



October 2009 Support and Appreciation for the Art of Storytelling In Kentucky Volume 5 Issue 4

# Kentucky Storytelling Association

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All KSA dues are payable by Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. If a person is not sure if they are already paid for 2010, they can contact Pam Holcomb, President-elect and current Member Roster Keeper at 606-573-4376 or [President-Elect@kystory.org](mailto:President-Elect@kystory.org)

### Useful Links:

#### KSA Website

<http://www.kystory.org/>

#### National Storytelling Network Website

<http://www.storynet.org/>

#### Contact your Board

## Message from our President Donna Slaton

Dear KSA members,

As my term as your president comes to a close, I want to thank each of you for your interest and support of KSA. The officers and board members have worked diligently and many of you have individually served behind the scenes on committees to help the organization grow in both memberships and programs.

KSA moves forward with more partners than ever for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual conference. I hope you will join us at ECU in Richmond Nov 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> for an outstanding line up of programs headlined by our own Cynthia Changaris. Betsy Fleischer, secretary, past-president and conference chair continues to support KSA with countless hours of work on the programs, grants and partnerships. President-Elect Pam Holcomb has worked to once again organize the process of selecting outstanding youth tellers. Kentucky has been fortunate to have youth recognized nationally for the last two NYSS events.

Congratulations to Board member Octavia Sexton who was recognized in great fun as the winner of the first ever story slam at Natasha's this summer. Thanks to Betsy Fleischer for organizing this new and hopefully annual event.

Thanks to new KSA board member Laura Seaman for establishing KSA on Facebook and helping to spread the word about storytelling.

Outstanding KSA Torchbearers David Benning and Emilee Seaman performed on stage at the State Fair and received a very positive article from the Courier-Journal. Our thanks to Don Creacy and the Toyota Blue Ribbon stage for arranging the opportunity.

Our congratulations to KSA member Mary Hamilton who was selected to receive a Circle of Excellence Award from the National Storytelling Network scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 1, 2009 as part of the National Story Night celebration in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Mary has contributed countless hours to KSA in many forms of service as a past secretary, president-elect and president, as a conference co-chair for several years and she continues to work on the website and nominating committee. We salute Mary for her gifted telling and her gifts of self to the community of storytelling.

Looking forward to a new year, Pam Holcomb's team will be enhanced with fresh faces on the board including several new faces. Please continue to support the KSA board with your membership, volunteer on committees and be active in the programs.

Thanks again to our hardworking newsletter editor Thomas Freese who not only puts it together well, but keeps us on target with the time line.

Best wishes to each of you and I hope to see you at the Conference November 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>.

Donna F. Slaton  
President

## KSA Annual Fall Conference

From the Conference Committee Chair, Betsy Fleischer

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## Upcoming Events

**October 2-4**, The  
National Storytelling  
Festival in Jonesborough,  
Tennessee. For more  
information, call 800-  
952-8392 or 423-753-  
2171 or contact

Register for the KSA Conference which will take place at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, KY. on November 6 & 7.

It's coming clooooooossserrrr. Your storytelling conference is just around the bend. It's time to register. The price has remained the same, \$15 if you are a member and sign up before the doors open (\$20 for non-members), and \$35 at the door for everyone. Get your registration postmarked by October 25 for the early registration rate. Make your checks payable to KSA and mail to KSA, PO Box 4148, Frankfort, KY 40604-4148.

To find out what's being offered this year go to [www.kystory.org](http://www.kystory.org) and click on the "Conference" button which will show you the schedule. Look to the left and find the "Workshops" link, click, and Presto! there you are.

New this year at the conference is the State Final for the Kentucky Youth Storytelling Showcase. Come to EKU to enjoy hearing their stories and encourage these young tellers.

Ask anyone who has been to a conference and they will tell you what a good time they had. This year there will be more fun and knowledge to share with folks who love storytelling, story listening, stories.

Come one! Come all!! Bring a friend!! Bring a neighbor!! See you there!! Remember the question from the last newsletter?? The prize still stands.

This is for all story tellers, story listeners, story collectors, story "appreciators". The annual KSA conference is coming up November 7 & 8 at Eastern Kentucky University. Our artist this year is Cynthia Changaris. The workshop levels will range from pre-school to senior citizens. Topics to be presented include Basic storytelling by Cynthia Changaris, How to work with pre-schoolers by Cynthia Changaris, Audience Participation Story telling by Mary Hamilton, Turning Your Story Into a Fabulous Fib by Jonatha and Harold Wright, Skills for Youth Tellers by Pam Holcomb, Your Own Story: Writing, Owning and Telling by Paschal Baute and Charlie Eyer, I Want to Hear That Story: Turning your ordinary story into extraordinary with imagination, voice and body by Octavia Sexton, Story Delivery Skills for Making Your Fibs Believable by Jonatha and Harold Wright, Deaf Interpreters and Hearing Tellers Interchange to create a story by Nina Coyer and lastly, Telling with senior citizens by Cynthia Changaris.

Help! Need Help!

by Betsy Fleischer, Conference Committee Chair

It's time to volunteer, pitch in, pick up an oar. Your conference needs your help in order to come into being. Who do we need? We need:

6 clerks for the story store for two times apiece (a total of 30 minutes).

someone to be in charge of the door prizes and

someone to be in charge of getting room monitors.

12 room monitors who will work one workshop session,  
an Emcee for the day to give all announcements,

5 people for setup crew,

5 for tear down crew,

1 person to put up signs,

an Open Mic Emcee and

6 people to do a turn at the registration table (2 at a time in the morning, 1 at a time after that until lunch).

Please choose your volunteer spot and contact Betsy Fleischer at

[info@storytellingcenter.net](mailto:info@storytellingcenter.net), [betsycat2@yahoo.com](mailto:betsycat2@yahoo.com) or 859-734-3194 as soon as possible. Thanks:)

**October 12**, Tale Talk, a storytelling group where stories are told, camaraderie developed, critiques are available, story news is shared. Louisville area, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Cynthia Changaris, 502-451-7144, 502-645-2930 or [cchangaris@aol.com](mailto:cchangaris@aol.com).

**October 23-25**, Barkley Tales Storytelling Festival Tell your story, share the joy of storytelling with others, and hear and learn from nationally-known master storytellers. Open to everyone and suitable for all ages, the festival will feature Halloween tales, children's yarns, and opportunities for adult and young storytellers. Contact: Toll Free: 800-325-1708 or <http://parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/lb/event/s/>, for more information.

**October 26**, Wandering Storytellers at Natasha's Bistro. 8:00 p.m. Admission: \$5.00. Natasha's Bistro 112 Esplanade, Lexington, KY. Contact: 502-484-3359 or [www.beetnik.com](http://www.beetnik.com).

**November 6, 7**, The Kentucky Storytelling Association 6th Annual Kentucky Storytelling Conference at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, KY. [More details will be available soon at the Annual Conference page on this website.](#)

**November 9**, Tale Talk,

## How am I doing?

As a full time freelance storyteller, I present programs to a diverse audience in a variety of settings. In doing so, I have developed several methods for the audience to evaluate my presentation. I think after 20 years that I have gained some insight into what audiences are willing to give me in the form of feedback.

First, there is not a generic evaluation that will serve all. As a storyteller, you must first determine what you think is important for your audience to receive from your presentation and also determine what your audiences want to receive from you. I have several evaluations that I may pull from depending on what type of story program I am presenting.

Second, you have to consider such things as audience age, location of the program and how many listeners you have. If you are telling in a classroom or similar setting, you can expect completion of the evaluation by most participants. Multiple choices and/or a rating scale work best. I have found that using open-ended questions do not work well, nor asking for comments on each point. Very few will respond with written comments. However, I do give them the option to make comments at the end of the evaluation. Also, keep your questionnaire short. I use no more than 10 questions. If I am doing a professional development or workshop, I use a more detailed evaluation and find participants spend more time filling these out, and will write comments.

In assembly type programs, I give an evaluation to the person who has engaged me and ask they make copies for teachers or others they think would give me feedback.

In festivals or large audience programs, I have placed evaluations in random chairs and announced that those completing the evaluations and placing them in a box I have provided at the exit are entered into a drawing for a free CD. If possible, I draw the winner while the group is still on site; however, I have also mailed the CD.

Third, as you develop your evaluation tools, keep in mind what you want the audience to receive from your performance and solicit feedback as to how well you succeeded. Also, do not be discouraged based on one or two negative responses. Consider the average of responses rather than focusing on one or two high or low scores.

For some, the internet is the ideal way to get evaluations completed. You can find many evaluation tools on the internet, and from workshops and classes, you may attend. Use these as a guide in developing your own. After you have created several, you can keep them on file and only have to adapt them as you change your programs. They will serve you well in guiding you in your progress and growth as a storyteller.

I haven't had much success - but then again, I was born in BC (before computers) and still prefer a paper trail. However, there are internet sites where you are provided tools to create a personalized evaluation and have participants complete it online. One I have used in the past is Survey Monkey - [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) where you can create a basic survey for free.

Octavia Sexton, Teller of Tales, [www.octaviaseyton.com](http://www.octaviaseyton.com)

## Owning your performance space

by Bill Watson

A storyteller is confronted with interesting, unusual, demanding, and sometimes uncomfortable venues. Although the teller may try to control the environment

a storytelling group where stories are told, camaraderie developed, critiques are available, story news is shared. Louisville area, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Cynthia Changaris, 502-451-7144, 502-645-2930 or [cchangaris@aol.com](mailto:cchangaris@aol.com).

**November 30,** Wandering Storytellers at Natasha's Bistro. 8:00 p.m. Admission: \$5.00. Natasha's Bistro 112 Esplanade, Lexington, KY. Contact: 502-484-3359 or [www.beetnik.com](http://www.beetnik.com).

**December 14,** Tale Talk, a storytelling group where stories are told, camaraderie developed, critiques are available, story news is shared. Louisville area, 7:30 p.m.

**December 28,** Wandering Storytellers at Natasha's Bistro. 8:00 p.m. Admission: \$5.00. Natasha's Bistro 112 Esplanade, Lexington, KY. Contact: 502-484-3359 or [www.beetnik.com](http://www.beetnik.com).

## News and Updates

KSA's 1st Annual Story Slam at Lexington's Natasha's Bistro on July 27th was a successful night of great fun!! Laughter and applause were heard all over. Our three conscripted judges: Donna Redwine, and Pat Hoefle, who are two retired teachers, and

where one will tell that is, sound, lighting, noise distractions, time of day, age range of audience, nothing is a guarantee and at times it is totally out of one's hands. I've told stories out of doors next to highways, indoors with crying babies, in libraries with no separate meeting room, to people sitting on hay bales being bitten by unseen insects, in nursing homes where the audience may not be very alert or in places where, even though well advertised only a handful show in a room which can accommodate over 100 or on stage where the spotlight in one's eyes hides the audience. Every venue is different.

In August I story told at the KY State Fair at 3 PM two days in a row. The venue was the lobby of the North Wing, a very large open space that would comfortably fit a symphony orchestra and seating for 500 or so. In front of me were 8 benches which seated four comfortably. To the right side even with the last bench was an area full of video games and a championship playoff of the popular game Guitar Hero.



Bill Watson at the Kentucky State Fair

Surrounding this venue people were constantly streaming by on their way to various other parts of Fair activity. Some people stood on the perimeter wonder what was going on and a few occupied the benches eating their lunch, catching a few winks from all the walking one does at the fair, and there was a mother changing the diapers of a baby.

Distractions were everywhere. However, I learned very early on from the tellers I admire the most, that you can't let things like that get you off point of what you are doing. You have to own the space wherever you are to tell.

There are various ways to own the space. I try to meet everyone in the audience before I start telling by talking to them individually and finding out some personal information. Quite often I can use this information in a story. Secondly, I try to get to know the people who invited me and/or who are there to assist in any way. Third, I tell my stories in such a way I would enjoy them if I were listening to them in the audience. Fifth, I try and give the best performance I possibly can.

Owning the space can make even the most difficult of venues yours. Own the space!

Charles Wright did a wonderful job of deciding what numbers to throw up. The contestants had five minutes to tell a story, their scores were tallied directly after telling and another contestant's number was drawn from the purple top hat.

After the last teller sat down it was obvious from the scoreboard that there was a tie for first place!! It was Octavia Sexton vs. Rebecca Henderson. Now the contestants had only three minutes to tell a story! When the smoke cleared it was Rebecca Henderson who won the second prize of a brand new \$5 bill. Octavia Sexton was the Champion winning a brand new \$50 bill, a faaaaaabulous trophy, and a brick of storytelling CDs. Get ye selves ready for next year!!

From Cynthia Changaris, roving reporter/storyteller:

The Kentucky Center for the Arts, headed by Jeffrey Jamner is overseeing a pilot project to put the Arts in Hospitals. Cynthia Changaris, Greg Acker and John Gage are among a handful of artists chosen to work in this pilot project.

Monday, September 21st as part of the pilot, I told stories and sang in the lobby of Norton's Hospital for 1 hour (beginning at 6:45 am!) and in a surgical-oscropy waiting room for families

## Member Spotlight

This issue shines the spotlight on Bill Watson.

Like most storytellers I cannot remember a time I haven't been a storyteller. My mother worried about my telling and was sure I would get into trouble with my stories. It is through this gift of gab, however, I have been able to relate to people literally around the world and in the various jobs I have had. I have been telling professionally over 20 years and it is one of the most gratifying things one can do.

*Why did you join KSA?*

I was privileged to be in one of the organizing meetings at Mary Hamilton's house in Frankfort. I believe in the goals and objectives of KSA in preserving the art of storytelling and encouraging others to pass along their rich treasure of family stories as a part of their inheritance to future generations.

*What kind of stories do you enjoy?*

I like stories that inspire, stories that have an unusual twist, stories that have an "ah ha", stories of reconciliation, and stories I can relate to. I appreciate history and how those stories provide the backdrop to who we are today.

*How has your life been affected by stories from family or friends?*

We are all a patchwork of all the events, experiences that happen to us and those we come in contact. My life is much richer by knowing my families stories. When friends share their stories with me I am drawn much closer to them by the trust they have placed in me as a listener and witness to their own history. In each case I come away with the feeling I am not alone in my experiences of life. Those I love and know the best have the same experiences of life, love, joy and grief plus all the emotions that surround our own existence on this planet as I do. Material possessions cannot compare to the richness of family and friends.

## Book Review

by Roberta Simpson Brown

*Ghosts, Spirits and Angels: True Tales from Kentucky and Beyond*, by Thomas Freese, 2009, Acclaim Press, Morley, MO, 253 pages, 51 illustrations, ISBN: 978-1-935001-25-6. Hardbound with dust jacket, hand-sewn page signatures, nonfiction.

*Ghosts, Spirits, and Angels* by Thomas Freese is the first collection I have seen that presents paranormal encounters in three separate categories. These are true stories of real, normal people that illustrate the roles that ghosts, spirits, and angels play in our lives. These are not the usual retold tales. These are intriguing, original stories. Included are many enriching photographs of haunted sites and unexplained phenomena caught on film. It is not only an entertaining book, but it is well researched. The book has wonderful variety! I really loved it.

You will read of a "cursed mink stole," ghosts in hospitals, "power tools in Heaven," family ghosts, and the "ghost next door." You will learn of haunted historic and public places-- "The Ghosts of La Grange," the Bell Witch Cave, Waverly Hills Sanatorium, and others--that you can check out for yourselves. You will thrill to accounts of "Bright Light Figures," good and bad spirit energy,

for one hour (at the more acceptable time of 8:30 to 9:30.) As some of you know, the lobby is a three story open space, which presented challenges. I was a little bit nervous.

I found that singing and instrumentals worked better than storytelling, since most people were traveling in and out of the space. When I began to tell a story, (which admittedly had some argument between friends as part of the story) one of the guards became worried and came over to talk to me.

The misunderstanding was handled by the Norton staff, and I was not arrested!

Wonderfully, my voice carried up to the upper levels, and people smiled, gave thumbs up, and generally seemed to enjoy the event. In the smaller waiting room space, people joined in singing, and one elderly gentleman came up and provided great harmony for some of the songs.

Storytelling worked much better in this contained venue. People seemed genuinely to be happy about having me there.

We will be having a discussion of the observations of the staff and proceed from here.

I will keep you informed about this wonderful pilot project which has me thinking a lot about story and song in hospitals. Is there anyone else who has had such experience? Anyone have any comments about this

Civil War spirits, and "The Healer's Story." You will be touched by encounters with baby angels, guardian angels, the "Little Crippled Angel," and people who are angels on earth.

Whether you are a believer or a non-believer, you will be left wondering and perhaps acknowledging some experiences of your own that you can't explain. This is a book that makes you go back again to look at the separate categories and to look closely at your own faith. This is an invaluable book to help clarify experiences with the ghosts, spirits, and angels because they will always be around!

## Youth Storytelling

Pam Holcomb

Two of Kentucky's finest young storytellers, Emilee Seaman (the National High School Torchbearer winner for 2009) and David Benning were a part of the Kentucky Youth Storytelling Showcase held at the Kentucky State Fair, August 28, 2009. Each of these two-time State Torchbearers entertained a very receptive audience with several stories. All former KY Torchbearers were invited to be a part of this event held on Toyota's Blue Ribbon Stage. In addition to their telling, information was given to everyone present about the upcoming Kentucky State Storytelling Showcases. The Louisville Courier Journal followed up with a wonderful article about the event. It may be viewed by following this link: <http://www.courier-journal.com/article/20090828/STATEFAIR/908280354>



Young Storytellers David Benning and Emilee Seaman

The Kentucky State Storytelling Showcase venue competitions are quickly coming to an end. The first of these was the Northern Venue held at the Kenton County Public Library. What a treat to find seven, ten year old girls ready to tell stories! Each of these young ladies did a fantastic job and made the judging very difficult. The winners were: 1st place - Amara Mitchell, 2nd place - Brianna Roberts, and 3rd place- Lauren Reed.

Saturday September 19th was a very busy day for KYSS. It started with the Eastern Venue, held as a part of the Kentucky Highlands Festival at the Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg and the Southern Venue at the Pulaski County Public Library in Somerset. At the MAC Arts Center we had both middle school and elementary contestants. The middle school winners were: 1st place Noah Hughes, 2nd place - Ethan Hughes, and 3rd place - Amanda Perkins. The elementary winners were: 1st place - Leanna Martin and 2nd place - Taylor Albright. In Somerset, we had as winners: High School 1st place

new work? Please E Mail me at [cchangaris@aol.com](mailto:cchangaris@aol.com).

I will carry your comments to the working meetings at the Kentucky Center for the Arts. Let your ideas be heard.

Bill Harley, a fantastic two-time Grammy winning storyteller, will be in Frankfort, Kentucky in April, 2010 at the Grand Theatre, 308 St. Clair, Frankfort, Kentucky. You have the opportunity to enjoy his performance for adults and participate in a three-hour workshop designed just for you – a person who already tells stories! The performance will be on Friday, April 23, at 7:30 p.m., and the workshop "Creating and Performing" will be on Saturday, April 24, 9:30 a.m. check-in & refreshments; workshop underway by 10:00; workshop ends by 1:00 p.m. The Friday night performance is for adult audiences. The workshop is for folks who already tell stories. See more about Bill Harley at [www.billharley.com](http://www.billharley.com).

**Coming Soon!**

**Storytellers and Great Shoes**

A Benefit Concert for Habitat for Humanity presented by the Georgetown Storytellers Guild on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 7PM at Harmony Christian Church, Georgetown, KY

For ticket information call

- Shelby Peden and Middle School 1st place - Mason Peden. All of these young storytellers did an exceptional job in telling their story.

These young winners, along with the winners from the Western Venue (scheduled for September 26th) and the mail-in entries (due September 30th) will compete on November 6th to determine the State Winners and also the Kentucky State Torchbearers. This competition will be held in conjunction with the KSA fall conference. Winners will be announced in the Friday evening's opening session.

## Flashlight

A Story by Kathy Claus

My memories of early childhood are not consecutive, but some incidents stand out with incredible clarity. One of the earliest concerns my third birthday.

I am a twin, and so, shared this momentous day with my brother. I do not recall the cake or a lot of other details. I do remember my pride in my cowgirl outfit which complemented my brother's cowboy one. I don't know if mine came with a gun, but can still feel the wonderful suede and gloried in the fringe. I knew this was really special.

But the truly indelible part of that birthday was my intense disappointment at not receiving another gift which my brother was given. HE GOT A FLASHLIGHT!

I was devastated. Why was this so important to me? Well, he was afraid of the dark, so I'm sure this present was intended as a comfort. If he was nervous about the shadows of night, I knew I also should share this fear. I burst into noisy tears, protesting the slight to my desperate want.

My mother hugged me, while trying hard not to laugh. "You don't need a flashlight, honey," she explained patiently. "You don't need the light."

"I do, I do!" I was passionate in my insistence. "Sweetie, when you're blind, you don't need to have a flashlight," she continued to reason. "You're okay without it."

I wiped my eyes, but simmered inwardly. I saw lots of things. I saw my world, within its safe confines of early childhood.

My brother's fear was a new one, and as twins, we shared a room and lots of childhood mischief. Naturally, I wanted to share in this, too.

That night, long after we had been tickled and tucked into bed, I climbed from my crib. "Hey," I hissed at my twin. "Give me your flashlight."

"No. It's mine," was the emphatic response.

"But I need it. I have to go potty and I'm scared of the dark. I'll give it back, I promise."

He continued to refuse, not wanting to part with such a prized new possession.

"Then you gotta come with me," I commanded. As the ringleader of 99 per cent of all our shenanigans, he complied docilely. Bravely, he shone his flashlight as he led the way down the stairs to the bathroom.

Relieved, I allowed him to proceed me back up to our room. Only then was I able to settle down to sleep, pleased that I had been kept safe from evil by that brave little light.

Only years later did I see the humor in this mundane situation. I was born totally blind, and so, my mother's reasoned explanation of my lack of need for a light made logical sense. But at three, my perception of the world was rudimentary. I saw many things. I lived in a world where such terms were used freely, and so I understood things in as visual a manner as is possible for someone with no sight.

My closeness to my brother, and the desire to share more than just mischief with my trusting twin was paramount. If something was important to

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Champion Ashley  
McGlone, Civil War Poet  
Maryann Zoll, and KSA  
storytellers Pam Holcomb  
and Buck P. Creacy.

him or one of my other siblings, then it certainly was so to me.

Many years later, having raised four sighted children, I have discovered that their early childhood understanding of life is not far from mine. Yes, they see, but it is not seeing or hearing that is important. It is the belonging that is so desirable. The need for a flashlight at three had much more to do with being a part of my world than the actual need for a guard against the dark. One of my sons had a fear of bears at three. I gave him a soft, cuddly bear, telling him that this was his guard bear, who would keep him safe from all bad bears. His fear soon subsided,

My daughter was a doll collector. Her next youngest brother desperately needed a doll. It had much more to do with being on a par with his sister than needing a doll to dress and cuddle. Yet, a doll he was given, and she was loved and cherished for quite a long time.

So, did I need a flashlight at three? I would say, emphatically, yes. I have not been irreparably damaged by not receiving one, but this memory guided me later in my parenting. I can tell you truthfully, however, that, being the mischievous one as a child, I soon discovered my brother's hiding place. I did not confiscate his prize, but did occasionally borrow it. And, I never was afraid of the dark again.



KSA members enjoying an outdoor moment at the Bullock Overlook at Kingdom Come State Park in Cumberland, KY. This photo was taken after the May KSA Board meeting and the Storytelling in the Mountains Festival here in Harlan. Pictured here are P.J. Beckett, Pam Holcomb, Betsy Fleischer, Donna Slaton, Cynthia Changaris, Mike Beville, and Maggie Beville.