



President's Message

Mid-Term Report

How about a mid-term report on Territory Tellers for our current year, which runs from our last Annual Meeting, June, 2021, to the next Annual Meeting, which will be in June 2022. For the past 16 years or so this has meant from Festival to Festival.

Now, what has happened so far this year? In July the board met to set up some goals and activities for the current year. Not all have been accomplished or even underway yet, but several have. To date the Board has met four times for Territory Teller business. Probably our biggest disappointment has been the need to cancel a live, in person meeting at the Retreat. A gathering of friends for stories has always been a favorite event. Here's hoping by next January this darn virus will have been seriously wounded.

But we did have a Zoom retreat on January 29, with a good panel discussion on publishing your work. Liz Parker put together a panel and Fran Stallings moderated the panel of published authors including Marilyn Hudson, Barbara Jones, Eldrena Douma, and C. Dale German. Good information. The world is changing and so many more opportunities to publish. And we followed the panel with an hour of sharing stories. Good ones.

Other things we are proud of include the special workshop on integrating poetry into your stories with Elizabeth Ellis. Not only was it useful, but it gained us a couple of members, and quite important, was

revenue neutral. It paid for itself.

The evening with Laura Packer, where three of our tellers shared a story and Ms. Packer did some coaching, was very useful. And fun. Took courage to do that and Valerie Kimble, Tony Hardman and Liz Parker felt they gained something. So did everyone else who tuned in to watch the process. Ms. Packer was kind and helpful.

The organization made a small contribution to ROMP in Locust Grove where Shaun Perkins hosted a Tellabration, which included a workshop for tellers and a nice program by Eldrena Douma. And Shaun got to show off this great thing she has started, only one of two poetry museums in the country.



In March we will do a program of storytelling in Woodward at the Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum. We were there in 2018 and had a good turnout and good local support. This time we will be there in conjunction with a traveling Smithsonian Exhibit, "Crossroads: Change in Rural America."

We will be sponsoring an upcoming workshop, by Valerie Kimble, on telling stories to very young children. More information will be coming about that soon. And in late spring we are planning a new event in eastern Oklahoma.

So the organization has been active, but participation has been a little less than we had hoped for. Do you think we are just not meeting members' needs and interests? Or has our world just changed around

Continued to page two

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Plans underway for 2022 Festival

The 2022 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival committee has started meeting and making decisions for this year's festival.

Chaired by Eldrena Douma, the committee is comprised of the following members: Barbara Jones, Valerie Kimble, Liz Parker, Stephanie Scott and Fran Stallings. Two of the major decisions made so far are to continue to have the festival the first weekend in June, and to have the event on-line via Zoom. While everyone is looking forward to when we can have an in-person event, it was felt that it was better to plan this year's festival for an on-line presence from the beginning rather than having to shift gears close to festival time.

The positives of delivering a festival online are that it keeps costs down, and allows many members and non-members the opportunity to see and hear excellent storytellers in the comfort of their homes. More information, including finalized registration fee, featured teller, concerts (including Story Swap), and workshops will be posted in the next issue of the *Tattler* and will also be sent out to members by email. If you have a suggestion for this year's festival, please let Eldrena know via email at bluecorn_teller@hotmail.com.

Mid Term *Continued from front page*

us? Is it too Zoomie, not enough hugs? I would appreciate any thoughts you might like to share.

One thing I do know. Storytelling will never go away, unless people do. We just can't keep from telling stories. Maybe they are just different today.

I give us a B+ for a mid term grade, but no attendance certificate.

Happy Telling. Chester Weems

Tattler Deadlines

We want to include the information you are interested in! Please have information in by the following dates for inclusion:

March 1 • July 1 October 1 • January 1

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tsa@storytelling.com



This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Texas Storytelling Festival is just around the corner and assessable online! TT Board member Eldrena Douma is a featured Teller, Fran Stallings will be telling, and our old friends and TT members Elizabeth Ellis and Rosie Best-Cutrer are also on the program. Tim Tingle is

back as a featured teller. Tim Tingle and Elizabeth Ellis were both major Tellers in our own Spirit of Oklahoma Festival.

To get the full scoop on the festival or to register, go to tejasstorytelling.com.

Do you know...?

Spotlight on Fran Stallings

In 1982, Fran Stallings married her twin passions for teaching and storytelling into a professional career.

Fran has been serving her profession ever since.

A founding member of Territory Tellers, “Lynn Moroney summoned a group of us to Oklahoma City,” Fran



said about the start of Oklahoma’s statewide storytelling organization in a recent Zoom interview. Over the years, Fran was a Board member, writer and editor of the Territory Tattler for 12 years, and a teacher and mentor for Oklahoma storytellers. She spent over 20 years traveling around Oklahoma as a storytelling artist in residence for the Oklahoma Arts Council,

while building an international performance career.

Fran widened her service focus to the national scene, becoming a two-term Board member for the National Storytelling Network. At NSN, Fran served as chair of the Oracle Awards Committee for 6 years, and organizer with Linda Yemoto of Earth Up, an eco-storytelling conference. January 2022 marks the end of Fran’s second term as a Board member for the National Storytelling Network. She leaves as South Central Regional Director for Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri. She has been a strong advocate for storytelling and the region, and deserves thanks and recognition for her work and dedication.

A teller of folklore and traditional tales, Fran selects and crafts her stories in service to her ideals. She is committed to the natural world, its conservation, the climate crisis, and issues of environmental justice.¹ She has distilled this into a rubric: Aware, Care, Dare, which

describes the three-step process in activating and actualizing personal and community responsibility for the environment. These steps are the desired outcomes of her eco-storytelling mission: to increase people’s knowledge of the environment and its problems, to elicit their emotional response and support of these issues, and to prompt them to act in ways to help ameliorate the problems. Fran tells traditional stories that either directly tell about these issues, or she tells stories that indirectly touch on these issues, or she tells what she calls “stealth stories”. “These stories describe the unintended consequences of our actions,” Fran explained. “The story of King Midas is a good example. If some is good, then more is better. This is a universal human foible.”

Fran employs partnerships very effectively to achieve her goals. She partnered with Oklahoma storyteller Lynn Moroney in a storytelling duo that was known as the Earth and Sky Tellers. They brought awareness about the natural world. She partnered with Hiroko Fugita to “leap the language barrier”² by developing a modified tandem style of Hiroko telling Japanese tales in Japanese after Fran had provided a partial synopsis in English. “People would come up after a performance and say, ‘I didn’t understand a word, but I understood the story’.” This duo performed in the United States and in Japan, flipping the roles of storyteller and one who provides the precis. This international partnership resulted

Continued on page 5



Spotlight

Continued from page 4

in the International StoryBridge Award from NSN.

Fran is also the recipient of the John Henry Faulk Award from the Tejas Storytelling Association in Texas. Presented annually to “a person who has made a significant contribution to the art of storytelling in the Southwest.”³ While Fran received this in 2009, she has not rested on her laurels. She is still working hard to bring awareness and galvanize action for responsible stewardship of the planet through storytelling. Like John Henry Faulk, Fran has the courage to speak even when she is the only dissenting voice. She is now working on getting other storytellers to join her in this chorus through Earth Up. Like the little frog in one of her stories, who uses his song to call down the rain, and who gets all the animals in the world to join him, Fran is challenging all storytellers to lift up their voices to save the planet. After all, as Fran quoted Greta Thunberg from September 2019 in a keynote address, “Once we start to act, hope is everywhere.”⁴

It was fun interviewing Fran for this article on January 20, 2022. She is still working hard gathering ideas to improve NSN's benefits for members and sharing with other arts educators to improve arts education. For more information on Fran, visit her website at www.franstallings.com. Fran wanted to encourage all Territory Tellers members to send Lynn Moroney, who is currently in a memory care facility near her daughter's home in Illinois, a colorful card. Please send them to Lynn Moroney, c/o Bella Terra, 730 W. Hintz Rd, Wheeling IL 60090. Lynn may not remember us, but we shouldn't forget her and her wonderful contributions to Territory Tellers and storytelling in Oklahoma.

Valerie Kimble

¹ Interview #029 Fran Stallings - Environmental storytelling, *The Art of Storytelling with Brother Wolf*, podcast, October 17, 2007, <https://brotherwolf.libsyn.com/webpage/2007>, accessed 01/19/2022.

² “Leaping the Language Barrier” (with Hiroko Fujita),

pp10-11 in *Storytelling Magazine* March/April 2000.

³ John Henry Faulk Award, Tejas Storytelling Association, <https://tejasstorytelling.com/about-us/awards/>, accessed 01/20/2022.

⁴ “Aware – Care – Dare”, Keynote by Fran Stallings at FEAST Conference, November 23, 2019, <https://www.franstallings.com/sites/default/files/keynote%20resources.pdf>, accessed 01/20/2022.

News and Notes on Members

In the past year we have added some new members. A few are from out of state. A new member from Arizona is **Dr. Nooshie Motaref**, a member and Treasurer of the Tellers of Tales in Tucson. She holds Doctorate degrees in American Literature and folklore from Florida State University. She has tuned in a couple of times to listen and told a story at one of our practice sessions. Chester has talked to her briefly a couple of times and is looking forward to a time we might meet her in person at one of our events.

She has just published a new book, available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. From a book review: “*Bird of Passage* is a story of a woman born in Iran who moves through the world looking for love, spiritual healing, and understanding what has happened to her homeland.”

The Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry has launched a new 30-minute podcast which discusses poetry and wacky stuff and poetry. It does include story elements, too. You can listen to it on the ROMP website or anywhere you listen to podcasts, Spotify, Apple, etc. Just search for Wacky Poem Life.

The podcast has a similar mission to the museum's--to promote wordplay and literacy and also engage people in an experience of poetry. No experience or even love of poetry is required to enjoy it!

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ROMP Story Life

Happy Winter, everyone! I hope you are finding it a good one or that eventually it will become that way. Though much is going on in the world that keeps us apart from one another, much . . . is still going on!

At the Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry (ROMP), we are helping to get one of our hometown master storytellers Choogie Kingfisher into a storytelling event at our local coffee shop, Wonder City Coffee.

The date is still not set, but if you have never heard Choogie tell stories and can come to Locust Grove, be sure and watch the Facebook pages of Wonder City Coffee or the poetry museum to see the details.

ROMP is in northeastern Oklahoma, less than an hour away from Tulsa, Muskogee, Tahlequah and Siloam Springs AR. We are in the heart of the Cherokee Nation and are gifted with a wide variety of storytellers, poets, artists and other creative types.

Master artists Bill Glass and his son Demos Glass have their art studio here in Locust Grove, but for those of you who live in Oklahoma City and the surrounding area, you can see their work at the newly-opened First Americans Museum.

An arched steel artwork by the Glasses frames the entryway to the museum. The sculpture called "Touch to Above," according to Demos Glass, "symbolizes a prayer to the Creator."

ROMP will be helping the Locust Grove Arts

Alliance soon as it reimagines its small downtown space as an LG Art & History Museum. The history component will tell the story of the town, as many small town museums in our state do.



The art area will showcase local artists like the Glasses, and other master artists such as Willard Stone and Jason Stone.

Storytelling will be a focus at the museum in March and April, as ROMP hosts a traveling exhibit from the Oklahoma History Center. This exhibit, *Where They Went: A Photographic History of Oklahoma Animals*, includes a variety of photographs that show the friendly relationship between humans and their domestic and farm animals

throughout the state's history.

On the opening day of the exhibit, March 3, ROMP will host an Animal Appreciation event where people can share stories, poems, and photographs of their own animals. The stories will be taped and become a part of the actual exhibit, which will run through April.

The exhibit is provided by the Oklahoma History Center of the Oklahoma Historical Society and made possible by funds from the Kirkpatrick Foundation.

For people who want to do storytelling in writing, ROMP is starting a writer's group, ROMP Writers, for anyone age 13 and up. It will meet once a month, the second Thursday, from 5:00-6:00 p.m., so if you live nearby, consider joining us.

I have quite a few years experience in conducting writing workshops in a professional, friendly, inclusive and safe environment. People will choose what type of feedback they would like on their stories, though any kind of writing is encouraged.

For more details about anything in this column, visit ROMPoetry.com or email me at ROMPoetry@gmail.com.

Shaun Perkins



Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry

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Thoughts to ponder

I wonder if this could be applied to storytelling:-
Chester

“When I was 15, I spent a month working on an archeological dig. I was talking to one of the archeologists one day during our lunch break and he asked those kinds of “getting to know you” questions you ask young people: Do you play sports? What’s your favorite subject? And I told him, no I don’t play any sports. I do theater, I’m in choir, I play the violin and piano, I used to take art classes.

And he went WOW. That's amazing! And I said, "Oh no, but I'm not any good at ANY of them."

And he said something then that I will never forget and which absolutely blew my mind because no one had ever said anything like it to me before: “I don’t think being good at things is the point of doing them. I think you’ve got all these wonderful experiences with different skills, and that all teaches you things and makes you an interesting person, no matter how well you do them.”

And that honestly changed my life. Because I went from a failure, someone who hadn't been talented enough at anything to excel, to someone who did things because I enjoyed them. I had been raised in such an achievement-oriented environment, so inundated with the myth of Talent, that I thought it was only worth doing things if you could "Win" at them."

- Kurt Vonnegut

Tejas Storytelling Association
How to Be a Better Liar
Without Going Into Politics

Free Online Workshop

On Saturday, February 19 from 2-4 pm Central Time, you can tune into this Texas sized workshop.

Stretching a tale just for the fun of it has a long history as a very special kind of storytelling, and the three certified award-winning liars presenting this workshop will outline tips for creating and telling some whoppers. Hear how to maintain believability in the midst of exaggeration, how to introduce characters and settings, and how to present a lie as if it's the absolute truth. Panelists include Donna Ingham, Decee Cornish, and Larry Thompson

Register on line at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/96871000000>
meeting/register/tZ0tc-ygqjsuGtEhgAD0Afinz7oNy-
J6YD0byz

A recording will be shared with those pre-registered

Did you know?

Your membership with Territory Tellers includes a posting on our website that includes your photo and bio? You just need to provide that information to our webmaster, Shawn Perkins, okiestoryteller@gmail.com, and she will make it happen.



TT Retreat January 26, 2019. How many Territory Teller members can you identify? Where was the Retreat? (correct answer does not win a prize, but isn't it fun)

Future event planned in Woodward

The Territory Tellers Board approved at the January 29th meeting to present a storytelling concert the evening March 4, 2022 in Woodward at the Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum. This will be in conjunction with a major traveling Smithsonian Exhibit titled. Crossroads: Change in Rural America. In 2018 we did a similar concert there and it was a great event, good local support.

Storytellers from Territory Tellers include Eldrena Douma, Liz Parker, Tony Hardman, Eddie Wilcoxon, and David Titus with Chester Weems as MC.

If you are traveling northwest through Woodward stop by the museum. Some very nice exhibits on local history.

Need to check on membership status?

Several people have asked how to know when your membership is due for renewal. Shaun Perkins, our webmaster, has added your renewal date to the membership list. So go to territorytellers.com, find your name on the membership list and the renewal date follows your name. Send your \$25 individual renewal to the TT address or \$40 if you are enrolling as a family membership.

Storytime for Storytellers

Are toddlers your most-feared audience? Have you ever arrived for a program and discovered the audience contained a bunch of preschoolers? Are you stumped as to how to proceed? Then, this program is for you. Valerie Kimble, retired children's librarian, will demonstrate several key elements of programming for little children that will have you approaching this surprise with confidence.

Whet your appetite? Be watching for more information on this workshop, including when it will happen!

A Final Note:

“Unfortunately we had to cancel the in person retreat at Lake Murray Lodge because of Omicron concerns. We have had past retreats at the Lake Murray Lodge and our members enjoyed being there. We appreciate Lake Murray Lodge working with us in this unusual health situation, and hopefully we will get a chance to partner in the future.”

Is your membership current? Send in your renewal today!

Territory Tellers is a growing network of individual tellers, listeners and local storytelling circles. Get connected by joining our statewide organization! Dues are \$25 for individual and \$40 for family membership per year.

Full Name _____

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e-mail address _____

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