



## President's Message

Greetings:

It is a long time since I have addressed you as President. I believe it has been five years since I turned over the metaphorical gavel. Since that time, I have served on the board, as Immediate Past President, Secretary, and At Large Board Member. Once again, I have been asked to assume the mantle of leadership, and my hope is that I do not disappoint my fellow storytellers.

A great deal has happened since I was last President. We lived through a devastating pandemic, which not only affected our health and safety, but rocked the world of storytelling. Our 2020 Festival had to be canceled due to growing health concerns and the need to not spread this illness to others. We were no longer able to meet in person for our board meetings, and many of us wondered if Territory Tellers would become another victim of the Covid 19 disaster.

However, we discovered a wonderful device called Zoom. It was little heard of then but has now become a household word. Board meetings were held via this marvelous technological innovation, as was our 2021 festival. Our retreat was also held via Zoom, and many storytelling events. As a result, we have been able to invite people from all over the United States to join in. Our membership has extended beyond Oklahoma, and we have members as far away as New York. Our events were viewed by people in Canada, so for the first time Territory Tellers became international.

Once again, we were able to have a live festival. Our members joined us and came from neighboring states of Texas and Kansas, as well as all over Oklahoma. It was good to see our fellow storytellers, shake their hands, share in a friendly embrace, joke, laugh, and catch up in ways we can only do in person. We mutually shed tears as Chester Weems paid a wonderful tribute to Pat Kardaleff and Connie Fisher, long time members of Territory Tellers and both storytellers extraordinaire.

But even though we are returning to traditional

ways, technology has also opened the door to a new and brighter future. And it is that future I wish to address. The board is filled with dedicated members who want to carry on the storytelling tradition, but sadly, we cannot do it alone. We need our members to help us, now more than ever. With the availability of Zoom, we can have more meetings with the membership as a whole, not just our regular board meetings. So, what I would like to do is host some general meetings. I would like all members to participate and give your feedback. With your help, we can make Territory Tellers a better organization, the



Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival a better festival, and all of us better storytellers and people. Be looking for upcoming Zoom invites and be thinking of ways that you can make an important contribution to our success. In the meantime, keep a story in your heart. Until we can meet again..

*Tony Hardman*

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## TT presence at OKC Lit Fest August 19th

It was great seeing all of you at the festival. The new fiscal year for Territory Tellers has begun and already things are starting to take place. One of those things happening is the Lit Fest, which will take place on Saturday, August 19 at the Downtown Library, located at 300 Park Avenue in OKC. This is a conference for writers and this is a good chance to get some exposure for the organization. We would like to have an organizational booth there and hopefully recruit some new members. We are also willing to share our booth with any individual member who might have items to sell, such as books, CDs, poetry scrolls, strings, and anything else. However, you must be there to sell your own items, we will not do that for you. The booth will be open from 9:00 to 4:00. If you have questions regarding this event or can help with the booth, please let me know.

Tony Hardman, [tony.hardman@opsu.edu](mailto:tony.hardman@opsu.edu)

## Did you know that TT is a member of TSA?

Rosemary Czarski recently passed along an email to our membership about a TSA event. Since the organization is a member of Tejas Storytelling Association (TSA), some of their membership perks get passed along to our members.

*On Wednesday, August 9, 2023 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm the TSA will present its Virtual Guild event. This is a quarterly event sponsored by TSA allowing storytelling guilds to share stories and highlight their guild.*

*The Dallas Storytelling Guild (DSG) will host this next event. The DSG will share Texas stories. These will be all types of stories about Texas. The members will share their unique view of Texas. This may mean scary stories about Texas, historical stories about Texas, stories about Texas from a distant view (we have tellers from Canada and all over the US), tall tales about Texas and any other type of story about our state you can imagine. If time allows we will also allow attendees who are not from DSG to share a brief Texas story.*

*This is a free event to all TSA members included with their annual membership in our Association.*

*The Zoom link will be provided prior to the event. In the meantime if you have questions or concerns contact Michael Brundy, DSG President and TSA Vice President at [vp@texasstorytelling.com](mailto:vp@texasstorytelling.com), or call 214-929-4290.*

## Tattler Deadlines

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

January 1 • March 1 • July 1 • October 1





# 2023 Festival: It Was Great To Meet Face To Face!

We dreamed, we planned, and we held a face-to-face storytelling festival!

We began with a goal given by then TT President Barbara Jones to set the festival in a smaller community to attract new people and to allow promotion of storytelling to new audiences. Sometimes in larger communities there is great competition for attendance at events. We had criteria of a suitable sized venue, restaurants, and lodgings.

After a survey of the Route 66 corridor within driving distance of both Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Stroud was selected. A big thank you to Stroud First United Methodist Church who shared their facility (parlor, fellowship hall and classrooms), provided some delicious cookies for snacks, and were so generous in the support of storytelling in the community. As a first time back in person event we were not sure what to expect but were delighted with a good group (including some who joined on the spot!), and an evening concert of around 50 persons

from the community, the church, and the Territory Teller membership.

The Festival provides two important things to the organization: 1) Getting together with like-minded people and 2) learning and sharing skills in storytelling. The Zoom meetings are a handy tool and provide an alternative to in-person events but the face-to-face rewards are vast. Good luck to the committee for next year!!

*Marilyn A. Hudson*



*Molly Lemmons, left, takes advantage of the photo booth at the festival. Rosie Cutrer, above, delights the audience with one of her story songs.*

# ROMP Story Life

Greetings from the Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry in Locust Grove. Summer is a great time to come and visit the museum. We are open Thursday-Saturday, 10:00-5:00, but we can also be open on other days and times if you want to visit. Just shoot me an email at [ROMPoetry@gmail.com](mailto:ROMPoetry@gmail.com).

This summer we are doing Creativity Camps for kids on Thursday afternoons, making art, telling stories, writing poetry, and enjoying the exercise of the most important thing in human life: creativity. Well, I might exaggerate . . . but not by much.

On July 22, from 2:00-4:00 p.m., we will have a special event celebrating the birthday of the late great Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. This event will feature poetry and stories about Yevtushenko as offered by his son Zhenya Yevtushenko.

Why is Yevtushenko in an Oklahoma museum, you might ask. Well, he lived for many years in Tulsa, where he died in 2017, and he taught at the University of Tulsa. His wife still teaches public school there, and Zhenya lives there also.

Zhenya's family has loaned us several items, and

we have a small exhibit on display about Yevtushenko. Our birthday celebration will include poetry, a talk, Q&A with Zhenya, refreshments and door prizes.

In other news, I will be at the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival in Okemah on July 15, as part of the Woody Guthrie Poets lineup, sharing poetry on Guthrie themes

at 11:00 a.m. Stories, poetry and songs are what this festival is all about. You can find out more about it at [Woody-Fest.com](http://Woody-Fest.com).

Also in July, I will be giving a workshop at the Eufaula Public Library on July 12, from 11:00-1:00. The workshop is open to everyone. We will have a workshop to create poems (and stories!) and then a performance

of them afterwards.

I hope everyone is enjoying a poetic and story-filled summer.

*Shaun Perkins*



## Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry

416 E. Main  
Locust Grove OK 74352  
(918) 479-ROMP  
[ROMPoetry@gmail.com](mailto:ROMPoetry@gmail.com)



# News and Notes on Members

**Tony Hardman** has been very active in community theatre. In February he played the character of Edgar Allan Poe in *Nightfall with Edgar Allan Poe* and Theodore Roosevelt in *Newsies*. Since then, he has been honored as the Artist in Residence for Seven Nights of Broadway, a summer theatre camp being sponsored by the Guymon Community Theatre, where he teaches storytelling and performs a storytelling concert for the youth enrolled in the week long workshop. Guymon Community Theatre sponsors two productions each summer, meaning Tony will be giving two storytelling concerts for the theatre workshop.

Tony Hardman also was one of four featured tellers at the Crazy Days of Summer Zoom storytelling concert sponsored by MO-TELL (Missouri Tellers). Hardman told his original story "The Green Gables of Slapout" and a folk tale called "The Bird that Thought He was a Chicken." This is the second time he has told for MO-TELL.

Fran Stallings shared the following with TT members via email. Here is the information again if any of you have misplaced the information but wanted to follow up on it. Storytell is a group email source sponsored by the National Storytelling Network. It links you to other storytellers. You can ask questions about stories, get advice about performance skills, classes and more, learn about upcoming events and let people know what you are up to.

Here is the url. Have fun. <https://storynet.org/groups/storytell/storytell-listserv/>

A call went out to our membership, "What have you been doing?" **Valerie Kimble** answered, "All of a sudden, my answer to that question is, 'A lot!'" "On Friday, July 7 from 6-8 pm, I participated in a Zoom concert produced by ASST, Artists Standing Strong Together, on the theme, "Intergenerational Stories". ASST was founded by Sheila Arnold and Donna Washington during the pandemic to provide a Zoom performance platform for storytellers. It's still going strong! Then, on Saturday, July 29, I will present an all-day workshop on "Storytelling: Tips & Techniques" at the Hewitt Public Library in Hewitt, Texas, near Waco. Vivian Rutherford of the Heart of Texas Guild is the organizer. It is sponsored by Heart of Texas Storytelling Guild, the Tejas Storytelling Association,

and the library. It's free. Finally, on July 30 at 6 pm is Elizabeth Ellis's regular last Sunday of the month concert on Zoom. The free concert (make a donation if you can) will be a celebration of Elizabeth's 80th Birthday, and a bunch of her storytelling friends from all over the country have been invited to tell. Me too!!! Contact me at [kimblevalerie@yahoo.com](mailto:kimblevalerie@yahoo.com) for registration information on these events. Happy summer!"

**David Titus** shared that "12 step recovery groups only work because members tell their story. They tell what it was like, what brought them to the program and what it is like now, and then they tell how they worked their program. I will be going to Finland to do a workshop on 11 July and then on the 17th and 18th I will be doing a workshop in Warsaw Poland and the next week-end a workshop in Wroclaw Poland. It is so rewarding to use my life experiences and storytelling skills and tools to share my experience, strength and hope with others to help them on their journey. It is also truly exciting to spend my time in peoples' homes, share their cultures and their stories. Then on September 23 and 24th. I am opening in the interactive area of The Lawton International Festival with storytelling with strings and teaching String Figures. Also on the 23rd I am doing a half hour storytelling at a wedding."

**Darla L'Allier** has been busy volunteering at The Route 66 Historical Village. Located in Southwest Tulsa on Historic Route 66, the open-air museum is a unique experience to educate visitors about Tulsa's history in the oil, refining and transportation industries. The Visitor's Center is a replica of a 1920's Phillips 66 gas station.



<https://www.artistsstandingstrongtogether.net/staff>

# Happy Birthday Elizabeth!

We know you claim Kentucky and Tennessee and Texas as homes. But you sure seem comfortable in so many side trips to Oklahoma. So many that we want to claim just a small piece of you for ourselves.

You helped us in the early days of our Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival, being a featured teller and sharing stories in some small groups. And remember that one year, when we weren't doing so well and needed a little budget help, you drove up from Texas to be our featured Teller, at a fraction of your usual fee. You just asked for a bed and a couple of meals.

You are held in high regard in these here parts. And you can throw in a couple of other words, like respect and affection. And a bit of awe for your talent.

So, Happy Birthday Elizabeth Ellis. Keep telling!

*Chester Weems*

I first heard Elizabeth Ellis tell at a Wintertails when a local group, mostly teller wannabes, drove up from Ardmore to immerse ourselves in the craft. She was mesmerizing. Listening to her voice, I was easily transported to the world she was guiding us through, phrase by phrase. She projected wisdom in her words. The Appalachian drawl made me feel secure that wherever she was taking me, she was going to make sure I still got home safe. If it sounds like I had a fan crush on her, you wouldn't be wrong.

Then, thanks to Valerie Kimble and our local arts council, I had the amazing opportunity to spend a weekend in her home. There were four students in that retreat. I was both excited to spend time with Elizabeth and terrified that I was going to have to tell stories in front of her. We all drank in her sharing what she loved about this craft. And then she shared the audience that loved her with us. She gave us a safe place to hone our stories in front of people that knew what good stories were. Like a mother bird, she knew it was time to shove me out of that comfortable nest and make me try out the wings she had

helped me strengthen.

Our paths have crossed several times since that weekend. When I became a mother she was sure to tell me to include stories about my failures and shortcomings with my son so that he knew it was okay to make mistakes and that he could get through to the other side. I've always remembered that. Elizabeth also shared a story with us that has resonated with me over the years. When telling at a local school, a young boy asked her if she memorized all those stories. The boy sitting next to him, shoved his friend with his elbow and said, "No silly, it comes from her heart." I can't think of a better way to describe Elizabeth. Everything she does comes from her heart.

*Tina Saner*

*Above, Elizabeth Ellis captures the attention of an audience at a Spirit of Oklahoma festival. Below she guides a group during a workshop. Both photos provided by Chester Weems.*





# A Generous Spirit, a Loving Heart, and an Ethical Soul

--Valerie Kimble

Elizabeth Ellis was my storytelling coach all through the pandemic. It was a transformative experience in many ways, and I am not talking about COVID-19.

Every time we met, I learned so much. She shared bounteously: her knowledge, experience, insights, stories. Her friendship.

Elizabeth has been a wonderful friend to Territory Tellers too. She has generously shared her fabulous storytelling gifts, her skill and knowledge as a workshop presenter, and some practical advice and guidance. Elizabeth has many years of experience as a storyteller, and she is still practicing her art. Festivals, coaching, performances as part of her being on the Artist Roster for the Texas Commission on the Arts, and organizational memory for the Tejas Storytelling Association, service on storytelling-related boards, and monthly Zoom concerts. Elizabeth has not slowed down. There is one sure way to catch her:

Visit with her monthly at her Zoom concert. It is usually the last Sunday of the month, a solo themed concert of traditional, personal, historical stories, both new and old, sometimes poetry or song starting at 6:00 pm CST. If you sign in at 5:30 pm and stay after the concert, you can chat with Elizabeth, and she encourages questions about stories and storytelling. Once you sign up, you will receive monthly concert announcements and the Zoom link in your email. The concerts are free, but a donation is appreciated. Her next concert is very special.

## **Elizabeth's Amazing 80th Birthday Party.**

**Sunday, July 30th at 6:00 - 9:30 pm**

**Central Time (US and Canadian)**

***Very Special Guest Tellers Include:***

**Robin Bady**

**Noa Baum**

**MaryAnn Blue**

**Adam Booth**

**Kate Dudding**

**Michael Reno Harrell**

**Pam McGrath**

**Motoko**

**Loren Niemi**

***A portion of donations will go to the National Storytelling Network and the Storytelling Resource Place***

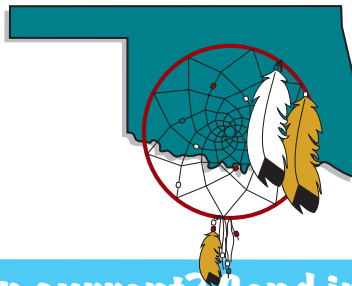
This is a not-to-be missed event! You can contact me for more information at [Kimblevalerie@yahoo.com](mailto:Kimblevalerie@yahoo.com), or go to Elizabeth's webpage at <https://elizabethellis.com/calendar.shtml>. It is a BYOC (Bring your own cake), party hats optional, free event. Elizabeth will welcome you.



*Elizabeth Ellis and Valerie Kimble at the 2023 Texas Storytelling Festival. Photo courtesy of Chester Weems*



*At the 2023 MO-TELL Missouri Storytellers Liars Contest, the two first place winners were both members of Territory Tellers. Rich White (who we all met at the retreat and at the festival in Stroud) and a member RAPS in Missouri (River and Prairie Storyweavers) as well as Territory Tellers, took first place in the spoken portion of the contest. And he did it wearing a Territory Tellers T-Shirt. Chester Weems took first place in the written portion of the contest.*



**Is your membership current? Send in your renewal today!**

**T**erritory 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.

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