

STORY CIRCLES

Friday, June 18
Friday, July 16
1:00-3:00 PM
Brunner Farm House

NEXT MEETING

Friday, August 20
1:00-3:00 PM
Brunner Farm House

Spellbinders
WWW.SPELLBINDERS.ORG
of
Broomfield, Colorado
News for MAY, 2021

MONTHLY MEETING SUMMARY: LIVE & IN-PERSON!!!

After more than a year of Zoom meetings, a little wind and cool weather could not dampen the spirits of the sixteen Broomfield Spellbinders and one guest who met in-person on the back patio of the Brunner House on May 21, 2021. **Kay Landers** welcomed everyone, then turned the meeting over to **Kathy Daniels** who gave updates on the library and recent donations of books and magazines and gave everyone a copy of "The End," a charming story about stories. **Janis Lievens** asked for volunteers who might join her to share stories with the kindergarten and first grade classes at Coyote Ridge. **Denny Thompson** gave a summary of the annual Spellbinders



meeting and asked if the group would be interested in purchasing training videos offered by the keynote speaker. A vote was taken, and Denny will be reimbursed for this purchase [NOTE: Denny later learned that copyrights prevent him from sharing the materials.] Denny also noted Spellbinders began in-person storytelling to seniors at Highland Trail in May and will begin at San Marino in June. **Tom Tjarks** presented years of service ribbons to all the members present, acknowledging the wealth of talent and experience in this group. [See page 3 for a list of recipients' years of service.] **Wynn Montgomery** reported that a training session for new members is scheduled for August; see page 3 for details.



After the business part of the meeting was wrapped up, **Dan Keenan** had a chance to say his official goodbyes before he and his wife move to Florida later this summer. Dan spent over ten years as a valuable part of the Broomfield Spellbinders, leaving behind many fond memories and great stories. Denny presented Dan with a card and the groups' good wishes, which launched a series of reminiscences and "Dan Stories". He will be deeply missed.

Continued on page 2

Monthly Meeting Summary (continued from page 1)

As a follow-up to last month's meeting, willing Spellbinders were asked to come up with a three-to-five-minute personal story. Eleven tellers did just that, to the enjoyment of all. **Karen Green** kicked things off with her story of *Deanna*, the sister she did not know she had. **Sandy Hopper** had everyone laughing at her life jacket drill story, *Holiday Spirit Along the Seine-2018*. **Janis Lievens** reminisced about her sister's imaginary playmate, *Nanely Fingerknotts*. **Julie Toepper** laughed about her irrational childhood fears in *The Frog*. **Vivian Hamilton** told two short, humorous vignettes, *The Two Rays* (could it be the same person?) and *My Most Embarrassing Moment* (or why you should not crack the window on a coal train passing through a tunnel). **Ellen Klement** let her imagination go wild in *Tin Man*. **Sheila Brush** channeled her childhood frustrations brought on by her brothers in *My Name is Betty*. **Kathy Daniels** shared memories of her sister in *Bev Can't Cook*. **Wynn Montgomery** entertained with a tribute to his mother in *Mama's Worms*. **Kay Landers** channeled ghosts of birthdays past with *The Haunted House*. **Denny Thompson** closed out the storytelling with his groaner, *Whiskers the Cat*. We agreed to continue with monthly, in-person Story Circles during June and July at the Brunner House. Mark your calendar for the third Friday of those months at 1:00pm. You will have a chance to practice new stories, tweak old stories, or just listen to some great storytellers. Kay reminded us to email their teachers about next fall and, if you told virtually this year, to ask if they would complete the BCAH survey questions which Kay will provide in an email.

APRIL STORY CIRCLE

Seven Broomfield Spellbinders met virtually on Friday, April 30, to share stories and poems in various stages of development. **Julie Toepper** led off with her version of *The Gum Chewing Rattler*, by Joe Hayes. **Kay Landers** told a personal story she called *The Haunted House*. **Janny Darby** was a convincing teacher in her rendition of the poem *Budding Scholars* by April Halprin Wayland, found in *Sharing the Seasons – A Book of Poems* compiled by Lee Bennett Hopkins. **Ellen Klement** read a story she is thinking of developing, *The Path* (from *Chosen Tales: Stories Told by Jewish Storytellers* edited by Peninnah Schram). **Denny Thompson** read a poem called *The Night Wind* from *The Poems of Eugene Field (1910)*. Several thought the poem could be reworked into a fun story. **Wynn Montgomery** closed the meeting with his blending of stories from several sources, which he called *My Strange Pets*. The pets included a turtle (original story), a catfish (*My Pet Catfish* by Joe Hayes) and a rattlesnake (*My Pet Rattlesnake* by Joe Hayes).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- **Marc Brown** (June 10)
- **Judy Lloyd** (June 13)
- **Tom Tjarks** (June 16)
- **Cathy Lichty** (June 29)



By its very nature, storytelling is an improvisational art. As you learn and tell your story, you will gradually begin to shape the tale—to change and adapt it—to fit yourself and your listeners. Changing and adapting stories can be fun and entertaining for both the teller and the listener, but often the story simply cannot be told unless it is modified to fit the telling.

-Jimmy Neal Smith in *Homespun: Tales from America's Favorite Storytellers*

TRAINING SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST: HELP US RECRUIT

It has been two years since we trained any new volunteer storytellers, and it now appears that it is safe to resume our training efforts. Several excellent candidates have already expressed interest, but there is certainly room for more. The training will be at the Brunner Farm House from 1:00-4:00 on **August 16, 19, 23, and 26**. The trainers will be **Wynn Montgomery** and **Cathy Lichty**. Please post the flyer that accompanies this newsletter in appropriate places in your neighborhood—libraries, churches, recreation centers, grocery stores, etc. Even more important, however, talk to friends who you think could be good storytellers. Tell them how much fun YOU have. If they have any interest at all, have them call Wynn so that he can explain the pre-training requirements. Thanks in advance for your help.

YEARS OF SERVICE

Thirty-two of our dedicated storytellers have been Spellbinders volunteers for two years or more. Those who were at the meeting (*) received ribbons indicating their tenure. Thanks to the following members for the years of service indicated:

- Vivian Hamilton* (14)
- Janis Lievins* (13)
- Dan Keenan* (10)
- Kay Landers* (10)
- Judy Lloyd (10)
- Liz Ryan (10)
- Denny Thompson* (10)
- Wynn Montgomery* (9)
- Marc Brown (8)
- Ann Cress (8)
- Mary Ann Drury (8)
- Judy Kundert (8)
- Cathy Lichty (8)
- Linda Brotman-Evans (6)
- Vicki Tiedeman* (6)
- Janny Darby* (5)
- Marrton Dormish (5)
- Clark Mikkelsen (5)
- Gail Samuelson Erwin (5)
- Kathy Daniels* (4)
- Sandy Hopper* (3)
- Lisa McIntire (3)
- Ed Winograd* (3)
- Marilyn Bittner (2)
- Sheila Brush* (2)
- Karen Green* (2)
- Ellen Klement* (2)
- Jill Martus (2)
- Larry Riesburg (2)
- Julie Toepper* (2)
- Donna Whitaker (2)

THE ART OF STORYTELLING

The art galleries in Santa Fe, NM are filled figures of Native American storytellers. Here are some of the more interesting ones. Enjoy! *(photos by Blind Pig Pix)*



[SPELLBINDERS \(VIRTUAL\) ANNUAL MEETING WAS A SUCCESS](#)

On May 15, Spellbinders HQ hosted its second virtual Annual Meeting. It was attended by 50+ members (at least eight from Broomfield) and, after overcoming some early technical challenges, was both interesting and helpful. There were concurrent sessions, so no one could attend the entire meeting. With help from **Ellen Klement**, **Kay Landers**, **Denny Thompson**, and **Julie Toepper**, here is a summary:

- **State of Spellbinders (Cathy Lichty)**. As an all-volunteer organization, expenses were reduced by a factor of 10 (down to \$13K) and the bank balance is healthy. The network now includes ten independent 501(c)3 organizations plus two (including Broomfield) with fiscal sponsors and two out-of-state storytelling "clubs"—a total of 14 "licensees." The Board will meet in June to formally approve a new group of officers; members have volunteered to serve as Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and six Trustees. Denise Rucks will become Chair, and **Cathy Lichty** will become Treasurer.
- **Retention, Resurrection, and Recruiting**. Jim McCauley's Powerpoint presentation summarized (1) the challenges facing us as we attempt to re-engage those members who have been inactive while in-person telling was not possible and to return to the classrooms in 2021-22; (2) the importance of overcoming these challenges; and (3) some suggestions for doing so.
- **Creating Different Voices**. Jeni Goodnow told two illustrative stories and emphasized the importance of warming up your vocal apparatus before telling and maintaining proper posture. She offered suggestions for doing both, and noted the importance of breath control, body language, gestures, pacing, varying pitches, and use of authentic language. She suggested YouTube is an excellent resource for learning to incorporate accents.
- **KEYNOTE SPEAKER: "Humor in Storytelling."** Pres Vasilev (<https://PresSays.com>), the 2013 Toastmasters' World Champion of Public Speaking, said that the three most powerful aspects of humorous storytelling are funny faces, funny sounds, and "call-backs" (creating an "inside" joke that deepens our connection with audience). He then shared a story that demonstrated these techniques.
- **Virtual Storytelling Tools, Tips & Techniques**. Mitch Krayton offered suggestions for using our virtual "stage" more effectively. Here's hoping that we will not need these skills next year.
- **Puppets and Storytelling**, Shirley Stafford and Jean Mate provided options for using handmade and purchased puppets to enhance stories (especially for younger audiences).
- **Website Walkthrough**. Lisa Radford presented an overview of the new Spellbinders website, which be on a new platform that will allow for easier changes and updates. The section on "Stories" will be updated to facilitate searches.
- **KEYNOTE ENTERTAINMENT**. Atumpan African Storytellers (<https://www.atumpanedutainment.com>) wowed everyone with their stories and use of traditional African instruments, music, and humor. They suggested using musical chants when appropriate and getting listeners to participate by requiring them to give frequent feedback which helps to keep them engaged.
- **Engaging Your Audience with Music & Storytelling**. Lise Nelson emphasized that music is not only singing or playing an instrument. It can be clapping a rhythm, mimicking a sound, or "call and respond" chants. Any music will involve and engage your audience.
- **Gazing into the Future**. Cathy Lichty presented information that Boards need to ensure that they are being ethical and protecting themselves legally. She recommended taking the tutorial offered by the Colorado Nonprofit Association and is working on a similar presentation. She emphasized the challenges that face all of us as we adapt to the new structure. The local affiliates (perhaps to be called "licensees") and the Council of Trustees need members with the commitment and expertise needed for these groups to grow and thrive.
- **Closing Remarks & Story**. The meeting ended with a few remarks from Denise Rucks, in-coming Chair, and a "Bang-Up" story from the always dynamic Tom Hobbs, who shared Joel ben Izzy's humorous story about "Learning to Love Liver."

If you missed this meeting, perhaps this overview will inspire you to attend next year.