

Storytellers of San Diego
President's Report – 2-17-26

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.

We affiliate with other organizations, and often collaborate on programs. We 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 monthly online "Genre Series." Marilyn is on the committee for the Regional Gem program. SAC has funded several of our programs of storytelling in schools, including the Chula Vista storytelling project organized by David Schmidt, and some work in Coronado schools. Funds from the SAC Storytelling in Schools/Jenny Fund have been allocated for programs with teens at Morse High School and presentations in schools in Escondido. We paired with the Contra Costa story swap group for an online Tellabration!™ in November 2025.

We work with San Diego Folk Heritage, including providing a storytelling strand at the Sam Hinton Festival. They provide sound for our Tellabration!™

We work with the Houses of International Relations in Balboa Park. Past programs have been in conjunction with the Houses of Scotland, Ireland, Ukraine, and Peru.

In February we presented the second of three planned programs at the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. It was well-attended and well-received. We are planning a third program in June, highlighting stories from the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District. The programs are funded by a grant from the San Diego Chinese Women's Association.

Two of our tellers are planning a residency at a San Diego elementary school, thanks to a grant from the Prebys Association administered by VAPA.

We have two regular monthly in-person, curated programs. On the second Tuesday, we are at The Template in Ocean Beach, and on the third Thursday, we are at Skybound Coffee & Dessert Lounge in Vista. Various SSD members organize and host programs. Also, there is a virtual open mic/story swap on the fourth Wednesday 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. .

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

We are an institutional member of the National Storytelling Network. Emily Stamets is a member of the NSN board in the position of Volunteer Coordinator.

Several of our storytellers have been featured in ASST programs. James Nelson-Lucas was a storyteller for the ASST New Year's Eve Blowout.

Mindy works with the Guild of Puppetry.

Individual members often present programs for churches, schools, libraries, businesses, civic groups, and more.

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. It is also an opportunity to hear stories from new tellers who wish to participate in our programs.

We have received a grant from the City of Encinitas for a couple of storytelling institute sessions. In addition, we have been the recipient of generous funding from the Coronado Library for the annual storytelling festival and also a five-session storytelling institute. A grant from the City of Coronado supports the storytelling institute and other programs in Coronado. These grants have enabled us to offer workshops free to participants. We have presented two of the planned five institute classes; the series includes a final session on effective performing. We invite tellers from these workshops to participate in our various programs, including our yearly festival.

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, Chula Vista, Bonita and more. The programs include opportunities for people to listen to stories and to tell stories themselves. Many of our members have strong connections with storytellers and storytelling organizations around the world, and have performed for NEST, ASST and other out-of-the-area organizations.

We encourage diversity in our programs – both in the storytellers and in the audiences, and we invite increased diversity in all of our programs.

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. The information 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. In addition, Jim Dieckmann sends informational emails to subscribers at least twice a month.

We have regular posts on our Storytellers of San Diego facebook page, which has more than 1.3K followers. Our YouTube channel has 187 subscribers and 506 videos. James has been adding to and updating the YouTube channel. Mindy and James send press releases and calendar items to local print and online calendars. The Coronado Library provides press releases for our programs there, and we have received some excellent local press coverage. We continue our membership and connection with the National Storytelling Network. 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 have presented two of three planned storytelling programs at the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum.

We will present two workshops at the Encinitas Library in April, thanks to a grant from the city of Encinitas.

We are planning for our annual Storytelling Festival on March 21 at the Coronado Library. In addition to our local tellers, we will feature Adam Mellema from Los Angeles, Darci Tucker from Williamsburg, VA and Irish storyteller and musician Mairtin de Cogain. Emily Stamets has organized a session of teen storytellers from her work at Morse High School. We will again have music from the jazz band from Coronado School of Performing Arts. Our “Art & Stories” session will feature our Storytellers of San Diego board member and visual artist, Deidra Davis, who will be creating a large art installation of a “Community Tree.” Our Storytelling Institute and festival are being held with funding and support from the Coronado Library and the City of Coronado.

We continue to provide 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 187 subscribers and more than 500 available videos.

OJ, Li-Anne, and Marilyn work with ASAP, Armed Services Arts Partnership. These classes are free for people with an 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.