

National Storytelling Network

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

JUNE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Delanna Reed

President & Chair of the Board of Directors
National Storytelling Network

Dear Storytelling Community,

I am writing this missive on Memorial Day 2025; a time to solemnly honor those who have given their lives to preserve freedom and democracy in the United States. It's also a time that marks transitions: the end of the school year, graduation celebrations, and the eager anticipation of summer. I hope you were able to spend meaningful time with loved ones over this busy holiday weekend.

As Americans, we currently face an unprecedented time of drastic changes in our government. In times like these, the role of the storyteller becomes even more vital. For thousands of years, storytellers have been the conscience of humanity—voices of compassion, truth, and unity. At the same time, we must acknowledge that stories can also be misused: to divide, deceive, and sow discord.

That is why I urge you, now more than ever, to use your stories to build bridges, foster understanding, and speak out against injustice.

Just a few days ago, the NSN Board learned that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) rescinded a \$35,000 grant previously approved for our sister organization, the National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS).

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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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THE PAGE TO TURN BACK

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TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE



This funding was essential for their 43rd In the Tradition... National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference, scheduled for November. It also supported vital outreach efforts, including youth scholarships and community programming.

Here's an excerpt from their homepage (nabsinc.org):

“Ain’t Nobody Gonna’ Turn Me Around... NABS Stands Firm Against the NEA’s \$35,000 Grant Withdrawal and the Aggressive Federal Agenda to Erase Arts and Culture”

The National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS) unequivocally condemns the National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) reckless decision, in accordance with the Presidential Agenda, to rescind a \$35,000 grant designated for our 43rd In the Tradition... National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference. This wasn’t just a grant—it was a promise to support the Adopt-A-Teller Program (AATP), provide critical youth scholarships, and preserve the living history of our people through festival documentation in Atlanta. That promise has been broken.

I encourage you to visit their homepage and read the full statement. You’ll also find opportunities to support their efforts.

In response, the NSN Board voted unanimously at our May meeting to donate \$2,000 to NABS, and we’ve pledged to raise an additional \$1,750 to fully fund their youth scholarships. Our special interest groups are already stepping up to help us reach this goal.

Supporting fellow storytelling organizations is integral to our mission to advance all forms of storytelling within the community. Last fall, we partnered with Artists Standing Strong Together (ASST, pronounced “assist”) and doubled the amount in the Storyteller Relief Fund (SRF) to help storytellers impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. In 2024, we were able to contribute a total of \$1968.65, including donations raised on our website. The SRF remains available for any storyteller facing emergency circumstances. You can learn more or apply at asst.art/storyteller-relief-fund.

NABS is not the only organization affected by NEA cuts. The International Storytelling Center (ISC) also had a \$35,000 grant revoked; funds that supported its Storytelling Live! series. While ISC has reserves to absorb this loss, they too face uncertainty as additional cuts loom.

The National Storytelling Network remains financially stable thanks to the dedication of our incredible network of volunteers. On behalf of the board, thank you for giving your time, energy, and passion to support this community. We hope to thank many of you in person at the National Storytelling Conference in Atlanta, July 17–20.

Until next month,

Warmly,

Delanna Reed



NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK
JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER

Georgia 2025

NATIONAL STORYTELLING CONFERENCE



NATIONAL
STORYTELLING
NETWORK

JULY 17-20, 2025
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
KENNESAW, GEORGIA

Registration for housing and meals closes June 30!

Last chance to join us for four days of community, the best of American storytelling, and an (air-conditioned) taste of Georgia summer!

NSN member registration only
\$289!

[STORYNET.ORG/CONFERENCE-REGISTRATION](https://storynet.org/conference-registration)





NATIONAL STORYTELLING CONFERENCE

RESERVE YOUR VIRTUAL TICKET FOR ONLY \$99!

Visit the 2025 National Storytelling Conference in Georgia from your own armchair! A virtual ticket is available for just \$99. If you aren't free to join that day, you have until the end of September to finish viewing...or re-viewing the offerings. You will be able to view:

The Regional Teller Showcase with Josie Bailey, Julie Bradshaw, Natalie Jones, Amanda Lawrence, Barry Steward Mann, Denise Mount, Mike Mount, Cora Newcomb, and emceed by Chetter Galloway; **The National Teller Showcase**, featuring Carmen Agra Deedy, Lyn Ford, Bill Harley, Rev. Robert Jones, Connie Regan-Blake, and emceed by Adam Booth, And the **ORACLE Awards & Concert**, with awards, followed by stories: Susan O'Connor, Clinton Atwater, Jim Brulé, Sherry Norfolk, Trudy Hanson, Bob Johnson, Meghna Bhat, Sara Armstrong, Jo Ann Dadisman, and Jennifer Pahl Otto.

You will also be able to sit in on **Bobby Norfolk's** presentation "Callaloo: How Folktales Influence and Reflect Culture," **Connie-Regan-Blake** on "A Legend in Overalls: Storytelling in the Footsteps of Ray Hicks," and **Barry Stewart Mann's** "The Strange Case of Lady Liberty-an Historical Investigation." Attend a **panel discussion on storytelling in higher education** "Basket Weaving or Storytelling? A College Degree" with Nancy Donoval, Charles Parrott, Melissa Fees, Liz Warren, and moderated by Delanna Reed; and a panel discussion **"Telling 'the Other's' Story - How do we share stories from someone else's tradition, history, or creative effort? Or should we....?"** by Elizabeth Ellis, Nancy Pheasant, Chetter Galloway, and moderated by Anne Wheeler.

Also Georgia specials! Watch **the national youth teller showcase** featuring the Kuumba Storytellers of Georgia's award-winning Tattle Tales; and sit in on the **late night fringe performance "A Taste of Kuumba Stew"** with the Kuumba Collective. And enjoy **the Kennesaw State University student teller showcase!**

And not to forget...join our **Annual General Membership Meeting** to get all the latest news from NSN. Programming starts at 3 pm Eastern Time on July 17 with our **conference welcome** and continues 18, 19, 20 am. With live chats hosted by Heather Forest.

All this for only \$99! Click [here](#) to register for the virtual ticket!



SILENT AUCTION & BOOKSTORE SELLING

As you plan your trip don't forget to set aside some fun and intriguing items to share in the greatly anticipated silent auction. Your contribution helps with fundraising for NSN!

The bookstore will also be open! If interested in selling, please email leslierainey.shelley@gmail.com to sign up.

We request a 2-hour volunteer shift in the bookstore for each person bringing merchandise, and 20% of sales are donated to NSN.



SIG REPORT

ECO SIG EVENTS & UPCOMING CONFERENCE SESSIONS



Linda Yemoto & Claire Nolan
Directors, ECO SIG
National Storytelling Network

ECO SIG members have been enjoying monthly virtual gatherings where we share eco-related stories and receive feedback if requested. In April, **Bowen Lee** presented a very effective workshop on turning folktales into eco-tales. On Wednesday, June 11, 8:30 pm EDT, please join us as **Barry Stewart Mann** will be our guest teller. He will give us a little preview of what he will be presenting at the National Conference. All members will receive an email with the zoom link.

There will be several ECO sessions at the National Conference. We'd love to see you there – virtually, if not in-person!

Jackson Gillman | Workshop | Close Encounters of the Natural Kind - an environmental story exploration

Bobby Norfolk | Presentation | Callaloo: How Folktales Influence and Reflect Culture

Jenny Cargill-Strong | Workshop [INTERNATIONAL, STREAMED] | Learn how to harness storytelling to catalyse regenerative change.

ECO SIG Dinner | Friday 5:30-6:30 pm

Special | ECO SIG Field Trip to Smith-Gilbert Gardens

Fran Stallings | Late Night Story Swap

Judith Black | Workshop | From Information Download To Creating A Compelling Story

Fran Stallings | Workshop | SCIENCE: Tell It Like A Story

MAY ISSUE CORRECTION

Information about Brian Kokensparger was omitted from the SIO SIG Member Spotlight article in the May issue:

Brian Kokensparger, MFA, PhD
Computer Science Program
College of Arts and Sciences
Creighton University U.S.A.



NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK
JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER



June 13 & 14, 2025

Community Learning Center

**Rose State
College**

6191 Hudiburg Drive, Midwest City OK

Check out these scheduled activities:

- Friday night concert: *"Unsettling Tales, a tribute to Friday 13th"* begins at 7:15 pm
 - Featured storyteller, **Sky Shivers**, will present the workshop, *"The Brindle Cow"* beginning at 9:15 am Saturday
 - Saturday afternoon Poetry Concert will feature two former Oklahoma Poet Laureates
 - Free Family Storytelling Concert Saturday at 2:15 pm
 - Story Swaps so registrants can tell a story
 - Evening concert on Saturday starts at 7 pm
- Festival weekend pass \$35**
Friday & Saturday night concert \$10 each

For a complete schedule and to register for all events go to: territorytellers.com



Are you involved in planning or organizing storytelling events? Have you been "volunteered" into this role? Whether you're brand new, or have years of experience, the Producers & Organizers Special Interest Group (PRO SIG) is here to support you every step of the way!

WHAT WE DO:

- We have monthly virtual informal meetings
- We host quarterly virtual workshops (free for PRO members)
- We have produced a Storytelling Event Production Guide (available on Amazon! - see to the right..)

AND....

We are launching a new Peer Consulting Program at the NSN 2025 Conference!



ADVERTISE IN THE NEWSLETTER FOR FREE!

Just send your ad to newsletter@storynet.org by the 25th of the month.

And also go onto our website and enter your even data into our calendar...which is reproduced in the monthly newsletter.



NATIONAL STORYTELLING CALENDAR
(CLICK LINKS IN TITLES)

JUNE 2025 EVENTS

[19th Annual Spirit Of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival](#)

June 13, 2025 6:00 pm – 14, 2025 9:30 pm

Rose State College Community Learning Center
6191 Hudiburg Drive, Midwest City, Oklahoma

Featured Teller: Sky Shivers, a western humorist. Sky has twice won the Will Rogers Award for Humor. There will be a Workshop on building your story, Story Swaps, Two Oklahoma Poet Laureates, two concerts with 6 regional tellers, including Fran Stallings, nationally recognized for her environmental stories, as well as Japanese Folktales. There will be a Children's concert. For specific questions email cjweems19@gmail.com and rarczarski@gmail.com.

[Celebration of Tales](#)

June 14, 2025 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

The Center at Belvedere
540 Belvedere Boulevard, Charlottesville, Virginia

[Acclaimed Featured Storytellers:](#)

Charlotte Blake Alston – Renowned for her masterful telling of traditional and contemporary stories rooted in African and African American oral tradition

Charmaine Crowell-White – Captivating audiences with her powerful narratives that explore identity, heritage, and social change

Stan Trent – Celebrated for his dynamic performances that blend humor, history, and heartfelt wisdom

Rob Craighurst – Known for his spellbinding tales that transport listeners to worlds both fantastical and familiar

[Outstanding Regional Voices:](#)

Tabitha Enoch – Bringing local legends and personal stories to life with warmth and wit

Liza Newell – Crafting intimate narratives that celebrate the beauty of everyday experiences

Glenna Ohlms – Sharing tales that honor Appalachian traditions and rural wisdom

Clinton Atwater – Enchanting audiences with stories that bridge past and present



Healing Story Alliance: “When Storytellers Write about Healing” with Dan Yashinsky

June 18, 2025 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm EDT

Online via Zoom | Admission \$16.50

In this session, noted storyteller/author Laura Simms will interview Dan Yashinsky about his award-winning book *Suddenly They Heard Footsteps*.

Audience participation is encouraged, with opportunities to ask questions and share observations inspired by Dan’s work and the interview. This event benefits The Healing Storytelling Alliance, dedicated to promoting healing through the art of storytelling.

34th Bay Area Storytelling Festival: A co-production with the Storytelling Association of California and Six Feet Apart Productions

June 20-21, 2025

Sonoma Academy

2500 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa, California

Featured tellers: Charlotte Blake Alston, Dovie Thomason, Willy Claflin, Brandon Leake

For questions, email bayareastoryfest@gmail.com.

Friday 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm: Reception with refreshments and performances by all four featured tellers.

Saturday 10 am to 6:30 pm: Multiple performances by all four featured tellers in a split track format, as well as an open mike session during lunch and a showcase for California tellers in the late afternoon, as well as a youth teller session. The closing session will include storytelling and taiko drumming.

Tickets for the entire event are currently \$124.56 for adults, including fees, or you can buy tickets for parts of the event. Virtual tickets are also available, for a link to videos of the storytelling sessions.

Voices In The Glen Monthly Story Swap

June 21 at 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Online via Zoom

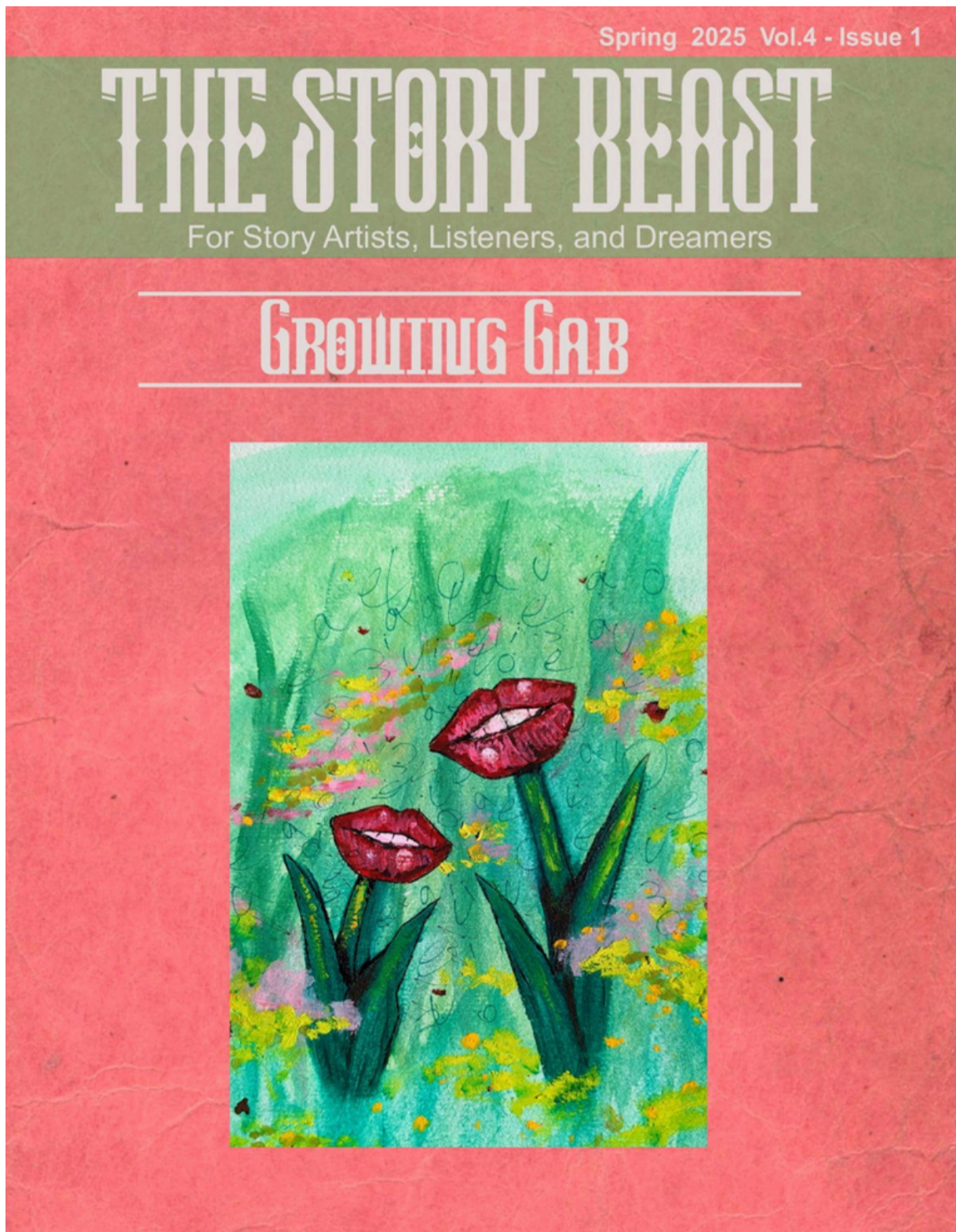
Storytellers and listeners are invited to join Voices in the Glen storytellers for an evening of shared stories. Anyone is welcome to tell a tale; no one ever has to. FREE!



NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK
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Click below to read the March 2025 Story Beast Issue (Growing Gab) this month!
Stay tuned for [Story Beast June 2025 Issue Sizzling Splendor](#) coming out June 15, 2025!

Visit storybeast.org for more.





NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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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 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.