

Storytellers of San Diego
President's Report – 7-15-25

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.

Every second Wednesday, we have a curated show at The Template in Ocean Beach. Each month has a different coordinator who chooses a theme and title. Tellers vary and often include new-to-SSD storytellers. Mindy has written a guide for the Template shows, which will make these events more effective and smooth.

We will also have the first of what we anticipate will be a monthly show at Skybound Coffee & Dessert Lounge in Vista. The inaugural show will include six tellers telling stories with a sky theme, We are excited to be at a new North County venue.

On the fourth Wednesday, there is a virtual open mic/story swap 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.

We affiliate with other organizations, and often collaborate on programs. We continue to participate in programs sponsored by the Storytelling Association of California, of which we are an institutional member. We usually have a teller representing Storytellers of San Diego in every monthly program, and in June three of our tellers were featured in a Juneteenth program. Another connection with SAC is with the Regional Gem Program. Marilyn is on the committee.

We work with the local San Diego Folk Heritage, providing a storytelling strand at the Sam Hinton Festival.

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

Emily and Marilyn will attend the National Storytelling Network conference in Georgia in July. Emily is the Volunteer Coordinator for NSN.

Melanie performs in Brenda Adelman's storytelling shows.

Individual members often present programs for churches, schools, libraries, businesses, civic groups, and more. Sometimes they involve music and/or puppetry.

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.

We have received a grant from the City of Encinitas, which will be used for school and public workshops. A grant from the City of Coronado will help to fund library programming there. In addition, we have been the recipient of generous funding from the Coronado Library for the annual storytelling festival and also a several-session storytelling institute. These grants have enabled us to offer workshops – both individual and a series – free to participants. We often invite both youth and adult tellers – both those who have been in institute or residency programs and open-mic tellers -- to tell in our programs.

To encourage the use of storytelling to bring together diverse populations in the community and promote cross-cultural understanding.

The tradition of oral storytelling is, by its nature, diverse and cross-cultural. We offer storytelling programs to a wide variety of local communities, including Oceanside, Vista, Encinitas, City Heights, Coronado, Chula Vista, Poway, and more. The programs include opportunities for people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures to listen to stories and to tell stories themselves. Some SSD-sponsored programs have been provided in Spanish as well as English. Our storytellers listen to and tell stories all over the world. This has led to connections and an increased understanding of diverse populations and cultures.

We encourage diversity in our programs – both in the storytellers and in the audiences.

To serve as a source of information on the art of storytelling and storytelling events in the San Diego area

Current information about storytelling is featured on the Storytellers of San Diego website. This includes the announcement of local storytelling events, as well as information on storytelling in general. Topics range from Storytellers of San Diego-sponsored events, events presented by individual members, and awards and news. Jim Dieckmann updates the website regularly to ensure that the information is current and accurate. Links to future programs and videos of past programs are provided. Emails are usually sent to subscribers twice a month. The website also notes accomplishments and awards to SSD members. An example is the residency awarded to Linda Brown in Wilmington Delaware in July.

We have regular posts on our Storytellers of San Diego facebook page, which has 1.3K followers. Our YouTube channel has 173 subscribers and 488 videos. Mindy and James send press releases and calendar items to local print and online calendars. We are institutional members of the National Storytelling Network. Mindy has participated in youth storytelling instruction through ASST, Artists Standing Strong Together. Several of our storytellers have also been featured in ASST programs. 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 hosted the annual Southern California Story Swap Festival in April in Vista. It included storytellers from all over California, workshops, lunch and many opportunities for participation. The day began with an on-site and virtual annual meeting of the Storytelling Association of California and a concert with the SAC Regional Gem, John St. Clair.

We provided a series of storytelling sessions at the Sam Hinton Folk Festival in June. All sessions were well attended, and the listeners were very enthusiastic.

Although the annual San Diego Scottish Highland Games was canceled this year, we will be presenting "A Celtic Celebration: Stories and Music from Scotland and Ireland" at the House of Pacific Relations in Balboa Park on August 1. This program is sponsored by the House of Scotland and the House of Ireland.

Emily Stamets has organized the second annual storytelling event in conjunction with the Apple Days festivities in Julian.

David Schmidt wrote an extensive grant proposal for storytelling events in Coronado. Details are being worked out, but with support from the City of Coronado and the Coronado Library, we will provide a full range of storytelling performance and workshops, including publication of stories gathered from residents of Coronado,

We have received a grant from the San Diego Chinese Women's Association which will fund storytelling at the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum.

Emily Stamets is organizing a storytelling event in Julian as part of their Apple Days. She also had a one-woman show at the San Diego Fringe Festival.

We are planning for our annual Storytelling Festival on March 21 at the beautiful Coronado Library. We are considering several options for a community panel and guest tellers

We continue to enjoy 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 173 subscribers and 488 available videos.

James Nelson-Lucas has arranged for an expanded storytelling component at the Vista Viking Festival in September.

We are planning for Tellabration! tm in November in-person in Ocean Beach, and will consider a collaboration with another California storytelling group for an on-line Tellabration! tm

OJ, Li-Anne, and Marilyn have upcoming workshops with ASAP, Armed Services Arts Partnership. These are free to anyone with 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.