

*We have heard it all before... We rejoice in the retelling.*

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## April Newsletter

Welcome to the **MO-TELL Register!** Here you'll find information about storytelling in the Show-Me state (and beyond). Questions? Just ask!

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### News from the President

#### Joyce Slater

*A note from the President,*

Hello everyone,

Staying well and safe during these difficult times is your most important job. Keep up the good work,

The newsletter looks a bit different this month. The coronavirus has affected a number of things including our newsletter. We have gone back to an old format until summer. Expect to see our beautiful newsletter again soon. Thank you for your patience.

Sheltering in place and making the best of it is my top priority. I've started wearing a mask when I go out to the store now, which isn't very often. My hands get

washed so often they have turned red.

Storytelling online is fine and fun but for me, but it will never take the place of in person telling.. Fortunately The St. Louis Storytelling Festival is virtual and there are lots of stories to listen to from wonderful storytellers. I hope you are on board with it. .Zoom is the new way to communicate and the way to teach a class remotely, I feel like a duck out of water sometimes. Our dogs are being walked 4-5 times a day and I am managing to get in my daily 10000 steps.That's never happened before. The winter coat drive will have a few more scarves thanks to Covid-19. We are very careful with our toilet paper use. I guess I should've purchased that bidet when I had the chance. I have transplanted lilies and planted seeds. The neighbors and I talk over the back fence from afar. Kids are playing in their backyards and neighbors are listening to music on their front porches. Whole families are riding bikes together and sitting down to a meal together. I am going to church online.

We need to stay positive and make plans for the future. There will still be a Liar's Contest in July. It could be virtual, but there will be a contest. Please send in your information for the State Parks for the Fall.

We will stay in touch. Send us your stories about your adventures at home and on the web.

I am thinking of all of you and wishing you the best.

Love, Joyce





My favorite types of stories are folktales from around the world and bible stories. My favorite story is always the one I am currently working on to make it tellable by me.

**Comments about digital storytelling, given the current stay-at-home and social distancing guidelines?**

I think it is wonderful we can use technology to connect with each other, to listen to and to tell stories. It is especially fun to be able to see and hear storytellers from other parts of the world. But, as nice as it is to see and hear everyone, I miss the eye contact, the laughter, and the other audience reactions in a live performance.



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## **Messages for you from the Board**

### **From Perrin Stifel, Founder of MO-TELL**

Dear Friends in Storytelling,

Our 8 antique clocks keep us going as I keep them going. They tick, chime and ding with comforting sounds. They need me and we need them. Alice crochets and I wind clocks!

I wonder what you are doing as Alice and I hunker down here at home. I can only surmise. So here's our Time Being!

We are fortunate to be able to walk in our neighborhood in Webster Groves. Each day for an hour minimum, we take one longer walk and one short walk and keep our distance from other folks. Each day we do at least one hour of what we want to do or need to do such as write letters, check on friends, organize a drawer, work outside (Well, not Alice LOL), crochet (not Perrin LOL), read, whatever. Each day we do something for the future, such as inventory our home contents with descriptions of who gave us what or the estate sale where it was purchased and the current value we estimate. We are also each writing down our memories for our family.

Storytelling, which is limited to standing across the street as families walk by when I'm outside, consists of my doing the rap of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and getting smiles and even a little applause. I tell the neighbors that I couldn't tell stories without an audience! On TV we watch the stocks go up and down, and also enjoy old movies and PBS series such as "Call the Midwife", "American Experience," and "World on Fire." We order groceries and then I do a drive-by and Straub's places them in my trunk.

We are fine and very fortunate and lucky. I hope all of you are safe and well.

Love and blessings for the Time Being!

Perrin and Alice Stifel

### **From Sue Hinkel, Treasurer and former Board President**

We live in the country outside of Pacific, which is southwest of St. Louis about 30 miles. We live on the Meramec River and we love it. I wake up early alone. I do not wake up grumpy. I let him sleep. This is my alone time and I do need my alone time. The west side of the house is

where we live and work most of the time. It is mostly glass. I look out at the river and the trees. The trees are beginning to leaf out and almost everything is green. The redbud is blooming. It is quiet at this time of day and the birds sing just for me. It is my favorite time of the day no matter what the weather.

These times are often not easy, but my weeks have been brightened by stories by some of the best storytellers around. At 10:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. the St. Louis Storytelling Festival goes virtual. On Thursday night, there are stories for adults. Two weeks ago our own Joyce Slater told stories. She was outstanding. Last week was Ken Wolfe. He used the light from his refrigerator to provide just the right touch for his tall tales.

I am looking forward to RAPS meetings and hope to catch Phyllis Howell next week. There are so many wonderful storytellers, doing so much during these times, but also for all times. I also listen to Jim "Two Crows" Wallen, sharing his wonderful talent on facebook. He mentioned Calamity Jane the other day. Calamity Jane was my first best story for my first St. Louis Storytelling Festival. My session was with middle schoolers. When I arrived I had preschoolers instead. I did not tell them about Calamity Jane. Thank goodness that wasn't my only story. I am going to dust off that story and start retelling it.

Also when I have to, I am writing lesson plans for my two classes I teach. One is Art for Teachers and another is Storytelling for Teachers. It is not as much fun as teaching my students in person. I talk faster than I can type. There are strict guidelines and everything must be very clear. Students must read all the instructions before contacting me, they sometimes don't read it all first. So this has been so fun!!!! I am getting better at this and so are my students.

Please take care of yourselves and follow the rules, so we may meet again to tell stories together face to face.

"Stories can conquer fear, you know. They can make the heart bigger."

Ben Okri

"The arts are the only things that separate us from the other animals. The arts are not decorative.... They are essential to our comprehension of consciousness and ourselves." Edward Albee

**From Jim Two Crows Wallen, Board member at Large**

Stay safe.

Have fun.

Be creative.

Keep in contact with friends and family.

Make technology your friend.

Tackle those projects you have been putting off.

Write a new story.

Develop a new program.

Let those creative juices flow.

Spend some time in prayer.

We'll all get through this together and have new stories to share.

Jim Two Crows Wallen

**From Linda Kuntz, Secretary**

Perhaps I am a closet introvert. I have to remind myself to reach out to others by emailing, texting, using Zoom or telephoning. I am not overly concerned during this Covid-19 pandemic. We have a well-stocked pantry with food enough to share. We have books, games, internet, television, household projects and gardening to keep us entertained. Even our church services are broadcast. We can get out for walks as the weather permits. We can smile, wave or greet the neighbors as they walk, play and ride bikes.

I am using this time to create storytelling programs and develop stories. I have told stories on Zoom for the St. Louis Storytelling Festival and the Kellogg Sisters Story Circle in Perry, KS. Zoom is a new experience for me and I have had a steep learning curve as I have adapted my voice, gestures, eye contact and lighting.

Stories are needed now more than ever as people stay at home. We need to tell our stories as we create history and we need to tell stories about overcoming obstacles and surviving as we encourage ourselves and the children that this too shall pass.

Linda

### **From Gary Kuntz, Board Member at Large**

Linda and I are staying at home and taking long walks around the neighborhood. Once a week I “sacrifice my body” (as Linda puts it) by going to the grocery store and occasionally we’ll call-in a food order from a local restaurant and pick that up. I have repeatedly told her that the 6-ft social distancing rule doesn’t apply to us in our own home, but she strongly disagrees and has stringently enforced that rule.

If you believe that last sentence I want you for my judge in the upcoming Missouri



Liars Contest .

I’ve enjoyed the digital storytelling opportunities that have become more prominent once the stay-at-home guidelines have taken effect. It’s fun and informative listening to and seeing so many wonderful storytellers, not just from around Missouri, but from around the nation and the world. Some of these people I never would have had the chance to listen to without the digital tools now available. I have to say that though it is fun seeing everyone on the screen I do miss the immediacy and personal contact of live performances. I hope and pray that each and everyone of us comes through this crisis ok and with a better appreciation for the world around us.

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## **Calendar of Events**

### **River and Prairie Storyweavers**

**Thursday, May 7, 2020 - 7:00 pm CDT (Story Theme: "Maybe I...")**

**Saturday, May 9, 2020 - 2:00 pm CDT (Story Theme: "May Flowers")**

**Though there are suggested themes for each meeting, we welcome any stories you might have to share.**

Email [rapsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:rapsecretary@gmail.com) for Meeting IDs and Passwords if you would like to join in.



*(You can view and download a full [Schedule of Virtual Events](#))*

*You can access these sessions by:*

- 1. Joining us directly in our Festival's Zoom Room (Meeting ID is 519027333) or click here to go directly there: [Zoom Room](#)*
- 2. Visiting our [Festival's Facebook Page](#) livestream at the designated time (these are being recorded and will be available for 24-48 hours)*
- 3. Or for audio only, you can call 312-626-6799.*

**The Sixth Annual**

**Missouri State Liar's Contest**

**The 2020 Missouri State Liar's Contest, sponsored by MO-TELL(Missouri Storytelling Inc) will take place at the Spencer Road Library in St. Peters, MO on July 11th, 2020.**

**Regional judges of honor and renown (at least in the hearts of their mothers) will rank worth contestants and you, too, in two arenas on that day: Oral Storytelling (up to 10 minutes per story) and Written Storytelling (up to 3,000 words).**

**For details, submission regulations & contest rules visit [MO-TELL.org](http://MO-TELL.org).**

**Be sure to attend this most unique event in Missouri. We will keep you informed about the event. Because we don't know yet about restrictions concerning covid-19, the event may be held virtually. Stay tuned.**

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## **[MISSOURI STATE PARKS](#)**

**MO-TELL will again be able to provide storytellers in our Missouri State Parks and Historical Sites for the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021. Storytellers in the region are invited to apply for these positions. MO-TELL will provide a fee for each gig and the State Parks will provide a stipend for expenses which will be paid through MO-TELL.**

**To apply send the following to Joyce Slater ([joyceslater20@gmail.com](mailto:joyceslater20@gmail.com)) by April 30, 2020:  
You must be a member of MO-TELL**

- 1. Name**
- 2. Contact information(address, email address, phone**



They had a "Mystical" connection to the 4 elements of Nature and as I went deeper into those studies I found that we humans are caught between the making of money and the care of the planet. That is the reason we are still using 18th century technology to power our vehicles, businesses, and homes.

Sherry my wife is vegetarian as I am and we strive to honor what I call the 5 Basic Precepts:

PROPER: Nutrition/Sleep/Exercise/Breathing/Mental Attitude.

These things have served us well in the "current climate" or "new normal" we find ourselves in today!

My two brothers Paul & Wil ( I am the middle kid) are doing their best to stay healthy also. Paul is an avid and prolific writer/Storyteller and Wil is retired from Mallinkrodt Chemical Co in St. Louis..

My son Damon and his wife Monique have a beautiful smart 10 year old daughter, Mikaylah Grace.

## **2. That is your interest in Storytelling? How did it begin?**

I did not find storytelling, it found me! I was in my senior year at UMSL pursuing a double Major in History and Journalism when a classmate recommended I go to the Arch to apply for a Summer job as an National Park Service Ranger. I had no idea what that was nor did I know the Arch was a national monument, but I did know I needed a Summer job!

After an hour interview, the chief ranger asked if I could start the next day! Caught off guard by the sudden twist of fate, I told him I had already signed an agreement to be a camp counselor at Camp Sabra, a Jewish camp in Lake of The Ozarks. He looked at his desk calendar and I knew I had blown the opportunity but he looked up and said; " Can you start the Monday after you return to St. Louis? We signed the deal, and the job lasted from the Summer of 1976 for the next 10 years!

In 1980 Ron Turner and Lynn Rubright banded together to create a storytelling festival in St.Louis that would model the National Festival in Jonesborough, TN and the site they chose was the Arch museum which as God & fate would have it, was my work site! Some of the best storytellers in the nation came to the museum and the epiphany dawned on me. I could take living history, my background in stand up comedy, and acting with the St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre and roll it

into a genre I called; "Storytheatre!"

I asked to be off Monday and Tuesday to work with a group called Young Audiences Inc. and got my wish to work in the St. Louis School system. Actor Chris Limber, who was hired by The Arch admin. to portray Mark Twain saw my guided tours in the museum and said I should apply for a position with YA and that set the next stage for my development.

I resigned from the Park Service in early 1987 and in 1988 I went to Chicago's North Shore to perform on the same stage as the legendary Jackie Torrence and the next chapter in my career was set. She became my mentor and introduced me to her record producer and booking agent.

Later I hired ex-Park Ranger Jan Dolan to be my executive assistant first and then my agent.

### **3. Why did you decide it was important to a member of Missouri Storytelling? How can MO-TELL improve?**

Two people kept asking me to join MO-TELL and I finally gave in. They were Sue Hinkel and Perrin Stifel. They both are relentless in getting people to do their bidding and I fell under their spell!

I feel MO-TELL could improve the organization by getting more involved in virtual telling while keeping some of the traditional parts of storytelling. I, being "old school" still prefer the paper newsletter. It still appeals to me!

### **4. What tellers have been influential in your life?**

Jackie Torrence.

### **5. What is your favorite story, movie, song?**

My favorite \*Movie & book is Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban. J.K. Rowling proved with the introduction of the Dementors that her Work was beyond kid entertainment.

My favorite \*Story is Wiley and The Hairy man- I love the jump story genre and I can do 4 in that 1 story!

My favorite \* Song is Head To The Sky-by Earth,Wind & Fire!

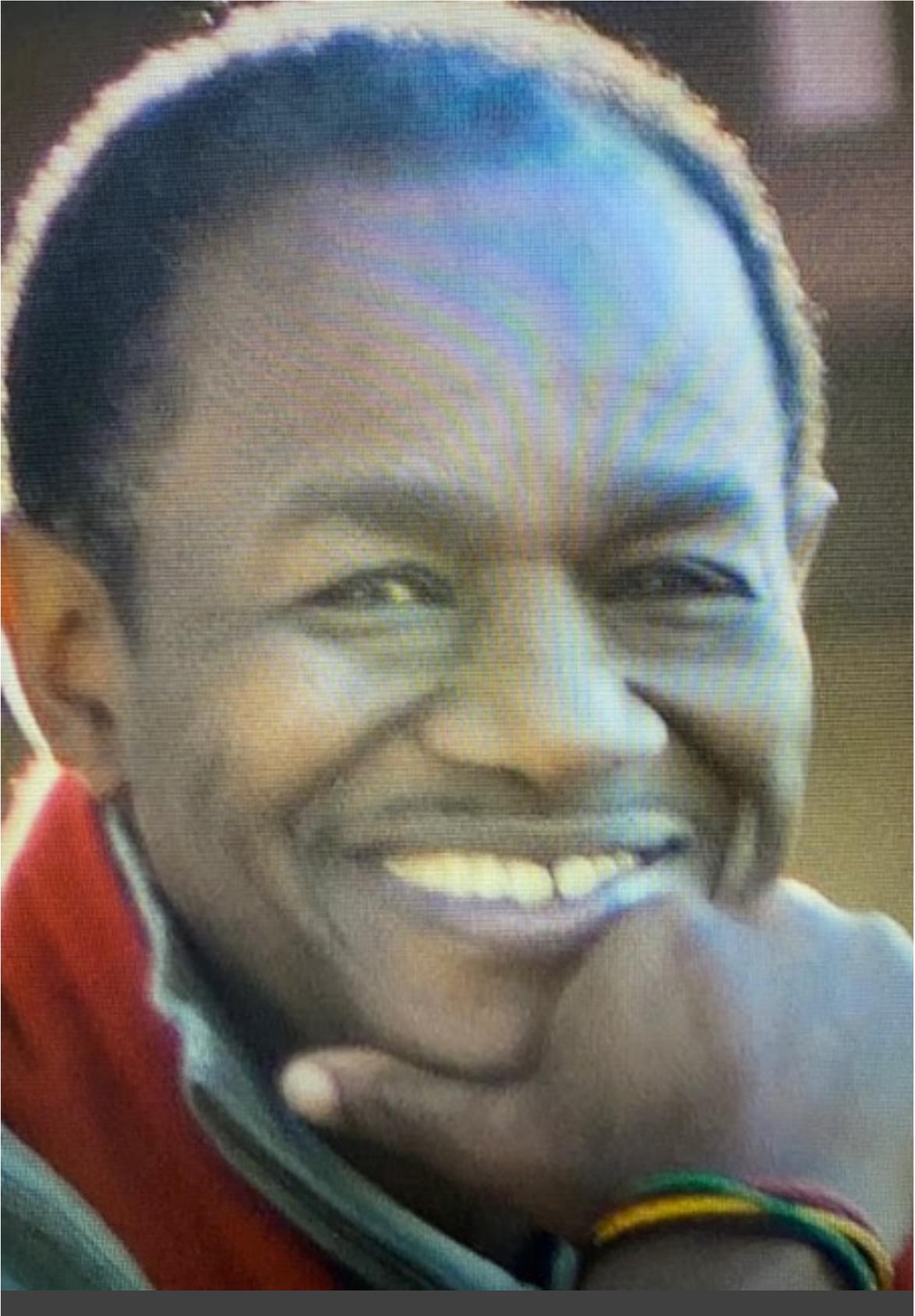
### **6. Favorite Trick or Treat Joke? Memory of Christmas? Valentine Memory?**

Trick or Treat joke- Adam & Eve and Pinch Me Tight went over the river to see a fight, Adam & Eve came back from the fight, who was left to see the fight? (when they say pinch me tight, I oblige) :)

Christmas- As a kid making snow cream with freshly fallen snow caught in a large dish set on the window sill, vanilla flavor, sugar, and Pet Milk!

Valentine- Making hearts and handmade cards in grade school arts & crafts class!

Favorite vacation- Looking down the caldera of an active volcano in Indonesia and visiting The Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, FL.





Phoebe Couzins was the first woman to graduate Washington University Law School, St. Louis, the first woman to be a lawyer in the United States and the first woman to serve as a United States Marshal.

The daughter of Mr. And Mrs. J.E.D. Couzins, she was born in St. Louis, September 8, 1842. In the 1860s she established a reputation as a writer and speaker for woman suffrage. In 1868 she was one of the signers of a petition presented to the Missouri General Assembly by a group of St. Louis women requesting the right of women to vote. The next year she was the principal speaker at the national convention in St. Louis of the Woman Suffrage Association.

After her graduation from Washington University Law School, May 8, 1871, a banquet was held in her honor which was attended by the Law School faculty and other prominent St. Louis citizens. Although she was admitted to the Missouri Bar, she never practiced law extensively.

She became well known throughout the state and nation as an authoritative lecturer on the subjects of women's rights, temperance and the legal profession. She addressed the San Francisco Woman Suffrage Convention in 1872 and the Association's national convention in Washington, D. C. In 1874.

She served as deputy to her father, who was commissioned a United States Marshal of the Eastern District of Missouri, July 5, 1884. After her father's death she received the ad interim appointment on September 28, 1887, as United States Marshal.

Her career closed in obscurity and hardship. Financed by St. Louis brewers, she reversed her stand on temperance and became a lobbyist and lecturer for the United Brewers Association.

Her last speech in St. Louis in 1906 denounced Governor Joseph W. Folk for his advocacy of legislation restricting the sale of liquor.

She died in extreme poverty, December 5, 1913, in St. Louis. She had always worn her United States Marshal's badge and, in compliance with her request, it was buried with her.



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### **How can you help MO-TELL?**

There are several ways to help MO-TELL move its mission forward

1. Become a member
2. Renew your membership each year
3. Encourage others to join
4. Make a donation
5. Make a memorial donation
6. Volunteer your services

### **Gifts In Memorial**

For all donations and memberships contact Sue Hinkel at [shinkel@mail.win.org](mailto:shinkel@mail.win.org) or go to the web site, [www.mo-tell.org](http://www.mo-tell.org)

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### **Mission Statement:**

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

### **Vision Statement:**

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

### **Board Members**

President: Joyce Slater, [joyceslater20@gmail.com](mailto:joyceslater20@gmail.com) (Liar's Contest)

Treasurer: Sue Hinkel, [shinkel@mail.win.org](mailto:shinkel@mail.win.org) (Membership)

Secretary: Linda Kuntz, [iharilag@gmail.com](mailto:iharilag@gmail.com)

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At Large: Gary Kuntz, [galirahi@aol.com](mailto:galirahi@aol.com)  
At Large: Jim Two Crows Wallen, [jimtwocrows@att.net](mailto:jimtwocrows@att.net)  
Emeritus: Perrin Stifel, [pstifelstl@earthlink.net](mailto:pstifelstl@earthlink.net)  
[www.mo-tell.org](http://www.mo-tell.org)

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