Storytellers of San Diego

President's Report – 8-20-24

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.*

Every month we have two regular programs. We have a curated storytelling show at The Template in Ocean Beach – now on the second Monday. Our audiences have been steadily growing, and new people have been featured to both tell stories and host. We are searching for a new North County venue for some regular programming in that area. On the fourth Wednesday, there is a virtual open mic/story swap hosted by Marilyn. It usually has a small, friendly group with several regular attendees, both San Diego area residents and tellers outside the San Diego area.

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 online “Genre Series.” Marilyn is on the committee for the Regional Gem program.

We work with the local San Diego Folk Heritage, providing a storytelling strand at the Sam Hinton Festival. They have agreed to provide some funding for our Storytelling Institute.

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

Emily and Marilyn attended the National Storytelling Network conference in July. Emily is now a member of the NSN board in the position of Volunteer Coordinator.

Mindy will tell stories at the Botanic Garden and often performs with the Puppetry Guild. Melanie performs in Brenda Adelman’s storytelling shows.

Individual members often present programs for churches, schools, libraries, businesses, civic groups, and more. Sometimes they involve music and/or puppetry.

*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. In addition, we have been the recipient of generous funding from the Coronado Library for the annual storytelling festival and also a several-session storytelling institute. These grants have enabled us to offer workshops – both individual and a series – free to participants. In addition, we often invite both youth and adult tellers to participate in our various programs.

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

Storytelling is both 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, and more. The programs include opportunities for people to listen to stories and to tell stories themselves.  During the pandemic, our storytellers listened to and told stories all over the world – leading to good connections and an increased understanding of diverse populations and cultures. As a result we often participate with others across the country and beyond in storytelling performances and workshops.

We encourage diversity in our programs – both in the storytellers and in the audiences.

*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. Emails are usually sent to subscribers twice a month.

We have regular posts on our Storytellers of San Diego facebook page, which has more than twelve hundred followers. . Our YouTube channel has 155 subscribers and 448 videos. Mindy and James send press releases and calendar items to local print and online calendars. We continue our membership and connection with the National Storytelling Network. Mindy has participated in youth storytelling instruction through ASST, Artists Standing Strong Together. Several of our storytellers have also been featured in ASST programs. Our events are also listed on calendars of the Storytelling Association of California and the National Storytelling Network.

Some highlights since the last board meeting:

We provided a series of storytelling sessions at the Sam Hinton Folk Festival in June. All sessions were well attended, and the listeners were very enthusiastic.

We had our annual “Tales and Legends of Scotland” show kick off the Highland Games with stories and music. Marilyn and Li-Anne told stories at the games. Those shows were moved to an indoor (and air – conditioned) space, which proved to be very effective. The evening program was lightly attended but well-received. For the first time, the evening program was free to attend, since San Diego Highland Games agreed to contribute financially to the event. We are considering moving the evening program indoors next year.

David Schmidt has secured two sizable grants to fund a large project concentrating on the community of Chula Vista. It will include storytelling in elementary, middle, and high schools, in addition to libraries and other venues. David is writing a book about spooky sightings and legends from Chula Vista, in particular, the Proctor Valley monster. The book will be available on Amazon, and will be offered free-or-charge to participating institutions.

Emily Stamets is organizing a storytelling event in Julian as part of their Apple Days. In addition, she has scheduled a series of storytelling workshops and a concluding performance. These are new programs in new areas of San Diego.

We had our annual “Tales and Legends of Scotland” show kick off the Highland Games with stories and music. Marilyn and Li-Anne told stories at the games.

We are planning for our annual Storytelling Festival on March 15 at the beautiful Coronado Library. We are considering several exciting options for community tellers. One addition to our tellers will be Vicki Kirschenbaum from Lo Angeles. Our Storytelling Institute unfortunately lost some expected funding, but we are working to continue the Institute with alternate funding sources.

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 155 subscribers and more than 400 available videos.

We are planning for Tellabration! tm in November in-person in Ocean Beach, and we are combining with the Sacramento Storytellers in Northern California for a joint online Tellabration! tm

OJ, Li-Anne, and Marilyn have upcoming workshops with ASAP, Armed Services Arts Partnership. These are free to anyone with 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 like the Vista Viking Festival.