



**DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER**

# A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



“The end of a story is like the end of a good meal. We’re sated but it doesn’t mean that we’ll never be hungry again.”

- Kate Tellers,  
Director of MothWorks

Happy Holidays to all my friends, Whatever holiday you celebrate in this winter season, enliven it with stories. May your holidays be peaceful and full of joy.

We will see each other on December 9 for MO-TELL’s last concert of the year, “Endings” .

Next month we will get together for our Annual Membership meeting on January 13, 2026 at 7 PM on Zoom.

Thank you to everyone for making this a wonderful year of storytelling.

Our stories are important. Keep sharing them.

Joyce Slater  
President, MO-TELL

MAGNET  
HERE

# FOR YOUR FRIDGE

STORIES, GATHERINGS, AND STORY GATHERINGS  
AROUND OUR FAIR STATE.

MAGNET  
HERE

## RAPS

### December 2025 Calendar

**December 4:** Holiday Party Stories of Giving

Trailside Center , 9901 Holmes, Kansas City MO 64131

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505310168?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505310168?pwd=MmhrM2NHSE1VaHZaVG1MMTZjNIVKQT09)

[pwd=MmhrM2NHSE1VaHZaVG1MMTZjNIVKQT09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505310168?pwd=MmhrM2NHSE1VaHZaVG1MMTZjNIVKQT09)

[i

Meeting ID: 875 0531 0168

Passcode: 301275

**December 20 :** Story Center Open mic, Mid-Continent Public Library, 8900 NE Flintlock Road

Kansas City, MO 64157

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505310168?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505310168?pwd=MmhrM2NHSE1VaHZaVG1MMTZjNIVKQT09)

[pwd=MmhrM2NHSE1VaHZaVG1MMTZjNIVKQT09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505310168?pwd=MmhrM2NHSE1VaHZaVG1MMTZjNIVKQT09)

[i

Meeting ID: 875 0531 0168

Passcode: 301275

## MO-TELL

### MO-TELL Calendar 2025/2026

Board meetings – First Monday of the month, 2 pm Central time, Zoom  
December 9, 2025 – Online concert (see flier)

The Annual Membership Meeting –  
January 13, 2026, 7:00 pm, Central time

Quarterly online concerts for 2026  
March 10, June 9, September 8,  
December 8, 7:00 pm, Central time

The 12 th Annual Liars Contest in  
Joplin, MO, 2026  
July 10/11

## RIVERWINDS

## GATEWAY



# MO-TELL's

# TELLABRATION

## REPORT

### Tellabration! 2025 Kick Off!

MO-TELL kicked off Tellabration! on the evening of November 16th with a Zoom Concert in Missouri with Andy Offutt Irwin who is not only a storyteller, but also a singer-songwriter, and humorist.

Andy lives in Georgia but was in St. Louis for the St. Louis Storytelling Festival. In 2013, he received the Circle of Excellence Award from the National Storytelling Network.

Andy told two stories about a day in the life of his Aunt Marguerite Van Camp, who decided to go back to medical school after her husband died. She recently graduated at age 85.



### Tellabration! 2025 Live!

On November 20th, Perrin Stifel (Webster Groves, MO), Sherry Norfolk (University City, MO), Flavia Everman (Warrenton, MO), and Bobby Norfolk (University City, MO), graced the stage of The Chapel, a not-for-profit performance space.

Storyteller Ken Wolfe (St. Louis, MO) was the emcee. Performances were in tribute to the late storyteller, author, and educator, Annette Harrison of St. Louis, MO. Each teller shared a memory of Annette before telling their stories.

Perrin told "The Two Bowls of Water" by Victoria Forrester- a story about a man seeking a husband for his daughter. Sherry told a story that Annette told to middle school boys who had severe behavioral and emotional disabilities. The story was about three bored young men and a hermit. Sherry's second story was about a bored son and his father who were trapped on an island. Flavia told "The Worry Bundle" and an Aesop fable, "The Bull and the Bull Frog." Bobby told the story about "Three Strong Women."

During intermission, the audience was treated to complimentary beverages and sweets.

Commemorable booklets from the 40th Anniversary of the St. Louis Storytelling Festival were available free of charge, one per family. A story called "Truth and Parable" by Annette was featured in the booklet. It was a glorious evening of storytelling.

There were thirty-five in attendance, including Annette's family and friends.







# SIGNS YOU'RE GROWN UP & GETTING OLDER

YOU WATCH THE WEATHER CHANNEL.

YOU KEEP TUMS IN YOUR CAR, YOUR PURSE, AND YOUR NIGHTSTAND.

YOU LIKE A CERTAIN SHAPED HANDLE FOR YOUR COFFEE MUG.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TIME TACO BELL CLOSES AT NIGHT ANYMORE.

YOU HEAR YOUR FAVORITE SONG IN AN ELEVATOR.

YOU START SAYING "BACK IN THE DAY" AND CAN'T SEEM TO STOP.

YOU WISH MATT DILLON AND KITTY AND DOC REALLY EXISTED AND YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO RESEMBLES FESTUS.

YOU ENJOY PERRY MASON EVEN MORE THAN WHEN YOU WATCHED THE EPISODES THE FIRST AND SECOND TIME AND YET YOU ENJOY WATCHING THEM AS YOU TAKE A NAP.

YOU REMEMBER INTERSECTIONS LIKE THEY WERE 20 YEARS AGO AND CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHEN OR WHY THEY CHANGED.



### [Storytelling Certificate Celebration: Oral Storytelling \(Hybrid\)](#)

Sat, Dec 6 2025 10:30am - 12:00pm Central The Auditorium at Woodneath Library Center and Online Story Center Event **MCPL Online**

Join The Story Center as we recognize the participants who have earned their certificate from the Oral Storytelling Certificate Program.

**REGISTER NOW**

### [Stories for the Season](#)

Wed, Dec 10 2025 6:30pm - 7:30pm The Auditorium at Woodneath Library Center Story Center Event Registration Required

Join us for family-friendly stories about holiday traditions.

**REGISTER NOW**

### [Story Swap \(Hybrid\)](#)

Thu, Dec 18 2025 6:30pm - 8:00pm Central Story Center Programming Room and Online Story Center Event **MCPL Online**

This open-mic storytelling event is open to anyone!

**REGISTER NOW**



# Endings

*Tuesday, December 9, 2025*

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Dec 9, 2025 07:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/Xh94uMhGTp-ugRONRRrwbw>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



*"We've heard it all before...  
We rejoice in the retelling!"*

# TIPS FOR TELLERS

## DREAM A LITTLE DAYDREAM

**ANDY OFFUT IRWIN**

Sue Hinkel asked me to write down some storytelling tips for the MO-TELL newsletter. Let me begin by saying that “MO-TELL” is my very favorite cognomen of any regional storytelling organization.

There, I said it.

This request comes at an opportune time. This week I must finish two stories for a Thanksgiving show that I will be sharing with Bil Lepp and Regi Carpenter. Bil and Reggie have both bragged that their stories are finished.

Mine ain't.

So, right now, I will give you the advice that I'm giving myself. To quote the storyteller Willy Claflin, “My job is to daydream.”

As some of you might know, I primarily write and tell fictional tales. I have a coterie of recurring characters that populate my imaginary world. I try to walk and talk with them and ask them questions. I have to clear space in my brain for them, so I take them with me on my bike rides. In that fanciful world, my primary character is my 85-year-old newly minted physician aunt, Marguerite Van Camp. That world spins around her. And here's the crazy part, I actually ask her advice. I trust in her wisdom.

You might be saying, “But Andy, I don't write fiction.” Yup. I know a lot of you tell stories about friends and relatives who are (or were) real living people. I have some big news for you: as soon as they come out of your mouth when you voice them or describe them, they become very much like fictional characters.

Now, hear me out. I have never met Donald Davis's mother, father, or his little brother. But I have profound images of them in my mind. I can see them because I can see Donald seeing them as well.

And there's my advice. See your characters, whether they have existed or not. Whether they are from fairytales or folklore, see them. The more you know, they are alive the more alive they will be for your audience.

Now, go and have yourself a daydream.





[www.MO-TELL.org](http://www.MO-TELL.org)

## MISSOURI STORYTELLING, INC (MO-TELL) ONLINE AUCTION

**[WWW.32AUCTIONS.COM/MO-TELL](http://WWW.32AUCTIONS.COM/MO-TELL)  
FEBRUARY 1 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2026**

This money raised will help MO-TELL continue to support storytelling in Missouri through storytelling at Missouri State Parks and Historic sites, Zoom events, workshops and festivals.

To donate an item or service please email [Lindakkuntz@yahoo.com](mailto:Lindakkuntz@yahoo.com) the following by January 15, 2026.

1. A picture of the item. If it's a service, perhaps your photo or business card.
2. Description of the donated item or service. Up to three sentences.
3. Approximate value (minimum of \$25)
4. Starting bid price
5. Name of donor, mailing address, email address and telephone number.

MO-TELL is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible. After the auction closes and payments are received, you will be notified who has won your item or service and their mailing address so you can ship it to them.

Thank you for supporting MO-TELL.

Joyce Slater, President  
Missouri Storytelling, Inc (MO-TELL)



# MO-TELL HISTORY IN THE MAKING!



A FARM GIRL FROM BARNARD, IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI, **ROSENA BAUMLI** TAUGHT, PERFORMED, AND DIRECTED MUSIC AND DRAMA PROJECTS IN MISSOURI, GERMANY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. FOR FOUR YEARS, SHE LIVED IN A GERMAN VILLAGE, TEACHING IN A DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SCHOOL AT THE ARMY BASE IN BAMBERG. SHE ALSO PERFORMED AND RECORDED WITH A GERMAN CHOIR THAT PERFORMED RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE MUSIC, ACCOMPANIED BY ANTIQUE INSTRUMENTS. WHILE LIVING IN NEW ENGLAND, ROSENA WAS INTRODUCED TO STORYTELLING FOR ADULTS.

SHE HAD TWO CLOSE FRIENDS WHO WERE PROFESSIONAL STORYTELLERS, BUT SHE NEVER IMAGINED THAT, MANY YEARS LATER, SHE HERSELF WOULD JOIN THEIR RANKS. SHE HAS LIVED IN RAYTOWN FOR 19 YEARS. SHE HAS ATTENDED RIVER AND PRAIRIE STORYWEAVERS (RAPS) MEETINGS IN PERSON, BUT MOSTLY OVER ZOOM.

SHE WILL TELL AN ORIGINAL STORY AND COMPLETE THE ORAL STORYTELLING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM OFFERED BY MID-CONTINENT PUBLIC LIBRARY AT THE WOODNEATH LIBRARY AUDITORIUM ON DECEMBER 6, 2025, AT 10:30-NOON.

JOYCE SLATER HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY HELPFUL WITH THIS ENDEAVOR. THE FACES AND VOICES OF ALICE NATHAN AND RICH WHITE HAVE ALSO BECOME VERY FAMILIAR.

ROSENA PLANS TO TELL STORIES TO CHILDREN IN THE RAYTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHERE SHE HAS BEEN A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER SINCE SHE MOVED THERE. SHE ALSO PLANS TO HELP BUILD COMMUNITY BY TELLING STORIES IN RETIREMENT HOMES. ANOTHER POTENTIAL VENUE IS USING STORIES TO HELP HEAL MARGINALIZED GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING EXTREME TRAUMA IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY.

ROSENA IS MO-TELL'S NEWEST MEMBER.

REACH OUT TO HER AT [ROSENABAUMLI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ROSENABAUMLI@GMAIL.COM).



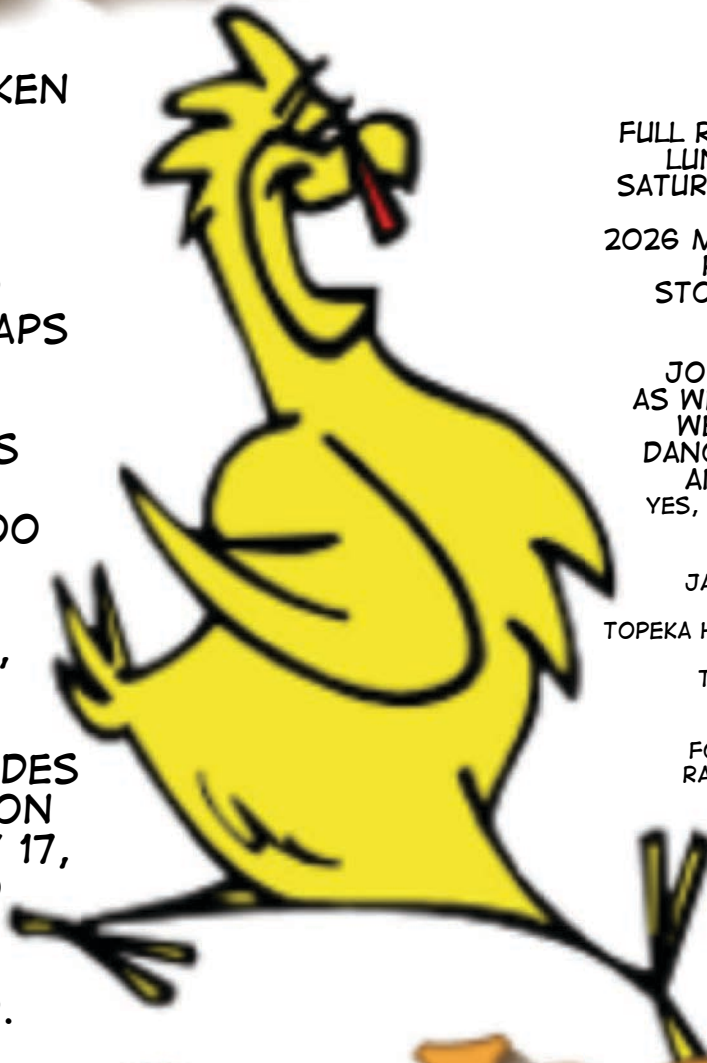
# By NOW, IT'S SOONER!

# RAPS

REGISTRATION IS TAKEN AT THE EVENT. THE CHICKEN FESTIVAL REGISTRATION IS \$50.00 FOR RAPS MEMBERS AND \$75.00 FOR NON-RAPS MEMBERS.

RAPS MEMBERSHIP IS \$25.00 FOR AN INDIVIDUAL OR \$35.00 FOR A FAMILY.

RAPS ACCEPTS CASH, CHECKS AND CREDIT CARDS. FULL REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH AND SUPPER ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2026 SO PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE TO LEAVE THE HOTEL TO GET FOOD.



FULL REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH AND SUPPER ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2026

2026 MARKS THE 33RD ANNUAL RIVER AND PRAIRIE STORYWEAVERS CHICKEN FESTIVAL.

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE AS WE WEAR CHICKEN HATS, WEAR CHICKEN SOCKS, DANCE THE CHICKEN DANCE AND TELL STORIES. YES, THERE IS A CHICKEN STORY CATEGORY...

JANUARY 16, 17, 18, 2026  
RAMADA DOWNTOWN  
TOPEKA HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER  
420 SE SIXTH AVE.  
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66607  
(785) 215-8257

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
RAPS.EVENTS@GMAIL.COM

# Chicken Festival

# STORY OF THE MONTH

## The Hunting of the Great Bear (The Big Dipper)

Once there were three hunters who were brothers. No hunters were as good as they were at following a trail. They never gave up once they began tracking their quarry.

One day, on the moon when cold nights return, an urgent message came to the village of the three hunters. A great bear, one so large and powerful that many villagers thought it must be some kind of monster, had appeared.

The people were afraid. The children no longer went out to play in the woods. The long houses of the village were guarded each night. Each morning, when the people went outside, they found the huge tracks of the bear in the middle of the village.

Picking up their spears, the three hunters set out for the village. As they came closer, they noticed how quiet the woods were. There were no signs of rabbits, deer, or birds. On a tall pine tree, they found deep scratches from the bear standing on its hind legs and marking its territory. The three hunters tried to touch the highest of the scratch marks with their spear.

The first brother said, "We are to hunt the monster bear."

"But what about the medicine the monster bear has?" said the second brother.

The first brother shook his head. "That medicine will do it no good if we find its track."

"That's so," said the third brother. "I have heard from the old people that those creatures can only chase a hunter who has not yet found its trail. When you find its trail and begin to chase it, then it must run from you."

Before long, the hunters reached the village. The village elder showed them the bear tracks. The three hunters promised to never stop following until they had finished their hunt.

Meanwhile, like a pale giant, the monster bear was moving through the trees close to the hunters. Its mouth was open as it watched and its huge teeth glistened, and its eyes flashed red. Soon it would be upon them and on their trail.



# STORY OF THE MONTH

Suddenly the three hunters found the bear's trail. Fear filled the bear's heart for the first time, and it began to run. It broke through the trees. With loud hunting cries, the hunters ran after the bear. The bear's strides were long, and it ran more swiftly than a deer.

The three hunters were also swift, and they did not fall behind. The trail led through swamps and thickets. It was easy to follow the trail because the bear pushed everything aside as it ran, even knocking down big trees. On and on they ran, over hills and through valleys. They came to a slope of a mountain and followed the trail higher and higher, every now and then catching a glimpse of their quarry over the next rise.

Day had turned into night. They were at the top of the mountain and the ground beneath them was dark. They could still see the white shape of the great bear ahead of them. The bear was tiring, but so were they.

One of the hunters grabbed his spear and dashed ahead of the others. Just as the great bear turned, the hunter leveled his spear and thrust it into the heart of the great bear. The monster bear fell dead.

By the time the other hunters caught up, the first hunter had already built a fire and was cutting up the big bear. As they cooked the meat of the great bear and its fat sizzled as it dripped from their fire, one of the hunters exclaimed, "Look below us!"

The three hunters looked down. Below them were thousands of stars. "We aren't on the mountain top at all. We are up in the sky." The great bear had been magical. Its feet had taken it high above the earth as it tried to escape the three hunters. However, their determination not to give up the chase had carried them up that strange trail.

The hunters looked, and there where they had piled the bears' bones of their feast, the Great Bear was coming back to life and rising to its feet. As they watched it began to run again. Grabbing their spears, the three hunters again began to chase the great bear across the skies.

So it was and so it still is. Each autumn the hunters chase the great bear across the skies and kill it. Then they cut it up for their meal. The blood falls from the heavens and colors the leaves of the maple trees scarlet. They took the bear and the fat dripping from their fires turns the grass white.



# THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

Sink your teeth and claws into our monthly publication now



A new free E-Publication the 15th of each month

While you explore, consider submitting stories, articles, poems, and art.

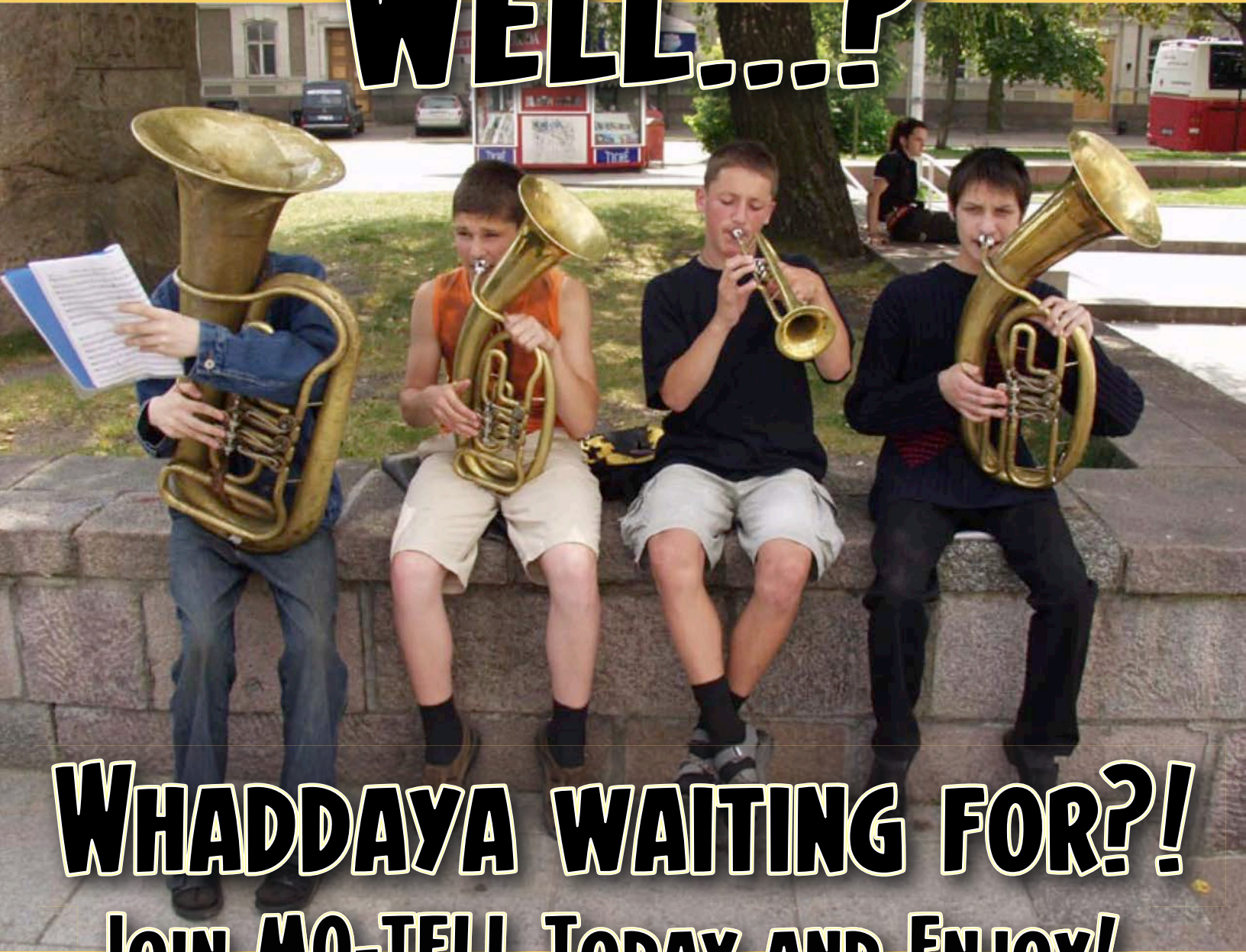


[STORYBEAST.ORG/ARCHIVE](http://STORYBEAST.ORG/ARCHIVE)





**YOU SAID YOU'D RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP  
WHEN THERE WAS FANFARE.  
WELL...?**



**WHADDDAYA WAITING FOR?!  
JOIN MO-TELL TODAY AND ENJOY!  
OR RE-UP AND LET US SERENADE YA!**

**DETAILS BELOW. CHECK 'EM OUT!**

CURIOUS ABOUT THE EVENT ABOVE?  
USE THE LINK TO SEE IT (OR ONE LIKE IT).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHf05dXzdEQ>

# THE MO-TELL BILL OF FARE

OFTEN IMITATED, NEVER DUPLICATED

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

FISCAL YEAR, FEBRUARY 1-JANUARY 31

**RENEW TODAY!**

MEMBERSHIP	ANNUAL DUES	COMES WITH
SINGLE MEMBERSHIP 1 YEAR	\$25	MO-TELL PRESTIGE
SINGLE MEMBERSHIP 2 YEARS	\$40	MO-TELL PRESTIGE
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP 1 YEAR	\$35	FAMILY-WIDE MO-TELL PRESTIGE
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP 2 YEARS	\$50	TWICE AS MUCH OF THE SAME!!
LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP -60	\$250	LOGO BAG PLUS MEMBER'S CHOICE OF ONE: (CAP) (T-SHIRT) (LOGO MUG)
LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP 60+	\$200	LOGO BAG PLUS MEMBER'S CHOICE OF ONE: (CAP) (T-SHIRT) (LOGO MUG)

### SEND CHECK PAYABLE TO:

Missouri Storytelling, Inc.  
9621 Olive Blvd. #28994  
St. Louis, MO 63132-9998



**A BARGAIN AT TWICE THE PRICE!**

### THE BENEFITS YOU RECEIVE FOR YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP:

1. MISSOURI STATE PARKS STORYTELLING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE
2. MISSOURI LIAR'S CONTEST
3. WEB SITE PRESENCE FOR STORYTELLERS
4. MONTHLY STORYTELLING PROGRAMS
5. LOADS OF MERCH (HATS, CAPS, CUPS, MUGS, BAGS, AND WHATNOT!)
6. NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK AFFILIATION
7. A WORLD CLASS NEWSLETTER (HUZZAH!)
8. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (AND A VOICE THEREIN!)
9. CONNECTION TO THE OTHER STORYTELLING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REGION

**RENEW TODAY!**



# WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Missouri Storytelling, Inc (MO-TELL) is an organization of storytellers and other interested persons dedicated to spreading the joy and art of storytelling throughout Missouri.

## MISSION STATEMENT

We envision that every Missourian will hear and share stories and keep the oral tradition alive.

## VISION STATEMENT

President: Joyce Slater, joyceslater20@gmail.com

Vice-President: Sue Hinkel, suehinkel1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Jackie Wright, jpapawright@sbcglobal.net (Membership)

Secretary: Linda Kuntz, iharilag@gmail.com

At Large: Gary Kuntz, galirahi@aol.com  
Nancee Walker Micham, walkermicham@gmail.com  
Glen "Papa" Wright, jpapawright@sbcglobal.net

Emeritus: Perrin Stifel, pstifelstl@earthlink.net

**[www.mo-tell.org](http://www.mo-tell.org)**

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Our mailing address: 7338 Belleview Ave, Kansas City, MO 64114



# THE MO-TELL BOARD