



NEWSLETTER

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Our next meeting

Our next meeting will be on March 12, in the Main Library at 10:00. This time we will be exploring 'What skills are useful in storytelling and how to develop them.'

NEWS ABOUT NSN

The Finance Committee and Board are monitoring the ISC bankruptcy as it may impact our membership organization. ISC has filed a motion asking the court to void the ISC-NSN agreement which states the terms of our co-ownership of the National Storytelling Festival. Your Board and Finance Committee will take all reasonable steps to minimize the impact of ISC's bankruptcy upon

NSN's finances and mission. The first step was to meet with legal counsel, who is filing an objection to the motion. While NSN did not initiate an action against ISC, they have brought one against us. Our obligation to protect the interests of our members requires that we respond in a responsible manner. We will keep members advised through the bulletin an other means. So the continuing story.

Jim Flanagan

National Women's History Month

International Women's Day was first celebrated on March 8, 1911, in Europe. Women's rights and women's suffrage were the priority of women's organization in both Europe and the United States. Both men and women strived to gain recognition of women's contributions to history.

The Great Depression of of the 1930's and World War II diminished some of the call to promote and recognize women's rights. But, with the evident isolation and ennui of the middle-class housewife, who had often given up her own professional and intellectual aspirations in order to raise a family and be the "perfect" Harriet-Nelson type of housewife, the women's rights movement began to revive. Eventually, this movement evolved into the "women's liberation" of the 1960's.

A growing sense that grade school and history classes in particular, as well as the study of United States "history" in general, omitted the stories of African and Native Americans and women brought a call for inclusion of those who were minimally mentioned and practically invisible in the studies of the day. In the 1970's, many universities recognized a need to fill the knowledge gap, and began to include in their curricular offerings the fields of women's history, and the broader field of women's studies.

In 1987, at the request of the National Women's History Project, Congress expanded Women's History Week to a month; the concept began to gain acceptance first as a "Women's History Week" celebration in California, thanks to the work of the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, who chose a week to coincide with International Women's Day, March 8, 1978.



Every year since then, the United States Congress has issued a resolution for Women's History Month, and the President has issued a proclamation of Women's History Month.

The President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in History in America met throughout the 1990's, in order to find ways to further extend the inclusion of women's history in both the history curriculum, and the everyday consciousness of national and international history. This effort has resulted in the push to establish a National Museum of Women's History in the Washington, DC, area.

Women's History Month is intended to increase our knowledge of women's history. But, if we are to be a nation united, every month should include the study of our country's diversity, and its unity and possibilities of community as a nation. We are a nation that thrives and grows in its diversity, thanks to the contributions of all those who came before us.

Lyn Ford

The most important thing is to tell our stories

I am passionate about storytelling. The art of the story should be in every speaker's arsenal. Stories entertain, inform and inspire. The practice of storytelling is older than the pen. It's lineage dates back to the cave drawings of primitive man. Our great country was born upon the words of wise men like Patrick Henry who stood in St. John's Church in Richmond Virginia and used his skills of oratory and dramatic storytelling to light a fire under those early leaders. Their stories were heard in houses of parliament- around campfires and in the log cabins of Kentucky or in the sod houses of the Plains to the tents and houses of our most ancient American tribes. The West became alive to the eastern states through exaggerated stories told in dime novels about the exploits of men and women on the new frontier. Storytelling is in our nation's blood infused by a tradition brought over from the old country.

We all have our different genres, techniques and styles, but the most important thing is to simply tell our stories. Which reminds me to tell you that you fine people of SOCO inspire and delight me with your dedication, determination and skill.

Jerry Smith,

What's Lyn been up to?

I'm prepping for another wonderful storytelling festival. I will be a featured teller at the 26th Annual Texas Storytelling Festival on March 10-13, 2011, along with Jeannine Pasini Beekman of Louisiana, Jay Stailey of Texas, and the Donald Davis of North Carolina. Yay! For more information, go to: <http://www.tejasstorytelling.com/festival/index.html>

I spent some time in Tennessee in February, as the featured teller for the Ocoee Story Fest. This is a small festival produced by the Cleveland (Tennessee) Storytelling Guild; it has done well for the past 16 years, and prompted me to think of the possibilities for a SOCO Story Fest in the future. The featured teller visits schools, church groups, and other venues as planned by the guild. The festival ends with a concert open to the public. I was impressed with the hard work and sense of community within the Cleveland Storytelling Guild. For more information on their organization, go to: <http://www.tntellers.org/osf/index.php?pg=history>

Just some thoughts from Lyn Ford

Congratulations to Cathy Jo and Steve

I've been working on a new presentation for tour groups (and maybe the Irish Festival)--"Seasons & Celebrations: Through the Traditional Irish Year". At various times, the new year in Ireland could be counted from November 1st, February 1st, March 25th or January 1st (and if you count the Church year, from the first Sunday of Advent).

I've also been preparing for five different March performances--two in libraries, a private party, a tour group and Fireside Tales. At least one of the library gigs came from the Video Showcase some of us did back in November. I'll top that all off with a celebration of my own as Steve and I mark our **35th anniversary** March 21st. I was, of course, a child bride...

Cathy Jo Smith

Check Out the Membership List on the Website!

The membership website has been up-dated with new members, address changes, anything that might be missed, anything you told to change or add. BUT if you didn't tell us it didn't get changed! So go to the SOCO website and check your listing. If you want anything added or changed, e-mail Joyce Geary, treasurer, who keeps the membership list up to date and Rick McCracken Bennett who is our webmaster and keeps that as up to date as you tell him. We both need your information so you will be accurately recorded. DO IT NOW BEFORE YOU FORGET.

Joyce Geary

Comment on professionalism

It is not whether you get paid for performing, but an attitude and behavior working with others and schools. If you decide to go and tell at a school for free, I suggest you send them a contract. In the contract, you list the time and date and for your fee list "free for this date". That gives them the idea you would come again but might want pay. The contract tells the school you agree to be at that school on that date and at that particular time.

Principals get several people agreeing to come for free, but with no official accountability. With this contract they have it. Many schools have been burned by a 'freebie' who is late or does not show up or does not stay within the time limits.

Just a suggestion it takes so little time and alleviates the worry with you and the school

Jim Flanagan

Sharing and Learning Through Story

Isn't it amazing the many different ways in which STORIES can be used to enhance our life, help us remember, create interest in information that might be ignored and on and on? I recently returned from 2 1/2 weeks in Israel and Palestine - 2 1/2 weeks of stories about people and places of history and about

the people today and their joys and struggles. I "know" and will never forget the lady who leaned out from her window that overlooked "no man's land" between Israel and Palestine - and her false teeth fell out onto "no man's land!" It took a UN discussion and many days of no teeth to get permission for a soldier to enter the area to pick up the lady's teeth and return them to her! Or the man who lived across the street from the hospital he always went to but could now only get there by leaving the country and flying to another country and then driving to the hospital from that country. The Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths came alive and are remembered through the stories told of people and events.

I just heard about "Information Stories," a Knight's Commission project on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy. To provide a tool to bring the Commission's findings in the best way to the most people, they recruited storytellers from around the country to come to OSU to create narratives to share via story information which otherwise might have been never heard or remembered. And many of our SOCO members have been sharing stories with all ages in the Trolley at the Ohio Historical Society museum on Saturdays and as first person characters telling their stories to children and adults in the museum and in Ohio Village programs. They also bring story and "pictures" via words to the blind through Voice Corp's radio program of stories once a month. In what other ways/ situations do we use story? Tell us what you do or know about.

Joyce Geary

Creating Your Stories

Make the plots understandable.

Too Predictable: If you have a familiar story, give it a fresh point of view. Brain Storm 20 things that can happen 1-5 probably predictable, 6-14 a probably good and the last 5 silly.

Rely on coincidence: Use only one per story. It is lazy writing. Try sometimes bad and good luck happens. Your characters accidentally over hear info. If it is a magical world it has to be just as consistent as the real world.

Loss of Focus: as the story goes along. You stop in the middle of the story and start something new. What is the theme of the story? When you think of the story what is the first thing that comes to mind. Why do you want to tell this story. How are the characters different/changed at the end.(The theme does not have to be new or fresh) I.E. grown up means accepting responsibility for your life. A single event can change your life.

Weak Black Moment: The awful moment is not good.

Ending not satisfying: What is the book end scene? Do not end the story abruptly

Premise not compelling: Idea does not catch the listeners. Tell someone the premise in one sentence and they say "OOO".

First Part great but story falls off: The scenes must build on the next.

Starting in the wrong Place: You start in the moment change starts then you have to go to the back story. Secrets should be revealed in certain places in the story.

Lack of clear cut goals: Goals need to be sympathetic that people care about.

Conflict: No big issues or too many conflicts.

Stakes are too low: escalate the stakes as you go along Premise not compelling. Good examples: loss of belonging, history repeating itself.

Plot Fixes

Plot moves too slow: Not enough twists and turns. It is a pacing problem. Way to check this is color code: description, action, feeling and dialogue. It will show too much or too less.

Saggy Middle: the beginning and end are good but it sags in the middle. List your plot lines so you can see the few in the middle. There should be 3 turning points in a story.

Plot goes too fast: Story is not explaining things or set the scene. Story is chopping.

The listener is asking a lot of questions. They do not understand. Suspense does not build.

Jim Flanagan

A Painted House
by Lee Elliott, 2010

I paint this house with neon strokes, with hues that rival all outside

No subtleness for simple folks who walk their walk with a giant stride.

*Timid grey? Safe brown? create a hiding place....
An attic for inner gazing, red portals here open to all of space...*

To hearth fires freely blazing!

Book shelves, pantries, all full stocked

Bare windows frame far visions..

Delight in doors as yet unlocked,

They taunt at life's grimmer seasons.

This painted house defies the wrath

Of age and dismal weather,

Bring your music Passer-by.... Let's spend some time together

Note:..When I moved to appalachia many years ago, the neighbors gathered to help unload... they refused money and issued this invitation. "We are just a step down the road, drop in! any time!..... and bring your music

