

President's Message

What a great joy to be back with storytellers at our recent Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival at Rose State College. I had to miss the 2023 festival in Stroud as I had just recently had open heart surgery. Recovery has been a long process and I didn't realize how much I missed all my storytelling friends and storytelling activities until I was there in the middle of all the activities. What a great festival! My thanks to Rosemary Czarski, Donna Le, Shaun Perkins, and Tony Hardman for all their hard work putting the festival together. It was great to see new faces. Rosemary tells me that we had 5 new people join Territory Tellers and 11 renewed their membership during the festival. Remember you need to renew your membership yearly. One area was a pleasant surprise. Everyone was willing to share stories and we heard some great stories during our impromptu sessions. I hope you were renewed with the determination to keep stories alive. Remember our major goal as Territory Tellers is to promote the oral tradition of storytelling. I am looking forward to working with the newly elected board and to a year of great stories!



Liz Parker

Executive Board

President

Liz Parker

elizabethparker862@yahoo.com

Vice-President

Teresa Vail

san_bois@yahoo.com

Secretary

Donna Le

Dkle45@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Rosemary Czarski

rarczarski@gmail.com

Board Members

Richard Czarski

rarczarski@yahoo.com

Eldrena Douma

bluecorn_teller@hotmail.com

Valerie Kimble

kimblevalerie@yahoo.com

Molly Lemmons

mollyloubelle@cox.net

Chester Weems

cjweems@cox.net

Jimmy Caldwell

yourtaichicoach@gmail.com

Liaison Director

Shaun Perkins

okiestoryteller@gmail.com

Parliamentarian

Past-President

Barbara Jones

bwjbook@yahoo.com

Webmaster

Shaun Perkins

okiestoryteller@gmail.com

Tattler Editor

Tina Saner

twosaners@aol.com

Gearing up for an active twelve months!

At the last board meeting I volunteered to take on the role of chairing some activities for Territory Tellers this year. Our president, Liz Parker, will be providing more information in the future.

We had a long list, but are encouraged that we may get some of those done. Several people have already stepped up to take on leadership roles. Again, those folks will provide more details in the future.

For now though, I would like to mention specifically three activities we plan to complete.

1. Valerie Kimble has agreed to produce a Territory Teller Zoom Tellabration in November. That's great. It's been a while.

2. The board wanted to continue our many year tradition of the Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival in June (with fond memories of Bonnie Smith and Jeanette Harjo who did so much those years ago.) We were also encouraged by the recent festival, which while low in numbers, was a great festival, enjoyable and relaxed. A number of folks deserve some credit, but Rosemary Czarski and Donna Le did a lot of the ground work.

3. Our first live board meeting in several years will take place in October in Stigler. Teresa Vail produced that event, which included a community concert.

Anyway, hope everyone is surviving the heat and listening/telling stories.

If you have an idea for a new idea contact me or President Liz Parker. Is there something you can produce in your own community you would like a little support for?

Chester Weems

General Membership vote results

At the General Membership Meeting in June, the three Bylaw changes were accepted. A new copy of the Bylaws will be posted on our website soon for you to review.

The budget as presented in the last issue of the Tattler was also accepted.

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

TT's 2024 Zoom Tellabration!™

On Sunday afternoon, November 10, 2024 at 3:00 pm, the Territory Tellers will present their 2024 Tellabration!™ on Zoom. Both new voices and a familiar favorite will perform. Territory Tellers members Donna Le, Jim Caldwell, and Tim Couch are part of the line-up as well as a teller from New Mexico and Doddi Jonsson from Iceland. Valerie Kimble will emcee. Eldrena Douma and Chester Weems will be the technicians.

Tim Couch from Dallas, Texas is well known to long time members. He is the recipient of the John Henry Faulk Award from the Tejas Storytelling Association for his contributions to storytelling in the Southwest. Tim tells both beautiful traditional stories and powerful personal stories from his days as a teacher and district attorney. Donna Le and Jim Caldwell are newer members, who have jumped right in, working hard for TT. A retired teacher, Donna is co-chairing the 2025 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival with Rosemary Czarski, and she is serving as the Secretary for the TT Board of Directors. Lucky for us she will share a humorous personal story. Jim Caldwell attended the 2024 festival, joined the

organization, and promptly volunteered. He is a board member at large with a vast knowledge of non-profit organizations and an interest in fund raising, membership, and partnering with community organizations to benefit TT. He described his story as “inspiring”.

Doddi Jonsson is a practicing librarian and published author. He lives in Iceland with his wife and plans on telling an Icelandic folktale and providing some additional background on his beautiful country. Chester Weems met Doddi (Pronounced Do-vay) while traveling in Iceland recently, and lured him into an oral tale for this event.

We hope a storyteller from New Mexico will join our presenters. Be looking for that announcement soon!.

This concert is free and open to the public, but registration is required. Please check the Territory Teller website at <https://territorytellers.com/2024-tt-tellabration/> to register, so you will receive the Zoom link via email.

Practice session available on line!

One evening in early October, Territory Tellers hosted a practice session on Zoom for members who were working on a new story and wanted a chance to practice a presentation. Six members joined this session and four presented new stories. Liz Parker was one of those people. She reports that, “It was great to present a new story to friends who gave constructive comments on how the story might be improved. I have already made positive changes to my story based on the comments from my storytelling friends.”

Chester Weems, who will tell anyone who will listen that this is a low stress environment, is setting up this practice session. Chester will host another practice session on Saturday, October 26 at 101 am. The Zoom link has been sent out to the membership, but if you can't find it, shoot an email to one of the board members.

If you want a chance to try out a story and join in friendly comments, please plan on joining. Don't forget we need folks to listen as well as tell! It's all free. Another benefit of Territory Teller membership.

On a related note, TSA is planning their Virtual Tellabration!™ Celebration evening on Saturday, November 16th from 2:00 - 4:00pm CT. Be watching your email for the latest news on how to plug into this additional opportunity to listen to a good story told well.



Teresa Vail, Stigler resident and TT Vice-Present, recounts one of her humorous personal stories. Teresa organized the Friday night community performance there in Stigler and the facilities for the TT board meeting on Saturday morning. Remember all board meetings are open to the general membership to attend and ask questions about programs TT works to offer.

Weems



Dianne Fallis leads an afternoon story swap where there were new faces joining in to share their stories.

Friday evening participants were welcomed by Jeff Conkin, Associate Dean, Rose State College. After his brief history of the school, everyone got up and told a story using items from the table as prompts.



Shaun Perkins did a great job at pulling donated items together for a silent auction during the festival. Books, whimsical pillows, travel mementos and hand-knit scarves were included in the offerings.

TT's extended family includes these three from Texas. Jaye McLaughlin, Tim Couch and Fred Peters catch up on news in between sessions.



All these 2024 SOOSF photos are credited to Chester Weems.

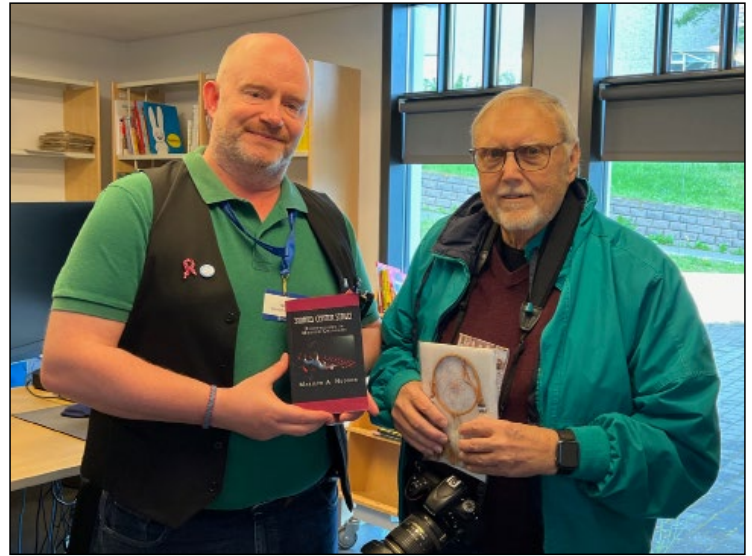
Richard Czarski and Rich White greeted some first time festival goers on both Friday night and Saturday.



Rosemary Czarski got everyone's hands in the air as she demonstrated how to successfully use participation stories on Saturday morning. Several other tellers demonstrated other genres during the session.

OK book added to library in Iceland

The country of Iceland is known for its high literacy rate. It is a country that loves poetry and stories, both written and oral. Now it can add one more book about stories and storytellers. When Chester Weems recently traveled to Iceland he took a new copy of Marilyn Hudson's book *Stories Center Stage: Storytelling in Modern Oklahoma*. Chester went to the public library in Akureyri, the second largest city, of about 20,000, in northern Iceland. They have a very modern library, the newest in Iceland. Chester presented Marilyn's book to Doddi Jonsson, a staff member and an Icelandic author himself, to be added to the library's collection. So Marilyn is now way up north, as are all the Territory Tellers in her book. Chester is presenting the book to Mr Jonsson in the photo, taken by Kim Weems who traveled the country with her dad.



Do you have something to share?

The *Territorial Tattler* is one way that we can share noteworthy items from the storytelling world. My personal reach into that world is relatively small. That's why as editor I solicit stories, news and reviews from our members to include in each issue.

Have you been sharing stories lately? Where have you gone and how did it go? I'm sure that others would

love to hear what you have learned.

Read a good storytelling resource book or article? You can write up a review and that can be added to our next issue. We aren't being asked by publishers for reviews any longer, but that doesn't mean we can't share with each other what we've been reading, or rereading, lately.

Tina Saner, editor

Member Input Encouraged

All members are encouraged to share any ideas about improving Territory Tellers events. If you have ideas on how to improve the festival, the winter retreat, or ideas for new events please share these ideas. Send any suggestions to Liz Parker: elizabethparker862@yahoo.com. Any ideas will be shared with the board and discussed for possible implementation.

Board Meetings

According to the By-Laws of Territory Tellers, board meetings will be held in July, October, January, March, and May. Any member is welcome to attend board meetings, make suggestions, and ask questions. However, only board members can vote. All board meetings with time and location will be posted on the webpage. www.territorytellers.com. Meetings are usually held via Zoom. However there was an in-person meeting and concert this month in Stigler!

Need to check on membership status?

Several people have asked how to know when their 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.

A quick blast from Liz on up coming events

At the last board meeting on Oct. 5, the board approved several storytelling activities that will be available over the next few months. Some have specific formats and dates, and some are still being developed. Hope you will find some that appeal to you and join with other TT members when these are presented.

- * **Zoom Story Practice Session** – 10/26/24 - 7:00 pm
If you are working on a story and want a chance to try it out, join this activity. Watch for an email from Chester Weems on how to join the activity.
- * **TT Winter Retreat** in January (specific date and activities to come)
- * **Taking Your Oral Story to the Written Page** (specific date and time to come) This workshop will support

people who want to contribute to the Territory Tellers Anthology Project.

- * **Creating/Developing Your Story** (specific date and time to come)
- * **Zoom Love Stories Concert** – 2/15/23 (specific time to come)
- * **Cooperative Project with New Mexico Tellers** (specific date and time to come)
- * **Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival** – June 13 & 14, 2025 at Rose State College.

Special emails will be sent out to remind you about these activities with details on how to participate.

Please join us for these activities and invite any friends who might be interested in storytellings.

Liz Parker, President, Territory Tellers

In case you missed the emails...

Fran Stallings recently shared this on an email to TT members. In case you didn't see the message, here it is:

At last year's Spirit Festival (2023), David Titus donated a dish garden of cacti to the silent auction. I bought it for husband Gordon, who loves cacti; and Gordon planted them in our front yard cactus garden.

Last week one of them bloomed!! (*This email was sent May 25, 2024-editor*) Each flower is about 2 1/2"



across. A photo doesn't do justice to the radiant lavender-pink color, and a still photo doesn't show how bees dive deep into the throat of each blossom disappearing under the crowd of stamens, reappearing a minute later groggy with nectar and covered in pollen. I hope we get seeds!

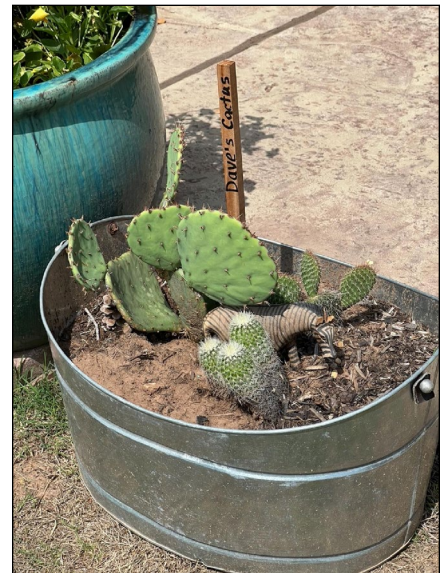
The blooms opened every dawn for several days, and each day we felt they were a message reminding us of David's generous loving spirit. We miss him.

Chester Weems responded with this memory:

When Velma and I were at David's house about a month before he went to the hospital he showed us his very extensive cactus collection. I told him I wanted one of his cactus. (We had just taken him a car load of containers for his cactus we had been collecting at garage sales for several months).

I said I wanted a cactus, so he picked out 3 and they have about doubled in size in our back yard. I wish I could remember what he told about them, he could name everything he showed us. The zebra was not his, but it makes me think of his travels.

It looks like a whole bunch of us have Dave memories.



News and Notes on Members

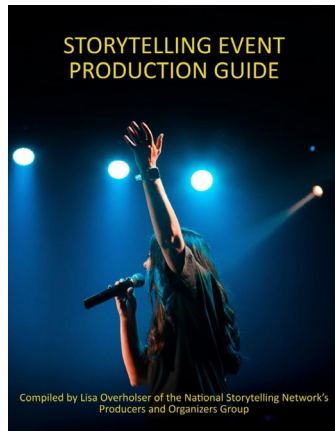
Donna Le recently presented "Prairie Moon" stories at St.



Ann Retirement Center in Oklahoma City. Le made contact with the activities director while attending a conference and took the

opportunity to set up a storytelling session at the facility. Prairie Moon stories are stories about growing up in the country and stories told while sitting on the porch, under the glow of the moon.

In May, the Producers and Organizers Special Interest Group (ProSig,) of the National Storytelling Network (NSN), published *The Storytelling Event Production Guide*. This 74 page guide was put together by the ProSig members to help organizers produce their own event.



The contributors are

experienced organizers from across the country and Ireland. Our own **Chester Weems** was one of those contributors and included a planning budget from the earlier years of the Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival. The guide is available from NSN and on Amazon for \$15.00.

Chester took 2nd place in the 2024 Missouri written liars contest. He took 1st in 2023, so his lying skills must be deteriorating. He wrote about the family 3-legged mule

Shaun Perkins and the Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry were featured on Gallery America! Now you all are storytellers, but you will like this too, because there are definitely some narratives woven into the ROMP story. The 27-minute episode begins with ROMP, has 3 other segments and then returns to ROMP at the end. <https://www.pbs.org/video/romp-become-the-poem-y5u-vn4/?source=social>

Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry



416 E. Main
Locust Grove OK 74352
(918) 479-ROMP

ROMPoetry@gmail.com

Is your membership current? Send in your renewal today!

Territory Tellers is a 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 _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Country _____

Preferred Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____

e-mail address _____ Are you a storyteller? ☐

Web site (optional) _____ a story listener? ☐

☐ \$25 individual

☐ \$40 family

☐ \$40 organizational

Please complete this form and mail it with a check payable to Territory Tellers to:
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