



**National Storytelling Network**  
**November 19, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
[storynet.org/about-nsn/board-meeting-information/](http://storynet.org/about-nsn/board-meeting-information/)

**I. Call to Order 6:05 pm ET**

Chair Rishi Nixon

Quorum requires a majority of the number of Directors in office—currently **16**—so **9** board members are required to conduct business.

Karin Amano, Melissa Fees, Caleb Hubbard, Margaret Read MacDonald, Barry McWilliams, Rishi Nixon, Claire Nolan, Lisa Overholser, Delanna Reed, Emily Stamet, Lisa Williams, Linda Yemoto. Staff: Dot Cleveland. Bob Johnson. Conference Co-Coordinator: Trudy Hansen

**II. Review and Approval of October 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**

Secretary Margaret Read MacDonald.

**Motion: That the minutes of the October 2025 Board meeting be approved as amended. Moved by Rishi Nixon. Passed unanimously.**

**III. Chair's Report**

Chair Rishi Nixon

This is Tellabration month. A Tellabration page is on the NSN website under "Events". Oracle nominations opened this month and close Jan 10. Proposal deadline for the 2026 conference is now closed.

NABS Conference is taking place now. Strategic Planning Committee member, Travis Wolven sent as rep from NSN. Hoping to discuss ideas for NABS and NSN cooperation. Travis will send note for newsletter about his experience at NABS conference, NSN bought a full-page ad for the NABS program (half page ad was already arranged via exchange with NABS ad for our conference).

Upasna Kakroo, NSN Publications Manager, is working on social media ideas to promote NSN.

Jo Radner sent info on Literary Arts Fund Grant. We are exploring the possibility of applying for this.

We received a \$3,000 donation from a Texas donor.

**IV. Treasurer's Report See on website.**

Treasurer Bob Johnson

Bob needs SIG budgets by 2<sup>nd</sup> week in January at latest.

**V. Environmental Storytelling Special Interest Group (ECO SIG) Report**

Directors Linda Yemoto and Claire Nolan

23 ECO SIGS did not renew. Investigating this and also reaching out to new members. Committee of five set to review proposals.

**VI. Producers & Organizers Special Interest Group (PRO SIG) Report**

Directors Lisa Overholser and Barry McWilliams

Denise Paige workshop “Can We Talk?” over 20 registered. The Peer Consulting program is being advertised. PRO is planning webinars for next year. A panel to evaluate proposals is set.

**VII. Storytelling in Organizations Special Interest Group (SIO SIG) Report**

Director Lisa Williams

James Brulé has a committee of five to evaluate conference proposals.

Lisa is looking for nominees to fill her position as SIO Chair.

Artem Mushin-Makendonskiy will complete his four webinar series on Dec 2.

Sadika Kebbi presented a successful “Legacy through Storytelling”. They had 20 participants. She sent a proposal to present the same workshop for NSN conference and will come from Dubai if accepted.

Dec. 13 Lauryn Williams and Eva Grayzel will offer a webinar re Eva’s journey in using narrative to change policy.

Vanad Krishna will be offering webinars 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays from 8-9 January through Aril.

Sally Perkins will be offering a webinar in February.

**VIII. Youth-Educators-Storytellers Special Interest Group (YES SIG) Report**

Director Karin Amano

New board member Karen Golden.

Storylab Dec 10 will feature a presenter on AI.

The Angela Lloyd Award is to be offered again this year.

Linda Yemoto will lead the proposal review team.

**IX. Vote on Minnesota 2027 Conference Proposal**

Chair Rishi Nixon

We have received a proposal from Story Arts of Minnesota, in partnership with The American School of Storytelling and the Black Storytellers Alliance.

Local Chair would be Loren Niemi. Local Committee to include: Katie Knutson, Pam Schweitzer, Sue Searing, Christine Mounts, Howard Lieberman, Carol McCormick, and Nicholas Pawloski.

**Motion: That we accept the proposal from Minnesota for the 2027 NSN Conference. Moved by Delanna Reed. Passed unanimously.**

**X. Texas 2026 Conference Co-Chairs’ Report**

Co-Chairs Caleb Hubbard and Trudy Hanson

Over 50 proposals were submitted. Some SIGS had only three proposals, so additional programs of interest to those SIGS may be solicited. Those proposing programs will be let know of their acceptance or rejection by February 1, 2026.

**XI. Ad Hoc Committee Report on Member At-Large (MAL) Involvement**

Ad Hoc Committee Chair Lisa Williams

Committee has not met yet. Lisa presented informational paper she created.

**XII. Strategic Planning Committee Advocacy Involvement Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

They evaluated the organization Americans for the Arts. Found benefit to NSN would be to expose other arts to our art of storytelling. Much of what is available on the website is available to non-members, still the \$100 membership for NSN feels useful.

Flyer created to explain values of AFTA will be put in newsletter and made available on our website.

**XIII. Grants Committee Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

Committee meeting. May trim the application. Coming up with criteria.

**XIV. Oral History Project Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

Work in progress.

**XV. Kathryn Tucker Windham Committee Report**

Secretary Margaret Read MacDonald

Committee to meet in December to decide on parameters for 2026.

**XVI. Adjournment 7:09 pm ET**

Chair Rishi Nixon

**Motion: That the meeting be adjourned. Moved by Rishi Nixon. Passed Unanimously.**

Next Board Meeting: **Wednesday, December 17, 2025**

6:00 - 8:00 pm Eastern Time

5:00 - 7:00 pm Central Time

4:00 - 6:00 pm Mountain Time

3:00 - 5:00 pm Pacific Time



**National Storytelling Network**  
**November 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**  
[storynet.org/about-nsn/board-meeting-information/](http://storynet.org/about-nsn/board-meeting-information/)

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Rishi Nixon

Quorum requires a majority of the number of Directors in office—currently **16**—so **9** board members are required to conduct business.

**II. Review and Approval of October 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**

Secretary Margaret Read MacDonald

**III. Chair's Report**

Chair Rishi Nixon

**IV. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Bob Johnson

**V. Environmental Storytelling Special Interest Group (ECO SIG) Report**

Directors Linda Yemoto and Claire Nolan

**VI. Producers & Organizers Special Interest Group (PRO SIG) Report**

Directors Lisa Overholser and Barry McWilliams

**VII. Storytelling in Organizations Special Interest Group (SIO SIG) Report**

Director Lisa Williams

**VIII. Youth-Educators-Storytellers Special Interest Group (YES SIG) Report**

Director Karin Amano

**IX. Vote on Minnesota 2027 Conference Proposal**

Chair Rishi Nixon

**X. Texas 2026 Conference Co-Chairs' Report**

Co-Chairs Caleb Hubbard and Trudy Hanson

**XI. Ad Hoc Committee Report on Member At-Large (MAL) Involvement**

Ad Hoc Committee Chair Lisa Williams

**XII. Strategic Planning Committee Advocacy Involvement Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

**XIII. Grants Committee Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

**XIV. Oral History Project Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

**XV. Kathryn Tucker Windham Committee Report**

Secretary Margaret Read MacDonald

**XVI. Adjournment**

Chair Rishi Nixon

Next Board Meeting: **Wednesday, December 17, 2025**

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**National Storytelling Network**  
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**I. Call to Order**

Chair Rishi Nixon

Quorum requires a majority of the number of Directors in office—currently **16**—so **9** board members are required to conduct business.

Present: Karin Amano, Trudy Hanson, Caleb Hubbard, Margaret Read MacDonald, Barry McWilliams, Rishi Nixon, Lisa Overholser, Delanna Reed, Emily Stamets, Lisa Williams, Linda Yemoto, Staff: Dot Cleveland, Bob Johnson. Member Observer: Robin Kitson (Raleigh, NC).

**II. Review and Approval of September 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**

Secretary Margaret Read MacDonald

**Motion: That the minutes of the September 2024 board meeting be approved. Moved by Delanna Reed. Passed unanimously.**

**III. Chair's Report**

Chair Rishi Nixon.

NSN turns 50 this month. We have joined Americans for the Arts. Delanna is kicking off an oral history project for NSN. Oracle Awards opens for nominations Nov 10. YES Sunbrella concert to fund Angela Lloyd Sunbrella Scholarship for K-12 teaching artists who do storytelling as their primary art. \$1,000 award.

**IV. Environmental Storytelling Special Interest Group (ECO SIG) Report**

Directors Linda Yemoto and Claire Nolan

ECO SIG Report: On Sunday, September 21, ECO SIG and HSA along with ThirdAct.org held a four-hour international storytelling concert on Zoom in honor of sustainable energy. The concert featured 25 storytellers, and we had over 70 attendees, many of whom stayed for the entire four-hour event! We are forming a committee of five to evaluate the 2026 NSN conference workshop proposals related to our SIG. So far, we have Claire Nolan and Fran Stallings on the committee. We continue to hold our monthly gatherings. Last one was in honor of Jane Goodall.

**V. Producers & Organizers Special Interest Group (PRO SIG) Report**

Directors Lisa Overholser and Barry McWilliams

Denise Paige, Can We Talk? workshop was rescheduled for Oct 27.

Group to evaluate proposals has been formed. Peer consulting program being launched. Free to the consultee, consultant is paid \$100. Kate Dudding, listserv manager, is retiring.

**VI. Storytelling in Organizations Special Interest Group (SIO SIG) Report**

Director Lisa Williams

Jim Brule and Alicia Dongjoo Bang will serve as the SIO conference representatives. Jim will lead the proposal review team, consisting of 3-5 SIO members. SIO doing webinar series Nov 4 and Dec 2. Oct 18 webinar to be rescheduled. Lauryn Williams interviewing Eva Grayzel. Another webinar series January through April. Lisa needs names of new SIG members from annual conference. Lisa's term as the SIO Director ends in July 2026. She is in the process of seeking nominees for her position.

Question was raised. What can we do to encourage MAL members to join SIGS. Or find a way to serve them as their own "SIG".

**Motion: That the board form an Ad Hoc Committee to explore ways to serve MAL members. Moved by Caleb Hubbard. Passed unanimously.**

Ad Hoc Committee to explore ways to serve MAL members: Caleb Hubbard, Margaret Read MacDonald, Lisa Williams.

**VII. Youth-Educators-Storytellers Special Interest Group (YES SIG) Report**

Director Karin Amano

\$2,193 collected from Angela Lloyd Concert. \$400 from Angela's auction items. StoryLabs continue. Looking for a YES board member.

**VIII. Vote on Cultural Equity Statement**

Vice Chair Caleb Hubbard

**Motion: That the Cultural Equity Statement be approved. Moved by Caleb Hubbard. Passed unanimously.**

The Cultural Equity Statement will appear on the NSN website.

**IX. Vote on Content Guidelines for Featured Conference Tellers**

Vice Chair Caleb Hubbard

**Motion: That the Content Guidelines for Featured Conference Tellers be approved. Moved by Linda Yemoto. Passed unanimously.**

**X. Texas 2026 Conference Co-Chairs' Report**

Co-Chairs Caleb Hubbard and Trudy Hanson

Caleb needs help with social media. An Instagram contact is needed.

Applications for conference presentations end Nov 15. Applicants for conference workshops will be notified by end of Jan. They must respond by Feb 15.

**XI. New Members of Member Grants Committee and Strategic Planning Committee**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

Member Grants Committee. Upasna Kakroo, Travis Wolven, Sara DeBeer, Robin Kitson, and Delanna Reed (chair).

Strategic Planning Committee:

Needs a SIG board member on the Strategic Planning Committee. Hoping to find a volunteer from general membership who has experience in strategic planning.

Strategic Planning Committee Members: Pat Nease; Drea Douglas, Nikki Goldman. Needs a board member liaison.

**Motion: That the board approve the members of the Member Grants and Strategic Planning Committees. Grants Committee: Upasna Kakroo, Travis Wolven, Sara DeBeer, Robin Kitson, Delanna Reed (Chair). Strategic Planning Committee: Pat Nease, Drea Douglas, Dr. Nicky Goldman. Moved by Caleb Hubbard. Passed Unanimously.**

**XII. Member Grants Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

Grants Committee will also oversee the Kathryn Tucker Windham Award.

**XIII. 50th Anniversary Oral History Project Report**

Immediate Past Chair Delanna Reed

Will begin with audio only. Documenting history of organization. They will be transcribed. Selected video segments of ten minutes or less will be prepared. The oral histories can be put on NSN website. We are also looking for another place to house them permanently. Work is underway on the protocol and a consent form.

Lisa Williams volunteered to be on this committee.

**XIV. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Bob Johnson

See on NSN website.

**XV. Adjournment 5:10 pm PST**

Chair Rishi Nixon



Next Board Meeting: **Wednesday, November 19, 2025**

6:00 - 8:00 pm Eastern Time

5:00 - 7:00 pm Central Time

4:00 - 6:00 pm Mountain Time

3:00 - 5:00 pm Pacific Time

# National Storytelling Network

## Statement of Financial Position

As of October 31, 2025

	Oct 31, 25	Oct 31, 24
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1025 • Paypal	0	4,236
1018 • US Bank General Account	5,031	4,082
1168 • US Bank Business Savings	165,136	108,336
1169 • Savings		
1077 • Ray Hicks Legacy Project	6,599	6,599
Total 1169 • Savings	6,599	6,599
Total Checking/Savings	176,766	123,253
Accounts Receivable		
1110 • Accounts Receivable	750	734
Total Accounts Receivable	750	734
Other Current Assets		
1250 • Undeposited Funds	135	20
1440 • Prepaid Conference Expenses	-25	0
Total Other Current Assets	110	20
Total Current Assets	177,626	124,007
Fixed Assets		
1645 • Machinery & Equipment	3,769	3,769
1760 • Accumulated Depreciation	-3,769	-2,262
Total Fixed Assets	0	1,507
Other Assets		
1800 • Other long-term assets		
1805 • CCU CD	64,567	61,742
Total 1800 • Other long-term assets	64,567	61,742
Total Other Assets	64,567	61,742
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>242,193</b>	<b>187,256</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Credit Cards		
1013 • US Bank Credit Card	618	1,468
Total Credit Cards	618	1,468
Other Current Liabilities		
2110 • Direct Deposit Liabilities	0	-904
2450 • Payroll Taxes Payable		
2452 • FIT Withheld Payable	227	73
2453 • FICA Payable-Employee	57	113
2454 • FICA Payable-Company	57	113
2455 • Medicare Payable-Employee	13	27
2456 • Medicare Payable-Company	13	27
2460 • KC Earnings Tax	0	0
2461 • MO Withholding	8	0
2463 • MN Withheld Tax	-20	276
2450 • Payroll Taxes Payable - Other	-230	0
Total 2450 • Payroll Taxes Payable	126	629
2520 • Payable for Ray Hicks Legacy Pj	6,599	8,933
2570 • Short-term liabilities - other		
2575 • Due to ETSU (In-State Tuition)	0	-99
Total 2570 • Short-term liabilities - other	0	-99

9:14 AM

11/18/25

Accrual Basis

# National Storytelling Network

## Statement of Financial Position

As of October 31, 2025

	Oct 31, 25	Oct 31, 24
Total Other Current Liabilities	6,725	8,559
Total Current Liabilities	7,343	10,027
Total Liabilities	7,343	10,027
Equity		
32000 • Unrestricted Net Assets	-21,064	0
3000 • Net Assets W/O Donor Restrictns		
3050 • Net Assets w/o Board Restrict.	105,216	90,448
3100 • Board Restricted Net Assets		
3102 • Due to SIGs		
3102i • Welcome Seed Funds (SIG)	1,129	0
3102g • Due to ECO (SIG)	3,415	1,712
3102f • Due to KSA (SIG)	0	36
3102c • Due to PRO (SIG)	6,128	5,138
3102d • Due to SIO (SIG)	8,382	6,333
3102e • Due to YES (SIG)	21,012	18,535
3102h • Due to MAL (SIG)	0	2,540
Total 3102 • Due to SIGs	40,066	34,293
Total 3100 • Board Restricted Net Assets	40,066	34,293
Total 3000 • Net Assets W/O Donor Restrictns	145,282	124,742
3300 • Net Assets With Donor Restrictns		
3301 • Use restricted net assets		
4012 • Scholarship Grants	4,644	2,500
3325 • Member Grant Restricted Funds	11,277	5,420
Total 3301 • Use restricted net assets	15,921	7,920
Total 3300 • Net Assets With Donor Restrictns	15,921	7,920
3998 • Current Year Earnings	42,128	0
3999 • Prior Year Earnings	-0	-0
Net Income	52,584	44,567
Total Equity	234,850	177,229
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	242,193	187,256

# National Storytelling Network

## Income and Expense Compared to Budget

### January through October 2025

	Jan - Oct 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
4000 • Contributed support			
4010 • Indiv/business contribution	9,426	17,271	-7,845
4130 • Gifts in kind - goods	300		
<b>Total 4000 • Contributed support</b>	<b>9,726</b>	<b>17,271</b>	<b>-7,545</b>
5000 • Earned revenues			
5112 • Teller Page Listings-Storynet	2,800	3,060	-260
5150 • Auction Proceeds	1,235	2,144	-909
5160 • Program-related sales other	1,486		
5180 • Conference & Other Program Fees	112,235	90,320	21,915
5210 • Membership dues - individuals	22,398	26,608	-4,210
5220 • Assessments & dues - orgs	3,650	3,800	-150
5310 • Interest-savings/short-term inv	4,245	4,069	177
5440 • Non-program sales	40	200	-160
5450 • Advertising revenues	6,450	7,500	-1,050
5477 • SMP Fees Earned	50	100	-50
5478 • ETSU Admin Fees	400	200	200
5490 • Miscellaneous revenue	396	0	396
5495 • Resource Room Admin Commission	391	500	-109
<b>Total 5000 • Earned revenues</b>	<b>155,775</b>	<b>138,500</b>	<b>17,274</b>
5800 • Special events			
5820 • Special events - gift revenue	979	0	979
<b>Total 5800 • Special events</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>979</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>166,480</b>	<b>155,772</b>	<b>10,708</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>166,480</b>	<b>155,772</b>	<b>10,708</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
7000 • Grant & contract expense			
7019 • All Grants			
7023 • Scholarships for Conference	150		
<b>Total 7019 • All Grants</b>	<b>150</b>		
<b>Total 7000 • Grant &amp; contract expense</b>	<b>150</b>		
7200 • Salaries & related expenses			
7220 • Salaries & wages - other	6,241	9,353	-3,112
7250 • Payroll taxes	477	789	-312
7260 • Payroll Processing Fee	0	125	-125
<b>Total 7200 • Salaries &amp; related expenses</b>	<b>6,718</b>	<b>10,267</b>	<b>-3,549</b>
7500 • Other personnel expenses			
7555 • Other	94		
<b>Total 7500 • Other personnel expenses</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94</b>
8100 • Non-personnel expenses			
8105 • Computer Equipment & Software	2,105	1,177	927
8110 • Supplies	1,934	1,400	534
8130 • Telephone & telecommunications	365	333	31
8140 • Postage, shipping, delivery	518	200	318
8170 • Printing & copying	4,107	3,500	607
8180 • Books, subscriptions, reference	780	800	-20
<b>Total 8100 • Non-personnel expenses</b>	<b>9,809</b>	<b>7,411</b>	<b>2,398</b>
8300 • Travel & meetings expenses			
8310 • Travel	503	6,000	-5,497
8320 • Conference, convention, meeting	41,788	40,700	1,088
8322 • Comp Conference Fees	24,745	1,200	23,545
8325 • Honoraria	0	150	-150

9:05 AM

11/18/25

Accrual Basis

# National Storytelling Network

## Income and Expense Compared to Budget

### January through October 2025

	Jan - Oct 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget
8330 • Sound, technology, Zoom etc	2,275	5,000	-2,725
8321 • Presenter payout	5,386	8,656	-3,270
<b>Total 8300 • Travel &amp; meetings expenses</b>	<b>74,697</b>	<b>61,706</b>	<b>12,991</b>
<b>8500 • Misc expenses</b>			
8516 • Marketing Expense	1,200	10,239	-9,039
8520 • Insurance - non-employee	5,502	5,691	-189
8530 • Membership dues - organization	385	300	85
8547 • Non-NSN Event Sponsorship	3,750	1,382	2,368
8555 • Program Related Fees	1,571	5,000	-3,429
8560 • Outside computer svcs/Website	4,941	12,022	-7,081
8561 • Website Enhancement	236		
8590 • Other expenses	270	0	270
<b>Total 8500 • Misc expenses</b>	<b>17,856</b>	<b>34,634</b>	<b>-16,779</b>
<b>8600 • Business expenses</b>			
8640 • Bank Fees	4,126	4,658	-532
8670 • Organizational (corp) expenses	446	300	146
<b>Total 8600 • Business expenses</b>	<b>4,572</b>	<b>4,958</b>	<b>-386</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>113,896</b>	<b>118,976</b>	<b>-5,080</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>52,584</b>	<b>36,796</b>	<b>15,788</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>52,584</b>	<b>36,796</b>	<b>15,788</b>

National Storytelling Network  
Profit & Loss

Accrual Basis

January through October 2025

	226-ECO (220-SIGs)	227-MAL (220-SIGs)	222-PRO (220-SIGs)	224-SJO (220-SIGs)	225a-Angela LI... (225-YES)	225-YES - Other (225-YES)	Total 225-YES (220-SIGs)	Total 220-SIGS (100-Program ...)	Total 100-Prog...	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense										
Income										
4000 • Contributed support	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	50	50	50
4010 • Indiv/business contribution										
Total 4000 • Contributed support										
5000 • Earned revenues										
5160 • Program-related sales other	0	0	0	0	522	0	522	522	522	522
5180 • Conference & Other Program Fees	350	0	140	0	1,314	340	1,654	2,144	2,144	2,144
5210 • Membership dues - individuals	1,130	1,725	1,338	1,400	0	2,638	2,638	8,230	8,230	8,230
5490 • Miscellaneous revenue	0	0	46	0	0	0	0	46	46	46
Total 5000 • Earned revenues	1,480	1,725	1,523	1,400	1,836	2,978	4,814	10,942	10,942	10,942
5800 • Special events										
5820 • Special events - gift revenue	0	0	0	0	979	0	979	979	979	979
Total 5800 • Special events	0	0	0	0	979	0	979	979	979	979
Total Income	1,480	1,725	1,573	1,400	2,815	2,978	5,793	11,971	11,971	11,971
Gross Profit	1,480	1,725	1,573	1,400	2,815	2,978	5,793	11,971	11,971	11,971
Expense										
7500 • Other personnel expenses	0	0	0	0	0	94	94	94	94	94
7555 • Other										
Total 7500 • Other personnel expenses	0	0	0	0	0	94	94	94	94	94
8100 • Non-personnel expenses										
8140 • Postage, shipping, delivery	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100	100	100
Total 8100 • Non-personnel expenses	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100	100	100
8300 • Travel & meetings expenses										
8330 • Sound, technology, Zoom etc	50	0	0	0	0	225	225	275	275	275
8321 • Presenter payout	175	0	950	495	0	900	900	2,520	2,520	2,520
Total 8300 • Travel & meetings expenses	225	0	950	495	0	1,125	1,125	2,795	2,795	2,795
8500 • Misc expenses										
8547 • Non-NSN Event Sponsorship	500	0	500	250	0	500	500	1,750	1,750	1,750
Total 8500 • Misc expenses	500	0	500	250	0	500	500	1,750	1,750	1,750
Total Expense	725	0	1,450	745	0	1,819	1,819	4,739	4,739	4,739
Net Ordinary Income	755	1,725	123	655	2,815	1,159	3,974	7,232	7,232	7,232
Net Income	755	1,725	123	655	2,815	1,159	3,974	7,232	7,232	7,232

# **Proposal to Co-design and Host the 2027 NSN Conference**

**Submitted: Story Arts of Minnesota**

**Contact: Loren Niemi (651) 271-6349**

niemistory@gmail.com

## **1. What is the name of the guild(s) and/or organization(s) interested in hosting the National Storytelling Summit?**

**Story Arts of Minnesota**, formerly North Star Storytelling League, is a leader in promoting storytelling as a performance art form as well as fostering its application within such areas as education, historical interpretation, health care, psychotherapy, spiritual direction, and organizational life. SAM helps storytellers develop professionally and work productively within and across these fields. Over the past 20 years SAM has hosted Tellabration!™, storytelling festivals (AKA *StoryFest*), and provided a mentoring program for new storytellers along with promoting storytelling classes and performances through our website.

SAM is excited to partner with:

The **American School of Storytelling** provides online and in-person classes and a mix of curated and “open mic” performances of storytelling, poetry, spoken word and singer/songwriting as oral narrative arts.

The **Black Storytellers Alliance**, a non-profit organization dedicated to informing the public of the power of the oral tradition as practiced by African people in the diaspora. BSA is in their 35th year of producing *Signifyin’ and Testifyin’*, an annual Black Master Storytellers’ Festival.

We have also been in conversation with other local organizations that use story in various capacities and would love to incorporate their work into the conference. These partnerships highlight the vibrancy of the storytelling and performance communities in the Twin Cities. See potential partners list below.

## **2. Where do you propose hosting the National Storytelling Conference? (City, State and a list of potential host sites (hotels, conference centers, retreat centers, colleges, etc))**

The following locations are all within the Twin Cities. Each meets our requirement of being close to the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport with convenient transportation by light rail, taxi or shuttle. We will choose the conference site based on the needs of the NSN Conference audience including estimated number of attendees and cost. The selected conference site should allow for lodging, workshops and performances to take place in one building. Easy access to parking and restaurants outside of the main facility will also be taken into consideration.

**Ewald Conf. Center**

1000 Westgate Dr.

St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-290-6260

**McNamara Alumni Center at the University of Minnesota**

200 SE Oak St.  
Mpls MN 55455  
612-624-9831  
[macevents@umn.edu](mailto:macevents@umn.edu)

**Marriott City Center**

30 S. 7th St.  
Mpls MN 55402  
(612) 349-4000

**Courtyard Mpls Downtown**

1500 Washington Ave. S  
Mpls, MN 55454  
(612) 333-4646

**Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel- The Depot**

225 3rd Ave.S.  
Mpls. MN 55401  
612-375-1700

Additionally, we have a connection with [Conference Hotels Unlimited](#), a business that facilitates site sourcing, contract negotiations, contract management, and other services to help organizations find and work with appropriate venues.

**3. NSN has been scheduling the Summit such that it ends on the last Sunday of July. If your group would like to propose an alternate schedule, please provide an explanation (e.g. coordinating with local events).**

At this point, we are not aware of any big event or national conferences taking place in the Twin Cities that would conflict with a July 22-25th NSN conference. We would also consider (propose to the NSN Board) August 26-29th dates which would allow NSN attendees to attend (via field trips or curated performances if we can arrange it) the MN State Fair. We are open to considering other options, for example during the MN Fringe, which is usually held the first ten days of August. For both the State Fair and the MN Fringe, we would seek to partner with them to engage conference attendees within the larger experience.

**4. Who will be the local chair?**

Loren Niemi and (TBD) co-chair the NSN Conference Hosting Committee.



**Loren Niemi** is an innovative storyteller creating, coaching/directing, performing, teaching and writing about stories that matter for audiences of all ages in urban and rural settings. He is a lifetime member of NSN and has served on the Board of Directors (1999-2004 and 2020-2021), been the Chair of the Board (2000-2004 and 2020 -2021), served on various committees including the Site Selection Committee (2006-2015) and the Conference Fringe Committee (2010-2025), Chaired the Producers & Organizers Special Interest Group (2009-2019) and produced the showcases and Slams for the 2017 - 2019 NSN Summits. He received NSN's Oracle National Service and Leadership award in 2007 and a Lifetime Achievement award in 2016.

Loren is also a published author, including: *Circus Rex*, a novel, *A Breviary for the Lost*, a poetic memoir, and *What Haunts Us*, a collection of non-traditional ghost stories. Other publications include the award winning *The New Book of Plots* on the use of oral and written narratives, *Point of View and the Emotional Arc of Stories*, co-written with Nancy Donoval and the critically acclaimed, *Inviting the Wolf In: Thinking About Difficult Stories* which he co-written with Elizabeth Ellis on the value and necessity of stories that are hard to hear and harder to tell.

#### **5. List other local committee members. (give names, experience)**

**Katie Knutson** is a storyteller, producer, former NSN Chair and NSN Conference Chair, and the current Executive Director of Northeast Storytelling (NEST). She has produced several conferences and events, and is excited to connect the greater NSN community to some of our incredible local organizations that use story in various capacities.

**Pam Schweitzer**, a storyteller and teacher, is most interested in bringing storytelling to children and youth. She produced a monthly storytelling venue for children for 20 years. Pam had the pleasure to be the President of Story Arts of Minnesota from 2016-2024. During that time, she was the organizational chair for numerous *StoryFest* celebrations, most in collaboration with the Bloomington Center for the Arts. She is excited to use her energy and skills to build connections between the Minnesota storytelling community and the rest of the country.

**Sue Searing** ([www.suesearing.com](http://www.suesearing.com)) is the past secretary of the board of Story Arts of Minnesota. She also maintains SAM's website and Facebook page. Now retired, Sue enjoyed a successful career as an academic library administrator, concluding with service as the Associate Dean for User Services and full professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Sue performs an eclectic repertoire of traditional and personal tales at Twin Cities storytelling venues and on public radio in northern Minnesota. She has won local story slams and took first prize in the 2018 Great American Story contest.

**Christine Mounts**, co-founder of the American School of Storytelling and poet. She is also a University of Minnesota IT administrator with expertise in database management.

**Howard Lieberman** is a nationally known writer, storyteller, performance artist and political commentator/activist who grew up on the North Side of Chicago. After a series of unfortunate life tragedies leaving Howard homeless, he left Chicago and traveled the country, eventually finding his way to NYC where he became a husband, father, corporate attorney, Irish ceili dance teacher and Director of the Irish Arts Center before moving to bucolic Stillwater MN in 1990. When not writing poetry and political essays Howard spends most of his artistic hours writing and performing personal narrative stories. Howard is a former member of the Board of Directors the National Storytelling Network and is a current board member of Story Arts of Minnesota.

**Carol McCormick**, a professional storyteller for over 35 years, has worked at a multitude of venues from conferences and corporate events to county and cultural fairs to apple orchards and shopping centers. She's presented many school residencies and assemblies plus preschool and senior programs. A conference keynoter and workshop leader, Carol was formerly a classroom teacher and corporate trainer.

**Nicholas Pawlowski M. Ed**, has been integrating fairy tales, rhythmic movement and music into education for over 20 years. He is the current board President of SAM and the founder of The Story Table Foundation, a non-profit that promotes mental and emotional wellbeing through interactive storytelling. He is committed to collaborating with community organizations and making space for great storytellers from around the world. [www.storytablefoundation.org](http://www.storytablefoundation.org)

## **6. List potential sponsors and other funding sources in the area.**

If we win the bid to host the 2027 NSN conference, we will approach the following organizations for grants or sponsorships.

The **Minnesota Regional Arts Council** (MRAC) is funded by an appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature, the Legacy Amendment Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and the McKnight Foundation. Each year they give grants to non-profit arts organizations. Story Arts of Minnesota has received funding from MRAC in the past for Tellabration!™.

The **Minnesota State Arts Board** (MSAB) offers a few different grants that could support paying Minnesota artists, including the Arts Education and Arts Experiences grants.

**Parkhurst Brothers Publishing House** is the publisher of several of our local storytelling authors and has been a strong supporter of NSN conferences.

The **Minnesota Humanities Center** has supported storytelling through their "Absent Narratives" program with workshops and publishing folktales from the many under-represented cultures in Minnesota. Initial conversations have been started regarding a potential partnership and using their space for pre-conference events.

Minnesota has a long history of corporate and family foundation support for the arts from Target, McKnight, Carlson Family (as examples).

**7. List other potential partners in the area (regional arts councils, performance venues, storytelling advocates, fringe festivals, etc.)**

**League of MN Poets** - Established in 1934, League of Minnesota Poets' mission is "to make Minnesota poetry conscious, and conscious to its own poets" through sponsorship of various state-wide chapters, poetry contests, sponsorship and participation in readings, retreats, and other events throughout the state. The League highlights members' works through the annual publication of Agates and other works, both digital and print. LOMP holds biannual state meetings for members in the spring and fall.

Other potential partners include:

Green Card Voices  
Sandbar Storytelling Festival  
Minnesota Fringe Festival  
Tish Jones/ Tru Art Speaks  
Sweet Potato Comfort Pies  
Word Sprout  
MN association for Environmental Education  
Mixed Blood Theater  
Bryant Lake Bowl Cabaret  
Rain Taxi Review  
St. Paul Almanac  
Loft Literary Center  
MN Historical Society  
MN Humanities Center  
Story Table Foundation  
Cultural Wellness Center

Possible Pre- or Post-Conference experiences:

Minnesota Fringe (if the conference is at the beginning of August)  
Minnesota State Fair (if the conference is at the end of August)  
Minnesota Center for Book Arts  
University of Minnesota Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature  
University of MN Arboretum  
Mississippi Riverboat Cruises  
Healing Minnesota Stories ("Tour of Bdote" at the convergence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers)  
Guthrie Theater  
Owámniyomni Okhódayapi (indigenous St. Anthony Falls)  
Fort Snelling

Minnehaha Falls  
Mill City Museum  
Como Park Conservatory  
MN Zoo  
George Floyd Square  
Paisley Park (Prince's former home and studio)  
Gangster Tours (Wabasha Street Caves)  
Eat Street (Nicollet Ave, with dozens of restaurants featuring a wide variety of international cuisine)  
And for the hearty- a few day canoe trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

## **8. Explain why you want to host the summit and why your location is good for NSN.**

From a practical standpoint, the Minneapolis, St. Paul area is an ideal location for a national conference. We are centrally located with easy access by train, plane and car. Our International airport has easy access to Minneapolis and St. Paul through light rail, taxi and many hotels have shuttles to and from the airport. Hotels are centrally located and are within easy access to a diverse selection of restaurants, museums, cultural amenities and performance venues. Minnesota's commitment to the arts is evidenced through the state appropriated Legacy amendment which supports arts endeavors based on a % allocation of the sales tax. For 2026-7, the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will receive \$179.91 million of which 45% supports the arts. The Twin Cities are the state's largest cities, but they have a small midwestern feel. Located on the Mississippi River, both cities abound in natural beauty, parks, walking and biking trails and many interesting historical sites.

Story Arts of Minnesota and our potential partners are excited to have the opportunity to host a National Storytelling conference. We want to show conference attendees the treasure we have in our thriving storytelling/spoken word and theater scene. The Twin Cities has over 100 for and non-profit performing companies offering drama, dance, comedy and music! We also are blessed with local, dynamic cultural diversity including significant Hmong and Somali immigrant populations. Hosting a National Storytelling conference will allow SAM to build connections and strengthen relationships with and between organizations, develop local storytelling talent and grow storytelling audiences in the Twin Cities.

## **9. Describe your vision of how the summit will go or any unique ideas that you have outside the standard NSN National Storytelling Summit model.**

A lot has happened since SAM originally submitted a proposal to host the NSN conference: the murder of George Floyd and subsequent unrest, the shooting at Annunciation School, and the reshaping of the federal government. While MN is not the only place where world-changing events have happened, it is one of them. We can lean into this idea with themes like "Stories that Connect People," "(Re)building Community" or "Stories that Matter". We can invite people who have played key roles in building and re-building community to speak or offer workshops - Tea Rozman of Green Card Voices (who have helped hundreds of immigrants tell and often publish their stories of coming to

MN) and Tish Jones of TruArt Speaks (who has been building a community around spoken word for decades in St. Paul) as examples.

**Some potential ideas we generated:**

Potential **Keynotes**: Jack Zipes (noted traditional story scholar), Louise or Heid Erdrich, Marcie Rendon (Native American authors, poets), Bao Phi (poet), Kate DiCamillo (children's author), Kevin Kling (storyteller), Owámniyomni Okhódayapi (a native nonprofit), Shawn Sherman (Indigenous Foods Chef from Owamni Restaurant), Green Card Voices, or Tish Jones

**Workshops** could include stories of the many cultures who have come to call Minnesota home, including voices from newer immigrant groups such as the Hmong, Somali, Karen, and Cambodian exploring the question: What does home mean to me? How do we build community? The role of story in our current political climate?

**Performances and Open Mics** at various spoken word, poetry and storytelling venues including the American School of Storytelling, Eat My Words bookstore, The Loft/Open Book, and (again) if held in August activities in partnership with the MN Fringe or the MN State Fair.

**Open Space Technology** - We see this as an integral part of the conference allowing for structured conversations. It usually features a facilitator who invites participants to name critical topics facing NSN or the storytelling community followed by a sorting process and breakouts into facilitated groups to discuss specifics and craft strategies, policies, or actions that can move forward or resolve the issues. This process encourages participant involvement and the sharing of ideas and would be repeated every day to build community understanding and support.

**10. Describe the transportation, food, and lodging options available for attendees (for example: are there shuttles from the airport? Are there a variety of places to eat within walking distance of the summit? Are there a variety of lodging options close together to suit varying budgets?)**

The Twin Cities has a wide variety of restaurant options in both cities from vegan eateries to traditional steakhouses, from Vietnamese Pho to authentic German Strudel, for many budget ranges. It is a diverse and vibrant multi-cultural culinary scene. The hotels we have listed are centrally located and have a range of eating options within walking distance. For those who would like to venture further there is an excellent light rail and bus system. For lodging, there are many hotels and air-bnb options to fit a range of budgets. Most hotels do supply shuttles to and from the airport, but if they don't, the light rail runs from the airport to both downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul or taxis/Uber/Lyft are an option.