



AUGUST 2024 NEWSLETTER

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello my friends,

Thank you to all involved in the wonderful Tenth Annual Missouri Liars Contest. The Daniel Boone Regional Library, under Sarah Howard's guidance, hosted a marvelous event. As you may know, there was a workshop with Larry Brown before the contest, but the surprise was the library's gift to the patrons. It treated everyone to coffee, tea and sweets at the opening of the day. Sarah also had souvenirs from the library for all who came. The library welcomed us with open arms, and it felt so good. We have good friends in Columbia, MO.

Thirty-five people attended the workshop and sixty-five people attended the contest. There were nine spoken contestants, each with a story I thought for sure was the winner.

The winners were Christine Henderson from Basehor, KS with the story "Ratness" in first place. Larry Brown from Columbia, MO took second place with "Chickens Underground." Jeff Hannah from Cape Girardeau, MO came in third with "El Diablo."

The judges had a tough job because all the stories were winners. Many thanks to all the judges, both those for the spoken contest and those for the written contest.

There were eight entries for the written contest. The winners were Ken Wolfe and Perrin Stifel, both from St. Louis, who tied for first place. Ken's story was "The Leap," and Perrin's story was "Great Salt Truck Massacre." Second place went to Chester Weems from Oklahoma with the story "I'll Fly Away" and third place was taken by Amy Prater with "One Brave Little Girl."

The entire day went well thanks to the careful planning of board members, Jackie Wright and Linda Kuntz.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all of you who listened to the tales, who told the tales, who wrote the tales, who judged the tales and who allowed the tales to be told forever to be remembered.

It was a day to remember and I was thrilled to emcee.

Keep telling your stories,

Joyce Slater, President, MO-TELL



"Storytelling is our obligation to the next generation."

— Isabel Allende

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

10th Annual Missouri Liars Contest Report

20 July 2024

Columbia Public Library, Columbia, MO (Sarah Howard)

Workshop “**Turns, Twists, and Terminate**” by Larry Brown - 35 attendees enjoyed and were edified by Larry’s storytelling instruction!

2024 Missouri Liars Contest

65 distinguished attendees filled the seats of the Columbia Public Library in a collective puddle of good-natured gullibility to hear nine skilled liars lie their lying lies. They were not disappointed in the mastery of the prevarications they heard!

The Nine Spoken Entries:

Larry Brown, Barbara Carter, Lee Giezentanner, Denise Grow, Jeff Hannah, Christine Henderson, Amy Prater, Roger Rose and Rich White

1 st Place	Christine Henderson (\$150)
2 nd Place	Larry Brown (\$100)
3 rd Place	Jeff Hannah (\$50)



The Seven Written Entries:

Susan Bravo, Patricia Coffie, Ramona Crawford, Amy Prater, Perrin Stifel, Chester Weems, and Ken Wolfe.

1 st Place Tie	Perrin Stifel (\$150) and Ken Wolfe (\$150)
2 nd Place	Chester Weems (\$100)
3 rd Place	Amy Prater (\$50)



MAGNET
HERE

FOR YOUR FRIDGE

MAGNET
HERE

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

RAPS

AUGUST 2024

Thursday August 1, 2024, 7:00 pm
First Thursday Meeting
Hybrid meeting at Trailside Center
AND on Zoom

**Officer Elections: Director, Events
Coordinator, Secretary**
Story Theme: “Stories of Service”

Saturday August 17, 2024, 10:30 am
Third Sat. Meeting
Hybrid* meeting at Woodneath AND
on Zoom

**Thursday September 5, 2024, 7:00
pm** First Thursday Meeting
Hybrid meeting at Trailside Center
AND on Zoom
**Workshop: From Stage to Page by
Alice Nathan**
Story Theme: “School Mishaps”

*Hybrid meetings will be held in-
person at:

Trailside Center
99th & Holmes Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64131

Woodneath Library Center
8900 NE Flintlock Road
Kansas City, MO 64157

If not on RAPS Mailing List,
Contact: RAPS.Secretary@gmail.com
for additional info and Zoom links.

GATEWAY

AUGUST 2024

**A Continual
Continuance to
Wish you Happy
Continuation of the
Continually
Continuing
New Year from
Gateway
Storytellers,
continued!**



www.MO-TELL.org

MISSOURI STORYTELLING, INC (MO-TELL) ONLINE AUCTION

WWW.32AUCTIONS.COM/MO-TELL
AUGUST 15, 2024 TO AUGUST 30, 2024

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 the following by August 10, 2024.

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)

Ad Astra

Beloved wife of Colman Bank; dear mother of the late Nathan A. Bank, Dr. Adam Bank (Vivi) and Jason Bank (Bluma Sheindl); loving grandmother of Stephanie, Danny, Moshe, Chasdeya, Yehoshua, and Moriyah Bank; dear daughter of the late Harry and the the late Rose Lanis; dear sister of the late Stuart Lanis and Gary Lanes (the late Gloria); dear aunt, cousin, and friend to many.



Diann Joy Bank

JULY 4, 1944 - JULY 27, 2024

The “Joy” of Storytelling

FROM DIANN'S TELLING WEBSITE

Professional storyteller/educator Diann Joy Bank shares her humorous Jewish folklore and multicultural stories sprinkled with the language of the culture, including ASL (sign language). Blending audience participation, rhythm, and song, she evokes our imaginations and teaches us an appreciation for others. She believes that storytelling inspires enthusiasm for reading and writing that helps us to pass on cultural values and traditions. In her parent, teacher, and students' workshops, she helps us become storytellers ourselves.

Diann's philosophy: Through the art of storytelling, we can spark childrens' and adults' imaginations to bring peace among us one story at a time. Diann's stories will “touch your audience's hearts, tickle their funny bones, and challenge their spirits!” If you want to be entertained, relive memories, experience past cultures, or learn to be a storyteller, give her a call....and laugh happily ever after. Her secret: She tells from her heart to ours!

Through hands-on storytelling performances and workshops to enhance the appreciation of others and through literacy teach values from multicultural and Jewish folklore. Diann is known as the “Joy of Storytelling,” through her high energy performances. As a Jewish early childhood educator, an ESL teacher, and public school elementary teacher assistant, she turned the pages of each student's imaginations through “story.” As a featured festival storyteller throughout Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin, she is recognized as a hands-on storytelling workshop leader for students, teachers, librarians, parents, and seniors. Her recipe of rhythm, using percussion instruments with her audiences, and active participation brings everyone into her imaginative story. She shares her traditional Jewish folklore to guide her audiences to develop and reinforce values of trustworthiness, fairness, kindness, and respect to make wise choices in our lives.

THE STORY OF *Diann, Jackie, Papa, & Frederick*



In recent times, Diann lived in care facility. Jackie Wright had a long-term, special, best friends, mentorship with Diann over the years. She tell this story of a visit.

“On my very first visit with Diann, I took a monkey stuffed animal Papa & I named Fredrick. Diann had given Fredrick to Papa when he was in the hospital for the tumor he had in 2014. So, he wanted Fredrick to keep Diann company at Barathaven. Needless to say, I never saw Fredrick again on any of my visits. We knew he was there somewhere, making somebody happy. Well, I'm happy to say that Papa and I saw Fredrick today! A resident with a walker came into the activity room and on the seat of that walker was a collection of stuffed animals. And there was Fredrick! Diann's full name is on his label. The activity director told me that particular resident goes into rooms and collects everyone's stuffed animals; and of course, while we are watching her, she was taking a stuffed animal off a shelf in the activity room to add to her collection.”



A note from our President: Diann Bank was so much a part of the St. Louis storytelling world. I attended and told stories at the St. Louis Storytelling Festival for years and she was always there with her big smile and open arms and heart. She often emceed the closing concert which was a treat for all. Everyone loved Diann and we miss her presence now and forever.

Chabad.org, like many Jewish print and online publishers, is particular to not spell out the name of our Creator, even in English. Rather, we write “G-d.” Here’s why: Following the Torah’s instruction to “obliterate the name” of idolatry in the Land of Israel,¹ the [Torah](#) warns us not to do the same to [G-d](#). We thus learn that there is a prohibition to erase G-d’s name.² Writing G-d’s name could lead to erasing or disrespecting G-d’s name, as will be discussed.

G-d’s Dilemma

As Retold by Storyteller, Diann Joy Bank

From her Book, [A Pot of Mitzvot: 18 Jewish Folktales](#)

G-d had a big dilemma when he created the first human being, Adam. He wanted to get it right the first time. After all, his next project was to create Eve to help advise Adam; and he knew she was going to be much more complicated. In the Garden of Eden, G-d was ready to fill the human heart with *simcha*--joy, so humans could perform *mitzvot*-- good deeds.

The angels were puzzled. “G-d, how will your humans, Adam and Eve, know how to hold on to the joy in their hearts?” the angels asked. G-d said delightfully, “I have a magnificent plan! It is a great *mitzvah*—good deed--to always be in a state of happiness. When my humans are happy, they are much more capable of serving me with joy!”

The angels sighed and said to each other, “Ahhh! G-d has such high expectations of the humans he’s creating for the world.”

“We’re listening G-d. Tell us your plan,” the angels inquired.

G-d smiled and said, “MMMM! I will create their nostrils to give humans the breath of life. I will teach the nostrils to only breathe in the sweetness of life. There’s the aroma of my flowers, the smell of fresh rain, and the sweet smell of a newborn’s skin. Then they will fill their hearts with joy.” And the nostrils agreed.

“MMMM, “G-d said, “Now I will create their eyes and teach them to only see the beauty I have created in the garden. Adam and Eve will look for the good in each other. They will fill their hearts with joy.” And the eyes agreed.

“MMMM, finally, I will create ears and teach their ears to listen to the beautiful singing of the birds in the garden. They will only listen to hear ‘good’. They will fill their hearts with joy.” And the ears agreed.

“MMMM, next I will create their mouth and teach them to only speak the truth and say kind words. Then the truth and kind words can fill their hearts with joy.” And the mouths agreed.

“My humans will give thanks to me and honor the gifts I’ve given them. They will sing up to the heavens and fill their hearts with joy!” G-d said smiling. “They will learn that the highest *mitzvah* is to feel joy in their hearts every day.” The nostrils, the eyes, the ears, and the mouth all agreed and the angels applauded!



LEGISLATIVE ARTS ALERT



July 23, 2024 @ 9:50 p.m. ET

Congratulations to arts and humanities advocates! I am pleased to share that two House floor amendments, offered by Freedom Caucus member **Rep. Josh Brecheen (R-OK)** to cut funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (**NEA**) and National Endowment for the Humanities (**NEH**) by \$48 million each, were soundly defeated tonight. The NEA amendment was defeated by voice vote, while the NEH amendment was defeated by a recorded vote of 269-to-147

[\(See how your U.S. House Member voted\).](#)

Congressional Arts Caucus Co-Chair and Ranking Democrat of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee **Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME)** stated on the floor “The arts have an incredible value as a positive tool for economic development, education, and community building. The National Endowment for the Arts is the federal agency that funds, promotes, and strengthens the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans diverse opportunities for arts participation. This small but mighty agency supports arts organizations and artists in every congressional district in the country.”

Chairman of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee **Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID)** also opposed the amendments and stated “I’ve seen what the NEA and NEH do in Idaho and across the country. Communities we represent have access to arts and art programs. I’m not worried about the arts in Washington, New York or Los Angeles. But I am worried about the arts in Shelly, Idaho, a small town. They have an arts council. And they do a great job. I continue to see the impact that funding has to small communities to help with their arts councils.”

Arts champion **Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)** also stood up to oppose the bill by adding “The Republican majority has made unacceptable cuts in this bill in the arts and humanities.”

Thank you for your successful arts advocacy efforts. Next, we wait to see what happens on Thursday in the Senate!

Nina Ozlu Tunceli

Executive Director, Arts Action Fund

Chief Counsel of Government and Public Affairs, Americans for the Arts

Perrin Stifel's

GUFFAW OF THE MONTH

Half a Lemon

The other day a new neighbor came by and asked for half a lemon. I said OK and got the half lemon. He quickly ran away before I could ask why he needed it. I was curious.

The next day he came back again and asked for half a lemon. I gave it to him and before I could ask what it was for, he ran away. Then, he came back again for a 3rd time, and I told him I'd get it, but I wanted to know what he was using it for. He said he needed it right away and I gave it to him, and he ran away even faster. I even ran after him, but he was too fast.

The following day, I was ready for him and sure enough, he came back to ask for half a lemon. I said I would give it to him only if he told me what it was for. He said OK but only if I promised never to tell anyone. I said OK. He told me and I couldn't believe it! I would tell you what it was for, but I can't break my promise . . .

A POCKET OF MO-TELL HISTORY



Bermuda Elementary School Librarian and Storyteller Sandra Roberts showing love to Storytellers Jackie and Glenn "Papa" Wright at Tellabration 2005 Saturday @ Union Avenue Christian Church and Arts Outreach Organization

I believe this Tellabration! was sponsored by MO-TELL. Isn't this your church, Perrin?

I found this newspaper clipping from 2005 yesterday. It is from the St. Louis American Newspaper (covers local, national and international news, sports, arts, business and health in the Black Community.) I can't remember if we were telling that night or just in the audience. I do remember taking this picture with Sandra Roberts for the photographer from the newspaper.

Jackie

THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

Sink your teeth and claws into our monthly publication now



A new free E-Publication the 15th of each month

While you explore, consider submitting stories, articles, poems, and art.



STORYBEAST.ORG/ARCHIVE



Sue Hinkel presents: Tips for Telling

WRITING THROUGH STORYTELLING by The Joy of Storytelling - Diann Joy Bank

A storyteller is one who tells stories. The best way to learn to tell or write a story is to **JUST DO IT!** Remember, you are as unique as your own thumbprint!

STORYTELLING TIPS:

1. Choose a story you really like.
2. Visualize your story
 - a. Setting - where? smells? sounds?
 - b. Characters - age? appearance? voice?
 - c. Crisis - sequence major events
 - d. Resolution - solve the conflict
(invent different endings to the story)
3. Use your eye contact with your listeners
4. Have your audience be CO-TELLERS through participation
 - a. Use sounds (squeaking doors, howling wind, animals)
 - b. Use movements (clapping, flying, sneezing)
 - c. Use chants and repetitive phrases (walking, walking, walking through the woods; Do you see what I see?)
5. EXAGGERATE your voice and movements
6. RELAX - ENJOY -- DON'T WORRY!!!
(If you forget a part of the story, just add it on and say, "and don't forget about.....or I almost forgot to tell you....").

WRITING TIPS:

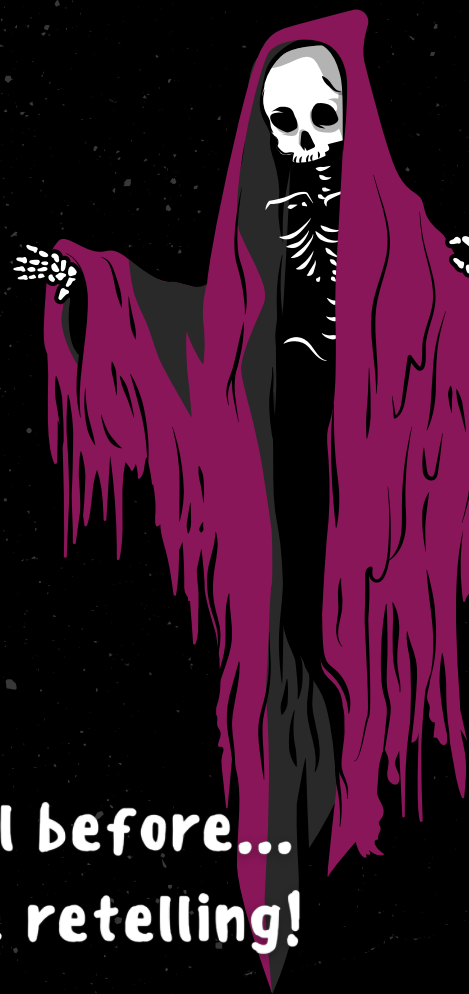
1. Re-write the story from another point of view
2. Take one of the characters and create a new story for him \ her
3. Change one of the characters and see how the story plays out
4. What happened before the story began? Explain in writing
5. Create a new ending or extend the storyline
6. Create new dialogue
7. Write an up-to-date version of the story
8. Write a letter to one of the characters, praising them, criticizing them, giving them advice, etc.....
9. Go to the library and research information on the people, customs, and history of the country your story comes from.



HAUNTINGS

10 SEPTEMBER 2024

7PM ZOOM



We've heard it all before...
We rejoice in the retelling!

A BIT OF MO-TELL HISTORY

MO-TELL MEMORIES OF COISETTA "COSY" WRIGHT

You ask, "How did I find my way into storytelling and MO-TELL?" And my first thought was, "that's a good question" especially for someone who spent twenty-one years in the military. But as I thought about it, there were lots of moments and events that brought smiles or laughter to my military experience. In some cases, they were the seeds for a MO-TELL "Liars Contest Story." I remember the day I reported to my basic training camp, the young airman, who came to escort the four new cadets to the camp was the spitting image of Barney Fife from the Andy

Griffin TV sitcom, or Beetle Bailey from the comic strips. He was this skinny little guy who had this look of fear in his eyes, like any moment he was going to burst into tears. And he had about 4 or 5 little pieces of white tape all over his face, covering his shaving cuts. I could hear myself quietly screaming inside my head, "OH MY GOD, WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MY SELF INTO!" But I made it, and I stayed in until I could retire.

My twenty-one years in the military went by relatively quickly and since I was in the National Guard, I was able to have a civilian job at the same time. I started teaching at Eugene Field School, an elementary school, located in the Central West. It was while I was at Field that I enrolled in a workshop entitled, Storytelling Across the Curriculum, which was held at the Learning Center. The workshop instructor was non other than Janet (January) Kiefer. She was an outstanding instructor and storyteller. I fell in love with storytelling and the different ways I could use storytelling in my classroom to enhance my teaching. January also introduced the class to resources in the community, such as St. Louis Gateway Storytellers, who met for dinner at the Salad Bowl (Good food) along with a group of talented storytellers that would become mentors & lifelong friends. There was the National Storytelling Network (NSN), Missouri Storytelling, Inc. (MO-TELL) with Tellabration!, and the St. Louis Storytelling Festival. There were monthly storytelling events and state park storytelling opportunities.

Although I have not been a member of MO-TELL for a very long time, I've attended a number of their functions and I have volunteered with several activities. In July of 2019, I was excited and thrilled to submit an entry into the Liars Contest and even more thrilled to have come in 2nd place with my written story "Mr. Cheetah and the Chicken." The Liars Contest was held in Columbia, MO on July 13, 2019. I was invited to read my lie to the story listeners and other liars, so I traveled to Columbia. My story was well received, and I was delighted. Maybe next year will be my turn to get 1st place in the Liars Contest, with a story about a very young and frighten airman who makes a career in the military and retires as a General after a long career in service to his country.

God Bless Our Country!

GOING TO A MISSOURI STATE PARK? NOW YOU KNOW WHICH ONE & WHEN! SUPPORT MISSOURI STORYTELLING!



2024 MO-TELL STORYTELLER STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITES LIST

PARK/SITE	EVENT	DATE/TIME	STORYTELLER
WAKONDA SP	SPOOKTACULAR EVENT	10/26/24	GARY & LINDA KUNTZ
LAKE OZARK SP	STORIES	6/15/24/ 7PM	RICH WHITE
MASTODON SP	STORIES	7/25/24/ 7 PM	ERIC HAYNES
BENNETT SPRING SP	ANNIVERSARY EVENT	10/05/24	MIKE & NANCEE MICHAM
HUNTER-DAWSON SP	FRENCH/SPANISH TRAPPERS	9/28/24/ 1 PM	SARAH POFF
ONONDAGA CAVE SP	HALLOWEEN EVENT	10/25/24	RAELENE CROSTER
ROBERTSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY, HIGGINSVILLE, MO	PLANETS	7/23/24/ 1 PM	FRAN STALLINGS
HAHA TONKA SP	TBD	6/14/24	JIM "TWO CROWS" WALLEN
MONTALUK SP	TBD	TBD	HEATHER HARLAN
POMME DE TERRE SP	HALLOWEEN EVENT	10/19/24	SHERRY NORFOLK

2024 MO-TELL QUILT RAFFLE

AS A PART OF OUR FUNDRAISING, MO-TELL HAS A WONDERFUL QUILT TO RAFFLE. THIS HAND PIECED QUILT BY MARSHA STIFEL MELLENDORF IS AN IRISH CHAIN PATTERN IN RED AND NAVY WITH SQUARES HAVING MULTI-COLORED FLOWERS ON A NAVY BACKGROUND. THE FIELD IS "CIVIL WAR MUSLIN TAN" COLOR.

THE QUILT IS PROFESSIONALLY MACHINE-STITCHED IN AN OVERALL OAK LEAF PATTERN. THIS TWIN-SIZED QUILT MEASURES 52" X 80". THE BACKING IS A WHEAT PRINT, AND THE QUILT HAS A SLEEVE THAT MAKES IT PERFECT AS A WALL HANGING.

TICKETS FOR THE RAFFLE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

ONE TICKET FOR \$5,
THREE TICKETS FOR \$10,
FIVE TICKETS FOR \$15,
AND TEN TICKETS FOR \$20.

MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A MAILING REGARDING THE RAFFLE. EMAIL LINDA KUNTZ AT LINDAKKUNTZ@YAHOO.COM IF YOU NEED MORE RAFFLE TICKETS.

PLEASE HELP IN THIS ENDEAVOR TO FULFILL THE MO-TELL MISSION AS WE PARTNER WITH THE MISSOURI STATE PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES.

TICKETS ARE FOR SALE NOW THROUGH SEPTEMBER 9. YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.

THE DRAWING FOR THE QUILT WILL BE AT THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 MO-TELL ZOOM PROGRAM "HAUNTINGS." THE WINNER WILL BE NOTIFIED THROUGH EMAIL.

MO-TELL BOARD
JOYCE SLATER, PRESIDENT
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LINDA KUNTZ, SECRETARY
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GARY KUNTZ, MEMBER-AT-LARGE
GLEN "PAPA" WRIGHT, MEMBER-AT-LARGE
PERRIN STIFEL, EMERITUS



TELLERS!
YOU WANT WORK?

**MO-TELL BRINGS
YOU GIGS!**

REN FESTIVAL OPPORTUNITY

VIA FLAVIA EVERMAN

I'm writing to see if you could send out a message about storytelling at the **St. Louis Renaissance Festival**. I'm the coordinator and we are looking at filling 2 more days during the run of the Faire. **Payment is \$100/day with a free sandwich and drink for lunch.** There are **5 telling slots of about 30 minutes each during the day.** *Storytellers need to be present for all 5 slots. A costume is a must* (but could even be a pirate costume). Stories don't necessarily have to be period, but we are one of the only clean acts in the afternoon, so they count on our stage to be filled for the children. The dates I have available are **Sunday, October 20** and **Saturday, October 26.** *If anyone is interested or has more questions, please contact me.*

Flavia Everman

636-456-3550

flaviaev@gmail.com

MO-TELL MEMBERS!

IT'S SUMMER! TRAVELED?



SHOW US WHERE YOU'VE GONE THIS SUMMER FROM OVERSEAS TO OVERLAND TO JUST OVER THERE!

TAKE A SELFIE OR GROUP PHOTO WITH YOUR MO-TELL SWAG OR THE REGISTER OPEN ON YOUR PHONE AND WE'LL SHARE IT IN AN UPCOMING PAGE IN THE NEWSLETTER.

BE SURE TO TELL US YOUR NAME, THE NAMES OF THE FOLKS WITH YOU, AND WHERE YOU ARE SO YOU CAN BE A LITTLE FAMOUS IN OUR EVER-WIDENING MO-TELL CIRCLE.

SEND TO MOTELLNEWS@GMAIL.COM

DON'T KEEP YOUR ADVENTURES TO YOURSELF, SILLY.

MO-TELL 'ROUND THE WORLD



MO-TELLER, FLAVIA EVERMAN, IN RWANDA



[Performance Options and Opportunities \(Zoom\)](#)

Tue, Aug 13 2024 6:30pm - 8:00pm Central Story Center Event **Virtual Event**

Learn from Lisa Overholser, the Field Specialist in Community Development for University of Missouri Extension, about matching venues, gigs, and audiences to your storytelling content and style.

EVENT DETAILS REGISTER NOW

[Story Swap \(Hybrid\)](#)

Thu, Aug 15 2024 6:30pm - 8:00pm Story Center Programming Room Story Center Event Registration Required

This open-mic storytelling event is open to anyone! Put your name in the hat for a chance to share a seven-minute story, or just come to enjoy the show.

EVENT DETAILS REGISTER NOW

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

Mon, Aug 19 2024 6:30pm - 8:00pm Central Story Center Event **Virtual Event**

Entrepreneurial expert Kimberly Beer will teach you how to cultivate a brand that speaks to your audience as a writer or storyteller.

EVENT DETAILS REGISTER NOW

THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF 2024'S WINNING LIARS CONTEST LIES (WRITTEN CATEGORY)

TIED FOR 1ST PLACE **THE LEAP** BY KEN WOLFE

Trying to reconcile with people from your past can be dangerous, take it from me.

See, I grew up in a small town. Not much to do but make the lives of the nerds in my school more miserable than mine.

I tormented Louis all through gym class. I made Martin dread coming to school. And this one kid named Clark was a favorite target of mine. We called him "Clark the Narc," such a goody-goody. He was a nobody in our school, nothing special, and yet he stuck out like a sore thumb. Smart enough, I guess. He was always dreaming out loud about moving to the city and making it big in business. We mocked him for it. No one got out of our dinky little town in the corn fields and we wanted to make sure he didn't get the idea of being the first. I guess I was jealous of his ambition and potential cause I made his life pretty awful. I was a real jerk to him. Made fun of his farm clothes. Ripped 'em more than once. Threw him up against lockers, gave him "swirlies" in the toilet, shot him hard with those rubber-banded "paper wasps" in class. Humiliated him every chance I could when girls were present. Poor guy.

Yeah, it's bothered me ever since, my stupid abusive teenage self coming down so hard on Clark. When Facebook came around, my guilt made me look him up. Sure enough, I found him. And, sure enough, he was in the big city, rising in the ranks of the big-time media. I guess, anyway. He was doing better than I was, me trying to sell tires from the gas station I worked at as a teenager.

So, I bit the bullet and I messaged him. Gave him my cell number and, DUDE, he called me.

I was shocked that he responded and was actually friendly to me. He said that he definitely remembered me. I figured he'd verbally give me the bird and tell me to "kiss off" or "get bent," but he was actually really nice. We talked for a while. At the end, he said I should text him when I was in town, down his way and we'd get a beer. Couldn't believe it. It was like none of it had happened.

So, a few weeks later, I'm in the city on a delivery from my shop, and I figure, "Why not look him up?" I texted and we arranged to meet in a place across from his work for a burger and a beer.

I didn't wait long. I hadn't seen him since high school and I didn't recognize him hardly. He'd gotten big. Like, really solid. I thought maybe that my torture might have motivated him to go work out. Looked like he knew how to handle himself, for sure, though I never knew him to fight. I was impressed and I told him so, and then I apologized. He took it well, and nodded his forgiveness, and we sat and ate and chewed the fat for an hour or so. The longer I spent with him, the worse I felt for how I'd treated him, and the more I couldn't believe that he was willing to let bygones be bygones.

We started talking about his job, and he mentioned how much he'd learned about the city and its

architecture. It was interesting enough. And then he said that the building he worked in was special, in fact, and had this one crazy quirk. He said that it was designed aerodynamically by aerospace engineers and situated on the street in a particular way. He said that on a windy day the gusts came down the canyon of buildings on that street and roared up against his building, channeling wind to the very top. The story was, he said, the building was intended as a mooring place for zeppelins back in the day, and the rush would support those huge things. But then the war happened and, duh, no zeppelins ever arrived.

Still, that windy rush, he said, was so powerful that if you opened a window on the 14th floor and jumped out, the wind would scoop you back up to a balcony on the 16th floor where he worked. People have done it, he said. In 1929, that very thing saved some stockbrokers' lives, he said. "Bunch of guys and I did it drunk last New Year's," he said. "It really works!"

"That's a lie," I said. "There's no way."

"It's not a lie. It's a fact," he protested.

"Yah? Prove it!" I challenged him.

"I'll show you myself," he said. He got up and hustled us out of the deli and to his building across the street.

We took the elevator to the 14th floor and he strode right through this accounting firm, me trying to keep up with him. As we passed, people were getting up and following, asking each other if someone was gonna try The Leap. The Leap, they called it.

So, he opened the window wide and he stepped up into the casement and he waited.

"You have to time it just right," he said. We all stood there, watching his hands grip the sides of the glass and not believing he'd actually jump. The wind rose, alright. A huge gust! Clark said, "Yup. Now." And he was gone. The ladies yelped.

I rushed to the window and looked out and, sure enough, he was falling. I couldn't believe I was going to watch him die. But he slowed, and tumbled in mid-air, and he seemed to catch his balance somehow, couched in a net of wind. To our amazement, he rose lightly past the window and kept going up, up, up! I craned my neck out the window and couldn't believe my eyes. Two flights up, he had landed on his feet on the balcony on the 16th floor, hair a little messed up, but he'd kept his glasses on. He waved to me and the cheering accountants and shrugged. "See?" he yelled down to me. "Whaddaya think?"

"I can't believe it!" I called back. "It happens every time?"

"Nah, the timing has to be right," he called, serious now. "You wanna go? I'll tell you when. You gotta go EXACTLY when I say, though. Climb up!"

The crowd behind me urged me on, spurred me up into the window, I figured if it worked for

him, big as he was, it HAD to work for me. And before I knew it I was teetering there halfway out a window fourteen floors up, white-knuckled, waiting for the signal to jump.

“This is stupid, this is stupid, this is stupid...” I was saying when Clark yelled down, “Now! Go! Go! GO!”

So I leapt.

I fell. And I kept falling. The only wind I felt was the breeze I was slicing through. No great gust caught me and held me up. The ground was coming up fast! I could see people watching me come down. Some lady screamed. This was it. I was gonna die. I closed my eyes.

With a jolt that wrenched my eyes open again, a stiff trampoline of an awning over the sidewalk bodega below kinda broke my fall as I broke through it. I came down to street level hard, pile-driving into wooden shelves of fresh fruit on display. I wrecked it all and myself.

No gusty zephyr buoyed me to the 16th floor. I guess I jumped late. Timing was off. And so no zeppelin wind stopped me from shattering both my legs, fracturing my skull, splintering my pelvis, and spending eighteen months in hospital and rehab. And, besides all that, now I can't STAND fresh fruit.

Y'know, I'm glad that Clark forgave me for being cruel to him and said he didn't hold a grudge against me at all, but I'll tell you something: despite what he says he knows all about the architecture of the Daily Bugle building, Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter, can NOT read the wind like he says he can.

Now that I think about it, maybe he didn't forgive me after all.

He didn't even send flowers.

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Encore Story of the Month

WHO GOES FIRST INTO HEAVEN

AS RETOLD BY DIANN JOY BANK FROM HER BOOK, A POT OF MITZVOT: 18 JEWISH FOLKTALES

The gate angel in heaven stood at the entrance holding his large golden-bound book. Inside his book was a list of every soul that had lived on earth. Dressed in his white flowing gown, standing on a floor of white soft clouds, the gate angel's long white hair was blowing softly in the gentle breeze.

Standing side by side stood three souls that had just arrived at the gates of heaven. The gate angel announced, "I must decide who is the most holy to enter heaven first. It is the highest honor to go first into heaven."

The gate angel opened his book to see what was written about each soul's life on earth. The three souls stood patiently waiting to hear the gate angel's decision. Then the angel asked each soul, "Tell me, what was your highest mitzvah--good deed--when you lived on earth?"

One soul, the most learned, was a student of Torah and Talmud-- Jewish most sacred books. The second soul was the most observant in his daily way of life. The third soul, wearing a flowered apron, looked at the angel with a sweet smile and said, "I was a Bubbe--Jewish grandma--to all the children in my shtetl--Jewish village."

The learned soul wore a worn shirt and pants and carried a heavy backpack filled with books. He stepped close to the gate angel's face, folded his arms and began to brag. "I am the most pious of all. From morning till night, I studied all the Jewish books of learning. I never let anyone come into my home for idle talk. I never wasted my time to even walk outside. I deserve to be the first to enter heaven," boasted the learned student.

The next soul, the observant one, wearing his kippah--Jewish observant skullcap--and tallis--Jewish prayer shawl--that hung down to his knees, stepped forward and stared into the gate angel's eyes. Holding his siddur,--Jewish prayer book--he shouted, "I deserve to enter heaven first. I am the most observant. Did I ever miss saying my prayers three times a day at shul--Jewish synagogue? Never!" He continued to bellow for all to hear, "I was never distracted nor spoke to anyone at shul. Did I ever miss observing each and every Jewish holiday to its fullest? Never! I am the most pious of all."

The Bubbe stood silently. Her face had soft wrinkles. There was a twinkle in her eyes, and she had a glowing smile. She spoke in a gentle voice, "I'm neither a learned soul nor an observant soul. I gathered all the children to teach them how to plant a garden to grow food for those that were hungry in our shtetl. Each day I taught them to take care of G-d's creatures. I don't need to go first into heaven." After the Bubbe spoke, the gate angel saw a joyous look in her eyes.

The gate angel closed his large golden bound book. To the learned soul, he asked, "Did you ever invite anyone to your home to teach them one of the holy books of learning?" Not speaking a word, the student held his head down, shaking it from side to side.

To the observant soul, the gate angel asked, "Did you ever invite someone from your shul for a meal at your home?" He also held his head down, shaking it from side to side, not saying a word.

Then the gate angel turned toward the old Bubbe and said, "Bubbe, you are the humblest. To learn to be humble is the highest mitzvah of all. You deserve to enter first through the gates of heaven." And so, she did.

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.

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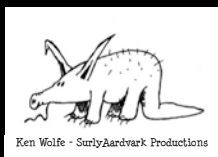
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Volume 7, Newsletter 8

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