



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

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## May 2020 Newsletter

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

### Letter from the President: Joyce Slater

Hello: All of us on the board of Missouri Storytelling, Inc are thinking of you and wishing you well. To many of you, I wish you "Happy Mother's Day". A lot of us are out of work and a lot of us are home alone. It can be very lonely. We will get through this together with our stories. These are strange times indeed; however, storytelling has survived. Zoom and YouTube and Facebook have protected us from the virus and given us stories to share and discover. Save some stories for when we meet again in person. In the meantime, practice social distancing and keep your hands clean. When necessary, wear a mask. Stay well, stay safe. If you need to talk to someone, give us a call or email me.



Thought for the day:

We often say "you are in my thoughts and prayers", but prayer is not just when we kneel and fold our hands. It can be when we think positive thoughts about a friend in trouble, or wishing good for others. It is when we hug a friend - when we get to do that again or when we say "Drive safely". It can also be when you cook a meal or send a card of greeting. It can be when you forgive someone. There are so many ways to communicate love.

You are in my thoughts today. Thank you for being a friend. Joyce

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### In Remembrance of Becky Walstrom

At this time of year we think of the St. Louis Storytelling Festival and our friends associated with it. After last year's festival we lost our wonderful friend and board member, Becky Walstrom. She ran the St. Louis Storytelling Festival for many, many years and brought so many storytellers to St. Louis.

We celebrate her contributions to storytelling in St. Louis, in all of Missouri and

in the whole United States. She always did things with a smile on her face. All of us in MO-TELL send our love and our thoughts to her husband, Charlie and to all of her friends and family. We miss you and love you, Becky.



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## **Calendar of Events**

### **River and Prairie Storyweavers**

**Thanks to COVID-19, River and Prairie Storyweavers is going**

virtual on Zoom again in May. You may join us for stories from anywhere without a long drive.

Saturday, May 23, 2020, 10:00 am - RAPS South Meeting

Contact: [RAPS.Secretary@gmail.com](mailto:RAPS.Secretary@gmail.com) for Zoom Meeting ID and

Password for each meeting

(If you are on the RAPS email list, meeting ID and password for each meeting will be sent to you automatically.)

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Gateway Storytellers, whose members have typically met in St. Louis, MO, are going to be springing back into action starting on SUNDAY, MAY 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 P.M. and we welcome you to take part.

If you have a 5 – 9 minute story you're excited to share with others, please reply to the sender of this email with your name, title of story, and short description.

Since our zoom time is limited, not all stories may have a chance to be told on the 17th, but may be scheduled for the next story swap. The link to use for logging in will

be: <https://muextension.zoom.us/j/519027333>

**MAY11**

**Deaf Storytelling for Youth**

**Public**

Hosted by [St. Louis Storytelling Festival](#)

**Time: 11 AM – 2:30 PM**

**MAY12**

**14th Annual UMSL Student Storytelling Mini-Festival**

**Public**

Hosted by [St. Louis Storytelling Festival](#)

**Time: 7 PM**

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**The National Storytelling Network**

On-line national conference!! Sunday May 31 - Sunday June 7.  
The 7 regions will also present an evening concert.  
Our region, the South Central Region, is scheduled  
for MONDAY JUNE 1, 7-8:30pm, CDT. Bobby Norfolk  
and Jim "Two Crows" Wallen will represent  
us. Details will be coming soon.

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**VIRTUAL STORYTELLING CONFERENCE**

*Storytelling in a World Shaped by Coronavirus-19.*

24 hours of FREE storytelling activities start  
Saturday, 16th May 2020

(9am Eastern USA time / 6:30pm India time)

This whole event is FREE, done as Public Service via Zoom  
presented by the World Storytelling Institute (Chennai, India)

**Conference Schedule**

[http://storytellingandvideoconferencing.com/conference\\_A.html](http://storytellingandvideoconferencing.com/conference_A.html)

To REGISTER (attend as much of the Conference as you like)

So Simple! Just send an email with your name and general location to  
[virtualstorytellingconference@gmail.com](mailto:virtualstorytellingconference@gmail.com)

You will then receive an email with passwords & instructions. Simple!

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**Liar's Contest 2020**

• Written and Oral story submissions for the [6th Annual Missouri Liars Contest](#) are due June 1, 2020

• MO-TELL is now accepting applications for the [Fall 2020/Spring 2021](#) State Park Storytelling Program

See the website for the rules.

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

The Liar's Contest is so much fun. Some of the participants would like to share their enthusiasm for the event.

**Christine Henderson**

*"Participating in the Liars Contest in 2018 was so much fun. The audience enjoyed the stories and laughed at the many lies told that day. As a teller, it was a great atmosphere to present a story. Whether going to the contest to listen or to tell, you won't regret it."*

**Gary Kuntz**

*The Liar's Contest is part fun and part terrifying. The fun part is telling a tall tale, a lie, to the audience and seeing how far you can push the story before it becomes too unbelievable (even for a tall tale). Even more fun is listening to the other contestants and being blown away with the imagination and verve of their stories. The terrifying part is telling a tall tale, a lie, to a panel of judges and knowing they are judging your story. I know that for me, being involved in the Liar's contest has allowed me to be more creative and to step outside my comfort zone to become (hopefully) a better storyteller.*

**Linda Kuntz**

*I have entered the MO-TELL Missouri Liar's Contest 3-4 times and have been a finalist 3-4 times. Either I am not a good liar or my honest face cancels out my story. Seriously, jump in and have fun. Winners get money and losers are not shot.*

**Rich White**

*Not only does the MO-TELL Liars Contest provide you with the opportunity to stand up and tell bald-faced lies to a whole bunch of people, you can do it without having a guilty conscience. Besides that, the very people you have just lied to will thank you for it. Kind of like being a modern day politician without having to get dragged down in the political cesspool. What could be better than that?*

**Carol Kariotis**

*I was the 2016 1st place winner of the MO Liars Contest. I told in 2017 and 2018 and in 2019 was the 3rd place winner of the Written MO Liars Contest. I gained so much confidence in my storytelling.*

*As a very new storyteller, entering the 2016 contest opened my eyes to the kind of storytelling I love to do most. It is so much fun to enter, and tell stories to an eager and supportive audience. I encourage all new and old liars to enter ..... when else is lying encouraged*

*Alice Nathan*

*I had no experience in writing fiction until I entered the Liar's contest last year. But, I discovered a part of me that LOVES to exaggerate, stretch the truth, and lie, lie, lie! It was a fun experience, and, truth be told, I have already written my entry for this year's contest.*

*Roger Rose*

*The most fun of all is to tell the absolute truth and make everybody think you are lying.*

**Check out Jim Two Crows Wallen's Tall Tale below for an example of the kind of lie that might find itself in the Liar's Contest.**

### **Caught In A Fog By Jim Two Crows Wallen**

It was always a bone jarring experience when Granddad decided to go fishin on the Osage River. It was about an hour trip from Granddad's to the river. It was over some of the roughest gravel roads, narrow lanes, Ozark rocky cow paths, and finally deep ruts across private lands into thick woods, I still don't know how Granddad got that 3/4 ton Chevy pick-up through all those obstacles. But we always made it into a little clearing that led down a very steep embankment with a huge mud slough on your right and there straight in front of you was the Osage River. Sometimes it was just Granddad and me, sometimes my Dad or Granddad's best fishin buddy, Siebert Weaver came along. Carrying Granddad's John boat down that slick muddy bank wasn't much fun. And if Siebert came we had to carry his five horse Johnson outboard motor to the boat. After several trips up and down that steep bank carrying our fishin gear, our lunches and the large cooler filled with live perch for our trot line bait we were ready to go. If Granddad and I were alone I sat in the back of the john boat. If Siebert came with us I sat in the middle with Granddad in front and Siebert and his 5hp Johnson in the back. The first thing was to either paddle or motor around a large island that was right where we put the boat in. Once we got to the South end of the island we would put out our trot line stretching it from the point of the Island to the bank on the opposite shore. 450 feet of line with

225 very large treble hooks. Each hook baited with a perch that weighted as least a pound. The river was probably 500 feet wide and Granddad said the catfish would always choose to swim up the deep side of the river around the island. Granddad was pretty sharp because we always caught lots of big catfish on that line. Sometimes if the river was high we would bait limb lines. A limb line is where you tie a single trot line and hook to a limb hangin over the water, baited with a perch or a piece of cut bait. We used gar or drum for our cut bait. Once on a limb line we caught a 475 pound mud cat. He would have weighted more but by the time we got to him he jumped so high out of the water tryin to throw that hook out of his mouth, that he wound up in the top of that cottonwood tree that we had the limb line tied too. It took us a week to saw down that 95 foot tall tree. We figure he lost at least 200 pounds bein out of the water that long. Sometimes if the river was low we would throw out some jug lines with those large treble hooks and live perch or Granddad's very special worms for bait. We were always successful on either. A jug line would be an old gallon plastic bleach bottle. When it was empty it would float on top of the water. As soon as the fish took the bait, it was caught. But a big fish could pull that jug a mighty long ways. Once we had to follow one big flathead 98 3/4 miles up the river before he tired out. I loved watching that limb line shaking violently, a jug bobbin up and down, or the water boilin in circles at the far end of the trot line. That told me there was a big fish on the line. When I was about ten years old, on a Tuesday towards the end of July, Siebert, Granddad and I had made our way to the Osage hoping to catch some large flatheads or whitecats. After baiting our trot line we decided to do some fishing for perch along the shoreline so we could rebait our line late in the afternoon. It was about lunchtime when Siebert hooked a large fish. We were fishin over a gravel bar where a bridge had long ago crossed the river. The old gravel road that led to it was still there but, the bridge was long gone. Someone had pushed an old car into the river from the gravel road and it sank in about eight feet of water. When the river was clear you could see the old rusted body of the car. When Siebert hooked that big ole fish it headed straight for that car and got his line hung up on that bucket of rust. Siebert didn't want to lose that much meat so he gave the fishin pole to Granddad and told him to keep the line tight. He quickly took off his shirt, trousers, and shoes and slipped into that eight feet of water, telling Granddad and me he was going to catch that fish by hand. He carefully followed his line down to the car, but that day his luck was all bad, the fish had locked the doors and rolled up the windows. Siebert came up saying it was just gar anyway. After that we just ate our lunch. Granddad and I always had the same lunch. Granny would pack in a metal lunch box like I used to carry to school. A can of Vienna sausages, a thick slice of Colby cheese for each of us and a package of

crackers to share. The thermos was filled with ice cold well water from the Bentonville, Missouri, community well. I don't remember what Siebert would eat. But I do remember he brought his lunch in a brown paper bag. We were almost finished with lunch when we noticed just a few yards from the boat a big mouth bass kept hitting the top of the water so we decided to float the boat downstream to see what he was after. There was a grasshopper sitting on a weed hanging over the water and that bass just kept hittin that reflection in the water. Very quickly I threw out a line with part of one of Granddad's worms and that big ole bass struck that worm. It took a little while but I finally caught him. Because it was July and so hot Granddad said we had better go ahead and filet him and put the meat in the cooler we had brought the perch in. Granddad and Siebert cleaned that ole bass, the filets weighted 8 poundseach, and when they opened him up he had 52 grasshopper reflections in him. Reflecting back on it, it was quite a fish. Some of you may not think that story is true but I was there. I think one reason Granddad had such good luck using fishin worms was that he raised his own. He took those big ole river worms that we dug out of the slough's of the river bank and crossed them with night crawlers he got out of his truck patch. They were the best worms I ever used. They were tough like river worms and bigger than night crawlers. We ended up with nine pound sixteen ounce worms. Those worms so excited the fish they always had a smile on their faces even when they got caught. It was that same smile some of you have on your faces right now. It was mid-afternoon when Granddad using about a half pound of one of his famous worms hooked the biggest perch that I ever saw. It was so big it started pulling the whole boat upstream against the current. Now if you know anything about fishin you know that, pound for pound a perch can fight as hard as any fish. Several times it jumped high into the air trying to flip that hook out of its mouth. Finally with a 20 foot gigantic flip in the air, doing a half gainer with a twist, it spit the hook right back at my Granddad. Siebert while that fish was still in mid-air, grabbed a lead sinker and his brown lunch sack and began drawing a picture of that perch. I don't know how much that fish weighted but the picture he drew weighted 5 3/4 pounds and that was after Siebert had eaten his lunch. Siebert was some artist! By now it was getting along in the evening and we had drifted quite a ways down the river. It was time to check the trot line. As we started upstream the fog began to roll in. Now river fog can be some of the thickest fog there is. It soon got so bad that I couldn't even see Granddad or Siebert right there in the boat. Granddad and Siebert discussed the situation for some time and decided to keep making our way upstream and maybe with any luck we would run into the island across from where we put the boat in. I got to tell you despite the fog, fishin was pretty good for all three of us caught a nice mess of fish, nothing big, nothing weightin

over 100 pounds. It wasn't until about 9:30 the next morning that the fog began to lift that we discovered that we were still in the johnboat and it was sitting in the back of Granddad's truck, and most of the fish had been caught after we had come ashore. The boat had sometime in the night snagged our trot line and drug it on shore and those sharp Ozark flint rocks had filleted all 47 catfish that had been caught on that trot line. We picked up the filets, took up the trot line and headed for a bone jarring ride home. Which just goes to prove you don't have to water to catch fish. You just have to put your audience in a thick fog, and have a lot of wind to get them out. I think some of your funny bones have been jarred because I see that nine pound sixteen ounce worm smile on your faces again.

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## **State Parks and Storytelling and MO-TELL**

MO-TELL has a proud history of storytelling in the Missouri State Parks and Historical Sites which is owed to Perrin Stifel. Because of Covid 19, the parks are closed and storytelling has been suspended in all but Bennett Springs. Nancee and Mike Micham will perform there on June 13, 2020 at 1:pm. Mike and Nancee Walker-Micham

EznDil

[www.ezndiltraditionalmusic.com](http://www.ezndiltraditionalmusic.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/EznDil/>



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### **Meet a MO-TELL Member**

MO-TELL Register Interview:

**Steve Otto Interview**

**How did you get involved in storytelling?**

Steve Otto has been involved with storytelling for many years. He credits Joyce Slater for getting him into storytelling when she told him she found this class in storytelling and he should take it. Since Steve was involved in community theatre at the time his reply was “Joyce, I am an actor. I don’t tell stories to little kids.” To which Joyce said “Steve, I really think you should take the class.” So he took the class and discovered he liked storytelling because he could use his own words and imagination in telling a story vs. trying (emphasis on trying) to remember and recite lines written for the character he was playing on stage.

He took storytelling classes for about a year then came his big break. Jim “Two Crows” Wallen had taken the leap to become a full-time storyteller and invited Steve and another teller to join him in telling stories at a local park. Steve said this was the first time he told stories to a non-storyteller audience. This experience was what firmly set the hook and led Steve to continue to learn about storytelling. Over the next several years he worked on learning stories and how to tell them. He attended the NSN Festival and Conferences where he studied the tellers and learned how they used their voices to captivate audiences.

Then his employer, The Federal Government, offered an early retirement option and Steve, after a long discussion with Virginia, his wife, decided to take the option. He’s been telling stories as his only job since then.

### **What is your favorite type of story?**

If you know anything about Steve you know that he loves, absolutely loves with a passion, telling scary stories. He says for him the quickest and easiest way for to get the audience’ attention is to start with a scary story.

### **What advice to you have for someone getting into storytelling?**

He has two pieces of advice for beginning or experienced storytellers.

1. You have to have a large enough repertoire of stories to satisfy a wide range of audiences.
2. The most important thing is to tell your version of the story. Many people may tell the same stories from literature or folktales. You, as the storyteller, has to tell the story your way and not the way someone else tells the story.

A favorite storytelling memory.

As you can guess there are so many it is hard to pick a favorite but one sticks out in his mind. He was hired to tell stories to a group of middle schoolers but there was an issue. A group of parents had pre-filed a motion prohibiting the telling of ghost stories in the school. It cut out his favorite type of story to open a program but he had other stories that would work. He walked into school that morning and met the literature teacher who asked about his Edgar Allen Poe stories. When Steve replied that he thought he couldn't tell them at the school because they were prohibited the teacher replied that Poe was literature and he could tell literature stories. So Steve led off with one of his favorite stories, The Tell Tale Heart. Nobody complained, even though it probably is one of the scariest stories he tells. As Steve put it "It's amazing what a difference in perspective there is when the story is "literature".



### **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**

In the last three years, MO-TELL has received several memorial donations. Your loved ones are remembered by the stories they told and by passing the torch on to others.

An anonymous donor has contributed funds for the State Park Program.  
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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### **Picture Contest Winner**

We have a winner of the picture contest. Mary Garrett names 5 people in the picture. Joyce Slater, Mary Garrett, Mary's sister Donna and her mother, Verna, Irene Eveland are in the front.

Jim Two Crows Wallen is nearest the boat, then in line from the left are Joseph Mangum, Jackie Rozine and John Rozine. This took place in the Fall in St. Charles, MO on the Goldenrod. The year was not determined. Mary will be sent a special prize. Thank you, Mary, for sending in your answer. (see picture below)





**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)

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

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