



## Two Awards and One Liar at the Texas Storytelling Festival

Recipients of the 2013 John Henry Faulk Award and the Marvin Brown Volunteer Award were announced during the 28th Texas Storytelling Festival in Denton March 7-10.

The **John Henry Faulk Award** has been presented annually since 1986 by the Tejas Storytelling Association to a person who has made a significant contribution to the art of storytelling in the Southwest. It is the most prestigious award given in the name of storytelling in the state of Texas and has been awarded to some 30 people and/or organizations to date. Their names are listed on the TSA website.

A native Texan, John Henry Faulk was a master storyteller, chronicling the stories and lives of friends and relatives through the years. Some called him an actor and impersonator, as he was able to mimic the voices and mannerisms of almost everyone he met. He was a satirist and used his humor to expose bigots, ignorant racists and ultra-patriots. But first and foremost John Henry Faulk was a defender of the First Amendment and had the courage to speak his mind even when his was the only dissenting voice.

The **Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award** began in 1999 and was so named because Marvin Brown was indeed one whose volunteer service to

TSA and to youth tellers across Texas was remarkable and a model for others to follow. A list of previous recipients is available on the TSA website.

Marvin spent hours serving in the TSA office and volunteering his time with storytelling events across the state of Texas, as well as helping future Youth Tellers as coach and supporter. He is the epitome of volunteer service, and through that service he helped TSA immeasurably and contributed to its growth. The recipient of the Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award is a person or group whose contributions of time and talents to TSA have enhanced the reputation of TSA in the greater Denton area and beyond.

### **John Henry Faulk Award: Mary Grace Ketner**

“The one-word description that often pops into mind when people think of this person is dependable.” So said Mary Ann Blue, last year’s recipient of the John Henry Faulk Award, when she presented the award to this year’s recipient, Mary Grace Ketner. If you give her a job, Mary Ann said, “you can relax because you know it will be taken care of.”



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Added to the description during the presentation were observations that Mary Grace “shares stories with a profound respect for other people and other cultures,” that she is “a good mix of right brain and left brain: both creative and analytical,” and that her “service to storytelling organizations at the local, state, and national levels has been remarkable and is on-going.”

Specifically, “while some Baby Boomers have met the technological age with trepidation,” Mary Grace “has entered the high-tech 21st century fearlessly as a recognized member of the technological storytelling world.” She actually blogs about fairy tales in partnership with Megan Hicks.

Mary Grace has chaired or co-chaired four TSA summer conferences and served on the TSA board. She is co-founder of the San Antonio Storytellers’ Association.

Considered to be the “storyteller in residence” during her years at the Institute of Texan Cultures, she continues to tell her tales and present workshops in schools, libraries, festivals, and conferences. Her storytelling CDs have received honors from Storytelling World in 2010 and 2013.

The John Henry Faulk Award recognizes her “Outstanding Contributions to the Art of Storytelling.”

### **Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award: Jaye McLaughlin**

Jaye McLaughlin received the Marvin Brown Volunteer Service Award, presented this year by Shelby Smith, the 2012 award recipient. In her brief review of Jaye’s many contributions of volunteer time and talents to storytelling within the state, Shelby described Jaye as being “tenacious, energetic, and bighearted” while serving as a Fort Worth Children’s librarian, writing a grant to bring historical storytelling into the Fort Worth



schools and museums, and serving two full terms on the TSA Board of directors.

During those six years of ups and downs on the board she faced serious issues and defended her conscience with dignity. She chaired committees which actually met, face to face, around a table. She served as Tejas Teller editor for over three years and made notes about members’ addresses and phone numbers to keep the last five Tejas directories current. As Mary Grace Ketner says, “You would have to go back many years to find anyone who doesn’t think of her smiling face accepting their credit cards and cash at the Story Store,” which she managed for a number of years at both festivals and conferences.

She took on thankless tasks no one else wanted to do with the same ardor as the tasks she loved, at one point even taking classes to prepare herself.

She co-founded and continues to be a strong hub of a cooperative storytelling troupe which has included various storytellers. She helped find venues for all to share—in a tipi, no less.

Her tireless commitment to TSA, to a local guild, and to fellow storytellers has meant long hours, long drives, and long meetings. She sets the highest standards for volunteer service.

### **Winner of the 2013 TSA Liars Contest: Sheila Starks Phillips**

With a deadpan expression that almost made her tale sound like the truth, Sheila Starks Phillips spun out a story that got as tall as the tree she described: the only tree in Amarillo, Texas, right there in her front yard. It was enough to earn her first prize in the annual Texas Storytelling Festival Liars Contest.



Tied for second place were Leslie Buie and Donna Ingham. Judges for the event were Dalton Gregory, Dawn Cobb, and Gene Edgerton.



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### **Mission Statement:**

*Tejas Storytelling Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the appreciation of storytelling as an oral tradition, a performing art, and an educational tool.*

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# Making Good at National Events

Several storytellers with TSA ties—or at least Texas ties—will be in the line-up at events in Richmond, VA, and Jonesborough, TN, this year.

**Bernadette Nason**, a TSA member from Austin, will tell her “Tea in Tripoli” story as a fringe performance at the National Storytelling Conference in Richmond the first weekend in August. **Darci Tucker**, from Williamsburg, Va., who recently presented a workshop at the Texas Storytelling Festival, will present “Stepping into Story through Character Interpretation” at the national conference.

**Elizabeth Ellis** and **Gayle Ross**, TSA members from Dallas and Talequah, Okla., will both be Tellers in Residence in Jonesborough, Elizabeth in August and Gayle in October. Both will be at the National Storytelling Festival in October as well. Elizabeth will tell in the Midnight Cabaret, and Gayle will be emceeding during the festival.

Representing Texas and the Southwest as New Voices at the national festival this year will be the **Gillette Brothers, Guy and Pip**, fine cowboy musicians from Crockett.

## Doc Moore Fund Offers Workshop Opportunities

Would your Guild benefit from a workshop in your area? Is there a topic that would help your group become stronger tellers? Would it be useful if someone helped you start or strengthen your Guild?

TSA has a wonderful opportunity for you. The Doc Moore Fund was established to help with projects just like these. Your group would decide what presentation or workshop you want to sponsor. Then get in touch with [tsa@tejasstorytelling.com](mailto:tsa@tejasstorytelling.com). TSA will arrange to send a presenter for that topic.

Your group would be responsible for arranging a location for the presentation and a host home for the presenter. The presenter donates his or her time and expertise to TSA. TSA provides the transportation costs for the presenter and helps to publicize the event. If you wish, you could host a concert in addition to the workshop. You could split that money between the presenter and your own Guild’s treasury. Everyone benefits!

Start right now deciding what you want to have and when. Time’s a wasting!

# From the President

*By Gary Patton*

For those of you who missed the Festival in Denton you missed a great one. For those of you who were there, thank you. Thank you for your presence, your listening, your contributions and your support.

Someone said, “Generosity is never expensive.” The members of the Tejas Storytelling Association continue to prove that to be true.

Our fiscal year will end on May 31, 2013. Three of our Board members, Elizabeth Ellis, Donna Ingham and Larry Thompson, will be ending their terms at that time. Elizabeth will carry on as the Co-Artistic Director, along with Jeannine Pasini Beekman, of next year’s Festival. Jeannine will be the Artistic Director for the 30th Festival in 2015. Elizabeth will also continue to serve, or at least contribute constantly I am certain, to the Grant Committee. Valerie Kimble has been learning the ropes of our grant process and will continue as a Board member.

Donna Ingham has served our organization for decades. As the past president her time on the Board ends soon. She has saved us again this year and last by taking over the Publications Committee and seeing that The Teller lives and comes to you now. She has been a steady and calm presence on the Board and in her approach to our work.

Larry Thompson was appointed to serve a partially served term on the Board and is not running for one of the two positions that will be filled in the upcoming election. We intend to keep Larry involved and on the Board in some way as his experience and knowledge in the “electronic” world into which we have been entering to a greater and greater degree has been invaluable.

My deepest thanks to Elizabeth, Donna and Larry for their service on your Board of Directors. Please take it upon yourself as you see them or have contact with them to thank them as well. Your Board members, with rare exceptions, work very hard to

contribute to your organization and make it work. Their generosity is sometimes expensive for them, from my perspective, but they continue to be generous anyway.

You may have noticed that we have three people leaving the Board and an election for only two positions. What gives? At present we have fourteen Board members; the Board can be as large as fifteen. As part of our grant process last year at least one of the organizations that has given us a grant for years made it very clear that it was a problem that our Board had no members from Denton. Consequently we are keeping two positions open (the one already vacant and one of the three being vacated at the end of this fiscal year) on the Board to appoint appropriate people from Denton to the Board. As yet there are no real candidates, but the search is on. If you have any ideas about this or anything else concerning the organization please call the office or email [tejasprez@gmail.com](mailto:tejasprez@gmail.com).

Finally you need to get ready for Waynetta Ausmus. She will become the President of your organization on June 1st. My plans are for her to do a stellar job as President. If she does not do so then you will know I have fallen as well since I told Waynetta recently my job next fiscal year is to make certain she wins. Hopefully she will not keep me too busy; knowing her it will be a smooth year of many wins for her, the Board, the organization and you.

Remember to vote in the upcoming election for two of the five candidates, and check to see if you are a member in good standing as those who have not paid their annual dues will not be sent a ballot.

It has been an honor serving as your President this past year.

## Guild News

# What's Happening Around Texas?

*Compiled by Sheila Phillips*

Guild News editor for the Tejas Teller is Sheila Phillips (zoolady@airmail.net). Please submit announcements of upcoming events, reviews of past events, and other articles to her by or before the published deadline.

- » The Mesquite Storytellers of Abilene continue to meet at 7 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Center for Contemporary Arts. Come and join us if you are in this neck of the woods.
- » The WTAMU Panhandle Storytelling Guild held its annual storytelling festival, April 26th. The featured teller was Cuban American teller, Carmen Deedy. The festival schedule included two kids' concerts in the morning, an afternoon workshop conducted by Carmen Deedy and an evening performance featuring graduate students enrolled in the Art of Storytelling seminar, as well as Carmen Deedy. All events took place on the WTAMU campus in the Sybil B. Harrington Fine Arts Complex. For more information, contact Dr. Trudy Hanson at [thanson@wtamu.edu](mailto:thanson@wtamu.edu).
- » The Heart of Texas Storytelling Guild of Waco will present an Adult Storytelling Workshop on May 25th sponsored by TSA and the Doc Moore Outreach Project. Kathy H. Culmer of Kingwood, TX will be featured. Kathy is a well known author, speaker and storyteller. This workshop is designed to share the basics of storytelling in a fun and engaging way. Several sessions were taught including personal tales, folktales, biblical & business storytelling.
- » The San Antonio Storytellers Association (SASA) enjoyed their Permission 2 Play coaching workshop with Kevin Cordi on April 18th. <http://sanantoniostorytellers.org>. SASA has long supported the Texas Storytelling Youth Challenge by purchasing medals and providing some of the judges. This year they added a new event, the UTSA Storytelling Challenge for college students. SASA member Ryan McPherson initiated a campus storytelling group which hosted the contest as well as small group story swaps, open mic storytelling, and a concert, all free and open to the public. (<https://sites.google.com/site/storytellingchallenge/home>)
- » The Houston Storytellers' Guild says a big YOU GO GIRL! to our Rising Star at the Texas Storytelling Festival, Judy Allton. She did a fabulous job and made us proud. The Guild hosted a truly marvelous Beginning Storytellers Workshop for adults on March 22nd that was led by Dr. Hank Roubicek and Sally Goodroe. On Saturday, April 13th, arguably the World's Most Famous LIARS' CONTEST was held in the Hinton Center at Houston Baptist University. Last year's winner, that ringer from San Antonio Larry Thompson, entertained the audience while the judges selected the winner. It's fun for all and always a memorable evening of storytelling.

## 29th Annual Texas Storytelling Festival March 6-9, 2014

The nation's premier Jewish teller Penninah Schram, the elegant and eloquent Janice del Negro, and the free-spirited Angela Lloyd will join Texas' own Tim Couch for the 2014 Texas Storytelling Festival on March 6th through the 9th at the Denton Civic Center. Please note that the dates previously announced for the event were incorrect.

Each of these tellers will enchant and inspire you... and in Janice's case scare the tar out of you, too. Mark your calendars now for an event too amazing to miss!

## NSN Community to Gather in Virginia

*By Mary Grace Ketner, NSN liaison for Texas*

Hard to admit something is bigger than Texas, but the National Storytelling Network is! Yes, it's a bigger community of storytellers than we have in Tejas, but just as warm and welcoming. Take one glance at Paul Porter's photo (link to <http://www.storynet.org/conference/index.html>) of everyone at last year's conference, leaning over the rails, vying with one another to be the most conspicuous in greeting you, and you'll see exactly what I mean!

We'll certainly miss having our own Tejas Storytelling Conference in 2013, so let's make lemonade out of lemons and meet at the NSN Conference in Richmond, VA, August 1-4. It will be just as inspiring and enlightening as last year—no, more so, because you'll be there.

Read about the conference and register from the NSN site, [storynet.org](http://www.storynet.org/conference/index.html). (link to <http://www.storynet.org/conference/index.html> again) Early Bird rates are available through May 15.

## TSA Co-Founder Featured at New Orleans JazzFest

TSA co-founder Jeannine Pasini Beekman was featured at this year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Popularly known as JazzFest, the event is a 10-day celebration of the indigenous music and culture of New Orleans and Louisiana.

Invitations to perform are highly coveted and Jeannine is the first storyteller from outside of south Louisiana to be invited since the festival began in 1970. She says, "I was so pleasantly surprised and honored when I received a call asking me to perform. People come from all over the world to attend JazzFest and I am delighted to represent our art form on the final Saturday when the crowds will be especially large. Although my performance was in the afternoon on a smaller stage and Fleetwood Mac is performing in the evening on the main stage, I am having a great time telling people that *they* are closing for *me!*"

An eighth generation resident of Louisiana, Jeannine will draw upon the rich and diverse folklore of the many cultures important in the state for her performance. For further information go to [www.nojazzfest.com](http://www.nojazzfest.com).

## TSA on Facebook

TSA board member Larry Thompson is now the administrator for TSA's Facebook page, and he welcomes guild news as well. Promote and/or report your guild activities through social networking by funneling announcements to Larry at [larrythompson@ureach.com](mailto:larrythompson@ureach.com).



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