

THURSDAY, JULY 23

3:00-3:50 PM

OPENING MIXER: THE BUFFALO HUNT

Branding Iron Theatre

Out on the prairie, stories were never told alone, they were shared in circles, in motion, in community. The Buffalo Hunt invites you into that spirit of connection through a lively, interactive mixer designed to bring voices together. As you move, meet, and engage in this playful experience, you'll begin weaving your own thread into the larger story of this gathering. Come ready to laugh, connect, and take your first steps into a weekend rooted in heritage and alive with possibility.

4:00-4:15 PM

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME | RISHI NIXON

Branding Iron Theatre



Every prairie story begins with a voice rising over the horizon. Join us for the official opening as our President welcomes you into this year's gathering, honoring the voices that came before us while setting a course toward the stories yet to be told. This moment invites reflection, connection, and shared purpose as we begin a conference grounded in heritage and inspired by tomorrow.

4:15-5:15 PM

CIRCLE THE FIRE: Conversations with the NSN Board

Branding Iron Theatre

When the fire is lit, all are welcome to draw near.

Circle the Fire is a relaxed, open space where NSN board members gather not above, but among you. Pull up a chair and join in meaningful, down-to-earth conversations about the future of our storytelling community. Share your ideas, your hopes, and your questions in an environment built on listening and collaboration. Here, every voice matters, and together, we shape the path forward.

5:15-6:30 PM

DINNER THE CAF

NSN

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continued

FRIDAY, JULY 24

6:30-8:30 PM

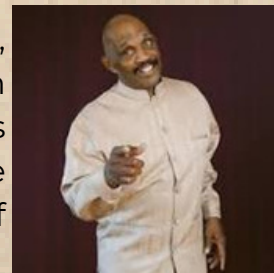
FEATURED REGIONAL TELLERS

Branding Iron Theatre

DECEE CORNISH

The asphalt AESOP, Jubilee's child, Urban griot, Storyteller Decee Cornish Texas born, and raised in Houston's 5th Ward. A member of the United States military for well over a decade. During which Decee managed to set foot on five of the seven continents of this planet. Attending colleges and universities worldwide. He began his storytelling career in the early 90s working

with at-risk youth using stories to teach and motivate at the local, state and national level. The award-winning storyteller Decee Cornish is informative, insightful and entertaining. Fun for audiences of all shapes and sizes from 8 to 80.



ELDRENA DOUMA

Eldrena Douma is a molder of words. Her spoken words highlight the history and enduring cultural contributions of her Southwest Pueblo tribes along with tribes across the United States. She travels nationwide presenting stories and workshops that inspire quick creative writing, cultural understanding and connection. This has led to her contributing stories to four published anthologies. In 2014, Eldrena received the John Henry Faulk Award from the Tejas Storytelling Association for her contributions to storytelling in the southwest. Website: eldrenadouma.com



JUBA MAE

Juba Mae is a nationally acclaimed storyteller, visionary teaching artist, speaker, and "Chief Encouragement Officer". She is dedicated to education and creativity. Awarded the 2021 Regional Service and Leadership Award, she carries forward a sacred legacy from her grandmother, a descendant of West African Griots. Juba nurtures growth by weaving folklore, fables, and personal narratives into a rich tapestry of connection. Her performances go beyond simple entertainment, addressing profound themes such as healing, racism, and multiculturalism. Through her heartfelt dedication to traditional storytelling, Juba inspires audiences of all ages, fostering the deep empathy and understanding needed to transform communities.





PAULA SCHLEGEL

Paula Schlegel began creating stories about the time she learned to talk. Admittedly, many of her early tales were told for self- preservation. Since 1998, Paula has been known as "that story lady" through her storytelling in schools, museums and community events on the local, regional and multi-state level. Her favorite stories to tell are scary tales and holiday stories. She is the author of *The Christmas Potato*. She is currently the director of the WT Storytelling Festival held each spring at WTAMU. Paula teaches in the Department of Communication at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas.



FRAN STALLINGS

Fran Stallings (Bartlesville OK) is internationally known on stage and Zoom for her environmental stories, traditional folktales, and the Japanese folktales she collected while working on both sides of the Pacific with Hiroko Fujita. She helped Fujita-san publish four books in English. Recipient of TSA's John Henry Faulk award and two NSN ORACLE awards, she performs

and teaches nationwide and overseas. Her recorded stories are now available on Bandcamp. www.franstallings.com.



CHESTER WEEMS

Chester Weems is a retired Oklahoma Educator and longtime member of Territory Tellers of Oklahoma, Tejas (Texas) Storytelling Association, and NSN. He also has memberships with RAPS, MoTell, SASA and RMS.

Chester says "I like all kinds of stories, but I have a special fondness for stories about real people. They don't have to be big stories, sometimes the little stories

about living are more interesting to me." He advocates collecting family stories. He also is an award winning photographer and for over 30 years has been photographing storytellers. Chester said "The only problem photographing storytellers is their mouths are always moving."



EMCEE/HOST: DARLENE RICHARD

Darlene Richard is ... aka Nelda Toñe, a storyteller, emcee, & professional speaker. She holds a degree in Emergency Management & Planning and began her career presenting at events & organizations, serving as an instructor for FEMA. She later emceed dance competitions across the U.S. before training in improv, which led to stage performances &

storytelling. Nelda performs true-based & fictional stories nationwide. She taught a workshop at the 2024 Tejas Storytelling Association conference, won the 2024 Kathryn Tucker Windham Scholarship from NSN, served with SIO 2024, & is a NSN VP-Elect (2025). Social Media: [Neldatone.com](https://www.Neldatone.com)

8:45-9:15 PM

TEXAS CAMPFIRE: YOU BRING THE FIRE

Branding Iron Theatre Foyer/Lobby

A campfire is not lit until people gather around, and that community is the fire. Texas Campfire is a relaxed, open space where we will have snacks and refreshments. Come enjoy conversation and a modern style campfire.



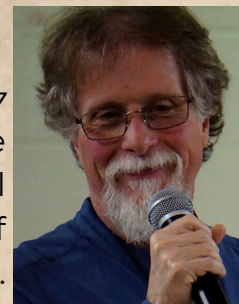
9:15-10:15 PM

Fringe: Windwagon Smith and Sam Peppard the Tall Tale and the Legend Behind It

RIC VICE | FAC 127

"Windwagon Smith", the tall tale has its roots in the true story of blacksmith, Sam Peppard, who sailed an actual "windwagon" from Oskaloosa, Kansas to within miles of Ft. Collins, Colorado..

Family | Solo | No Warning | Music | Period Photos



Fringe: Tales of the Narts

TIM ERENETA & SUFIAN ZHEMUKHOV | FAC 176

The Nart sagas are to the Caucasus what Greek mythology is to Western civilization. Come hear ancient tales collected and passed down at the crossroads between Europe and Asia..

*Adult | Tandem | Folklore | Myth
Violence | Adult Subject Matter*



Fringe: Scallywag of the Scrubs: Tales of The Orneriest Cow Wrangler in Florida History

WALT BELCHER | FAC 177

Bone Mizell could outride, outshoot, out wrangle, out talk, out drink and out prank any cowboy of his era (1863 to 1921), and I've got stories to back it up.

Family | Solo | No Warnings| Humor| History



FRIDAY, JULY 24

7:30-8:45 AM

BREAKFAST | ROOM

8:00-8:30 AM

Wake the FUN Up!

Norm Brecke | FAC 175



Wake up the FUN! A half hour of Laughter Yoga: no mats, no poses, and no experience required! Norm Brecke will get you ready for a great day of learning and enjoying storytelling. Increase your joy with singing, dancing, playing, and LAUGHING! If you can breathe, you can laugh and get healthy.

Norm is a popular laughter leader known around the world for his unique, fun style on the International Laughter Club on Zoom.

9:00-10:30 AM

FAMILY TRESURES

Heather Forest | FAC 129 | HSA Workshop



Stories are valuable family heirlooms held in the heart not the hand. Time honored moments when one generation shares experience with the next can deepen relationships. Utilizing performance, lecture, and experiential activities this workshop explores creative ways to stimulate intergenerational conversation and the passing on of family history, culture, and values through storytelling.

FUNLOCKING YOUR HERO'S JOURNEY

Charlie McCain | FAC 189 | General Workshop



Step into a transformative workshop that unlocks your personal hero's journey and reveals the story you were always meant to live. Through guided reflection, intuitive prompts, and a creative journey-mapping experience, you'll uncover the roots, turning points, and inner strengths that define your unique voice. If you're craving clarity, renewal, or the courage to step into your next chapter, this session will ignite your purpose—sending you out empowered, inspired, and ready to live the story only you can create

N&N

PODCAST

Storytelling and Nature Meditation: Reground and Grow!

Amanda Lawrence | FAC 175 | ECO Workshop

We'll start with a gentle tree meditation that will help you connect with your roots, strengthen your trunk, and reach for the sky. Along the way, we'll release stress, deepen our breathing, and transform ourselves from a circle of individuals to a grove of mighty trees. Then we'll explore how to use storytelling skills to develop nature-based guided meditations for others. Everyone is welcome; no experience with meditation (or with being a tree) is necessary.



These Are The Children In Your Neighborhood

Adam Mellema | FAC 127 | National Teller Presentation

Ever heard of Roblox? Blippi? 6-7?! The kids in your community have! This kids media "boot camp" will educate and further deepen your understanding of the children who attend your programs at schools and libraries. For storytellers who tell to family audiences, this program is tailored to be a useful tool in better knowing how to meet your "constituents" where they're at.



COUNTING, CLAPPING AND TAPPING: FINGERPLAYS, ACTION SONGS AND RHYMES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Priscilla Howe | FAC 177 | YES Workshop

Whether you're searching for fun wiggle breaks, sneaky teaching ideas or just plain silliness to incorporate in your storytelling for young children, this workshop will give you plenty of new tools for your toolbox.



MAKING HISTORY RELEVANT; HOW TO STORYART THE PAST AS A GIFT TO OUR FUTURE

*Megan Wells | FAC 129 | National Teller
Workshop*

Human beings are very fond of revolving doors. We re-do and re-do until we see a way through. Storytellers are uniquely gifted to minister to the repetitive nature of events. How can we help our world move from REvolve to Evolve? This practical hands-on workshop will help us sharpen our skills at delivering history to activate change. We will cover both personal history and world history from first person through third. Feel welcome to bring a story you are working on. If not, I'll have packets to work with.



FRIDAY, JULY 24 continued

10:30-10:45 AM

SMALL BREAK

10:45-11:10 AM

TEXAS: THE MUSICAL

Branding Iron Theatre



We are honored to welcome performers from **TEXAS: The Musical** - rooted in the spirit and history of Palo Duro Canyon. Through music, movement, and narrative, this special performance celebrates the enduring power of storytelling across time and landscape. It is a tribute to heritage brought to life and a reminder that stories can still inspire tomorrow.

11:20-11:40 AM

Gathering the Goods: Member Benefits

FAC Recital Hall



Gathering the Goods is an informative session for both new and longtime members to explore the many benefits of being part of NSN. Discover the resources, opportunities, and connections available to you, while also helping imagine what more could be offered. This is a space to reflect on what supports our community now and to help shape what will carry us forward.

11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Lunch THE CAF

12:45-2:15 PM

MAPPING MEANING: VISUAL STORYTELLING FOR HEALING AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Stefanie Azua | FAC 127 | HSA Workshop



This workshop invites participants to revisit the stories that shaped them, those spoken aloud and those carried quietly. Through simple drawing and reflective prompts, personal memories become visual expressions that honor resilience, emotion, and cultural heritage. By sharing these images through dialogue and storytelling, participants connect through shared humanity and recognize the strength in their lived experiences. This is a compassionate space to transform silence into meaning and turn healing into creative empowerment.

NSN

PALO DURO CANYON

AI TOOLS FOR STORYTELLERS

Marilyn McPhie | FAC 129 | PRO Presentation

With Artificial Intelligence, storytellers wonder: Is this good luck or bad luck? Inspired by the ancient Chinese story, this session will offer a clear-eyed, nontechnical look at AI as a tool for inspiration, editing, and research while also considering ethics, authorship, and artistic voice. Whether you're curious, cautious, or already experimenting with AI, you'll find new ways to think about creativity, change, and keeping your own voice at the center of your art.



TO LIFE, TO LIFE, YOUR STORIES: INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES

Eva Grayzel | FAC 176 | YES Workshop

Do you tell stories on a stage, a pulpit, in a classroom, or just to the young ones in your family? Get interactive! Learn how to take a storybook, a familiar story like Cinderella, or even a personal story, and expand the narrative to make the story come to life with spontaneous role-playing. Create the illustration using your audience of one or many. Spontaneity will be exercised. This technique builds self-esteem, boosts retention, addresses many learning styles, and builds rapport among the group.



STORIES TO PLAY WITH: TOYS FROM TRASH

Fran Stallings | FAC 189 | YES Workshop

This hands-on workshop teaches you to make simple story props and toys from stuff you might have thrown away. Make the toys, learn the stories, have fun! Based on Fujita/Stallings' book "Stories to Play With."



MASTER CLASS COACHING

Laura Simms | FAC 177 | Coaching

Laura has been coaching storytellers, writers and speakers for decades. Two tellers will share stories. We will witness and therefore experience the fine details of reciprocal performance that enrich our storytelling and the listener's capacity for imagination, intelligence and abiding sense of joy and interdependence.



Friday and Saturday

Hours: 9am-5pm

closed for lunches

Pick Up: Saturday by 6pm

Happy State
Bank Theatre

SILENT
AUCTION
& BOOKSTORE

FRIDAY, JULY 24 continued

12:45-2:15 PM continued

**ZITKALA SA, NATIVE AMERICAN ADVOCATE,
MUSICIAN, AUTHOR, AND MY COUSIN**

Lona Bartlett | FAC Recital Hall | General Presentation



The stories of the past are lessons for the present. Come hear the story of Zitka sa, and learn of the stories she authored. She was taken from her tribe at 8 years old, placed in white man's boarding school, but found her way back to her Native roots. She advocated for her people, and for the rights of women and the enslaved.

**Mr. Patches, from the Appalachian 20th
Century Series: 1990s**

Adam Booth | Branding Iron Theatre | General Presentation



A small-town's neighborhood school is saved from demolition when it is retrofitted into low-income assisted living for seniors. Hope is a nurse who works in the very school building she attended as a girl. She discovers her new patient is Mr. Patches, the mesmerizing storyteller from her childhood. Hope slowly unwinds his secret past - and her future - in this tale set in the present with vivid flashbacks to 1990s Appalachia and 1940s Europe.

2:15-2:30 PM

SMALL BREAK

2:30-4:00 PM

**CROSSING CULTURES: KOREAN STORYTELLING
TRADITIONS INSPIRING THE FUTURE**

Alicia Dongjoo Bang | FAC 175 | SIO Workshop



Discover the power and depth of Korean storytelling traditions in this dynamic cross-cultural session. From tiger legends and Baridegi to beloved children's folktales, learn how Korea's oral narratives carry emotional universals that resonate worldwide. Led by an international storyteller bridging Korea and the United States, this workshop offers fresh stories, cultural insight, and practical tools for adapting Korean tales for performance, education, and organizational storytelling. Come explore how heritage can inspire the global future of story.

N&N

POPOV

UP YOUR GAME WITH COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING

Stephen Schwartz & Viveca Deanes

FAC 189 | YES Workshop

Boost your storytelling skills in this interactive, game-driven workshop! Work in teams to build characters, craft scenes, and shape a six-scene story. Share your work, gain fresh ideas, and receive valuable feedback to strengthen your storytelling abilities. You'll leave with sharper scene-creation skills, a stronger grasp of plot structure, and access to a free online version of Smalltown Tales to keep practicing long after the workshop ends.



CREATE YOUR HISTORICAL ALTER-EGO

Anne Rutherford | FAC 176 | General Workshop

Have fun learning a process to design an original character set in a period of history you want to explore. You will use a template Anne created and fine-tuned over the years to create your own character and begin developing their story. Clementine Ryder, Anne's award-winning Wild West alter-ego, will be there to inspire, exhort and demonstrate the fun of creating an authentic original historical character who speaks with your unique voice.



STORYTELLING TOOLS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Loren Niemi | FAC 127 | PRO Workshop

Do you want to use stories to make a better, more just and equitable world? This is a hands-on workshop focused on three effective applied storytelling tools: Story Circles, Oral History collection, and Advocacy Message framing. Taught by a long-time storytelling community organizer, it draws on real-world examples and proven techniques to help those you work with create politically and emotionally resonated stories.



WORDS TAKE US LANDS AWAY...IN THE COMPANY OF STORYTELLERS

Kathleen Santopietro | FAC 177 | YES Workshop

Crafting a story isn't just a matter of determining plot from beginning to middle to end. One element of an evocative story can involve using rich language and expressive vocabulary. In this session, adding depth to plot will be demonstrated. Then, participants practice using devices such as sensory, emotional and figurative language to enhance sample stories about prairie voices and honoring heritage.



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FRIDAY, JULY 24 continued

2:30-4:00 PM continued

THE PRINCE OF PIRATES AND THE WITCH OF WELLFLEET (A LONG-FORM PERFORMANCE)

Rona Leventhal | FAC Recital Hall | General Presentation



Wander the bluffs of Cape Cod, Massachusetts and you might hear whispers of the ghost of Maria "Goody" Hallet, calling for (or cursing) her lover, "Black Sam Bellamy". Come hear their tale.....this is not your average 'happily ever after' story! Rona's one woman show is her version of a classic Cape Cod tale, set in the early 1700's. It is an intersection of legend and history. Playing fifteen characters, Rona offers an engaging, powerful look at life in puritan New England. It addresses universal themes, "gang mentality" of the masses, hypocrisy, resilience.

VOICES OF ASIA: FOLKTALES, MEMORIES & MORE

*Alton Takiyama-Chung, Anne Shimojima,
Linda Yemoto and Karin Amano*

Branding Iron Theatre | YES Presentation



Experience the magic of Voices of Asia: Folktales, Memories & More, featuring four Japanese American storytellers who bring Asian folktales and lived experiences to life. From dazzling myths to heartfelt personal stories, this showcase reveals the humor, courage, and resilience woven throughout Asian traditions and modern identity. A vibrant, uplifting journey that celebrates heritage, imagination, and the universal power of story.

4:00-4:15 PM

SMALL BREAK

4:15-5:30 PM

Story Slam | *Host: Loren Niemi*

Branding Iron Theatre



Experience an evening of live storytelling as tellers take the stage to share personal stories inspired by a common theme. Filled with laughter, heart, and unexpected moments, the Story Slam celebrates the power of authentic stories and the connections they create.

5:30-6:30 PM

DINNER THE CAF

N&N

POPPY

FEATURED NATIONAL TELLERS

Branding Iron Theatre

SHELIA ARNOLD

Sheila Arnold has a talent for storytelling, a passion for history, and compassion for people. She provides Storytelling, Historic Character Presentations, Christian Monologues, and Professional Development for schools, festivals, churches, and organizations nationally and internationally. She is co-founder and Artistic Director of Artists Standing Strong Together (ASST) a source of inspiration, strength and action in the storytelling and artists world. Sheila has been honored as a 2021 MacDowell Artist Fellow, a 2020 Mt. Vernon Research Fellow and a 2019 Hewnoaks Artist Colony summer residence Noted Artist. Sheila lives in Hampton, VA near her son's family and parents.



ADAM MELLEMA

Adam Mellema has told stories in China, South Africa, Chile, Mexico and around the US. His "Stories From The War" collection chronicles World War II veterans in their own words, taken from interviews he conducted. Adam moonlights as an Emmy Award-winning Television Producer. He is currently Head of Content for Yippee TV, a streaming service for kids. Mellema co-created the campy action figure hit, Playtime, and Backseat Drivers, the world's first car show for kids. His preschool series, Maggie's Market, is in its third season Adam loves to visit old places, and avidly explore both fancy restaurants and dive bars.



LAURA SIMMS

Laura Simms is acclaimed worldwide for her storytelling, writing, teaching, and humanitarian work. She has performed in venues from The Nobel Peace Prize Festival, to displaced persons camps in Haiti. She is considered to be one of the Great Mothers of the Storytelling Movement since 1979. She served on the Board of Directors of NAPPS, directed the Festival in Jonesboro for three years building it into a global festival, and was on the original planning committee of what has become the NSN Conference. She lives in New York City and continues to write and perform internationally. She won the Oracle Award, The Talking Leaves Award, and Lifelong Achievement Award. She was given the SESAME STREET, Sunny Days Award, for her work with children worldwide. She saved a zoo in Romania and has written five books. Presently she works with the NGO for Children's Rights, and the NGO for Spirituality at the UN. www.laurasimms.com



MEGAN WELLS



Megan fell in love with the expressive arts at the ripe age of seven. She's been devoted ever since; gathering a lifetime of plays, stories, teaching, workshops, dance and improv. She holds seven national awards and has been touring as a professional storyteller since 1991.

Megan is honored to be a professor now, running the theater program at Concordia University Chicago. Megan is also a sought after coach in both the Theater and Storytelling worlds. She loves to encourage others to "jump in" to their authentic potential through the purposeful joy of the expressive arts. If there is an artform simpler and more effective at community building, Megan hasn't found it yet! STORIES! YES! Megan became a lifetime member of NSN the year after chairing the closing ceremony for the Chicago Conference. She is a grateful recipient of the Oracle Award Circle of Excellence. Megan says, "This beloved community is the heartbeat of my hope." meganwells.com

PIPPA WHITE



Pippa White turned to solo performing in 1994. Previously, she had an extensive career in theatre and television on the West Coast, including five years hosting a daily morning show at ABC in San Francisco. She calls her One's Company Productions "part theatre, part storytelling, part history." Audiences call them unique, captivating, and touching. Her performance pieces are varied, ranging from The Story of the Orphan

Train to Voices from Ellis Island, 72 Years to Women's Suffrage, Voices from the Resistance, and the musical I Can't Give You Anything But Songs. She has toured to thirty-five states, performing at universities, theatres, museums, libraries, and festivals. Conferences often feature Pippa as a keynote speaker. She has performed five times at the United Solo Theatre Festival in New York City, earning praise as "riveting, heartbreaking, and suspenseful." In addition, Pippa offers workshops, residencies, and has long served as a teaching artist.

EMCEE/HOST: MICHAEL BRUNDY



Michael J. Brundy is a motivational speaker, storyteller, and the author of four books, including Make a Point, Tell a Story!. He currently serves as the President of the Tejas Storytelling Association and is a Past President of the Dallas Storytelling Guild. An award-winning communicator, Michael was inducted into the

toastmasters International Hall of Fame for his excellence in leadership and oratory. His narratives often weave personal and historical themes designed to inform, inspire, and empower. Michael is also a dedicated marathoner and a life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Website: www.storiesbymichael.com

8:45-9:15 PM

TEXAS CAMPFIRE: YOU BRING THE FIRE

Branding Iron Theatre Lobby/Foyer

A campfire is not lit until people gather around, and that community is the fire. Texas Campfire is a relaxed, open space where we will have snacks and refreshments. Come enjoy conversation and a modern style campfire.

9:15-10:15 PM

Fringe: Eavesdropping on the Dead

PAUL STRICKLAND | FAC 127

Dark, sometimes funny, always gripping tales from long ago. Strange old stories, reupholstered for contemporary audiences, carried into unlikely rooms and told like they still matter—because they absolutely do.

Adult | Solo | Adult subject matter | Violence



Fringe: Becoming Ty - Part One

TY FANCE | FAC 129

Storytelling performance featuring poignant, humorous and heartfelt stories from my life. A journey, vivid in sense of time and place, of family connections and the environment that influenced me.

Adult | Solo | Language | Adult Subject Matter



Fringe: 38 years of Aikido

LARRY CASTLEBERRY | FAC 177

Follow the life of an Aikido student, from enthusiastic youthful beginner, to a nearing 60 year old still training (but oh he moves so much slower now!!)

Family | Solo | No Warnings



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SATURDAY , JULY 25

7:30-8:45 AM

BREAKFAST | ROOM

8:00-8:30 AM

WAKE UP AND SING!

Anne Rutherford | FAC 175



Warm up your voice and spirit singing along with cheerful, easy to sing songs in this fun session led by singer-storyteller Anne Rutherford and her trusty mandolin. Song-sheets are provided and all levels of singing welcome. As Pete Seeger said, "There is no such thing as a wrong note, as long as you're singing along." Join with other NSN folk for a positive, energetic start that will fuel you for the day ahead.

9:00-10:30 AM

ECO FIELD TRIP | PALO DURO CANYON

8:30-11:00AM | Tickets purchased during registration

FIELD TRIP WILL COVER THE MORNING SESSIONS



Explore Palo Duro Canyon on this special ECO field trip, where the landscape tells stories of history, culture, and place. This experience reflects our theme, Prairie Voices: Honoring Heritage, Inspiring Tomorrow, by connecting participants to the stories rooted in the natural world.

STORYWALK: ENSEMBLE STORYTELLING FOR TRANSFORMATIVE NARRATIVES

Kevin D. Cordi | FAC 127| YES Workshop



Step inside your stories and experience the power of collaborative narrative. This intensive workshop empowers beginning to professional storytellers to create, reimagine, and deepen tales as an ensemble—challenging assumptions, addressing issues of diversity, and transforming stories into meaningful experiences for all

THE EXTRAORDINARY ROLE OF THE NARRATOR

Laura Simms | FAC 129| Workshop



What distinguishes living storytelling from more passive forms of narrative performance is the exceptional role of the narrator. The narrator is the key to the life of a story. The awareness and sensitivity of the narrator, authentic, present and relational, creates the ground for radiant engagement.

The narrator is the guide, and the initiator of a ceremony of restoration. We will work on one story together. Laura will take us through a series of exercises, that strengthen our storytelling at the deepest level. Please bring a notebook, pens, and an open mind.

NSN

prairie voices

LEGENDS OF SCIENCE

Tim Livengood | FAC 189 | YES Workshop

Science is done by people, and stories are about people – good, bad, clever, foolish, ordinary, and sometimes extraordinary. The one thing that is absolutely disqualifying is dishonesty. Science wouldn't be science without the peculiar people who make it happen. And people make myths and legends.



RE-UPHOLSTERING FOLK TALES: HONORING OLD STORIES, INSPIRING NEW AUDIENCES

Paul Strickland | FAC 177 | General Workshop

Every story that feels ancient today was once brand-new. In this lively, laughter-filled workshop, storyteller Paul Strickland shows how to honor the heart of old folk tales while giving them new rhythm, humor, and life. Learn to re-upholster classic stories so modern audiences can lean in, laugh, and listen like it's their first time hearing them. You'll leave with fresh tools, a renewed story, and a roomful of ideas ready to tell.



"THE STRANGE CASE OF LADY LIBERTY"

A HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION THROUGH STORYTELLING

Barry Stewart Mann and Deborah Strahorn

FAC 129 | General Presentation

Recipients of the 2025 Speak Story Commission, and presenters of excerpts in development at last year's NSN Conference, Barry and Deborah return with the complete long-form tandem theatrical storytelling piece that weaves together historical, personal stories, folklore, humor, and little-known fragments of American History. To shed new light on a Lady who has shed light on the world for 140 years. Come join the huddled masses to hear this compelling tale!

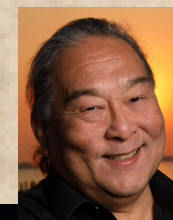


LIVING HISTORY: UNIFYING STORIES FROM WORLD WAR II

Alton Takiyama Chung and Adam Mellema

Branding Iron Theatre | General Presentation

In this powerful and unique session, Alton Chung and Adam Mellema bring to life stories from World War II. Attendees will witness a curated collection of true accounts told with a variety of storytelling techniques and styles. Alton and Adam will alternate, sharing complimentary tales from their repertoires. Chung's and Mellema's stories will reveal the humanity of those on both sides of the conflict.



9:00-10:30 AM continued

ENGAGING THE LISTENER THROUGH IMAGERY

Dorothy Cleveland and Barbara Schutzgruber

FAC 176 | General Workshop

Some stories lack imagery, especially in folktales, historical offerings, technical writings. It is important to note that imagery involves more than visual descriptions. This workshop offers a method that broadens the story's sensory attributes, which in turn draws the listener deeper into the story and the story is embedded in their memory. Bring a story and explore the possibilities!



MINI-CHALLENGE: STORYTELLING COACHING

Sheila Arnold | FAC 175 | Coaching



Bring your 10-minute story or your business question, and get feedback and information from National Storyteller Sheila Arnold. Known for her 8-week Challenge Class, this "mini" coaching session, gives you a taste of that workshop. Are you ready for the CHALLENGE.

LIMITED SLOTS! Audience Welcomed.

Sign up for coaching sessions at the front desk.

10:30-11:00 AM

LARGE BREAK

CHECK OUT THE BOOKSTORE AND SILENT AUCTION

11:00-11:45 AM

STORY SWAP

Story Swap is a welcoming space for connection, conversation, and the sharing of stories in a relaxed, informal setting. Join fellow attendees to listen, tell, and celebrate the power of storytelling while building community throughout the conference.

LEGENDS/HISTORICAL

Facilitator: Melissa Fees

FAC 129

TALL TALES

Facilitator: Toni Simmons

FAC 127

FAIRYTALES

Facilitator: Sarah Evans

FAC 176

PERSONAL STORIES

Facilitator: Nelda Tones

FAC 177

continued

SATURDAY, JULY 25

11:45AM - 12:00 PM

SMALL BREAK

12:00 - 12:30 PM

SIG MEETINGS

SIG Meetings offer attendees the chance to connect with others who share similar storytelling interests while learning, collaborating, and discussing ideas within focused communities. Part business meeting, part resource exchange, these gatherings help strengthen connections and shape future programming.

NOT A MEMBER? NOT A BIG DEAL. JOIN ANY SIG MEETING TO LEARN MORE. IF YOU ARE NOT IN A SIG, COME JOIN THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.



Environmental Storytelling (ECO)

FAC 127

Storytelling in Organizations (SIO)

FAC 129

Healing Story Alliance (HSA)

FAC 175

Producers and Organizers (PRO)

FAC 177

Youth, Educators and Storytellers (YES)

FAC 176

General Members (open to those not in a SIG)

FAC 129

12:30 - 1:45 PM

LUNCH

THE CAF

1:45 - 3:45 PM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Branding Iron Theater

The General Membership Meeting is a chance to gather with storytellers from across the network, hear exciting updates, and learn more about what's ahead for the National Storytelling Network. With conference registration, all attendees receive a one-year membership, making this the perfect opportunity to connect, stay informed, and discover ways to get involved.



2024

Washington

2025

Georgia

Past Conferences

HONORING HERITAGE

TEXAS
2026

INSPIRING TOMORROW
Future Conferences

Minnesota

2027

Utah

2028

**COME JOIN US THROUGHOUT THE NATION TO
CELEBRATE OUR STORYTELLING NETWORK!**