National Storytelling Newsletter

VOLUME 8
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PRESIDENT's LETTER

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY



Caleb Hubbard
President & Chair of the Board of Directors
National Storytelling Network

I grew up in a tiny town in Texas called Archer City. Although I no longer live there, I have always considered myself a small-town guy. Plus, I get to go back all the time to visit my parents. One of the things I loved most about growing up in a small town was the sense of community. People showed up for one another. I remember how the community would come together when a family experienced a loss, when our school band made it to state (I was the drum major!), or when a neighbor needed a helping hand. Whether there was something to celebrate or a difficult moment to get through, people found ways to support one another. You might not have known everyone in town, but you knew that when something happened, people would show up.

When it came time to choose a place to raise my own kids, that sense of community was something I wanted to find again. I wanted to put down roots somewhere that valued connection, where people looked out for one another, and where my family could experience that same feeling of belonging. Over the past few weeks, I have been reminded of just how much that kind of community matters. I have seen members of NSN step up to support one another, offer encouragement, check in, and find ways to help when someone in our community needed it. Watching people come together has been a wonderful reminder of what makes this organization special.

NSN is more than an organization of storytellers. We are a community of people who care about one another.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has stepped in to help a fellow member, offered a kind word, checked on someone, or found a way to show love and support. Sometimes those gestures might seem small, but they can mean the world to the person receiving them. They remind us that we are not navigating life's challenges alone, and that the relationships we build through storytelling can extend far beyond the stories themselves.

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Letter

Stories for Margaret Read MacDonald

42nd Tejas Storytelling Festival

NSN's End-of-Year Call for Volunteers

2027 ORACLE Awards Nominations

Featured Events

National Storytelling Calendar

DID YOU KNOW?

National Storytelling Network Board of Directors meetings are open to all members!

Read minutes and learn how to attend here.

But here is something important about communities like the one I grew up in: they don't sustain themselves. They thrive because people choose to participate, contribute, and care for one another. The same is true for NSN. As we continue working to grow our membership and create a more active, connected organization, we need members who are willing to help keep that community strong. There are several positions and opportunities available within NSN, and I encourage you to look through this month's newsletter to see where we need support.

If you are interested in giving back to NSN and helping support the community that supports you, please reach out to me or another board member. You do not have to commit to a major role or take on more than you can manage. Whether you have a little time to give or are ready to take on a larger responsibility, we would love to talk with you and find a place that fits your interests, skills, and availability.

And volunteering for a formal position isn't the only way to contribute.

Start by checking in on someone. Reach out to a member you haven't heard from in a while. Send a note of encouragement. Celebrate someone's accomplishment. Offer a helping hand when you can. This month's newsletter even includes a simple way to write a letter to one of our members, giving you an easy opportunity to make someone's day a little brighter.

I also encourage you to read through the newsletter and explore the many ways you can support NSN and get the most out of your membership. There are opportunities to connect, participate, volunteer, and contribute in ways that fit your life. Your membership is more than a name on a list. It is an opportunity to be part of something that grows stronger when we invest in one another.

I chose a small-town community for my family because I believe there is something special about people who show up for each other. Seeing that same spirit within NSN makes me proud to serve in this position. I want us to keep building an organization where members feel connected, supported, and valued, not just at conference, but throughout the year. This is something that our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) thrive at throughout the year.

We may be spread across different towns, states, countries, and communities, but we share something meaningful. We share a love of storytelling, and we have the opportunity to turn that shared passion into lasting relationships and genuine support.

Let's keep showing up for one another. Let's keep finding ways to give back. And let's keep building the kind of community that makes people glad they belong to NSN.

Thank you for being part of it.

Image: Archer City, TX



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STORIES for MARGARET

SHARE A TRIBUTE FOR MARGARET READ MACDONALD

Margaret has given so much to storytellers. Now our community is gathering in words, memories, and kindness to honor the connections she has helped create.

Message from Margaret: After coming back from twelve amazing days at the Federation of Asian Storytellers (FEAST) conference in Chennai, India, I collapsed and discovered I have a brain tumor. The surgery was as successful as could be hoped. Fortunately, my brain seems intact! Unfortunately, the prognosis is less than a year. I am starting radiation and chemo and will fight, fight, fight. I'm also busy working on one more book with my daughter. Thanks for all of your love and support!

Message from NSN President Caleb: Please join us in supporting Margaret in a way storytellers know best, through words! Share a story, a cherished memory, or a heartfelt message to remind her how deeply she is loved and how many lives her storytelling has touched.

NSN is collecting the following stories for Margaret:

- online stories **(share a memory, a lesson, or a few words of gratitude)**
- photos of **handwritten notes**
- **or** handwritten notes to send **by post** to share with Margaret.

CLICK HERE TO VISIT storynet.org/stories-for-margaret FOR DETAILS ON SHARING STORIES WITH HER



Margaret Read MacDonald, a cherished children's book author and member of our storytelling community has, for years, contributed so much to our National Storytelling Network. Margaret served on our board of directors when we were known as the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (NAPPS) from 1981 to 1984, as president during our re-organization as the National Storytelling Association in 1998, and as secretary of our board since 2023. She is the most-awarded winner of the ORACLE Awards - the highest honors in the American storytelling community - receiving five, for regional service to the Pacific Northwest, distinguished national service, lifetime achievement, as well as the Talking Leaves award for literary contributions to storytelling, and the International StoryBridge earlier this year, at the 2026 National Storytelling Conference.

PARTNER ANNOUNCEMENT

JOIN THE TEJAS STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION FOR THE 42ND TEXAS STORYTELLING FESTIVAL IN DENTON, TEXAS



Michael Brundy
Festival Director
42nd Texas Storytelling Festival

Dear Storytelling Colleagues,

Some of the most memorable experiences begin with a story. I want to personally invite NSN to participate in a North Texas tradition.

The Tejas Storytelling Association presents the 42nd Texas Storytelling Festival, March 4–7, 2027, at the Denton Civic Center and nearby venues. Our theme, "New Voices, Familiar Faces," brings together established and emerging storytellers for four days of performances, learning, and connection.

Stories have always brought people together—passing down traditions, sparking laughter, sharing wisdom, and helping us see the world through someone else's eyes. This spring, that tradition comes alive in Denton.

Enjoy storytelling concerts, educational workshops, humorous tall tales, ghost stories, traditional folklore, personal narratives, music, and Story Slam and Poetry Slam competitions. The festival welcomes longtime storytelling enthusiasts, families, educators, community groups, and newcomers who simply love a good story.

Professional storytelling concerts and workshops offer a chance to exchange techniques, meet fellow tellers, and celebrate oral traditions.

Thank you for helping people discover the value of live storytelling. We hope you will help us bring more voices and listeners together in Denton next March.

Warm regards,

Michael Brundy
Festival Director, 42nd Texas Storytelling Festival

Carol Barrow
Festival Operations, Tejas Storytelling Association
tsa@tejasstorytelling.com | 940-380-9320
festival.tejasstorytelling.com

CALL for VOLUNTEERS

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK!



Amanda Lawrence
Vice Chair-Elect
National Storytelling Network

We are seeking enthusiastic members to serve on our Fundraising, Grants, and By-Laws committees. Whether you enjoy building community support, celebrating the excellence of your peers, or strengthening organizational policies, your skills and perspective can make a meaningful difference as we work together to champion the art of storytelling.

- Fundraising Committee: Do you have creative ideas for fundraising? By joining this committee, you can help generate financial support for NSN members around the world by brainstorming and designing creative fundraisers.
- Grants Committee: Are you good at assessment? By joining this committee, you can help celebrate the excellence of your peers by reviewing applications for NSN grants.
- By-Laws Committee: Do you have ideas for improving the structure and function of this organization? By joining this committee, you can help shape the future of NSN by reviewing the by-laws annually and recommending amendments for members to vote on at our annual meeting.

If you're interested in volunteering for one or more of these committees, please reach out to Amanda Lawrence at amanda@storynet.org to learn more.

If you have leadership skills and would like to make an even bigger difference, consider joining the board in one of these roles:

- Finance Chair: Do you have an eye for facts and figures and experience with budgeting? The Finance Committee Chair works with our Executive Director, CPA, and other committee members to create our annual budget and financial report.
- Volunteer Coordinator: Are you a matchmaker at heart? As Volunteer Coordinator, you can help match NSN volunteers with the jobs they might most enjoy doing based on their skills and interests.

To learn more about these leadership roles, please reach out to Caleb Hubbard at cghubbard@storynet.org.

ORACLE AWARDS

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2027 ORACLE AWARDS ARE NOW OPEN

Since 1995, the National Storytelling Network has recognized those in our field who have carried the torch, shared the vision, and spread our tales throughout the world. Now it's now time to submit nominations for the 2027 ORACLE Awards. Let's show our appreciation to our colleagues for the work they have done to preserve and perpetuate the art of storytelling.

The ORACLE Awards are national and international. They include:

- **The International Story Bridge Award**, which recognizes those who use story to celebrate our cultural differences
- **The Talking Leaves Award**, which honors authors, editors, collaborators, and translators
- **The Circle of Excellence Award**, which recognizes storytellers for their artistic accomplishments
- **The Regional Service & Leadership Awards**, which are presented to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to their local or regional storytelling community and/or have used storytelling to make a significant contribution to the larger community in which they live
- **The Lifetime Achievement Award**, which is presented to individuals in the storytelling community who have dedicated their lives to the art form of storytelling and who have demonstrated meritorious service to the National Storytelling Network as well as to the community of storytellers at large
- **The Distinguished National Service Award**, which is presented to individuals, members, or groups who have contributed their time and energy in an exemplary manner on the national level to forward the work of the National Storytelling Network

We have many storytellers who deserve these awards. Let's nominate them for recognition! How? Visit storynet.org/awards/ORACLE-awards to see the instructions and nomination form. Submissions will be accepted November 10, 2026, through January 10, 2027. Start now: Write your nomination narrative and solicit the three support letters you'll need.



CLICK FLYERS FOR REGISTRATION LINKS

HSA HEALING STORY ALLIANCE

Putting your Heart on the Page

A workshop with Merna Hecht

Honoring Refugee and Immigrant Voices through Poetry, Storytelling and Visual Art

November 1st
7:00 pm-9:00 pm EST
LIVE on Zoom!
Tuition: $30
or pay what you are able



HSA HEALING STORY ALLIANCE

OARS in the Water

November 11th
7 - 8:30pm EST

New Friends in Old Places

Hosted by Jim Brulé and Baba-C the Griot



Good Liars Club XX



GOOD LIARS CLUB ANNE & NORM

Tuesday, November 3, 2026

4:00 AKDT / 5:00 PDT / 6:00 MDT / 7:00 CDT / 8:00 EDT

This month's liars are Walt Belcher, Roopa Mohan, Ingrid Nixon, Ty Fance, Claire Hennessy, Anne Rutherford, & M.C. Norm Brecke.

Register & Support the Storytellers at: anne-norm.com/

Donations are split among the storytellers.
All donors receive a link to watch a recording of the show on demand for up to a month afterwards.

NATIONAL STORYTELLING CALENDAR

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2026 STORYTELLING EVENTS

Putting your Heart on the Page Workshop with Merna Hecht
Healing Story Alliance
November 1, 2026 | 6–8 pm CST
VIRTUAL

Anne & Norm Present: The Good Liars Club XX
November 3, 2026 | 7:00 pm CST
VIRTUAL

Storyteller John Weaver: Pumpkin Tales
November 5, 2026 | 2:30–3:15 pm PST
Menlo Park Library | 800 Alma St, Menlo Park, California

Tellabration: Michigan Bright Water Storytelling Festival
November 7, 2026 | 9:30 am – 9:00 pm CST
Howell Opera House | 123 W Grand River Ave, Howell, Michigan

St. Louis Storytelling Festival
November 8–15, 2026
St. Louis Library District | 1640 S. Lindbergh Blvd, St. Louis, Missouri

True Tales Live New Hampshire Storytelling Workshop
November 10, 2026 | 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
VIRTUAL

StoryFest Online!
November 12, 2026 | 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm CST
Menlo Park Library
VIRTUAL

Storytelling Workshop: The Enchanting World of "Once Upon a Time"
November 15, 2026 | 1–3 pm PST
Menlo Park Library | 800 Alma St, Menlo Park, California

Voices In The Glen Story Swap
November 15, 2026 | 2:30 pm EST
Bethesda, Maryland | RSVP for details

Dang, I Forgot To Ask Grandma: How to collect and share family stories
Laura Packer
November 15, 2026 | 1–3 pm CST
VIRTUAL

Jeff Gere: True Supernatural Tales of Hawaii
November 16, 2026 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm PST
Menlo Park Library | 800 Alma St, Menlo Park, California

What are we thankful for? An online storytelling circle
Laura Packer
November 19, 2026 | 7–8:30 pm CST
VIRTUAL

Tellabration: Menlo Park Storytelling Festival
November 21, 2026 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm PST
Menlo Park Library | 800 Alma Street, Menlo Park, California

Tamiami Tale Tellers (TTT) Tellabration 2026
November 21, 2026 | 2–4 pm EST
Peace Community Church | 17671 Pine Ridge Rd, Ft. Myers Beach, Florida

Tellabration: Foundations—Stories that Made Us Patchwork Storytelling Guild
November 22, 2026 | 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm EST
The Rotunda | 4014 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

True Tales Live Storytelling Show "Regrets"
November 24, 2026 | 6–7:15 pm
VIRTUAL
To be a teller email: info@truetaleslivenh.org

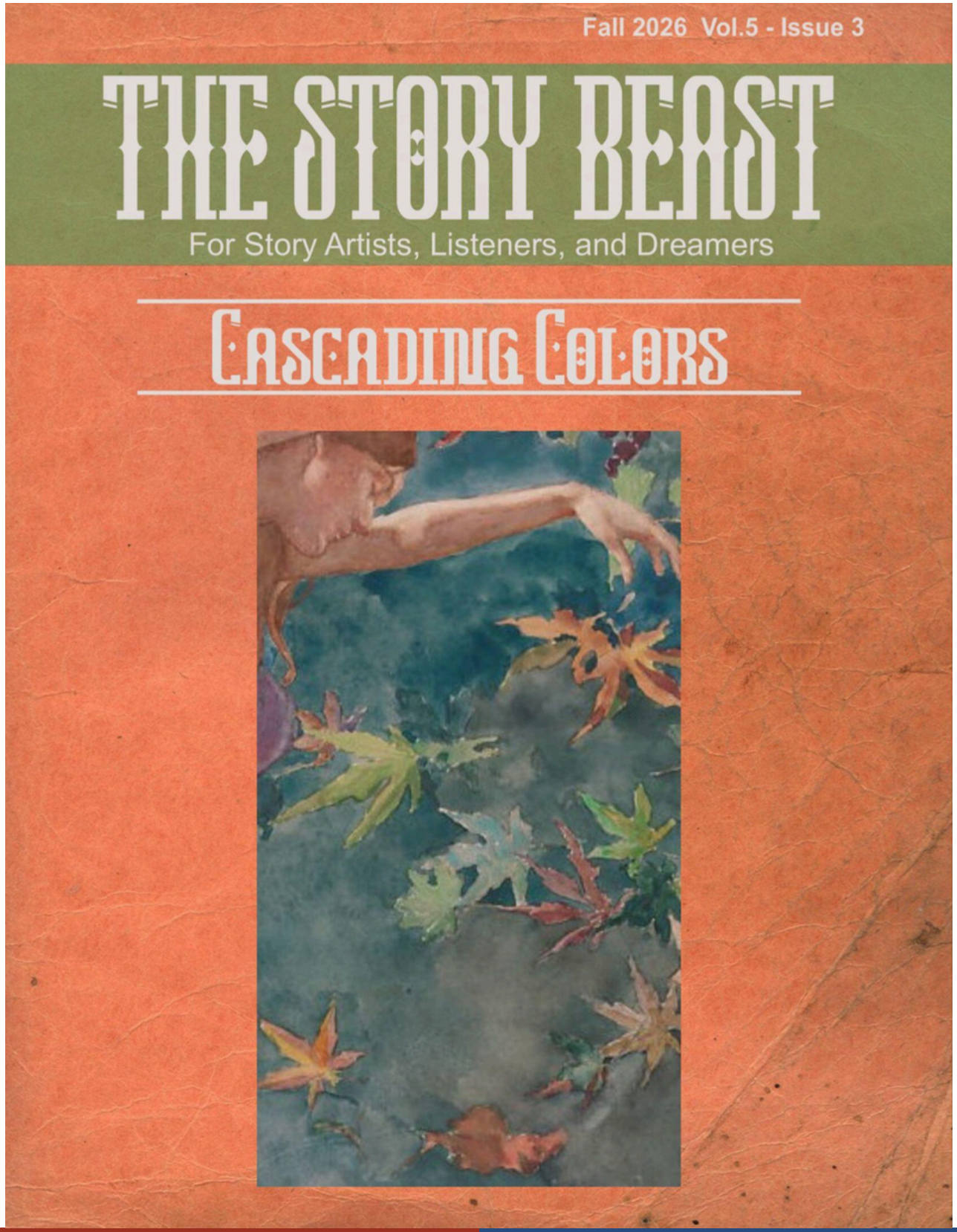
2026 Varta Storytelling Festival
December 5, 2026 | 1:30–4:30 pm CST
Austin Public Library | 5125 Convict Hill, Austin, Texas

A Blue Ridge Christmas featuring Michael Reno Harrell and Josh Goforth
Storytelling Arts of Indiana
December 5, 2026 | 7–9 pm CST
Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center | 450 W Ohio St, Indianapolis, Indiana

THE STORY BEAST

Click the cover below to read the Fall 2026 Story Beast issue: *Cascading Colors*.

Visit storybeast.org for submission information.



NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Rishi Nixon	Managing Editor
Ashton Cynthia Clarke	Events Editor
Nick Smith	Events Editor
Cassie Selleck	Events Editor
Rita Rigano	Copy Editor
Sara Armstrong	Copy Editor

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE CONTENT:

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.