Territorial Tattler Newsletter of the Territory Tellers

Winter 2012  www.territorytellers.org

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The 2012 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival promises to surprise and delight its audience. Liz Parker, chair of the Teller Selection Subcommittee has announced the tellers for the festival performances.

Nationally known Featured Teller Jim May is no stranger to Oklahoma having told at several story-gatherings in our state. May is cofounder of the Illinois Storytelling Festival and for 20 years its artistic director. He was inducted into the National Storytelling “Circle of Excellence” (Hall Of Fame) in the year 2000. May is also an Emmy Award-winning storyteller and writer. He has toured the U.S. and Europe telling his stories at storytelling and folk festivals, as an artist/author-in-residence at schools and universities, and in nonprofit and corporate venues. His workshops and seminars emphasize the role of myth, story, and culture in the personal, family and community context.

Regional Featured Teller Jay Stailey has crossed the Red River more than once to share his brand of telling in Oklahoma. Hanging around the storytelling community for over a quarter of a century, he is a two time winner of the Greater Houston area Liar’s Contest, and has been a teller-in-residence at the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee. In March of 2011 he was featured at the Tejas Storytelling Festival and was one of twenty-five tellers featured at the 25th Anniversary Tejas Festival in 2010. Jay also has been featured at Wintertales in Oklahoma City, and at Tellabration events throughout the country. A retired school principal, Jay currently stays busy working with the School Improvement Resource Center in Austin, Texas, while freelancing as a leadership coach. His most recent adventure was storytelling for educators and children in Ethiopia as an ambassador for Ethiopia Reads. The following three Spirit of Oklahoma Tellers are all members of Territory Tellers. They were selected by a similar process as the national and regional tellers.

Loralee Cooley, who coined the word Storyspinning to describe her work, first announced she was a “professional storyteller” in 1977, when she hadn’t the foggiest idea what she was doing. Since then, she’s been on the state arts rosters of South Carolina and Texas, working in schools, civic groups, businesses, camps, churches and libraries from Columbia, SC, to Cordell, OK, where she now lives, with stops in Scotland, Austria, Bolivia and the Georgian Republic. Since 2008, her primary project has been researching, writing and marketing her children’s biography, Island Child, telling of the childhood of Barack Obama. Loralee will spend the remainder of June, 2012, in the Summer Reading Program of the Western Plains Regional Library System, all seven branches, as their featured artist.

Tim Couch took a winding path to storytelling. After practicing law in Dallas for 14 years, he decided to change careers. Tim joined the faculty of the Episcopal School of Dallas and began to teach religion classes to middle school students where he developed his love of storytelling. Tim served as the president of the Dallas Storytelling Guild for two years and is a past-president of the Tejas Storytelling Association. He has spun yarns at schools, libraries, churches, the Bath House

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Territory Tellers offers opportunities to learn the art of storytelling by supporting storytelling concerts, conducting workshops and providing information at professional conferences and regional and local events.
President’s Message

I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas and are settled into a great new year. Now that the holidays are over, it is time for all members to make plans to attend the 2012 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival. When this festival was started six years ago, the goals were to give our members opportunities to tell, hear well-known national tellers and to provide workshops so members could improve in their storytelling skills. I think these goals have been met over the years. However, I have been disappointed that more of our members do not participate in the festival. We need everyone to join us. If you can’t come for the entire festival, come for part of it. Activities will begin on Friday, June 1 with a lunch story swap. Then we will premiere a new concert Friday afternoon. Four Territory Teller members, chosen through an application process, will tell. The audience will have a part in choosing two of those tellers to join the national and regional tellers at the Friday and Saturday night concerts. Friday night after the main concert, five members will present ghost tales. Then on Saturday afternoon three more members will be featured at the Spirit of Oklahoma Concert. Throughout the festival story swaps and mini concerts will be scheduled for many more members to have a chance to tell. We need you! We need you to tell your family and friends about the festival. Please make it a priority to attend and to bring someone with you. If we do not get better attendance, we cannot continue to offer this type of festival. As a member of Territory Tellers, I know you believe in the preservation of the oral tradition of storytelling. This is the main mission of Territory Tellers. Please help us advance this mission. Attend and participate in the 2012 Spirit of Oklahoma Festival on June 1 and 2 in Seminole, OK.

A BIG THANK-YOU!

In November the current Territory Tellers Board reviewed our constitution and by-laws. During the review, we were made aware of how well these were written. They have been revised only a few times. The board would like to say a big “thank-you” to all members who participated in the original development of our constitution and by-laws. If you would like to review these, they are available on the web page, www.territorytellers.org

Liz Parker

Next Territory Tellers Board Meeting

Saturday, March 31, 2012 in Seminole
10:00 a.m. - Steering Committee at the Sirloin Stockade 12:00 p.m. - Lunch at the Sirloin Stockade 1:00 p.m. - Board of Directors Meeting at the Kelly Haney Center Territory Teller members are always welcome as guests at any board meeting
Cultural Center, Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park, the Crow Collection of Asian Art Museum, the Texas Storytelling Festival, and the Texas Summer Storytelling Conference and has served as emcee at the Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival and the Oklahoma City Storytelling Festival. Tim says that he considers one of his greatest triumphs to have occurred while telling ghost stories to students around a campfire. One of the boys jumped up at a climactic point in the story and said: “That’s it, I’m out of here.” He suddenly looked startled and asked: “Did I say that out loud?” And he sat down to hear the ending.

As the descendant of Oklahoma pioneers, Kyle Dahlem has a storytelling heritage passed down from great-grandparents. As an educator for over 42 years and inducted into the Oklahoma Educators Hall of Fame in 2010, she used storytelling as a key methodology in her teaching. As the Executive Director of the Oklahoma DaVinci Institute, Kyle continues to utilize storytelling to make the case for encouraging and maintaining creativity as a necessary lifelong skill.

The next four tellers completed submissions to be chosen for our Friday afternoon Oklahoma Voices Concert. Two will earn the right to tell their story alongside Jim May and Jay Stailey at either the Friday or Saturday night concert.

Tony Hardman is currently serving as the Library Director for Oklahoma Panhandle State University. He is a member of Territory Tellers and has been a board member for the last four years. Tony has presented at prior Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festivals and told stories as part of the “Oklahoma Olio” at the Oklahoma City Storytelling Festival. In addition Tony has told at the Texas Storytelling Festival, Timpanagos Storytelling Festival, KABAM Festival and has performed throughout the western U.S. and Japan. In addition to storytelling he is active in his community theatre where he has performed in “The Christmas Cactus” and “Harvey.”

Molly Lemmons retired from Mustang Public Schools after 22 years in order to pursue a writing and storytelling career. She is an award-winning author of six books. Many of the stories she tells are of growing up in the 1950’s, and are taken from her first published book, Kind of Heart. Molly also teaches classes on Writing and Telling Life’s Memories from the Heart and uses one of her published books, Seize the Flashbacks! as the manual for these classes. She has taken her stories to retreats, private gatherings, churches, zoos, historical museums, and schools. She had her own newspaper column in the Mustang, Oklahoma News for several years. The column was picked up and carried in newspapers in Arkansas, Kansas, and Texas as well.

Gary Parent began following the tradition of the balladeers in his early thirties. A product of the nineteen sixies, he was influenced by the work of Tom Paxton, Woody Guthrie and Guy Clark, with a little O. Henry added for spice. Born and raised in Wewoka, OK, Gary creates characters from local soil. His songs, sometimes humorous, sometimes poignant, and sometimes true, treat those characters with an honest affection that leaves you feeling certain that you must have known them, once upon a time. Now semi-retired from a career in pharmaceutical research, Gary’s rare public performances are a treat to be savored. So, suspend your disbelief and travel to a remarkable place... one that feels a lot like home.

Bonnie Smith has a great heritage in storytelling. The original stories that she has written draw upon her broad range of experiences and from her own family history. She taught language arts, English literature, and reading in the middle school until her retirement. She encouraged her students to research the facts of the story so that they could fully understand the “why” behind the author’s intent. Bonnie is a past president of Territory Tellers and belongs to several other storytelling organizations and civic groups. The most precious audience she has for her stories are her eight grandchildren. She and her husband, Duane, live on land “just over the hill and around the jog line” where her grandparents lived.

Rounding out the main concerts is the Ghost Stories late Friday night. Tellers, all of whom are TT members, will be Darla L’Allier (Tulsa), Greg Rodgers (Warr Acres), Tim Couch, Loralee Cooley, and Marilyn Hudson (Norman). Chester Weems (Mustang) will emcee the afternoon concerts and the Ghost Tales and Connie Fisher (Sand Springs) will emcee both evening performances.
So many books

The Itsy Bitsy Tiger and Other Ridiculous Stories and Songs. DVD by Priscilla Howe. www.priscillahowe.com 2010, Order # PHS006

Priscilla Howe is a master at her craft. In “The Itsy Bitsy Tiger” DVD, you get to see Priscilla work her magic. This 43-minute adventure is filled with solid and entertaining storytelling with expertly-timed comedic moments that induce wails of laughter from the children in her audience. Children watching this DVD will most likely find themselves gesturing along with the audience as Priscilla weaves story and song together.

You won’t be distracted by the puppets and the songs. While Priscilla uses the music and puppets well, she is foremost a storyteller and it shows. This isn’t a puppeteer or a musician using storytelling as a side-note to her presentations. Rather, it’s an internationally-traveled and very talented storyteller intent on delivering great stories to and with her young audience- and you get to come along via the video.

The only challenging thing we see about the video is what appears to be the varying skill levels of the videographer or the editor. We were surprised at the several clumsy pans and the slow switching between teller and puppets. Not to worry, as Priscilla is a much better storyteller than the video crew. Your children watching this DVD will not notice these simple mistakes. They are more likely to be entranced with the excellent shots that were otherwise done by the video crew, especially when they show close-ups of the children’s hands as they do the gestures to Priscilla’s stories.

The DVD package suggests that this project is for ages 3-10. We agree. Pick up a copy of Priscilla’s “The Itsy Bitsy Tiger” DVD to enchant your kids with these eight stories. Along with the stories, you will meet two of our favorite friends of Priscilla- The Baby and Trixie (yes, that’s her on the front cover) - who both apparently keep themselves very busy in a unique manner while in the puppet bag between their appearances on stage. Trixie also spends time writing to her adoring audience on her own Facebook fan page.

Finally, watch the video until the very end to see Priscilla and the puppets interact with the audience after the show. So many children’s performers vanish at the end of their set. Priscilla lingers while letting the children get close up with these little characters they have learned to love in the last hour. It’s in moments like these where you see the “heart” of a talented teller.

--reviewed by Sean Buvala, Director of Storyteller.net; used with permission.


Have you ever heard of the four creatures of Feng Shui? Mothman? The Wolf Children of Midnapour? Epona, the Celtic horse goddess? That the dove was sacred to Hachiman, the Japanese god of war? or that the first mention of a unicorn was as far back as 398 B.C.E.? These just scratch the surface of a book that serves as a bestiary, a concise study of folklore and traditions, and a look into the science of the relationship between humans and fabulous creatures.

Eason, a resident of the United Kingdom, has previous dozens of books in this field. Here she has skillfully balanced impeccably researched fact with fiction that would do a teller of tall tales proud. Real creatures such as cat, dog, horse, manatee, wolf and raven walk alongside phoenix, dragon, mantichore, griffon, Yeti, unicorn and more. General headings include clan animals, animals in prophecy, animal symbolism, serpents, winged creatures, and marine creatures of myth and legend from all parts of the world. From ancient times to modern Bigfoot and Mothman, this volume is a wonderful introduction for children and young readers as well as for storytellers. Highly recommended for home, school, and library.

reviewed by Robert Rodríguez


Kurdistan encompasses portions of present-day Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran. It has been at the center of political turmoil and tragedy from ancient to modern times, especially since the end of WWII. The Kurds, facing constant oppression and denial of their right to exist as a nation-state, have nonetheless held steadfastly to their folkways, traditions, and storytelling arts for well over 4000 years.

Into this maelstrom of conflict came Massachusetts teller Diane Edgecomb who, from 1999 to 2006, collected traditional Kurdish tales in the Kurdish region of Turkey. This volume introduces a culture hitherto little known until recent times.

Like all Libraries Unlimited’s World Folklore series, this book includes an introduction giving a brief history

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Tellabrations across the state see a healthy audience of listeners

Colony

The town of Colony, welcomed its second Tellabration in 2011. Colony’s Columbian Memorial Presbyterian Church served as host, followed by a reception provided by the ladies of the church. Artists at this matinee event, on Sunday, November 13, presented a variety of material. They included Territory Tellers Board President Liz Parker of Midwest City, and Board Members Molly Lemmons of Mustang and Loralee Cooley of Cordell. Master of Ceremonies was church pastor Ed Cooley.

Loralee Cooley gets the audience at the Colony Tellabration off their chairs and on their feet. This is the second year for the community event.

Other artists were “Straw” (Lavern) Berry, cowboy poet of Cordell, members of the Mitchell family of Cordell, Karen Arnett of Cordell singing Patsy Cline favorites, Jennifer Wedel of Clinton with a selection from Clinton’s Southwest Playhouse recent production of the musical “HATS!” and the Men’s Chorus from the Cordell First Presbyterian Church.

A sponsorship of $60 was made to Territory Tellers for the 2012 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival from a collection given by attendees of the Tellabration concert.

Watonga

The first Tellabration was held on Saturday, November 12, at the Watonga Community Theatre, and sponsored by the theatre board. Besides featuring several members of Territory Tellers, there were also two Watonga residents, Larry Masoner and H.G. “Hod” Tolbert, who shared tales and history of the Watonga community. Master of Ceremonies was Andy Barrett, active in Watonga affairs, and a native of the historic town. Storytellers from Territory Tellers were Greg Rodgers of Warr Acres, Tony Hardman of Goodwell, Chester Weems of Yukon, Liz Parker of Midwest City, Teresa Black of Oklahoma City, and Loralee Cooley of Cordell. The guest tellers were treated to a delicious dinner at “End of Main,” a local restaurant prior to the concert, and the theatre held a reception for audience and artists afterward.

A sponsorship of $100 was made to Territory Tellers for the 2012 Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival by the Watonga Community Theatre.

Choctaw

Marilyn Hudson was the featured teller at the Choctaw Tellabration. Other Territory Teller members who told were Rosemary Czarski, Susie Beasley, and Liz Parker. The family style Tellabration was attended by people from the Choctaw community. At the end of the concert, Rosemary opened the mike to tellers from the audience. An upper elementary student came forward to tell a story. Then there was a reception that followed and the tellers and the audience members were able to visit and get acquainted.

Bartlesville

Tallgrass Tellers (TgT) celebrated Tellabration in downtown Bartlesville. Guests were treated to a feast of stories. Nikki Austen, from Pawhuska, started the night out with “drinks” by telling her story of “Beer for Slugs.” Fran Stallings told of a family that traded their produce for money to feed their family and got the better of a deal with a wily, wealthy and presuming merchant that found out he couldn’t outsmart a woman so easily.

Robert Rodrequez, New York City, gave us an appetizer of “Turtle Soup in the Red River” which had folks filled with laughter imaging the Red River flowing with turtles. While the folks were still contemplating this story, Nikki again regaled the audience with a story about different species of dogs and emcee Nancy Matthews told of her experience meeting Santa Claus.

After the brief intermission where cookies and hot cider were served, our main course was served by Connie Neil Fisher. His advise to take a magnet to check out the angel hair spaghetti got a lot of chuckles.

Just over 100 folks filled the Clark-Bohardt Community Building in the heart of historic downtown Apache for the 2011 celebration known as Tellabration. They enjoyed the storytelling artistry of Mary Anne Prueett, Jay Snider, and Sam McMichael (above). Steve Kardaleff was Master of Ceremonies. The event raised $400 which was donated to the local food pantry.
Invitation to Sponsor Individual Festival Events

Still itching to do more for the Festival? You can sponsor an individual event at the Festival. Sponsorship means at a minimum that a sign will be posted at each event naming the event and listing your name, or the name of your business. The sign will be approximately 8 1/2 x 11. If you prefer to provide your own signage, you can do so. Sponsors will also be listed in the participant packets and at the registration desk. Please make your checks payable to “Territory Tellers Storytelling Festival.”

Friday
Table Telling 1 .......... $75 00
Lunch Story Swap 1 . $75 00
Snack Area ............ $60 00 Colony Tellabration
Oklahoma Voices ...... $150 00
Story Swap 2 ............ $75 00
Jim May
90 min workshop..... $100 00 Velma & Chester Weems
Mini Concert “West” .. $75 00 Elizabeth Parker
Evening Performance. $250 00
Ghost Tales ............. $100 00

Did you forget to pick up a festival t-shirt?
Don’t fret! you can log on to http://www.territorytellers.org/SpiritOfOklahoma/T-Shirts and place your order. Hurry, there is a limited supply.

Have you checked out TT’s presence on Facebook and Twitter? We have 660 friends on Facebook and 57 followers on Twitter. Thanks to Webmaster Shaun Perkins for her consistent efforts to get story information out to the masses!

Saturday
Publishing Panel ....... $75 00
Story Swap 3 .......... $75 00
Jim May
60 min workshop..... $75 00 Seminole Wind Farms
Jay Stailey
90 min workshop..... $100 00 Watonga Comm Theatre
Mini Concert “East” .. $75 00
Lunch Story Swap 4 . $75 00
Snack Area .......... $60 00
Table Telling 2 ...... $75 00
Spirits of Oklahoma ... $150 00
Story Swap 5 .......... $75 00
Evening Performance. $250 00 Pryor Petroleum, Inc.
Closing Reception ..... $200 00

Head down to “Baja-Oklahoma” for the Texas Storytelling Festival

Our story cousins down South have their own Festival in the works March 9-11, 2012, at the Denton Civic Center in Denton, TX. They promise that they’d love to have a whole bunch of Oklahomans come across the Red River and join them in the festivities. Elizabeth Ellis says, “It’s gonna be wonderful.”

The Texas Storytelling Festival will feature Patrick Ball, MaryAnn Blue, Kim Lehman and Kevin Kling. Twelve “great workshops” are planned according to Elizabeth, along with Ghost Stories, Sacred Tales and a Liar’s Contest. Sounds like a Texas sized mix of events to suit anyone’s tastes.

Visit www.tejasstorytelling.com for complete information.

Member news, notes and events

The Duncan Storytelling Festival is scheduled for Friday March 9 at 6:30 in the Seniors Center on 1110 7th St. Tellers will include Sam McMichael, Gale McCray, Ed Foley, and Charles Kriss.

Marilyn Hudson will participate in the 2012 Peterbaugh Festival, University of Oklahoma, March 6th. An Irish playwright will be honored on this occasion and Marilyn will be reading a selection of Irish literature. “I am honored to be part of another nationally recognized event for literature hosted in our state. Details are still sketchy but I wanted to make you aware of this opportunity and my involvement” says Marilyn. She also served as a guest reader for the Neustadt Children’s Literature Award event in the fall. More info on both the Peterbaugh and Neustadt events can be found at: http://www.ou.edu/worldlit/puterbaugh-festival.html and http://www.ou.edu/worldlit/nsk-childrens-prize.html.

Stella Long reports that she is “slowly coming out to the public with stories” after some personal difficulties the last few years. She was invited to share in a traditional medicine ceremony and storytelling with the northeastern tribes that was held at Montgomery College in Maryland. “We shared our Indian histories remembered. This was a special occasion and I shall always remember being a part of it,” recounts Stella. She will also speak on the public tribal radio station in the future.

Tony Hardman has become active in the Guymon Community Theater (GCT) since his move to Goodwell, Oklahoma. Guymon is only ten miles north of Goodwell. Last December he played the role of Ramon Ramirez in the play “A Christmas Cactus.” He is also actively pursuing a “night of storytelling” as part of the GCT 2012-13 season.
Silent Auction is an easy way to support the Festival

For the past five years, we have had a silent auction at our storytelling festival. It is a fun and easy way to raise some funds to support the festival. We are asking each member to check through closets, attics, and basements and find something that you don’t use anymore, but someone else might enjoy having. Go through your storytelling books and donate any you don’t need anymore. Of course, you can also contribute something new if you want to. Co-chairs for the silent auction are Loralee Cooley, storyspinner@sbcglobal.net and Tony Hardman, realpha1984@yahoo.com. If you can donate something to the silent auction, please let Loralee or Tony know. Then just bring your item to the festival and they will get everything organized so festival attendees can make bids.

Special offer for first 5 responding TT members

As a Territory Teller member would you like to sell something at the festival? Five tables will be made available to Territory Teller members. The only cost for a table will be a donation of an item for the silent auction. If you are interested in reserving a table, please contact Liz Parker at eparker1964@yahoo.com. Tables will be reserved on a first-come-first-serve basis. At the festival you must be responsible for your table and for all your own sales. Two people can share a table.

The Seminole Tourism Council approved funding in the amount of $3,110 for promotion of the “Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival” to be held on the Campus of Seminole State College in Seminole, Oklahoma June 1-2. We can best show appreciation to the Tourism Council by continuing to grow the festival, and attracting as many out of town participants as we can. Pictured are some of the Tourism Council, Chaired by Lana Reynolds.

So many books from page 4

and geography of Kurdistan; and a section of games and recipes. Most important for storytellers, Edgecomb provides background information on where she collected the tales, when and from whom, with notes explaining relevant aspects of daily life, customs, and folkways helpful to the enjoyment of the tales—which are beautifully retold.

Story types include origin tales, animal fables, tales of wonder, heroic legends, humorous tales and a group of teaching stories. Personal favorites include the legend of Rustam Zal, Fatima, the Kurdish Cinderella, a resilient elderly woman known as Pire and Rovi (Uncle Fox). “Three Donkeys Like You” is a variant of “Jack and the Three Sillies.” We meet haughty sultans, evil magicians, brave peasant lads and djinn-like females. Edgecomb emphasizes that the Kurdish village is the center of all storytelling traditions. Thanks to Libraries Unlimited and Dianne Edgecomb for opening a window on this little-known culture. --reviewed by Robert Rodriguez

[editor’s note: Dianne Edgecomb received an NSN 2011 ORACLE Regional Excellence award]
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.

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

Territory Tellers • 6495 S 438 Rd • Locust Grove OK 74352

Are you a storyteller? ☐  Story listener? ☐

Web site (optional)

e-mail address

Home Phone

Work Phone

Country

City/State/Zip

Street Address

Full Name

Is your membership current? Send in your renewal today!