



President's Message

It's hard to believe an entire year has passed, but it has. We have just completed a highly successful storytelling festival, our eighth one, and our first one held at Southern Nazarene University (SNU) in Bethany. We are soon approaching a landmark ten year milestone and already preparations are in order for a truly memorable event.

We had some great storytellers this year, as we always do. Our featured teller, Kent Rollins had us in stitches with his personal stories and with his stories of the American west. We also had some great spotlight tellers and I have to admit I was awe-stricken as I heard each teller perform. Not only was I awe-struck by their talent, which was no surprise, but in the incredible variety of their stories and in their story-telling styles. Cynthia Calloway, Shaun Perkins, Fran Stallings, Molly Lemmons, Kathryn Thurman, and Rosie Cutrer all told beautiful stories. Some were humorous, some serious, some personal, some poetic; but all were incredible in their own unique way.

I was also pleased with the new board. Some were returning to continue in their present position,

some returning to different positions, some rejoining our board after a period of absence, and some joining our board for the first time. One of those that is highly unique is our new board member, Colin Saner, who joins us at the ripe old age of 16. In some ways, this is not surprising as Colin has attended board meetings for at least the last eight years that I am aware of and has helped out with each festival in one way or another. He probably knows more about the happenings of the board than most of us "seasoned" veterans. It will be great having him aboard.

continued on page three



2014-2015 Board Members: back row: President Tony Hardman, Webmaster Shaun Perkins, Fran Stallings, Vice President Phillip Harjo; front row: Nancy Lenhart-Matthews, Parliamentarian Kathryn Thurman, Molly Lemmons, Cynthia Calloway, Secretary Steve Kardaleff, Barbara Jones, Treasurer Paulette Geeslin. Not pictured, Colin Saner and Tattler editor Tina Saner.

Photo by Chester Weems

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A First Timer says "Thank you!"



As a First Timer, I was very emotional. I was emotional because I had just completed one of the most taxing four years of my life. I was honored when I was asked to be a speaker, but felt overwhelmed. The Oklahoma Territory Tellers (TT) stepped in and helped to get it all done. For this I say, "Thank you!"

I met Tony Hardman at the Oklahoma City Storytelling Festival in 2012. I was attending for a class that I was taking as a graduate student at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, where Barbara McBride Smith, a celebrated storyteller, is an instructor. Immediately, Tony came up to me, introduced himself and "claimed" me as his friend. He introduced me to Elizabeth Ellis and the other professional storytellers there and coached me on proper storytelling festival protocol. He encouraged me to attend the Territory Tellers OLIO sessions and speak. I was so impressed with it all that as soon as I could, I joined the Oklahoma Territory Tellers. As a first timer featured storyteller and workshop co-leader, I was emotional at the 2014 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival because I wanted to represent both my education and to tell Tony, Barbara Wright Jones and all the other TT members that worked so hard to present me so well, "Thank you."

As a First Timer I was emotional because I got to tell my stories. My stories are very personal to me. I designed them to be. As an African American, I have seen and witnessed much discouragement, but I wanted all listeners to hear that there is hope and help. My stories are about the hope and the help that came to me and my family from unexpected places in unexpected times. To have witnessed this is emotional, so sometimes I get emotional as I talk about them in stories. I got emotional on Friday evening as I told my stories. Thank you TT members and others, for your many words of support as you came up to me afterwards to tell me of your experiences.

Lastly, I am emotional as a first timer because I want others to come and experience what I am experiencing as a TT member. I send out this appeal: If there is anyone out there, like me, who is or has been the storyteller and historian of their family, come let us hear you. Territory Tellers is full of people who will accept you, help you and give you time and space to tell your stories. I say, "Y'all come!" Look us up on the web and let us know that you are interested. You may get emotional, as I did, but it is well worth it. Thank you.

Cynthia Calloway

Tattler Deadlines

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

October 1, 2014 • January 15, 2015

March 1, 2015 • July 15, 2015

Spirit of Oklahoma Festival 2014

“Oh what a time we had!”

The feeling of excitement and expectation was in the air as storytellers from all across Oklahoma and beyond gathered at Southern Nazarene University for our eighth annual Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival. This year many changes were in store as we moved the date from the first weekend of June to the second and re-located from Seminole State College to Bethany, Oklahoma, on historic Route 66. Were we making the right decisions? Would the changes give the festival new energy or would they be end of our dream? Those were questions that challenged our board and festival committee as we worked and planned for 2014.

Many of us remember our first SOOSF in 2007. After that historic event Bonnie Smith, who was the president at the time, wrote, “The first Oklahoma Storytelling festival could be compared to having your first child....The excitement of knowing that something great is about to happen! The anticipation!” And she concluded, “Oh what a time we had!”

This same excitement and anticipation preceded this year’s festival as we planned and

worked from June 2013 to June 2014, striving to live up to our past festival successes. When it was over and we looked at the evaluations and reviewed the responses, we agreed that it was worth the time, money and work and concluded, “Oh what a time we had.”

SNU’s Webster Commons foyer buzzed with conversation as storytellers greeted one another, browsed the exhibits tables, and munched on the delicious treats created by SNU cooks. The silent auction became an interesting place when Fred Peters, Cynthia Calloway, and Barbara Wright Jones began a bidding war over the coveted tickets to Tejas Storytelling Festival next spring. Cynthia won the bid, and our festival coffers were better off for the competition.

Our featured storyteller, Kent Rollins’ workshops were crowded with standing room only. The workshops received rave evaluations from his audience. Comments included, “Educational... humorous... I loved it.”

All of the festival workshops received high marks. Participants at Fran Stallings’ two-session

Continued on page 5



Photo by Chester Weems

Featured Teller Kent Rollins kept the attention of his audience with his “down-home” Oklahoma charm and tales of being a cowboy.

Oh, what a time

continued from page 3

coaching workshop commented that it needed to be offered again. Cynthia Calloway and Barbara Jones' Bible Storytelling Alive workshop had requests that it needed to be longer. Kathy Anderson's Route 66 workshop was lively and informative, with slides and personal experience stories. The audience commented that they would recommend the workshop to friends.

Mini Concerts were also a hit, with Lorelee Cooley's Custer County Truckstop Poets being the most unique for our Festival. Who would have thought that poets would make such good oral storytellers!

We received a surprise visit from the Oklahoma news reporter, Steve Gust. He wrote a glowing report of our festival, *Storytellers Share Homespun Yarns*. The article quoted several of our storytellers and including a picture of the Truckstop Poets. Later we were informed that Steve had re-published his article in *Edmond Life and Leisure*.

For the evening Spotlight Concerts regional tellers, along with our featured teller, entertained the audience with a variety of stories, ranging from Cynthia Calloway's inspirational story of how Oklahoma City's legendary civil rights leader, Clara Lupper, influenced and gave courage and support to her and her family to Molly Lemmons true, but almost unbelievable, tale of how she, along with her Blue Bird troupe, welcomed back our World War II Veterans and then years later she eavesdropped on two of those same veterans as they recounted the story of meeting a little girl from that same BB troop when returned from WWII.

Kent's funny and informative tales of life on a ranch left the audience laughing and sitting on the edge of their seats as he told his personal stories of encounters with

bulls and other ranchers, as well as the jokes and pranks he and his brother pulled on each other.

Our listeners agreed that all of our tellers were great, but space and time doesn't allow me to retell their stories. It is my hope that this recounting of our 2014 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival will tantalize your imagination enough that all of our members will come and bring a friend to our 2015 SOOSF. And YES, we are already planning for next years Festival. So stay in touch to learn what's planned for the future.

Barbara Wright Jones



Rollins' workshop on cast iron cooking caused one TT member, Molly Lemmons, to act. She "went right home and bought a cast iron skillet from Wal-Mart, made in the good ole US of A. I can't wait to fry chicken in it like my grandmother did."

President's Message

continued from page 1

I look forward to next year and the possibilities the future presents to us. I hope you will join us in making that future as bright as possible. After all, the board alone does not make a great organization or even a great festival. It is members like you that help make the difference. It is members like you that help make the difference, whether as tellers, or whether behind the scenes; it is all of you that makes the future worth looking forward to. Hope to see all of you soon.

Improvements to the TT Website

A new page has been added on our website to help keep members informed about TT business. Here you will find board meeting minutes posted and details about upcoming meetings. Keeping up-to-date has never been easier!

<http://www.territorytellers.org/Site/TTMeetings>

Kudos to work done by the Festival Steering Committee

A big, big heartfelt thanks to those who served on the 2014 Festival Steering Committee: Marilyn Hudson, Sheron Rodgers, Arlita Harris, Liz Parker, Paulette Geeslin, Tony Hardman TT President and Lorelee Cooley TT VP.

This year we faced several challenges because of our location change and financial limitations, but all of our team members stepped up with their gifts and graces and brought everything together to make this festival one of our very best.

Arlita Harris, a new member to our Territory Tellers organization, is former librarian at SNU and a member Oklahoma Route 66 Association. She gave us leadership and guidance in working with SNU and the community of Bethany. She also connected us with a great music group, F5Four Bluegrass, and Kathy Anderson, of the Oklahoma Route 66 Federation, whose presentation, Route 66 Lore, was a raging success.

Marilyn Hudson promoted our festival with online and traditional news media as well as social media such as Twitter and Facebook. I would hate to have to pay her for the hours she spent getting the word out about our Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival.

Liz Parker, whose experience planning past festivals was invaluable, was my support and ad-

viser in making important decisions. She spent time and energy arranging our delightful food menu, working with Cheri Pack, the activities person for SNU, and setting up arrangements for those who would stay in the SNU dorm. Thanks to Liz our experience at the University was positive and trouble free.

Paulette Geeslin, who in spite of her full time position as a first grade teacher for OKC public schools, took care of our financial obligations and planned our exhibit table for the Route 66 day in Bethany.

Sheron Rodgers, who along with her husband Al, made our first contact with SNU and the Bethany community and recruited Arlita Harris. Sheron's quiet manner and wise council has carried us through many a fiery committee meeting. Every organization needs a Sheron.

Thanks to **Lorelee**, who spent hours working with our featured teller, Kent Rollins, and arranging for the mini concert of Truck Stop Poets and getting our sponsorship letter in shape.

My expression of gratitude would not be complete without a big thanks to **Tony Hardman** who kept everything running smoothly and who had the confidence in me to name me as chair of the 2014 Festival Steering Committee.

Without all of you, and others who were not named but stood in the gap when needed, chairing this committee would have been an impossible task. You are loved and appreciated. *Barbara Wright Jones*

So many books

A Belfast Girl: A 1960s American folk music legend weaves stories of a girlhood on "the singing streets" of Ireland, marriage in Scotland, and arrival in America (Paperback) Parkhurst Brothers Inc Publishers, 2012. ISBN

"Old Folkies" probably know Maggi Kerr Peirce from her legendary performances of traditional Irish ballads, rhymes, and folktales at the earliest festivals of music and storytelling. Now in her 80's, she recalls the adventures of her Irish childhood and youth in this sweet memoir of Belfast in the 1930's and '40's. All of the short (3-5 pages) chapters are so excellently crafted that they could serve as textbook examples of How To Tell A Personal Story.

Using only a few dialect or celtic words, Peirce somehow gives us the musical lilt of her charming accent. Her love or wry appreciation of each colorful character shines through her words and we feel we have met these people who are now long gone. The book takes us as far as marrying and settling in America. I hope there will be a sequel telling about her experiences in the early days of the storytelling revival.--reviewed by Fran Stallings



TT members Betty Perkins and Doris Rable peruse the silent auction tables at the festival. Funds received from the auction go to help pay festival expenses.

Photo by Shaun Perkins

August 21-23 2014

OKC Storytelling Festival Announces Schedule

For over 30 years, the Arts Council of Oklahoma City has produced the Oklahoma City Storytelling Festival, which has delighted audiences with nationally-acclaimed storytellers, workshops and special performances. The Oklahoma City Storytelling Festival continues the tradition with three entertaining evening performances, a family matinee and professional workshops. This year, the Oklahoma City Storytelling Festival will take place in a new venue, the Oklahoma History Center, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive.

Territory Tellers will again assist the Arts Council by providing two free events during their Festival. On Friday at noon, we will host the Open Mic Storytelling and on Saturday at noon we will spotlight some of our tellers at the Oklahoma Olio.

Featured National Storytellers this year will be Donald Davis, Syd Lieberman, Bil Lepp and Lynette Ford.

For Donald Davis, storytelling is a way of giving and living life. coming from a family of traditional storytellers who have lived on the same Western North Carolina land since 1781. He invites each listener to come along, to pull deep inside for one's own stories, to personally share and co-create the common experiences that celebrate the creative spirit. For Davis storytelling "...is not what I do for a living...it is how I do all that I do while I am living."

Syd Lieberman grew up in Albany Park, on Chicago's North Side. He credits both parents for his storytelling flair. Syd's father, a used-car salesman, told stories with a deadpan approach. At age 90, Syd's mother could still go to the grocery store and turn the trip into an opera.

Growing up in a family where it was always the responsibility of the listener to decide whether or not a story was true, Bil Lepp became adept at spinning tales and exaggerating circumstances at an early age. Lepp is an award-winning author, recording artist, internationally-known storyteller and humorist whose style has been described as a satisfying blend of Bill Cosby and Jeff Foxworthy.

Lynette Ford is a fourth generation nationally recognized Affrilachian, African American heritage and history from Appalachia, storyteller famous for telling her "Home-Fried" tales. She categorizes "Home-Fried" tales as folktale adapta-

tions, spooky tales and original stories rooted in her family's multicultural Affrilachian storytelling traditions. They are often enriched with call and response, choral response, rhythm and rhyme, humor and heart.

Workshop passes are \$10 each or \$25 for a day of workshops. A Workshop Pass is \$50 and includes all the workshops on Friday and Saturday. A complete schedule as well as tickets for performances and passes for workshops can be purchased at the door or early on line at their website <http://www.artscouncilokc.com/content/oklahoma-city-storytelling-festival>.

General Membership Meeting

The Annual General Membership Meeting took place on Friday, June 14th at 4 pm in the Heritage Room of the Webster Commons, SNU, Bethany. The slate of officers was filled from nominations from the floor and accepted by vote of the members present. The new board members can be found on page two of this newsletter.

Also on the agenda were the updated bylaws as presented in the last issue of the Tattler. There was a lively discussion regarding the bylaws. After all questions were answered, the updated bylaws were also accepted by vote of the members present. The bylaws are posted on our website so that they are easily accessible to the general membership. If you have difficulties in accessing this electronic format, please let one of the board members know and a hard copy will be provided to you.

At the request of TT members present, a copy of the 2014 SOOSF Budget will be published once it has been reported to the board. Be looking in the Fall issue for this information.

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You can get there via our website or direct at
<http://www.cafepress.com/territorytellers>



Fishers given the Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award by TSA

Oklahoma's Territory Tellers isn't the only organization that have benefitted from the dedicated service of Connie and Barbara Fisher. You have seen them at our festivals, winter retreats, Encylomedia and Telebration events. Connie has served on our board in various positions, including president. Currently they ensure that all our members receive a copy of the *Tattler* after it's printed.

Our southern cousins, the Texas Storytelling Association, have also benefited from their tireless service. That's why they named this couple as the 2014 recipient of the Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award.

Named after Marvin Brown who spent hours serving in the Texas Storytelling Association office, volunteering his time with storytelling events across the state of Texas, as well as helping future Youth Tellers as coach and supporter, this award spot lights volunteer service. The recipient of the Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award is a person or group whose contributions of time and talents to TSA have enhanced the reputation of TSA in the greater Denton area and beyond.



2014 recipients of the TSA Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award - Connie Neil and Barbara Fisher

Ever been curious what happens at a TT Board Meeting?

All TT Board Meetings are open to any of our members. Locations vary across the state, but typically start at 1 pm. A page has been created on our website to let members know where and when the next meeting will occur.

The dates for the current board have been set; however not all locations have been chosen.

October 11 will be at the home of the Kardaleffs's in the Lawton area.

January 17 meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual winter retreat.

March 28 meeting does not have a location as of press time.

May 2 will most likely be on, or near, the SNU campus in Bethany. Many last minute details of the festival may be addressed.

The board hopes to see you as a guest at one of our meetings!

Have you encountered a storytelling resource you'd like to review?

If so, please send your 200-300 word review to Fran Stallings at fran@franstallings.com. Many *Tattler* readers have commented that the review section is valuable to them in determining what materials to purchase. Your thoughts on a work could help someone finalize a purchase decision!

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.

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Is your membership current? Send in your renewal today!