Twenty years ago I attended my first FSA Story Camp held at Camp Lake Yale. I vividly remember watching, along with 200 other captivated listeners, as Jay O’Callahan performed his long form story, *The Dance*. He made us laugh, cry, and feel deeply. And, somehow the turbulent world of adolescence made a little more sense when he was finished. I had never experienced anything quite like it before. And I was hooked. I have returned year after year for the workshops, the evening performances, the promising youth tellers, the casual story swaps, and, most of all, the camaraderie of storytellers and listeners.

The 2016 Florida Storytelling Festival lineup with Donald Davis, Janice Del Negro, Robyn Rennick, Kuniko Yamamoto and Mary Kelly promises to be another dynamic weekend bringing together tellers and listeners from across the state to celebrate the power of well told stories.

In addition to this incredible weekend, FSA members are busy throughout the year. We are a vital and active part of all Florida communities, donating our services in the public schools, libraries, expanding literacy and teaching the art of storytelling though our Youthful Voices program. Our members regularly give of their time and talent to community centers, nursing homes, hospitals, boys and girls clubs, and more.

FSA continues to adapt to meet the needs of our community. We have set some ambitious goals for the upcoming year. We are in the process of creating a vibrant new look for FSA which honors the rich tradition of storytelling and incorporates the energy of the modern storytelling movement. This will include an enhanced website which is easy to navigate and full of useful information. We are also implementing a House Concert series bringing state and national tellers into the intimate setting of a living room near you! In addition, our Youthful Voices program is expanding to cultivate and support our youngest Florida tellers.

Included in this issue is the 2014-15 Fiscal Year budget. You can see that membership dues and festival registrations along with funding from grants and sponsorships enable us to cover our festival and operating expenses. But we need your help to meet our goals to do even more!

Our Let’s Grow funding campaign is off to a successful start. A special thank you to all the members who have generously donated! In just two weeks, we have raised almost thirty-five percent of our $3,000 goal. Please consider the important role FSA has in your storytelling life and in the larger community – and make a contribution to help us continue to grow and serve. Send your donation directly to FSA or use the button on our website at www.flstory.com. Thank you for making FSA the amazing organization it is!

Let’s Grow!
Robin Schulte, FSA President
The 32nd Florida Storytelling Festival will take place March 31 – April 3, 2016. Mark your calendar now and plan to be in Mount Dora for yet another great weekend of storytelling. We’ll have an outstanding line-up of featured storytellers that bring a wonderfully diverse palette of tales and expertise.

We’ll be posting festival updates to the FSA Facebook page so if you’re on Facebook be sure to “like” our page and get all the latest news. We’ll also use our new FSA listserv and our e-newsletter. Be sure you’ve got the fsa@flstory.com email address in your contacts so the news doesn’t land in your junk folder.

**Introducing Our 2016 Roster of Featured Storytellers!**

**Donald Davis**

A favorite in our Florida storytelling community, Donald Davis returns for an encore visit. Davis grew up hearing gentle fairy tales, simple and silly Jack tales, scary mountain lore, ancient Welsh and Scottish folk-tales, and-most importantly-nourishing true-to-life stories of his own neighbors and kin. For Donald Davis, storytelling is a way of giving and living life. He invites each listener to come along, to pull deep inside for one’s own stories, to personally share and co-create the common experiences that celebrate the creative spirit. For Donald Davis storytelling “…is not what I do for a living…it is how I do all that I do while I am living.” www.ddavisstoryteller.com

**Janice Del Negro**

Janice M. Del Negro, PhD, is a storyteller, author, educator, and coach. Her newest storytelling book, *Folktales Aloud: Practical Tips for Playful Storytelling*, was published by the American Library Association in 2014; her latest recording is *Fortune’s Daughters: Ghost Tales and Folktales*. Del Negro has been a featured speaker, storyteller, and workshop leader at the National Storytelling Festival, the Society for Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, the Illinois Storytelling Festival, the Mariposa Storytelling Festival, the Tejas Storytelling Festival, and many other celebratory events. Janice is a board member of Illinois Storytelling, Inc. and an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois.
Mary J Kelly
Mary is a professional actress, storyteller, and creativity consultant. She makes use of expressive vocalizations and visually exciting physical movements to create a cavalcade of characters that reflect historical and contemporary attitudes. Mary believes that the humanity in all us comes to life in the oral traditions and everyone has a treasure house of stories to be told. As she says, “we share the same joys and tears – that oneness comes through in our stories. We storytellers are keepers of our cultural history, traditions and values. “

Robyn Rennick
From humorous family tales, neighborhood gossip and pure fabrications to accounts of spirits from beyond touching this world to The Gospel According to the Southern Woman, Robyn spins tales that can make you laugh, cause you to cry, or just stop and think of the thin veil that separates this life from the spirit life. Robyn started writing stories in the 90’s and reading them to residents in a retirement center. Then she went to her first Storytelling Festival. “I decided I could never read a story again. I needed to “tell” them.”

Kuniko Yamamoto
A native of Japan, Kuniko Yamamoto began performing professionally in her hometown of Osaka where she grew up studying traditional dance, music and theater. In the United States she studied with highly respected mime and actor, Tony Montanaro. A passionate origami folder, for the last two decades she has toured throughout the United States, presenting lavish stage illusions and bringing ancient tales to life.
www.kunikotheater.com
“The Youthful Voices program was established in 2001 in honor of Virginia Rivers, who believed in the power stories have on our youth. Every year, through the Youthful Voices Storytelling Contest, youth ages 6-18 compete to perform on the main stage at the annual Florida Storytelling Festival. The selected Youthful Voices and an adult chaperone receive the Virginia Rivers Scholarship to attend the Florida Storytelling Festival. As a result of the knowledge, inspiration, and encouragement received at Florida Storytelling Festival, many of our recipients have performed in other regional, state, and national competitions and festivals. No matter what paths our young tellers take, their storytelling skills will provide a bright light to lead the way.”

- Florida Storytelling Association

Three Youthful Voices students, Molly Ellis, Mekeia Butler and Shannan Adams have been recipients of the Virginia Rivers Scholarship for FSA. They have recently been chosen to perform their stories at the National Youth Storytelling Showcase in Utah! They will be flying to Orem, Utah in September to be a part of the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival and Conference. Here’s a link to the homepage for the event. [http://timpfest.org/events/timpanogos-storytelling-conference-2015/](http://timpfest.org/events/timpanogos-storytelling-conference-2015/)

**Shannan Adams** is 11 years old and going into sixth grade at Orange Grove Magnet School of the Arts. She has been an Ambassador Storyteller with the Tampa/Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival for three years. Shannan performed at the 2014 Florida Storytelling Festival. Traveling throughout Florida, she has told stories at the Florida Folk Festival, and the Miami Book Fair, International. In May 2015, Shannan won first place at the Rotary Day Storytelling Contest. She is proud to be a storyteller and shares her gift and passion for storytelling at every opportunity. *See Oona and the Giant*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZj-m09SzkU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZj-m09SzkU)

**Mekeia Butler** lives in Brandon, and is 16 years old. Mekeia won an FSA Virginia Rivers scholarship in 2014. She is a student at Blake High School for the Performing Arts. She is also a Hillsborough County Storytelling Ambassador and has represented the Florida Storytelling Association at the Florida Folk Festival and the Miami Book Fair International. Mekeia writes many of her own stories. Watch her story: “Jamal and the Three Wishes” [https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mekeia++jamal](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mekeia++jamal)
Molly Ellis is from Gainesville and has been telling stories for 5 years. In 2012, she was selected as Florida Storytelling Association’s Youthful Voice. She has made numerous appearances in festivals. Molly will start the 10th grade in fall of 2015. She has achieved honors in her classes and the Arts Conservatory Program. She has appeared in 15 drama productions and has competed with her school thespian program where she has won numerous awards. In 2014, Molly won an exemplary award in the theater program. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsOOnn9ZnkA&feature=youtu.be

Kudos to them, their parents and to all the storytelling coaches who support them! Florida is growing another generation of tellers and is doing a fabulous job of passing along the legacy of story. They are all three working hard to make the trip to Timpanagos in September. You can offer financial support by contributing to their fundraising links below.

Additionally, if you are a youthful voices coach and know of events around the state that include youthful voices, please share that on the FSA listserve, or share on our Facebook page. The more we share, the more we are connected. Start grooming youthful tellers from your area to compete for a Virginia River’s Scholarship now so that we can see them next spring at the Florida Storytelling Festival! Visit the FSA website to learn more.

Shannan Adams:
Donations can be made online at: https://fundly.com/shannan-adams-to-national-youth-storytelling-showcase
or you may send a check to: Robert Adams (Shannan’s dad)
206 S. Ward St.
Tampa, FL 33609

Mekeia Butler:
Donations can be made by check to: Marlena Jones (Mekeia’s mother)
2407 Goodberry Pl. Apt # 103
Brandon, Florida 33510

Molly Ellis:
Donations can be made by going to http://www.gofundme.com/tzfqdk
or send check to: Molly Ellis
P.O. Box 141776
Gainesville, FL 32614
Molly and Her Music Makers, the popular opening night act at the Florida Storytelling Festival, will now become part of Sunday morning’s Stories From the Heart concert. Molly, and her group, have generously shared their talents with us, in large part due to her lifelong friendship with Annette Bruce.

It is fitting that Molly and Her Music Makers move to become part of the weekend event that celebrates goodness, inspiration and generosity of spirit.

What to do about the hugely popular Friday night concert?

Belmont and Jones will open the Friday night concert at the 2016 Florida Storytelling Festival. They are a treat for the ears, eyes and heart of the most discriminating blues lover.

The Belmont and Jones Traveling Show originates dually from Tallahassee and New Orleans. Steeped in the tradition of the great American blues repertoire, their passion for this genre is obvious. So is their integrity, skill and amazing talent.

Belmont sings and plays his National guitar while Jones’ guitar work and stunning vocals authentically bring to life the great blues of American music.

American music historian, George Mitchell, describes them as “Only the best traditional down home country blues duo out there”.

It’s not too early to put it on your calendar – Belmont and Jones on Friday night, April 1st at 7p.m. in the main tent of the 2016 Florida Storytelling Festival. Molly and Her Music Makers on Sunday April 3rd at 10a.m.
The upcoming Toastmasters District 48 2015 Fall Conference will hold its first ever Tall Tale Contest in lieu of the Humorous Speech Contest that it usually features. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Toastmasters, it is an organization for the improvement of public speaking skills, among which is storytelling. District 48 includes clubs from St. Petersburg and Tampa on down to Fort Myers and Naples.

The tall tale, although also humorous, is unique in the rules and techniques used to achieve its humor. Some education was in order.

The district offered a tall tale workshop at its Spring Conference this May in Tampa. Participants learned about the history and characteristics of tall tales, and explored the work of Bil Lepp, five-time winner of the West Virginia Liars’ Contest and nationally renowned storyteller. Then participants worked together to come up with premises that would be the basis for good tall tales.

The premises were quite creative and imaginative. One premise was a plan for a doughnut farm, with groves for different kinds of doughnuts - chocolate covered, glazed, or sprinkles. The seeds used to plant the doughnuts were Cheerios. Another man told about a parrot he had bought to practice his speeches with. The parrot began to critique him. He took the parrot to a club meeting. The parrot joined the club, gave a speech, and won the prize for best speaker. The workshop is to be repeated in Sarasota on June 25th, in Bonita on July 1st, and in Naples on July 15th.

The District also held a tall tale contest where contestants could get practice participating in such a contest. It was hosted by the Advanced Articulators, a Tampa club, on June 6, 2015. There were ten contestants. To see the results on the internet, Google Advanced Articulators - YouTube. The winning tellers were Adam Hsu and Keith Connes. Another practice tall tale contest will be held by Fort Myers Toastmasters on August 1st.

Toastmasters tall tale events will create an awareness and appreciation of storytelling in Southwest Florida.

A storytelling concert by Bil Lepp at the Alliance for the Arts, a Fort Myers organization that supports the arts in Lee County has also been scheduled.

Since Bil is the king of the tall tale, this will be a culmination of the tall tale events that Toastmasters District 48 is sponsoring in Southwest Florida. Bil will be performing on Thursday evening, February 25, 2016.

It will be the perfect link between Toastmasters and the world of storytelling.
This year was the 20\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of the Gamble Rogers Festival held in St. Augustine May 2-3 and for the first time in many years, there was a stage dedicated to storytelling. Rogers was a master performer of ballads who accompanied himself with Travis-style guitar finger picking and told his own humorous tales of the fictitious Oklawaha County. He was the inspiration for the founding members of the Tale Tellers of St. Augustine to get together on a regular basis and explore the art of storytelling. The organization hosted the stage on Sunday and regularly presents concerts for the public.

Weather was wonderful for the excellent performances by this year’s tellers- Twila Fleming Hudson, Harold Lock, Margaret Kaler, Joyce Sabato, Kaye Byrnes, Madeline Pots, Jane & Jane Sims: The Storytelling Sims, Chris Kastle, Robin Schulte, Backintyme, Betty Fell, MJ Harris, Drew Sappington, Kathy Duffy. We look forward to continuing the tradition next year.
Florida Loses Two Legendary Leaders

Betsy Hayba died May 29, 2015, in The Villages, FL. Betsy's love of storytelling touched so many people's lives. She taught storytelling at Wright State University in Dayton, OH, including graduate level "Storytelling for Multiple Cultures," and "The Art & Technique of Storytelling." While living in Dayton, Betsy and her husband founded and directed "Terrifying Tales," an outdoor Halloween storytelling festival held each year.

After moving to The Villages, Betsy joined the TALES Storytelling Guild and the Ocala Storytelling Guild. Members never knew exactly what she would tell when her turn came, but knew there would always be a laugh or perhaps a question as to whether what she told was true. After all, she loved the liars' competition and was always very good at it. Betsy was also an English teacher, writer, artist, singer, traveler, wife, mother of three, grandmother and of course, good friend. Storyteller Ann Scroggie said it best when remembering Betsy, "She carried the storytelling torch for all of us. Our loss is Heaven's gain."

Margaret Lawrence left this earth on June 20, 2015. She was born in Boulder, Co and attended the University of Boulder. Margaret’s engineer husband whisked her away to a life of international travel, and that led to Margaret’s love of world folktales. Eventually, Daytona Beach became their home.

Margaret was a novelist (Seven Thunders, 1974), playwright (Tiger Tales) and a storyteller. She served as president of the Florida Storyteller Guild (our early incarnation) and produced Sandcastle Storytellers’ Tellebration for many years. Margaret taught storytelling at the Elder Institute of Daytona Beach Community College. She was a wife, a mother, a grandmother who will be missed by her family.

Margaret was also a warm, welcoming mentor to storytellers throughout Florida. Pat Nease told us, “Margaret Lawrence was one of the first to befriend me when I started coming to camp. Always kind. Always interested in what you were doing. She was my mentor. We've lost another dear.”

Consider honoring these two marvelous women by dedicating a story to them this summer.
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800-327-1796

FSA Round-up

Where There’s Smoke, There’s Dinner
Stories of a Seared Childhood
with Regi Carpenter

Two Florida House Concerts

• Wednesday August 19
  7:30 p.m.
  At the home of Madeline Pots, Winter Park
  Contact:
  Madeline@MadelineLPots.com
  for tickets

• Friday August 21
  7:00 p.m.
  At the home of Schuyler Ford, Tallahassee
  Contact:
  StoriesHeal@gmail.com
  for tickets

A portion of the proceeds from these events will benefit the Florida Storytelling Association

StoryTimes Journal is published quarterly by Florida Storytelling Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Submit news, reflections and event info to: Schuyler Ford at StoriesHeal@gmail.com

Deadlines
September 15 for Fall Issue
December 15 for Winter Issue
March 15 for Spring Issue
June 15 for Summer Issue

NOTES & QUOTES

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.”

– PHILLIP PULLMAN