

25
YEARS



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of Broomfield, Colorado News for FEBRUARY, 2026

JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On January 16, nineteen Broomfield Spellbinders gathered at Brunner Farm House for our first meeting of the new year. **Sheila Brush** opened the meeting, saying that we would skip our Opening Question to allow our guest presenters plenty of time. **Jane Askham** invited members to sign-out a book from the selection she had brought up from our library. **Jan Osburn** volunteered to contact other 5th grade teachers at Meridian Elementary, where she tells to one 5th grade class. Sheila announced that this is the 25th anniversary of the founding of Broomfield Spellbinders, and the we are planning some sort of celebration this summer (see page 2). **Scott Carrico** reminded all that we need to be mindful of our health (see his article on page 2). We then heard stories from (l-r below) **Kari Reiquam** (*Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*) and **Marylou Dobbins** (*Snowflake Bentley*). After a brief break for snacks and conversation, **Cathy Lichty** introduced our guest presenters **Tom Hobbs** and **Ray Mohr**, members of Denver Spellbinders, who offered tips on how to work together to present "coordinated" stories, emphasizing the importance of trust in, and good rapport with, your partner (co-teller).



Save the date!

NEXT MEETING

Friday, February 20 (12:45-3:00 PM) at Bruner Farmhouse

Topic: Cathy Lichty on "Stories with Math Concepts"

Please bring story titles you use or know of that contain math concepts.



PRACTICE SAFE STORYTELLING, USE A PROPHYLACTIC! by Scott Carrico

Every time we walk into a school, we are walking into a veritable petri dish of respiratory pathogens. Here are a couple of things we can do to avoid contracting a nasty bug:

- Use a prophylactic nasal spray. Specifically, a povidone-iodine nasal spray. This is an antiseptic used to kill viruses and bacteria in the nasal passages. Numerous studies have concluded it creates a protective barrier against respiratory infections like colds, flu, and potentially COVID-19, by reducing viral load and transmission. From a June 2025 study published by the National Institutes of Health: "Povidone-iodine (PVP-I) is a broad-spectrum topical microbicide that rapidly inactivates viruses and bacteria at low concentrations."

AND/OR

- As hard as it may be to believe, try humming. Say what? Yes, humming. Multiple studies by the N.I.H., J.A.M.A., American Journal of Respiratory Care, and many other scientifically reputable organizations, prove that humming greatly increases Nasal Nitric Oxide. Important because Nitric Oxide (NO) acts as a double-edged sword; it is a crucial part of the immune system and helps fight damaging pathogens, specifically bacteria and viruses. Hum while you exhale for a couple of minutes each day.

NOTE: On Amazon, you can get a povidone-iodine nasal spray for under \$30. Humming is free.

JANUARY STORY CIRCLE

Seven members attended the January 30 Story Circle. Only three told a story. **Julie Toepper** told a historical Underground Railway story about 33-year-old Henry "Box" Brown, who mailed himself to Pennsylvania. Her intended audience is 6th graders. **Cathy Lichty** told one of her many Anasi stories and received support on her introduction. **Sheila Brush** shared a personal dog story, which is a work in progress. **John Kolber, Janis Levins, Jim Mariner,** and **Wynn Montgomery** listened and gave feedback. NOTE: Several members who had signed up to attend missed the meeting. Fortunately, some who had not signed up attended. Since the purpose of these sessions is to work on new material, an audience is needed. **So, if you signed up and your plans change, please notify Sheila or Wynn. If you did not sign up and decide to attend, please check with Sheila or Wynn to be sure the Story Circle is happening.**

25th ANNIVERSARY!



Did you notice the "25 Years" atop our logo on page 1. It is there because Broomfield Spellbinders was founded twenty-five years ago. A full-page article in the *Denver Post* on September 2, 2001, detailed the efforts of Aspen resident and Spellbinders founder Germaine Dietsch to establish local groups (chapters) throughout Colorado and beyond, including a group at the Broomfield Senior Center that started in the summer of 2001. We are trying to determine when BCAH adopted us. Meanwhile, **Janis Lievens** is working with help from Keri Dillingham and BCAH on an application for an Alex Wilson Legacy Grant to help with costs for a 25th Anniversary celebration in September. Stay tuned for details.

NEW TELLING OPPORTUNITY

Do you miss telling stories in the summer months? Well, thanks to the efforts of **John Kolber, Janis Levins,** and **Sheila Brush,** Treehouse Learning (in Louisville) has invited us to tell stories to their summer campers. Preliminary plans are for two tellers, two times a week for one 30-minute period. One group is pre- K; the other is 1st-3rd grades. More info will be available as we get closer to summer.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR
SPELLBINDERS ANNUAL MEETING IS MAY 2 IN HIGHLAND RANCH
(We will try to car pool)



YET ANOTHER TELLING OPPORTUNITY

For our April 17th meeting, we need storytellers interested in participating in our annual **4 versions of the same story**. Jan Osburn (osburn.jan@gmail.com) is coordinating the program. She and Wynn are prepared to tell versions of "The Three Little Pigs". Who will join them? There are many variations of this classic tale, so if you do not have one in mind, we can help you find one you like. Such a story would be a great addition to your repertoire. This always brings lots of laughter to our meeting. Don't be shy; jump in and join the fun! You will have a new story to tell at your schools.

BCAH NEEDS OUR HELP

Broomfield Council of Arts and Humanities BCAH@ArtsinBroomfield.org needs volunteers for its 45th Annual Student Art Show. The dates and times at the Broomfield Community Center are:

- MARCH 6 6:00-8:00 PM. Jobs include reception, set up, and check in.
- MARCH 7 8:30-12:30 and 12:30-3:30 staff the check in table

Please volunteer. BCAH does a lot to support us.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

As many of you know, our Leadership Team meets every month for an hour before the membership meeting. This is the group that handles the nitty-gritty behind-the-scenes work needed to meet our obligations to Spellbinders National, BCAH, and our members. The current members and their duties are:

- Point Persons (Co-Leaders): **Sheila Brush & Janis Lievens**
- Data Collection/Management-**Vicki Tiedeman**
- Librarian: Vacant (**Jane Askham** is doing some analysis)
- Newsletter/Communications: **Wynn Montgomery**
- Program Planning: **Jan Osburn & Cathy Lichty**
- School Liaison-**Janis Lievens**
- Scribes-**Karen Green** (Meetings) & **Janis Lievens** (Leadership Team)
- Trainers: **Wynn Montgomery, Cathy Lichty, & Donna Leard**
- Trustee/National Spellbinders-**Janis Lievens**
- At Large Members: **Scott Carrico, Kay Landers, Denny Thompson**

The Leadership Team meetings are open to any members wishing to attend.

STORIES AT SUNRISE SENIOR LIVING

Thanks to **Jim Mariner**, we now have a standing storytelling session every month that has a 5th Thursday. On January 29, Jim was joined by **Kathy Lichty, Scott Carrico, and Shirley Jamiel**. Thanks to **Sheila Brush**, we have pictures (below) of the four tellers and of Scott in action.





STORYTELLER in the SPOTLIGHT: KARI REIQUAM

by Jim Mariner

*This is the fifth in a series that will focus on a member of Broomfield Spellbinders each month. These articles “continue” a series that started years ago and has been on hiatus for a good while. We offer it as proof that all storytellers have their own (and usually interesting) stories. This month, meet **Kari Reiquam**.*

One of Spellbinders’ newest members is **Kari Reiquam**. On a rec-center photography field trip to Pikes Peak with Janice Lievens and Sandy Hopper, she found that she had more than just photography in common with her friends. Excited by the idea of telling stories to elementary children, she signed up for Spellbinders training in Boulder before joining our Broomfield group. Currently, she “tells” in 2nd-grade classes at Prospect Ridge Elementary.



With her background as a pastor, Kari is a natural for storytelling and has a talent for drawing her audience into her narrative. She especially likes adapting stories to her improvisational style. “The children become more involved in the story with the teller and the audience becoming a team,” she said.

Kari became a pastor in 1979, first as an Associate Pastor in Aurora and as a Chaplain in a retirement center and girls’ school. In her career, she has served churches in Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, and Hawaii. In a different role, Kari was an interim director of an Arts Center in Washington state.

Her husband, Brian Austill, is a psychologist. They have two daughters and one grandchild. Now in retirement, she lives in Broomfield and enjoys having more time for outdoor activities like skiing, hiking, and nature photography.

When asked if there was anything she’d like to add that hadn’t been covered, she proudly took me on a tour of the **Anythink Library** in Aurora, where our conversation took place. She highly recommends checking it out by saying, “If you haven’t been there,…”

WHO KNEW? *Our Tellers at the February meeting (Keri & Marylou) have known one another for years and joined Broomfield Spellbinders about the same time after being trained by different Spellbinders groups. We are lucky to have both among us.*

