



JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Happy New Year to all my friends,

I am looking forward to a brand-new world with brand-new opportunities in storytelling and the arts. I wonder what will come my way! What are your plans for 2026?

Will you learn a new story, travel with friends, meet new friends or explore a new language? I want to do all of that. We can travel this road together. I am looking forward to sharing my dreams with you.

Come to the MO-TELL Annual Membership Meeting on January 13 at 7 pm and tell us what your hopes are for the new year and for Missouri Storytelling.

Let's make the future bright. See the flier below for registration for the meeting. Our stories are important. Keep sharing them.

Joyce Slater  
President, MO-TELL

"Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it." – Hannah Arendt



# ALWAYS REMEMBER, NEVER FORGET



OUR FEARLESS LEADER, JOYCE SLATER, TELLS ABOUT TWO EERIE HOURS OF GHOSTLY TALES TO FIFTY-FIVE BRAVE SOULS AT CROWDER STATE PARK IN THE PUMPKIN SEASON.

(BACKGROUND EYES CANNOT BE CONFIRMED OR DENIED AS HAVING REALLY BEEN THERE!)

# 2026

**GET YOUR HUMOR BRAIN THINKING  
IN JANUARY 2026!  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



**ARE YOU IN THE 98 % OF THE  
POPULATION?**

**THINK OF A NUMBER FROM ONE TO 10  
MULTIPLY THAT NUMBER BY 9.**

**IF THE NUMBER IS A 2-DIGIT NUMBER  
ADD THE DIGITS TOGETHER.**

**NOW SUBTRACT 5 AND DETERMINE WHICH  
LETTER OF THE ALPHABET CORRESPONDS  
TO THE NUMBER YOU ENDED UP WITH.  
(EXAMPLE A=1, B=2, ETC.)**

**THINK OF A COUNTRY THAT STARTS WITH  
THAT LETTER.**



**REMEMBER THE LAST LETTER OF THAT  
COUNTRY.**

**THINK OF AN ANIMAL THAT BEGINS WITH  
THAT LETTER.**

**REMEMBER THE LAST LETTER IN THE  
NAME OF THE ANIMAL.**

**THINK OF THE NAME OF A FRUIT THAT  
BEGINS WITH THAT LETTER.**

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**98% OF PEOPLE WHO TAKE THIS QUIZ ARE  
THINKING OF A KANGAROO IN DENMARK  
EATING AN ORANGE.**



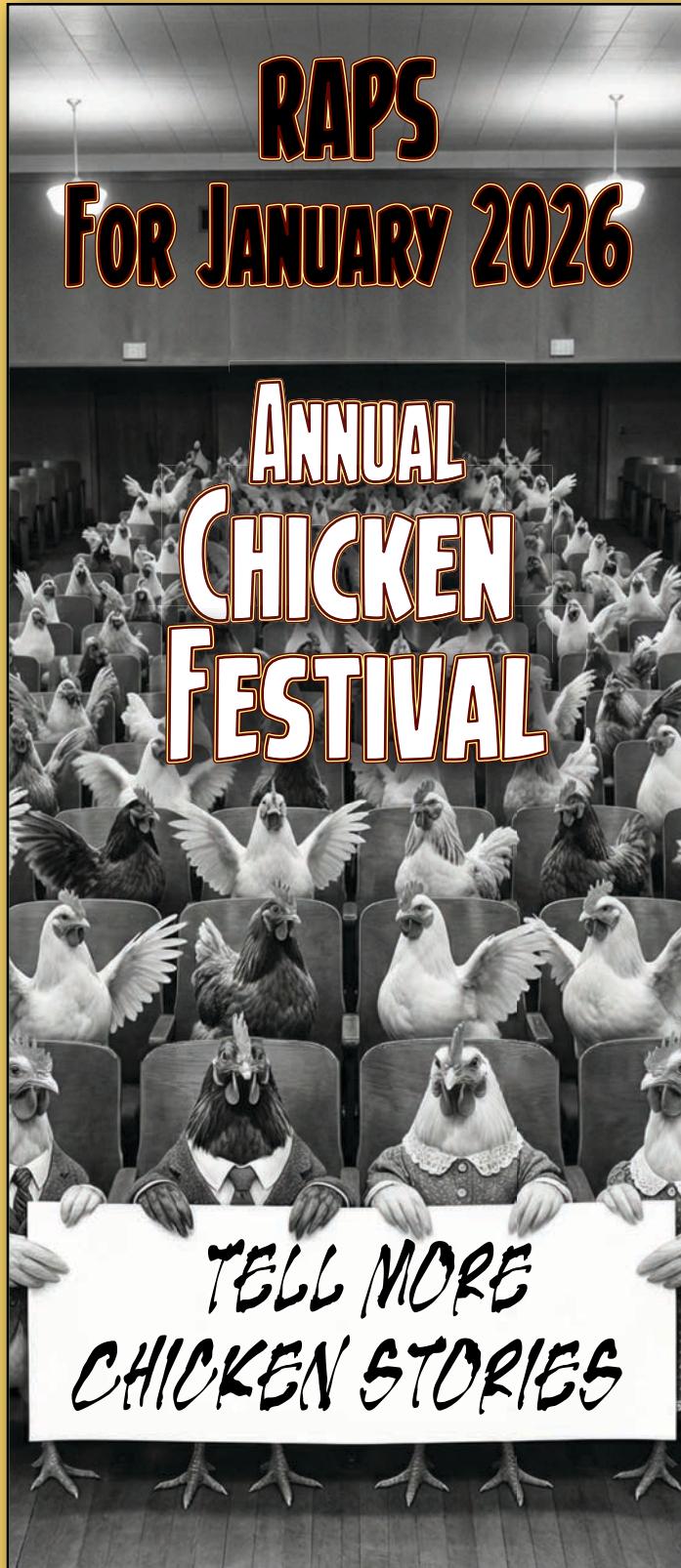
**I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE 2%  
ARE THINKING OF...**

MAGNET  
HERE

# FOR YOUR FRIDGE

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

MAGNET  
HERE



## 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

# GETTING READY TO CROSS THE ROAD!

# 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

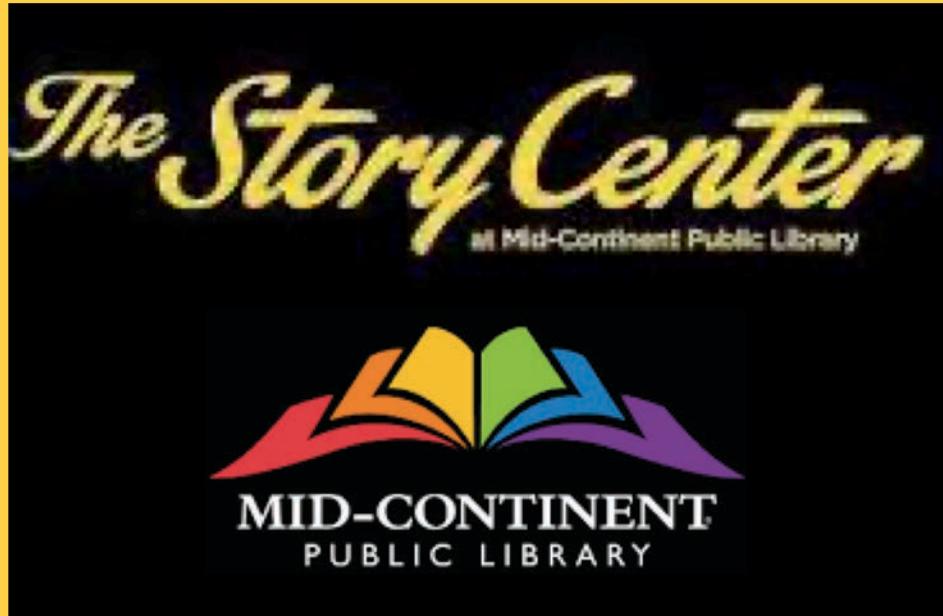
2026 MARKS THE 33RD ANNUAL RIVER AND PRAIRIE STORYWEAVERS CHICKEN FESTIVAL.

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](mailto:RAPs.EVENTS@gmail.com)

# Chicken Festival



## Winter Winds Storyfest



Come together for a day of storytelling events.

### Winter Winds Annual Storytelling Concert (Hybrid)

Fri, Feb 20 2026

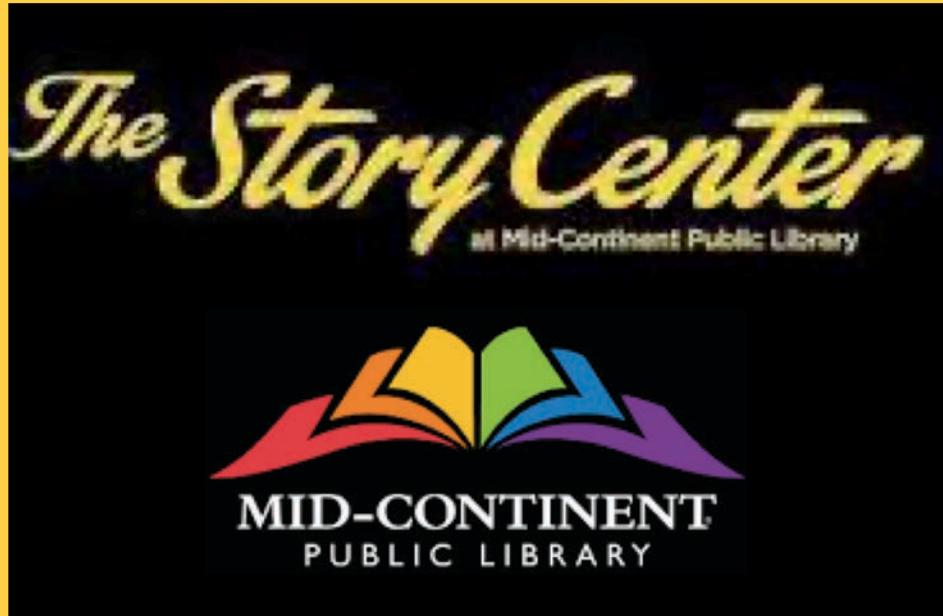
7:00pm - 8:00pm Central

The Auditorium at Woodneath Library Center and Online  
Story Center Event

MCPL Online

Warm up your winter and get ready for spring with a selection of stories told by featured teller Alton Takiyama-Chung and guests Rich White and Beverly Laudie.

**REGISTER NOW**



### [Storycrafting Fundamentals \(Zoom\)](#)

Mon, Jan 5 2026 6:30pm - 8:00pm Central Story Center Event [MCPL Online](#)  
Writer and storyteller Laura Packer will explore character development, story structure, point of view, understanding your audience, and other storycrafting techniques.

**REGISTER NOW**

### [Sing a Story, Tell a Song \(Zoom\)](#)

Thu, Jan 8 2026 6:30pm - 8:00pm Central Story Center Event [MCPL Online](#)  
You don't have to be a musician to use sound-makers, instruments, recorded sound -- or unaccompanied singing -- to enliven your stories.

**REGISTER NOW**

### [Story Swap](#)

Thu, Jan 15 2026 6:30pm - 8:00pm The Auditorium at Woodneath Library  
Center Story Center Event Registration Required  
This open-mic storytelling event is open to anyone!

**REGISTER NOW**

### [Performance Basics \(Zoom\)](#)

Wed, Jan 21 2026 6:30pm - 8:00pm Central Story Center Event [MCPL Online](#)  
Discover how to unleash your potential and connect with your audience in this interactive workshop with award-winning storyteller and teaching artist Sherry Norfolk.

**REGISTER NOW**

### [Resources for Storytellers \(Zoom\)](#)

Wed, Jan 28 2026 6:30pm - 7:30pm Central Story Center Event [MCPL Online](#)  
It takes various tools to become a seasoned storyteller or writer, including books, websites, and more.

**REGISTER NOW**

# TIPS FOR STORYTELLING PARENTS

To be a great storyteller for your kids, make them the hero, use your voice and body, tell stories from your own childhood or about their life, involve them with questions and actions, and create a fun, consistent routine. Don't worry about perfection; just start telling stories—even silly or "badly told" ones—as the act of sharing is what matters most to children.





www.MO-TELL.org

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

**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)



# A HEAPIN' HELPIN' OF MO-TELL HISTORY FROM BOBBY NORFOLK

## Q. Were you there when MO-TELL began?

Yes, I was at the first MO-TELL meeting. The reason I was there is because the St. Louis Storytelling Festival started at the Arch where I worked - at the Old Courthouse. So, it was hard for me to escape MO-TELL and its members. I didn't seek storytelling, it sought me.

The three guilds were very tight, very strong then. It was not only MO-TELL, but it was **Gateway** and **Riverwind**. Irene Eveland and Ruthilde Kronberg were a part of MO-TELL and Marilyn Kinsella was part of the Riverwind connection.

Initial meetings were at Perrin Stifel's house. David Schlamb was co-chair. January Keifer, Irene Eveland, Ruthilde Kronberg, Annette Harrison, and Lynn Rubright all sat in Perrin and Alice's living room many times trying to create MO-TELL. Sue Hinkel was the scribe. She took the minutes.

## Q. Did you hold an office with MO-TELL?

I didn't hold an office, but I was an avant member because I was totally excited about what I felt was a new concept called storytelling. I was doing Black Repertory Theater plays with Ron Himes. I was with Zack and Mack in the night clubs doing the Rubber Band Man Comedy Show.

When the *St. Louis Storytelling Festival* started at the Arch and the Old Courthouse in 1980 and some of the first storytellers started coming to the Arch, that's when everybody got started.

The storytelling world caught fire right after that.

I think MO-TELL was a much stronger guild than **Gateway** and **Riverwind**. Some of the people overlapped. You could be in all three guilds. It wasn't like a fraternity or sorority. I had membership in all three.

## Q. What Missouri Storytelling Festivals do you remember?

I was on the Golden Rod Showboat with Jimmy Neal Smith from Jonesborough. We rode up and down the river telling stories.

## **Q. Did you ever tell at one of the Missouri State Park Storytelling Series events?**

I remember performing at a state park out by Columbia, MO. They wanted stories about fishing. The state park had a fishing festival and there were a bunch of kids and their parents. I told stories at lakeside about tall tales of fish.

One of the turning points of MO-TELL was when they had the weekend retreats. I saw Jackie Torrence at one of those retreats. She was my mentor.

## **Q. Most Vivid Memory Ever?**

A vivid memory of one of those retreats was when I saw a female Jungian psychologist, I can't remember her name, who did an amazing psychological experiment using colors and people's intuition. She had different colored cloths like hand towels. She made a circle of chairs and put the different colored fabrics on the backs of the chairs. All of us were told to slowly walk around these chairs and if you felt an intuition or urge to sit in one of those chairs with that color, sit. If somebody was already sitting there, stand behind them. It took about ten minutes for that to happen.

When everybody was done, the psychologist put out a chart. Annette Harrison didn't want to be part of that exercise. Nobody knew why she didn't want to be part of it. Neither did the FBI guy, Warren Wyman. He sat on the side. Warren had done this session before and was astonished by what had happened. Fast forward, Nan Kammann(-Judd) sat in one chair with a cloth like the desert southwest of Arizona. Since she was already there, I stood behind her.

Everybody sat or stood and she asked this one guy what his profession was. He said that he was an attorney. According to the chart, she said that he was sitting in the "law giver" section of the circle. She asked somebody else why they sat where they were. The person said that they love Halloween. That's when Annette spoke up and said that when she did the Jungian circle before, she was wearing all black with red fingernails and didn't know that she was sitting in the "witches" section. I remember Warren Wyman said he was rehearsing ghost and horror stories at the time at another session and he sat in the "witch/demon" section.

The psychologist told Perrin Stifel he was sitting in the "tradition" section of the circle. He confirmed that he invites all family, extended family, and friends over for holidays. If they don't come, he and Alice will go to them. Perrin said that he loves tradition.

The psychologist asked Nan Kammann(-Judd) what her profession was. She said that she was the Artistic Director of the St. Louis Storytelling Festival, and the psychologist told her she was sitting in the desert southwest and that is the section of the "storyteller." Then she looked at me and asked me what my profession was. I said, "Storytelling" and everybody laughed. She nailed it on everybody! That was a weekend getaway I'll never forget. Everyone that is still here, and was there on that weekend, knows about that event.

## Q. An AHA! Memory

I've had several aha moments, but the biggest aha moment was when I found out from MO-TELL that storytelling is not just for babies. I thought it was just children's storytelling in libraries with little kids sitting on carpet squares.

I found out all these tellers were coming in from all around the world making thousands of dollars a show. I said, "Aha!" I was working at the National Park Service. I asked the Chief Ranger if I could work for him Wednesday-Saturday so I could work in the schools Monday-Tuesday and said, "Go for it!"

## Q. Tellabration!

I attended many Tellabration! annually in Jonesborough. I was good friends with J. G. "Paw Paw" Pinkerton. We were on a few festivals together around the United States. He invented Tellabration! and it has outlived him by many, many years.

IN ADDITION TO BOBBY'S ACCOUNT, WE WOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT BOBBY WAS ON THIS YEAR'S MO-TELL TELLABRATION!

IN ST. LOUIS, MO ON NOVEMBER 20, 2025. HIS PERFORMANCES WERE A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE STORYTELLER, AUTHOR, AND EDUCATOR, ANNETTE HARRISON.

AS PART OF THE MO-TELL ARCHIVES, BOBBY HAS SHARED WITH US THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY ST. LOUIS STORYTELLING FESTIVAL VIDEO. THERE ARE SOME VERY FAMILIAR FACES AND VOICES FROM THE ORGANIZATION THAT YOU WILL RECOGNIZE.

(THERE IS A ROUGH SPOT ABOUT NINE MINUTES IN WITH WHAT SOUNDS LIKE JAY O'CALLAHAN, BUT EVERYTHING ELSE IS CRISP AND CLEAN.)

TO WATCH, PLEASE HIGHLIGHT THIS LINK, COPY IT, AND PASTE IT INTO YOUR BROWSER. IT'LL TAKE YOU TO THE SHOW:

**HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?  
V=YNPLBW1EY08**

THANKS, BOBBY!

# STORY OF THE MONTH

## When It Rains

Efik Ibibio tribe, Nigeria

Many, many years ago, when the world was still quite young, and animals could speak, Thunder and Lightning lived on Earth in the form of Forest Buffaloes. Lightning was young and very excitable. And like the Forest Buffalo, he had very poor eyesight and hearing. Lightning also had a short temper. Every time it rained, he became enraged.

The rain made it even harder for him to see and hear. It made him so angry, he knocked down and burned trees. Thunder, his mother, disliked her son's behavior. She could be heard trying to control him with her low booming voice, a voice that shook the village trees.

The more Lightning burned, the more Thunder shouted. Trees and homes were destroyed faster than they could grow or be rebuilt. The destruction and the noise were unbearable! The other animals in the kingdom feared for their lives. Something had to be done with these disruptive neighbors.

So the animals held a secret meeting and called to their King. He was a good King and would certainly help them. He listened carefully for some time to the animals' complaints. Thunder and Lightning were indeed doing too much damage on Earth. After much thought, their King decided the only think he could do would be to move mother and son to Sky. Here they could carry on without causing so much damage on Earth. To this day, temperamental Lightning still knocks down and burns things and his mother can still be heard yelling at him. But they are far, far away and unless Lightning is very, very upset, animals and people on Earth are safe.

*This story comes from the book, African Folktales retold by Louise Orlando*

# THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

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Sink your teeth and claws into our monthly publication now

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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...?**



**WHADDAYA 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 Bellevue Ave, Kansas City, MO 64114



THE MO-TELL BOARD