

# National Storytelling Network

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

### AHEAD OF NSN'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, BOARD VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO JOIN AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS



**Rishi Nixon**  
President & Chair of the Board of Directors  
National Storytelling Network

Beginning this month, NSN celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year as the United States' national organization for storytellers.

On this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I would like to recognize our 23 formative years—from 1975 to 1998—our organization spent unified with the International Storytelling Center, first as the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (NAPPS) and then the National Storytelling Association (NSA). We wish the International Storytelling Center our sincere congratulations as their organization's reaches this 50<sup>th</sup> year milestone while in fellowship with the storytelling community at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee this month.

I would also like to recognize NSN's rich heritage as a powerful voice advocating for storytellers. At our 2025 annual conference in Georgia, I learned from former NSN president Jo Radner of our organization's deciding role, decades ago, in the successful movement to advocate for the National Endowment for the Arts to include storytelling as a category on their federal grant application...[continued »](#)

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**DID YOU KNOW? NSN BOARD MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS**

Click [here](#) to read this month's and prior meeting minutes.

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Today, arts funders from the local to state to regional level show widespread adoption of storytelling as a category for arts grants.

Amid these reckless federal cuts to the arts, all of these very grants are now at risk. By my own tally from conversations at our conference and since then, NSN member organizations have lost over \$100,000 from revocation of federal arts funding at both the National Endowment from the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment from the Humanities (NEH).

If you lead an NSN member organization that has lost funding from the NEA or NEH, I would like to hear from you; please reach out to me at [rishi@storynet.org](mailto:rishi@storynet.org).

From valuable conversations at our Georgia conference around our role as storytellers in this toxic new climate, one of my three key priorities for NSN has become reclaiming our mantle as the national advocacy organization for storytellers. As a result, I am pleased to announce that this September, the NSN Board of Directors unanimously voted to join Americans for the Arts, the leading national coalition of over 150,000 artists and arts organizations advocating against cuts to the NEA and NEH. This action also secures us membership in the Americans for the Arts Action Fund—their affiliate organization permitted to engage in arts activism and political activity—and confers a range of benefits we can provide the NSN membership. The board has tasked the NSN Strategic Planning Committee with examining how our organization can engage in these benefits for our membership—more to come on this soon.

To close this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary letter, I want to invite you to join us on a very special project that will be ongoing through the next year and will be showcased at our 2026 and 2027 conferences. NSN Immediate Past President Delanna Reed has agreed to chair a wide-ranging oral history initiative seeking to relate and preserve the history of the first 50 years of our organization through the stories of our members and leaders over the years. As the committee is formed, we will have more ways to engage with this project.

At this point, we ask to please contact [delanna@storynet.org](mailto:delanna@storynet.org) if you were involved in the development and governance of NAPPS, NSA, or NSN throughout its early history—especially from 1975–1990. We are interested in collecting your recorded stories.

Thank you so much for your support of our organization, and to 50 more years of growing storytellers,  
Rishi Nixon



NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK  
OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

VISIT STORYNET.ORG BY NOV 15 TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL!

## TEXAS 2026 NATIONAL STORYTELLING CONFERENCE CALL FOR PROPOSALS



Caleb Hubbard and Trudy Hanson  
Co-Chairs of the National Storytelling Conference  
National Storytelling Network

### Conference Theme: Prairie Voices – Honoring Heritage, Inspiring Tomorrow

Set against the open landscapes of the Texas Panhandle and the vistas of Palo Duro Canyon, this conference invites storytellers to gather where tradition meets innovation. From the voices of those native to the land to contemporary storytellers, Prairie Voices: Honoring Heritage, Inspiring Tomorrow celebrates the ways stories connect generations, communities, and experiences. Together, we'll explore how the wisdom of the past informs the stories of today and inspires the voices of tomorrow.

If you have any questions or concerns about the proposal, please contact conference co-chairs Caleb Hubbard ([cghubbard@storynet.org](mailto:cghubbard@storynet.org)) and/or Trudy Hanson ([hansontrudy@outlook.com](mailto:hansontrudy@outlook.com)). Your proposal submission can be edited after submitting until the proposal deadline. For those seeking to submit multiple proposals, you must submit one application per proposal.

### Terms and Presenter Benefits

1. We welcome proposal submissions from anyone by November 15, 2025. Presenters are not required to be members of NSN, but 80% of sessions must be presented by NSN members.
2. Each selected presenter of a 90-minute presentation will receive \$100 off registration.
3. Morning activity leader receives \$100 off registration for three 30-minute sessions.
4. Proposals will be evaluated for: (a) quality of program, (b) clarity of intent, (c) practicality of process, (d) expertise of presenter on this topic, (e) interest to general membership or to applications of storytelling (Special Interest Groups), and (f) diversity of presentation.
5. All applicants will be notified of their acceptance or rejection by e-mail sent on or before January 31, 2026.
6. All applicants receiving notification of acceptance must email their acceptance confirmation to NSN by February 15, 2026 —failure to respond by the deadline may result in withdrawal of the offer to present. We will also request a high-quality electronic photo (300 dpi or higher) and a 30-word biography for publicity.

[VISIT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM](#)



PRODUCERS AND ORGANIZERS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (PRO SIG)

## NSN'S PRO SIG ANNOUNCES NEW PEER CONSULTING PROGRAM



Lisa Overholser  
Director of PRO SIG  
National Storytelling Network

Looking for guidance from PRO peers on topics related to starting, organizing, or managing storytelling events? Apply for a PRO Peer Consulting Session, a one-on-one professional development opportunity for new and emerging storytelling event organizers to learn from seasoned experts! Applicants can select from a list of seasoned PRO experts on a variety of topics for individual consulting sessions, paid for with a PRO stipend.

Here's how it works:

1. Browse the [PRO Consultants List](#) by topic and select a consultant you would like to work with one-on-one.
2. Fill out a [short application form](#) and submit to PRO by hitting "submit".
3. The application will be reviewed by our PRO panel to determine availability of funds, appropriateness, etc., and the proposed consultant will be contacted.
4. If approved and the consultant is available, you will be notified and put in touch with the consultant. You will communicate directly with the consultant to set up meeting time(s), etc.
5. PRO pays the consultant upon completion of the session(s).

### Program FAQs

- What kinds of "consulting sessions" are offered?
  - These are meant to be brief consultations only, to work on specific questions or topics. This is an opportunity for one-on-one consultation. They are not meant for long-term mentoring or ongoing learning. They are also offered outside of any planned PRO workshops or presentations that are open to the general public. Applicants can apply for 1, 2 or 3 hours. The maximum is 3 hours; Consultants will get paid \$100/hr by PRO.
- Is this peer consulting program open only to PRO members?
  - NO – it's open to all NSN members.
- Is there a cost to me as the applicant?
  - The program is free for PRO SIG members. Other NSN members may join the SIG for \$25. Questions? Contact Lisa Overholser ([nsnprozoomadmin1@storynet.org](mailto:nsnprozoomadmin1@storynet.org), or [linlis334343@hotmail.com](mailto:linlis334343@hotmail.com)). PRO is piloting this peer consulting program, and has budgeted funds for consultants to be paid, at no cost to the applicant.



- What is the goal of this program?
  - Although our group meets monthly and organizes special public workshops and presentations, we find that our PRO members sometimes want to learn more from other PRO members – how did they handle this specific problem? What tools were used to accomplish this task? We hope to further the storytelling production knowledge of our larger community by drawing upon the wealth of knowledge of our members.
- Is there a deadline to apply?
  - No, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, as long as funding lasts. The pilot period is the 2025 calendar year.

**ORACLE NOMINATIONS**

## **ORACLE AWARD NOMINATIONS OPENING NOV 10, 2025**



**Mary Hamilton**  
Chair of the ORACLE Awards Committee  
National Storytelling Network

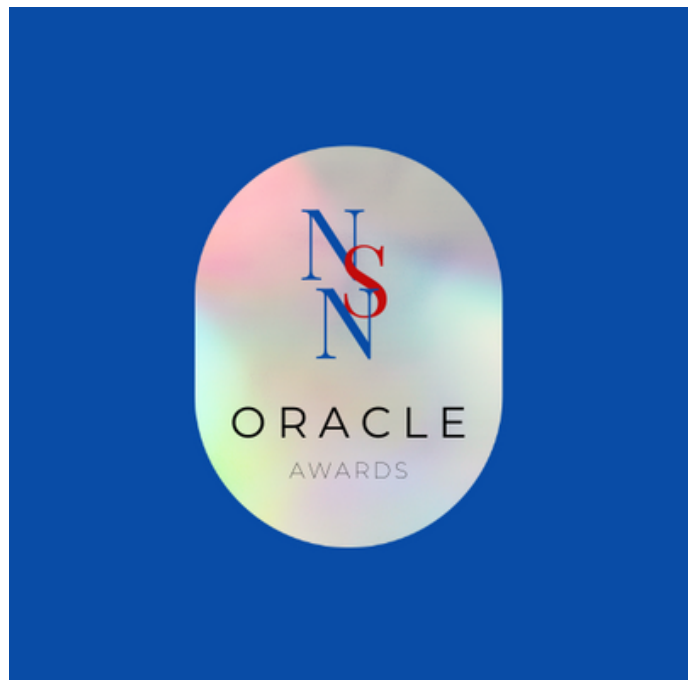
Are you getting ready for 2026? Plan your ORACLE Award nomination now.

Celebrate a colleague's excellent storytelling with a Circle of Excellence Award; or devotion to creating and supporting storytelling events with a Regional Service & Leadership Award; or writing with a Talking Leaves Award. These, and more, are among the National Storytelling Network ORACLE Awards.

Nomination submission window?

**November 10, 2025 – January 10, 2026.**

Learn more at [storynet.org/awards/oracle-awards](https://storynet.org/awards/oracle-awards).







*YES Story Lab presents*

## Spicing Stone Soup: Breathing Life into Fairy Tale

**Fairy tales** should be anything but dry! Join Cooper as we explore how to approach the "freeze dried soup" of classic fairy tales. **How to bring them to life, take them apart, rebuild them,** and have some plain old fun telling fairy tales.

CLASS FEE  
**FREE**

FOR YES MEMBERS  
\$20 - NON MEMBERS



**Oct 16**

**Thursday**

**5 pm Pacific**

**6 pm Mountain**

**7 pm Central**

**8 pm Eastern**

**REGISTER NOW!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[HTTPS://STORYNET.ORG/EVENTS/](https://storynet.org/events/)



## Webinar Series

Building your story constellation: four stories we need to know and share about ourselves.

### Goal:

You will discover, craft and master 4 core stories that help people learn who you really are: mission, values, beliefs and vision.

### When: Every 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month:

September 2, 2025

October 7, 2025

November 4, 2025

December 2, 2025

### Time:

11:00 a.m. -12:15 p.m. Eastern Time



### Facilitator:

Artem Mushin-Makedonskiy

[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)



**Free to SIO members and  
Non-members**

[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)



## **Storytelling In Organizations**

### **The Transformative Power of Storytelling: Personal Healing and Policy Change**

**When: Saturday, October 18, 2025**

**Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. EST**

**Where: Zoom**



**Host: Lauryn Williams**

Journalist, Researcher, Producer and  
Storyteller



**Guest: Eva Grayzel**

Survivor, Public Health Advocate,  
Storyteller and Motivational Speaker



**Free to SIO members and  
Non-members**



## Storytelling In Organizations

### Find Your Legacy Through Storytelling

**When:** Saturday,  
November 15, 2025

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. -  
12:00 p.m. EST

**Where:** Zoom

**By the end of the webinar  
participants will be able to:**

Apply a simple storytelling  
framework (beginning, challenge,  
transformation, impact) to shape  
their narrative.

Craft and share a short personal  
“legacy story” that communicates  
their purpose and values.

Gain tools to continue building and  
living their legacy beyond the  
session.

[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)



**Facilitator: Sadika Kebbi**  
CEO & Founder of Kun Consultancy  
A John C. Maxwell certified trainer  
Tedx speaker  
Best selling author



NSN PRO SIG presents



# CAN WE TALK?

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 8, 2025 - 6 pm (Central)

\$10 (FREE For PRO members)

Click [workshop registration link](#) to register

A ninety minute introductory interactive workshop by Denise Page  
for storytellers and other caring humans

*One of the many questions of today thoughtful storytellers are pondering is:*

- ❑ *Can I tell that story?*
- ❑ *Do I have right to tell a story that is not of my identify?*
- ❑ *Is telling this story cultural appropriation or misappropriation?*
- ❑ *What about dialects and accents?*
- ❑ *When I hear people who share an identity, which I don't share, discussing their cultural norms, may I incorporate that information into my stories?*

This interactive workshop provides a supportive, brave space for discussion. You are invited to bring a story about which you may have some of these questions. Our questions are communal, your answers, individual.



THE HEALING STORY ALLIANCE PRESENTS

# KIND STORIES IN CONCERT



**THE POWER OF COMMUNITY**

Emcee



LEE-ELLEN MARVIN

**SUNDAY  
OCT. 5TH  
7-8:30PM EDT  
ON ZOOM!**

Also featuring two  
Community Tellers who will  
share anecdotes of  
community kindness from  
their lives and work.



JIM BRULÉ



JESSICA PISCITELLI



ELISA PEARMAIN



RISHI NIXON

**Free: Registration Required  
Donations Welcome!**



**SANDBAR  
STORYTELLING  
FESTIVAL**

**OCTOBER 7-13, 2025**

*Seven Days of Stories, Culture, Music, and Food  
Celebrating the Art of Storytelling in Winona, MN*



**BIL LEPP**, five-time West Virginia Liars Contest champion, entertains with humorous, family-friendly stories that delight audiences of all ages.



**DOVIE THOMASON**, respected storyteller blending Indigenous history and personal narratives, has performed worldwide, receiving multiple prestigious awards for her work.



**REV. ROBERT JONES, SR.**, inspirational singer, songwriter, storyteller, and award-winning multi-instrumentalist blending folk, blues, and spirituals to celebrate the power of American Roots music.



**DON WHITE**, storyteller, comedian, author, songwriter, captivates audiences with emotional extremes, blending humor and heart in live performances, recordings, and written works.




**JOSH GOFORTH**, accomplished storyteller and musician, has performed worldwide and was nominated for a Grammy, currently teaching at Asheville's Academy for the Arts.



**KATIE KNUTSON**, professional storyteller and educator blending physicality and character voices; teaching artist, coach, and Executive Director of Northeast Storytelling, Inc.



**ELIZABETH ELLIS**, designated an American Masterpiece Touring Artist, is an award-winning storyteller and author known for Appalachian, Texas, and heroic American women's tales.



**Friday - Sunday  
October 24-26, 2025**

Three days of 16 diverse guest presenters at the forefront of the national storytelling movement!

# TALES FROM THE WELL




**Friday - Oct 24th**  
· 7 - 10 pm  
· Day pass \$45  
· \$35 Senior / Student

**Saturday - Oct 25th**  
· 2 - 10 pm  
· Day pass \$105  
· \$70 Senior / Student

**Sunday - Oct 26th**  
· 9 am - 3 pm  
· Day pass \$75  
· \$50 Senior / Student

**FULL FESTIVAL PASS**  
· \$195 / \$125 Senior / Student

**Event location :**  
Mountain View Studio  
20 Mountainview Ave,  
Woodstock, NY 12498



[www.woodstockstoryfestival.com](http://www.woodstockstoryfestival.com)





NATIONAL STORYTELLING CALENDAR  
LINKS IN TITLES IF AVAILABLE

## OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2025 EVENTS

### New Jersey Storytelling Festival

October 4, 2025 | 10:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern

William Trent House Museum | 15 Market Street, Trenton, New Jersey

### Traditions & Truth: A Virtual Open Mic

October 4, 2025 | 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm Central | Online

Email [jdelnegro@dom.edu](mailto:jdelnegro@dom.edu) for the zoom link or to tell in the open mic. Stories 7-10 minutes.

### Sandbar Storytelling Festival

October 7 – 11, 2025

Alverna Conference Center | St. Mary's University | Winona, Minnesota

Festival coaching with Elizabeth Ellis (\$375): 10 am, Oct 12 through 5pm, Oct 13, 2025; \$60 per night lodging. Limited to 12 participants—apply for coaching slots at [sandbarstorytellingfestival.org/box-office/education](https://sandbarstorytellingfestival.org/box-office/education).

### National Storytelling Network Storytelling In Organizations (SIO) Building Your Story Constellations: Four Stories We Need to Know and Share About Ourselves by Artem Mushin-Makedonskiy

October 7, 2025 | 11:00 – 12:15 pm Eastern | Online

*This is Part 2 of a 4-workshop series on the first Tuesday of each month from September to December 2025.* Each story we tell shapes how we see ourselves and how others see us. And yet there are some stories that have more potential in showing who we are and what we stand for. Stories in that sense are like stars in the night sky: every constellation has a couple of the brightest stars that play the key role in defining the shape of the constellation. In this series of webinars you will discover 4 core stories that can help you show yourself and others around you who you are, what you stand for, and why you do the things you do. Apart from theory on these stories there will be practice in break out sessions so get your microphone and headphones ready!

### National Storytelling Network Producers and Organizers (PRO) "Can We Talk?" Workshop with Denise Page

October 8, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:30 pm Central | Online

A ninety minute introductory interactive workshop by Denise Page for storytellers and other caring humans. Can I tell that story? Do I have right to tell a story that is not of my identity? What about dialects and accents? When I hear people who share an identity, which I don't share, discussing their cultural norms, may I incorporate that information into my stories?



**True Tales Live Storytelling Workshop**

October 11, 2025 | 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm Central | Online

**Voices in the Glen Story Swap**

October 11, 2025 | 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm Eastern | Online

Storytellers and listeners are invited to join Voices in the Glen storytellers for an evening of shared stories. Anyone is welcome to tell a tale; no one ever has to.

**National Storytelling Network Storytelling In Organizations (SIO) The Transformative Power of Storytelling: Personal Healing and Policy Change by Lauryn Williams and Eva Grayzel**

October 18, 2025 | 11:00 – 12:15 pm Central | Online

This interview delves into the transformative power of storytelling, tracing its journey from personal healing to broad societal influence. Through an intimate exploration of lived experience with illness, it reveals how narrative shapes identity, fosters emotional and spiritual resilience, and becomes a catalyst for advocacy. The discussion highlights practical examples where storytelling has influenced healthcare practices, education, and policy, while also examining the craft, philosophy, and ethical responsibility behind effective narrative work.

**Woodstock Storytelling Festival**

October 24 – 26, 2025

20 Mountain View Avenue, Woodstock, New York

**Tellabration! Ridgefield, Connecticut**

November 15, 2025 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Eastern

Scott House | Grove Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut

**Weave Us Together: Storytelling to Build Community and Create a Better Future by Carole McCormick**

November 15, 2025 | 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm Central

Rates: Regular \$90, Limited Means \$30+, VIP \$135, includes 2 coaching sessions of 20 minutes each.

Contact Carol to buy tickets and get Zoom details at [mccormickcarolr@gmail.com](mailto:mccormickcarolr@gmail.com).

**Story Weaver: Reviving the Art of Nature-Focused Storytelling**

October 30, 2025 | 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm Central

Hitchcock Nature Center | 27792 Ski Hill Loop, Honey Creek, Iowa

**Tellabration! Indiana**

November 21, 2025 | 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Central

Timbercrest Senior Living | 2201 East Street, North Manchester, Indiana

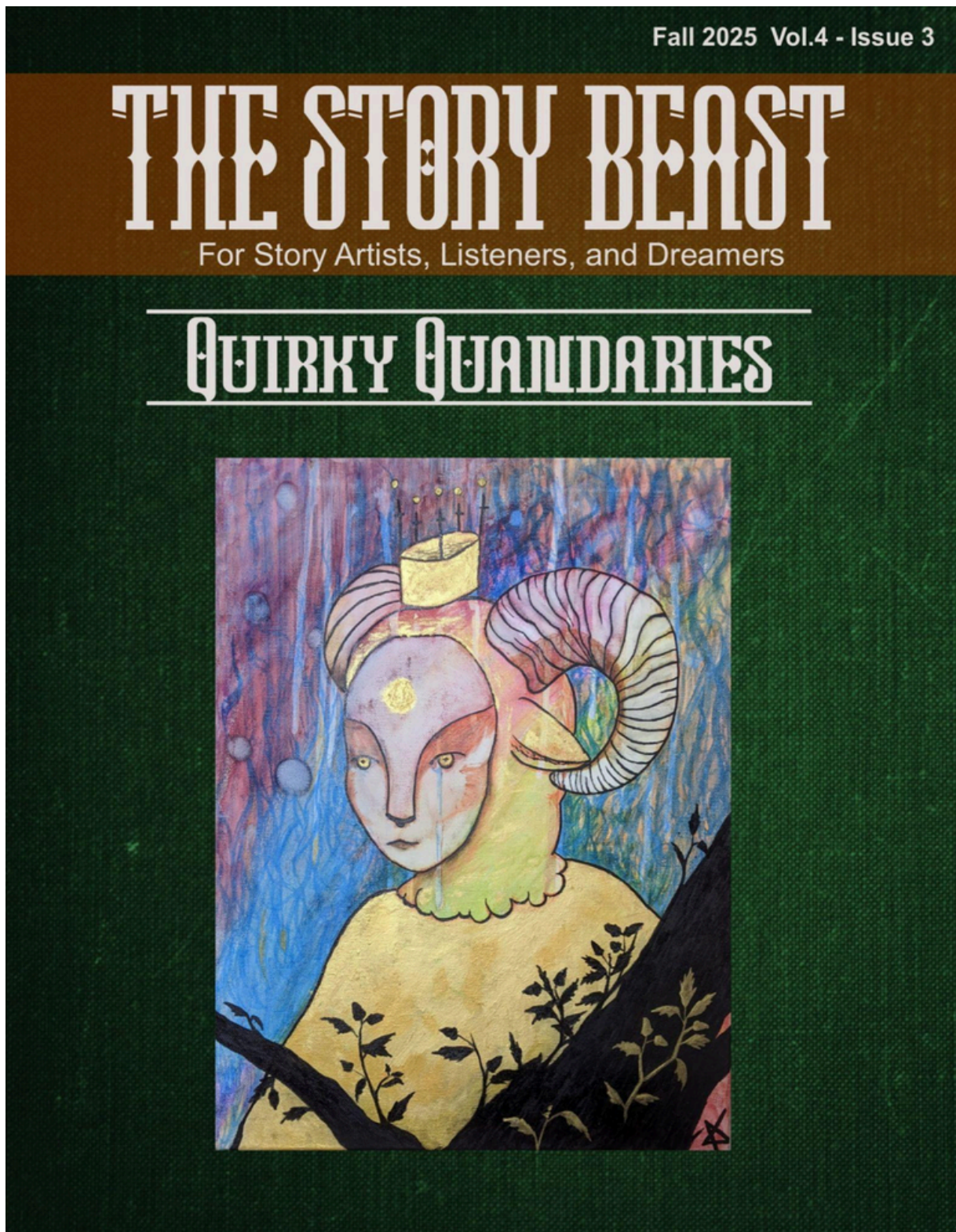




NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK  
OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Click the cover below to read the September 2025 Story Beast Issue *Quirky Quandaries*!

Visit [storybeast.org](https://storybeast.org) for more.





**NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK**  
OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

Margaret Read MacDonald	Managing Editor
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Rita Rigano	Copy Editor
Sara Armstrong	Copy Editor
Nick Smith	Editor
Cassie Selleck	Editor

**HOW TO SUBMIT TO THE NEWSLETTER**

Send us your events, articles, opportunities, storytelling or storyteller news, and more in an email to [newsletter@storynet.org](mailto:newsletter@storynet.org) to go out to the national storytelling community!

1. Contributions due on the 25th of the month.
2. Membership in the National Storytelling Network *not* required.
3. Content subject to editing and inclusion in final issue not guaranteed.
4. If you are the author of your contribution, please also attach a headshot photo of yourself to go next to your byline.