside the Nature Center, surrounded by trees harboring song birds, squirrels and robins. Tellers shared an assortment of multicultural nature tales to a multicultural audience.

Our kudos to Deborah who made certain this event happened. She is an excellent organizer. She began planning the event last June and kept us well-informed as plans progressed.

Our tellers were: Beth Carter, Wright Clarkson, Janice Davin, Linda Goodman, Catherine MacKenzie, Deborah Winkler and Sylvia Payne.



### **Sponsored by NCSG:**

**November 3, 2018: Tarheel Tellers 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival.** FREE and open to the public. **Place:** Main Library Hendersonville, 301 N. Washington St., Hendersonville, NC 28739. **Time:** 10am-4:30pm. **Phone:** 828.697.4725.

### **Other Storytelling Events:**

**May 15-19: Teller in Residence, Elizabeth Ellis.** Elizabeth is a versatile, riveting teller of Appalachian and Texas tales and stories of heroic American women as well as poignant and hilarious personal stories, told Southern style. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**May 16: Roadhouse Storytellers.** Beginning at 7:00pm, five storytellers will entertain you at the renowned Pittsboro Roadhouse on US 64 in downtown Pittsboro. Pittsboro Roadhouse General Store, 39 West Street, Pittsboro, NC. Contact: [pittsbororoadhouse.com](#) or 919.542.2432

**May 18-19: Shoals Front Porch Storytelling Festival.** This year's storytellers will be Donald Davis, Inge Auerbacher, Bil Lepp, Tim Lowry, Dolores Hydock, Kate Campbell, Bobby Horton, and Josh Goforth! Also pre-festival events on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Kennedy Douglas Art Center, 217 E. Tuscaloosa Street, Florence, AL. [http://www.kdartcenter.org/storytelling](#) with [shoalsstorytelling.org](#) is coming soon!

**May 20-26: Walk and Talk.** Storyteller Donald Davis will be the special Event Leader at The Swag, the great Country Inn of the Smokies. Each day Donald will lead hikes in the mornings and tell stories in the evenings. Come and stay, or, join us for dinner and stories afterwards. For full information: [https://www.theswag.com/](#) or 828.926.0430 or 800.789.7672.

**May 21:** Master storyteller, Jim May will conduct two workshops at Lenoir-Rhyne University's Asheville campus, Chamber of Commerce building, third floor, 36 Montford Ave., Asheville, NC. **Fire and Water, Mining Powerful Personal Stories.** 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, \$35 for ASC members, \$45 for non-members.

**Support for Creative Exploration,** 2:15pm to 5:15 pm, \$25 for ASC members, \$35 for non-members. Seating for each workshop is limited to 35. Contact Zane at: [zbc1399@gmail.com](#)

**May 29-June 6: Teller in Residence,**

**Peter Cook.** Peter is an internationally renowned deaf performing artist whose work incorporates American Sign Language, pantomime, storytelling, acting and movement. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

### **June 2018**

**June 1:** Asheville teller **Darcy** presents a story she developed expressly for **PechaKucha** 20x20 (Japanese for chitchat), where you show 20 images for 20 seconds each. The images advance automatically and the teller keeps pace with her story which runs **exactly** six minutes and forty seconds. Come enjoy this fun storytelling experience featuring nine tellers. Will they meet the challenge? 7:30-9:30pm; \$8 early bird; \$9 advance; \$10 door; 250 seats usually sell out. PechaKuchaNight at The Grove House, 11 Grove Street, Asheville, NC. Contact: [https://www.pechakucha.org/cities/asheville](#) or [www.DarcyWordDance.com](#)

**June 1-3: Ocracoke Music & Storytelling Festival.** Join Donald Davis with a host of artists, musicians and storytellers for this Festival Weekend. 120 Schoolhouse Rd, Ocracoke, NC. [http://www.ocracokealive.org/](#)

**June 2: David Joe Miller Presents Word! "A Storytelling Showcase!"** with Scott Whitehair from Chicago, Alison Fields from Carrboro, NC., Raymond Christian from Boone, NC, Chuck Fink from Weaverville, NC, Pete Koschnick from Weaverville, NC, and Lee Lindsey from ETSU in Johnson City, TN. Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7pm showtime, Saturday at Habitat Tavern and Commons, 174 Broadway St., Asheville, NC. [http://www.storytellingcalendar.com/](#) for more information.

**June 2: Storyfest SC:** The SC State Library is proud to announce that award-winning author **Carmen Agra Deedy** will be featured at South Carolina's summer reading kick-off event! **Storyfest** is FREE to the public, Saturday, 9am-2pm. South Carolina State Museum, 300 Gervais Street, Columbia, SC. [http://statelibrary.sc.libcal.com/](#)

**June 3: Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival** presents the magic of live storytelling performances by three world-class tellers, [Bil Lepp](#), [Tim Lowry](#), and [Minton Sparks](#) with guitarist John Jackson. Sunday; performances are: 2-5pm and 6:30- 9:30pm. Held at the Oak Ridge [Playhouse](#) in Historic [Jackson Square](#), it is an [Oak Ridge 75th Birthday](#) event that offers different stories at each show. Oak Ridge Playhouse, Jackson Square, Oak Ridge, TN.

**June 4,11,18,25: A Tale of Blackbeard.** Directed by Courtney Conner, Desiree Ricker, and Julie Howard, A Tale of Blackbeard is produced by the Ocracoke non-profit, Ocracoke Alive. Mondays at 8pm - \$15 Adults and \$7 Kids. Ocracoke Community Center, 999 Irvin Garrish Hwy, Ocracoke, NC. Contact: [info@ocracokealive.org](#), [http://www.ocracokealive.org/](#) or 252.921.0260.

**June 12-16: Teller in Residence, Regi Carpenter.** Regi's tales celebrate the glorious and gut-wrenching lives of four generations of Carpenters raised on the Saint Lawrence River. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**June 21: WORD! "An Evening of Stories and Conversation With David Joe Miller"** at Pack Memorial Library, Haywood St. downtown Asheville, NC. Free show sponsored by the Friends of the Buncombe County Library. Thursday at 7pm, doors open at 6:30pm. [www.storytellingcalendar.com](#) for more information.

**June 22: [Music on the Square](#),** Jonesborough, TN - more info to come... Check them out on facebook and give them a big like! [https://www.facebook.com/musiconthesquare/](#)

**June 26: David Joe Miller** will be telling with the **Jonesborough Storytellers Guild** on Tuesday at the International Storytelling Center's Mary Martin Storytelling Theatre, 116 West Main St., Jonesborough, TN. \$5 at the door. Doors open at 6:30 for a 7pm showtime. [www.storytellingcalendar.com](#) for more information.

**June 26-30: Teller in Residence, Adam Booth.** Adam's original stories blend traditional mountain folklore, music and an awareness of contemporary Appalachia. His work, both humorous and touching. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

### **July 2018**

**July 1-7: Storytellers Wild Week.** From The Pen To The Performance with Geraldine Buckley. Through writing exercises to free up your imagination, tips on how to write for the ear and not the eye and practice telling your new tale, your previously stuck story will develop a delightful life of its own! Come with paper and pencil and be prepared to set your stories free! Wildacres Retreat, 1565 Wildacres Road, Little Switzerland,



NC. Contact 865.457.3392 or [dianne@diannehackworth.com](mailto:dianne@diannehackworth.com). For details: <http://dianne79.wixsite.com/wildweek/about>

**July 2,9,16,23,30: A Tale of Blackbeard.** Directed by Courtney Conner, Desiree Ricker, and Julie Howard, A Tale of Blackbeard is produced by the Ocracoke non-profit, Ocracoke Alive. Mondays at 8pm - \$15 Adults and \$7 Kids. Ocracoke School Gym Auditorium, 120 Schoolhouse Road, Ocracoke, NC. Contact: [info@ocracokealive.org](mailto:info@ocracokealive.org), <http://www.ocracokealive.org/> or 252.921.0260.

**July 3-7: Teller in Residence, Tim Lowry.** Tim is known as the seersucker style of storyteller as he mixes stories of the American Revolution, the Civil War and the Western Frontier with tales of growing up Baptist, exciting road trips to Disney World, and more! 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**July 6-8: Reader's Theater, Folk School Style.** Storytelling and Writing Workshop, led by Bobbie Pell. Come create exciting folklore retellings for the dramatic Reader's Theater, suitable for all ages. We'll choose a world folk/fairy tale, then infuse the story with fictional techniques: dramatic irony, clever humor, sensory imagery, twisting plot lines, and intriguing dialogues. Everyone is welcome! John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC. Contact: <https://classes.folkschool.org/Browse.aspx>, 1.800.365.5724.

**July 8-14: Summer Storytelling Retreat & Adventure**, with Connie Regan-Blake. Come to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of [Asheville](#) for 7 days of story-listening & story-telling along with coaching, community & supportive exploration. This annual workshop welcomes all levels of expertise. Participants discover ways of being in the world that nurture your creative flow. <https://storywindow.com/calendar/>

**July 10-14: Teller in Residence, Heather Forest.** Heather enchants audiences with her unique minstrel style of storytelling. Interweaving original music, poetry and the sung and spoken word, she brings elegance, wit, and the poet's touch to homespun stories and classic tales from the treasury of world folklore. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**July 12: Storyteller, Lona Bartlett Performing.** Lona will be performing on Thursday from 11am and again at 1:30pm

at the Elkin Public Library, 111 South Front Street, Elkin, NC. <https://www.lonabartlett.com/calendar/2018/7/12/elkin-public-library>

**July 17-21: Teller in Residence, Andy Offutt Irwin.** With a manic, Silly Putty voice, hilarious, heart-filled stories, and amazing mouth noises, (arguably the greatest in the world), Andy Offutt Irwin has been described as "The Marx Brothers meet Eudora Welty." 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday, Children's Concert on Saturday June 17th. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**July 20: David Holt and Josh Goforth in Concert.** Friday, 8:00pm. [The Reeves Theater](#), 129 W Main Street, Elkin, NC. Contact: 336.258.8240.

**July 26-29: 2018 National Storytelling Conference.** Each year [National Storytelling Network](#) strives to bring together storytellers from every corner of the world to participate in an annual conference with a wide variety of workshops, education sessions, performances, and networking opportunities at the [National Storytelling Conference](#).

#### August 2018

**August 6, 13: A Tale of Blackbeard.** Directed by Courtney Conner, Desiree Ricker, and Julie Howard, A Tale of Blackbeard is produced by the Ocracoke non-profit, Ocracoke Alive. Mondays at 8pm - \$15 Adults and \$7 Kids. Ocracoke School Gym Auditorium, 120 Schoolhouse Road, Ocracoke, NC. Contact: [info@ocracokealive.org](mailto:info@ocracokealive.org), <http://www.ocracokealive.org/> or 252.921.0260.

**August 12-17: Ancient & Epic Tales From Around the World.** Instructor, Heather Forest. Learn to structure and retell ancient multicultural tales, making them relevant for modern listeners. Become comfortable using the voice, body, and imagination as creative instruments for storytelling. All levels are welcome, beginning to more advanced. Sunday through Friday. John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC. Contact: 1.800.365.5724 or <https://classes.folkschool.org/Browse.aspx>

**August 17-18: David Holt in Concert.** Each concert is preceded by a complimentary reception at 5:45pm. Friday & Saturday, 7:00pm each night. [Perelandra](#) Concert Hall in East Asheville, NC. For reservations call 828-669-7675.

**August 21-25: Teller in Residence, David Holt.** Four-time Grammy award winner David Holt is a musician, storyteller, historian, television host and entertainer. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B.](#)

[Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**August 28-September 1: Teller in Residence, Delores Hydock.** Storyteller and actress Dolores Hydock fills the stage with a swirl of characters in her funny, affectionate stories about family fireworks, true love, turnip greens, and other peculiarities of everyday life. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

#### September 2018

**September 4-8: Teller in Residence, Megan Wells.** Megan's telling is time travel at its best. With exquisite language she takes listeners into deep mind cinema, bringing worlds alive. Her telling is passionate, soulful, and warm with humor. 2pm performances Tuesday through Saturday. Live concerts at the [Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall](#), at the International Storytelling Center, 116 W. Main Street, Jonesborough, TN. For reservations or information: 800.952.8392 or 423.913.1276.

**September 28-29: 20th Annual Cave Run Storytelling Festival.** Featuring Regi Carpenter, Mary Hamilton, Kevin Kling, Bil Lepp, Barbara McBride-Smith, Clare Muireann Murphy, and Bobby Norfolk, and Don White. Twin Knobs Recreation Area, Morehead, KY. <http://caverunstoryfest.org/tellers.html>

**September 30-October 5: Engaging Young Audiences.** Discover how to get and keep the attention of audiences that consist primarily of children - preschool, younger elementary, and older elementary listeners - including what stories work for each group. Brasstown, NC. Contact: 1.800.365.5724 or <https://classes.folkschool.org/Browse.aspx>

### Accepting Articles for Fall JHT

Articles, stories, and storytelling news are needed for NCSG's Fall 2018 issue of the *Journal of Tar Heel Tellers*.

We ask that you include storytelling events that you are aware of (*must be open to the public*). They will also be included on NCSG's website 'Events' page at <http://www.ncstoryguild.org/events.html>

Allow three to four weeks notice for your event to get posted on NCSG's website 'Events' page.

**Deadline:** September 15, 2018  
Send to: [sylpayne@bellsouth.net](mailto:sylpayne@bellsouth.net)