

Storytellers of San Diego
President's Report – 2-17-25

We are continuing to address our core values with a range of storytelling programs – both virtual and in-person.

To increase awareness of and appreciation for storytelling as an art form in a variety of settings: entertainment venues, educational institutions, health care facilities, community organizations, non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses.

We affiliate with other organizations, and often collaborate on programs. We have continued to participate in programs sponsored by the Storytelling Association of California, of which we are an institutional member. Tellers from Storytellers of San Diego have been featured SAC's monthly online "Genre Series." Marilyn is on the committee for the Regional Gem program. SAC has funded several of our programs of storytelling in schools, including the recent Chula Vista storytelling project organized by David Schmidt. They are also contributing some funds to the Coronado School outreach in preparation for the festival.

We work with the local San Diego Folk Heritage, providing a storytelling strand at the Sam Hinton Festival. They include storytellers and storytelling in some music programs. SFH is partially funding our Storytelling Institute, and provides sound for our Tellabration!™

On the fourth Wednesday, there is a virtual open mic/story swap hosted by Marilyn. It usually has a small, friendly group with some San Diego area residents and others from outside the San Diego area. We have resumed monthly storytelling at The Template in Ocean Beach, now on the second Monday of the month. In March we will provide storytelling at a new venue, a coffee shop in Vista, and if successful, we hope that this will lead to a monthly gig.

Patti Christensen and James Nelson-Lucas continue to tell stories weekly in person at Rady Children's Hospital.

We are an institutional member of the National Storytelling Network. Emily Stamets is a member of the NSN board in the position of Volunteer Coordinator.

Mindy Donner is a mentor for youth storytelling camps through ASST, Artists Standing Strong Together. Several of our storytellers have also been featured in ASST programs, and we participated in the ASST New Year's Eve Blowout by providing an hour of storytelling for the event, featuring five of our storytellers. It was well-received.

Mindy works with the Guild of Puppetry.

We have worked with Write Out Loud on programs of storytelling, puppetry, and kamishibai.

Li-Anne, Mindy, Marilyn, and Emily work with AERO, Arts Education Resource Organization.

We are planning more programs with local organizations and venues. In January we arranged for storyteller Marianne Christensen from Denmark to present a program for the House of Denmark in Balboa Park, and in March Colin Urwin from Northern Ireland will be featured in a concert at the House of Ireland.

OJ, Li-Anne, and Marilyn work with Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP).

Individual members often present programs for churches, schools, libraries, businesses, civic groups, and more.

To provide opportunities for participation in storytelling for all children and adults, from beginners to professionals, through classes, workshops, story swaps, concerts and storytelling festivals.

Our monthly virtual open mic offers an opportunity for sharing stories in a small, friendly group. Often the attendees come from out of our area. This is a casual time to share a short tale. We often discuss storytelling events and resources.

We have received a grant from the City of Encinitas which provided a well-attended and positive interactive workshop on using humor in storytelling. Participants shared their stories in small groups and on stage. Funding from the Coronado Library for the annual storytelling festival and also a several-session storytelling institute allows us to offer workshops – both individual and a series – free to participants. We often invite both youth and adult tellers to participate in our various programs. Youth tellers come from our residencies in elementary schools in Encinitas and Coronado. Adult tellers come from our storytelling institute sessions.

To encourage the use of storytelling to bring together diverse populations in the community and promote cross-cultural understanding.

Storytellers of San Diego recognizes that the art of oral storytelling is diverse and multicultural. We continue to offer storytelling programs to a wide variety of local communities, including Oceanside, Vista, Encinitas and other north coast communities, City Heights, Coronado, Chula Vista, Bonita, Ramona, Julian, and more. The programs include opportunities for people to listen to stories and to tell stories themselves. Many of our members have strong connections with storytellers and storytelling organizations around the world, and have performed for NEST, ASST, Black Storytellers of San Diego and many out-of-the-area organizations. Some programs have been provided in Spanish, in addition to English – thanks to professional storyteller and translator David Schmidt.

We welcome diversity in our programs – both in the storytellers and in the audiences, and we are always mindful of increasing diversity in all of our programs.

To serve as a source of information on the art of storytelling and storytelling events in the San Diego area

Extensive and current information is featured on the Storytellers of San Diego website. It includes both storytelling in general and in particular the storytelling events in the San Diego area, those sponsored by Storytellers of San Diego and performances, classes, and workshops presented by individual members. Jim Dieckmann updates the website regularly. Links to future programs and videos of past programs are provided. In addition, Jim Dieckmann sends informational emails to subscribers twice a month.

We have regular posts on our Storytellers of San Diego facebook page, which has more than 1.3K followers. Our YouTube channel has 167 subscribers and 464 videos. Mindy and James send press releases and calendar items to local print and online calendars. Our events are also listed on calendars of the Storytelling Association of California and the National Storytelling Network. James Nelson-Lucas has made some short promotional videos for us to use.

Some highlights since the last board meeting:

In January, Li-Anne, Mindy, and Emily conducted a storytelling workshop at the Encinitas Library about how to tell a funny story. It was well-attended, and the feedback was uniformly positive.

We have three more workshops remaining in our seven-session Storytelling Institute at the Coronado Library. These have also been successful, and several participants are planning to tell their story on stage at the festival.

Jim and Marilyn presented an overview of the structure and work of Storytellers of San Diego for the Emeritus Program at the San Diego College of Continuing Education.

The Chula Vista Oral History Project, prepared by David Schmidt and funded by the city of Chula Vista and the Storytelling Association of California concluded. It was an ambitious project and involved many storytellers in many different venues – schools, libraries, a nature center, senior centers, museums. There were thirty-seven events. David wrote a book in conjunction with the project which is available online and in many of the venues that hosted the programs.

David has applied for another grant from the City of Chula Vista, and has begun applications for grants from several additional entities.

We are finalizing plans for our annual Storytelling Festival on March 15 at the beautiful Coronado Library. Our visiting tellers are Colin Urwin from Northern Ireland and Vicki Juditz from Los Angeles. Eighteen tellers will be featured. There will be two programs especially for kids and opportunities for kids and adults from our programs to perform, as well as an open mic. Workshops will be given by Colin Urwin, Vicki Juditz, and Almena Mozon. Musicians from the nearby performing arts school will perform. There will be a panel of women involved with the military, as well as a session of veterans' stories. An artist will paint on stage for our "Art & Stories" concert.

We continue to enjoy our regular programming online and in-person. Our YouTube channel offers a great variety of stories from many tellers – available to anyone free of charge. The channel has 167 subscribers and more than 464 available videos.

OJ, Li-Anne, and Marilyn work with ASAP, Armed Services Arts Partnership, offering classes free of charge for people with an armed services affiliation.

We continue to work with other storytelling organizations, including NSN, SAC, Black Storytellers of San Diego, and ASST, in addition to other local organizations and events like the Vista Viking Festival.