

2021-2022
Annual Report
to the
Membership



Board of Directors:

Lynn Schweikart

Jim Brulé

Cris Riedel

Barbara Aliprantis

Linda Schuyler Ford

Rona Leventhal

ChaChanna Simpson

Northeast Storytelling
Annual Report to the Membership
June 24, 2021

Table of Contents

- Board President Report
- Finance Committee Report
- Governance Committee Report
- Program Committee Report and Scholarship Report
- NEST Outreach Committee Report
- Tech Report
- Administrator Report
- Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild Program Report
- Financial Reports

Northeast Storytelling President's Report 2021-2022

It's hard for me to comprehend that I am writing a President's Report for yet another virtual NEST Annual Meeting. Yet, here we are—still working through the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, that has meant offering online opportunities for our community to connect—like our thrice-monthly storytelling gatherings, the Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild (WVSG). Like our November NESTFest, which this year, celebrated our new members. Like our Happy Hours, and now Sharing the Fire 2022. I think we've learned that even when the world returns to whatever form “normal” will take, virtual offerings will play an important role, and NEST is eager to help our members make the most of them.

In early November, as part of the NEST Board's annual retreat, we invited representatives from regional storytelling organizations to join us for a leadership summit to discuss challenges, opportunities, and concerns brought about by this new era. Participants were

- David Claunch, Tejas Storytelling Association
- Dorothy Cleveland, Northlands Storytelling Network
- Sue Kessler, Artists Standing Strong Together
- Jennifer Nelson, Timpanogos Storytelling Association
- Ann Shapiro, Connecticut Storytelling Center
- Megan Wells, Northlands Storytelling Network

The result was an enlightening discussion and an agreement to work together and share best practices moving forward.

It was also a year of big changes for NEST. Deb Roe, our Executive Director for more than 6 years, resigned as part of a career change. We decided it made sense to divide her tasks into two part-time positions: so we hired an administrator to handle the day-to-day activities, and a bookkeeper to look after our financial needs. We were lucky to find two stellar individuals to work with us: administrator Stephanie Tassinari and bookkeeper Lori Cipot. Perfect for this virtual new world, Steph lives in Auburn, Maine and Lori in North Carolina.

Changes I'm glad didn't happen: both Cris Riedel and Jim Brulé agreed to stay on the Board for a second term. I thank them and the rest of our Board: Barbara Aliprantis, Linda Schuyler Ford, Rona Leventhal, and ChaChanna Simpson for their help and support over the past year. They, along with Steph and Lori, and our tech specialist, Chris Donald bring an invaluable energy and can-do attitude that is helping our organization thrive.

I want to thank all the other volunteers who are keeping our organization strong and growing. The Board is so grateful for your efforts. Also, member Elsa Zuniga's support, through her employer, Google's corporate giving program, has been a lifeline during three years of limited income from Sharing the Fire. Thank you, Elsa, and thanks also to Lani Peterson, Laura Packer, and Nicolette Nordin Heavey, who on short notice helped Elsa and me put together a presentation that raised \$4,020.30 for NEST.

This is the part of the meeting where I make the "Big Ask": There are so many great initiatives we would like to pursue, but don't have people to lead them. And you don't have to be on the Board to do that:

- Our Social Justice Initiative needs an overall chair.
- We need help in taking our FLY youth storytelling program to the next level.
- We'd like a task force to identify locations and venues for STF in 2025 and beyond.
- We need help in launching a mentorship program.
- We'd like someone to help reevaluate our scholarship and membership assistance programs.
- We'd like to revisit the Story Trail idea and deepen connection with the guilds throughout our region.
- As we are going to be in Portsmouth, NH for the next two years, we'd like help with outreach to organizations in the Seacoast area to boost conference attendance and offerings.

Just reach out to Steph, or me, or any Board member. And yes, we can always use new Board members, too.

Since I was a kid, I've loved watching the Olympics. It was always a sad moment, as the flame was extinguished, but the words, "I call upon the youth of the world to assemble four years from now..." always brought me great joy. And so, it is with a great sense of joy, that I say to you: "I call upon the NEST storytelling community to gather next year in Portsmouth, NH—four years from our last in-person Sharing The Fire, where—if the fates allow—we will hug, and cry, and laugh and share stories together, face to face, once more.

Respectfully submitted by: Lynn Schweikart, NEST Board President, March 2022

NEST Finance Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

NEST remains on solid financial footing. While we have been unable to host our major fund-raising event, the Sharing the Fire conference, for the past three years, we are still firmly in the black.

After a poll was conducted of our membership, Sharing the Fire 2022 was moved to a completely virtual experience. We have continued our relationship with the hotel in Portsmouth NH, and expect to have a live (possibly hybrid) conference there in 2023. We were able to avoid a \$21,300.00 cancellation penalty fee this year by agreeing to hold our 2024 conference at the hotel as well.

Donations: These continue to form an important part of our funding, especially with the loss of Sharing the Fire income. The Benevity Fund, a Google-employee match program initiated by one of our members, has continued to grow. (We thank her for her support). So far, this fiscal year, Benevity donations are \$7,295.30, while member donations are just under \$500.

Membership: Though we added 11 new members this year, overall membership declined, from a high of 299 last year to 174 currently. This is likely due to the expiration of our "First Year Free" membership promotion and to the lack of a conference for three years running. We will be conducting outreach efforts to reach lapsed members and encourage renewal. Membership fees have not increased.

Programs: due to the pandemic and the loss of revenue from it, we have not funded programs this year.

For the year-to-date financial reports, please see the documents at the end of this report.

Respectfully submitted March 2022,

Cris Riedel, Treasurer

Northeast Storytelling Governance Committee Report 2021-2022

According to NEST Bylaws, the Governance Committee is tasked with the management of Board issues, recruitment of Director Candidates, nominations, elections, continuing education, and orientation of new Directors.

I am so proud of our strong, active Board. Everyone pitches in and gets the work done. Last December, Cris Riedel and Jim Brule both agreed to stay for another 3-year term, joining Barbara Aliprantis, ChaChanna Simpson, Linda Schuyler Ford, Rona Leventhal, and myself. There are currently one to two Board positions open, so if you'd like to join us, please reach out.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Schweikart,
Governance Committee Chair and NEST President
March 2022

Northeast Storytelling Program Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

For another year, in-person programs languished, while NEST did our best to raise our profile in the virtual world.

In early November, under the leadership of Board member Linda Schuyler Ford, we held our second NEST Fest. This free online event featured a story swap, happy hour, and our new members showcase. We had 67 registered participants. Some members have indicated they would like to make this kind of low-key gathering an annual event.

In late November, the Performance Task Force of the NEST Social Justice Initiative, including Robin Bady, Milbre Burch, Heather Forest, Denise Page, Jessica Robinson, Joy Kelly Smith, Jude Treder-Wolff, held its inaugural event, Hunger Comes Home for the Holidays. The online storytelling concert focused on food equity, and raised \$903.04 (990 Meals) for Long Island Cares, a food bank serving Long Island's hungry and food insecure populations. Two other committees are part of this initiative, the Skills and Training Task Force and the Resources Task Force. We are looking for someone to chair this committee. This initiative grew out of the break-out sessions which were central to Sherry Norfolk's "Story Teller, Story Worker" theme during SPARKS in May 2021.

In December, Board member ChaChanna Simpson launched the first in a series of NEST Storytelling Happy Hours, which give members a chance to grow connections, share laughs, and play games.

Board members ChaChanna Simpson and Barbara Aliprantis are in the process of launching a NEST mentorship program. Details to come soon!

Board member Rona Leventhal and Joy Kelly Smith took on the assignment of co-chairing Sharing the Fire 2022. Just days before registration was due to open, the Board decided that it was still too risky to proceed with an in-person conference. All quickly pivoted to a virtual format, led by Board member Jim Brule, who took on the task of setting up the online registration and Zoom licensing.

The Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild, under the direction of Board members, Cris Riedel and Jim Brule, has continued to thrive. For details, look for the report in this book.

Lack of resources, both human and financial, resulted in a hiatus for some of our important projects, including FLY! (Folktales, Lifetales, and Youth), StoryTrail, and The

Muse Hour (one hour to 90 minute workshops presented by members). If you are interested in helping, please let us know.

Outreach Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

This year, the committee has been focused on building community among the membership, and have been experimenting with ideas. We hosted a Story Happy Hour in November that was well attended and plan to host more in the future.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

In an effort to bring new members into the fold and to strengthen connections within the organization, the Outreach Committee is launching a Mentorship Program for new and seasoned tellers.

The goal is to assist new members in navigating the organization, get the most out of their membership and also feel connected to the group once they join.

This program is also for seasoned members to connect and expand and share their knowledge.

We will be sending out notices soon asking for mentees and mentors.

SOCIAL MEDIA BLOG

The blog is updated but the committee would really be interested in learning if the members are reviewing it and if it's bringing value. If not, we will focus our efforts on other ways to share knowledge with the membership.

Facebook Page

Northeast Storytelling: 715 Followers

Primarily used to share visual promotion of NEST shows and events.

INSTAGRAM

@northeaststorytelling

Relaunched Instagram page on August 1. We have 180 followers. On this page, we share events from the NEST calendar and are starting to see some engagement. We will continue to engage with followers, sharing NEST events and individual storytellers and local, regional, national, and international storytelling organizations to build connections.

Submitted by

Barbara Aliprantis & ChaChanna Simpson, Linda Schulyer Ford

Tech Annual Report 2021-2022

One ongoing project has been maintaining the calendar and sending out a weekly events email. This goes out to the NEST listserv as well as to the list of email addresses in the organization's database. Our current reach is about 800 people. We also continue to update our site's blog where each month we feature a blog from a different storyteller. This is done with the help of Linda Schulyer Ford.

This past November, we were able to hold a virtual NEST Fest for the second year in a row. This was a one day event held on Zoom. Tech rehearsals were held with each of the presenters beforehand and video of the conference was edited afterwards. These videos were made available to each of the performers.

In preparation for STF 2022 a series of pages were created on the website to provide information for attendants. This was done in collaboration with the STF planners, Rona Leventhal and Joy Smith. With the decision to make STF 2022 virtual, most of the information had to change and resulted in a bit of an overall. In addition to this, graphics were created for the site as well as promotion of STF.

This past year the Social Justice Committee was formed. One of the three subcommittees is the resources committee where we are responsible for providing various resources on our website for different social justice issues. The first one being tackled is food equity. Our small sub committee has met a few times to discuss how to find the resources we want to make available and how best to do that. This is something that is going to continue to be worked on in more depth once STF is over.

Submitted March 2022

Chris Donnal

Administrator's Annual Report 2021-2022

Personal Note:

For those of you I have not had the pleasure of interacting with (as of yet), my name is Steph Tassinari. I've been with NEST since the end of August in the administrator role. It's been a pleasure to learn the role of NEST in the storytelling community as well as get to know all of you! I look forward to forging more relationships and please don't hesitate to reach out: nestorytelling@gmail.com .

Membership:

We had an increase of 11 new members this year but an overall decrease in total numbers. If you are interested in helping encourage new membership, we are looking for individuals who are able to mentor new folks. The outreach committee will be asking for people to help with that soon!

Programing:

While covid continued to provide challenges with meeting in person, we were so happy to offer some options to gather virtually! Linda Schuyler Ford spearheaded NEST Fest this past fall as a virtual gathering option. We had 67 registrations for this wonderful online gathering. We are also currently in the midst of our Virtual 2022 STF! Co-chairs Rona Leventhal and Joy Kelly Smith have done a wonderful job putting together an amazing conference. We've had 110 registrants to date for the conference. What an incredible feat to switch gears and gather as a storytelling community.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Tassinari

March 2022

Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild Annual Report 2021-2022

We continue with three meetings a month, first Thursdays, second Saturdays, and third Sundays. Our page at the NEST site contains the Zoom link information as well as the upcoming monthly suggested themes.

As suggested by one of our Singapore members, Roger Jenkins, we dedicated a program to Asian storytellers in October. Twenty-five tellers attended.

Our Facebook account continues to grow, with 571 members, and multiple daily postings announcing performances and workshops internationally.

Jo Radner has donated our listserv through American University and continues to add members as they request. We are overwhelmed with her generosity and thank her. We have 171 members currently there.

The average meeting continues to see an average of twelve people, with a few regulars and a variety of others. There are lively discussions on performance, camera techniques in the Zoom era, and source documents. Meetings are recorded and made available to only members of the listserv; we thank Jim Brulé for his time and expertise.

Respectfully submitted March 2022,

Cris Riedel

Northeast Storytelling (online)

Statement of Financial Position

As of February 28, 2022

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Webster Checking	61,512.30
Webster Savings	40,047.41
Total Bank Accounts	\$101,559.71
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	-142.87
Total Accounts Receivable	\$ -142.87
Other Current Assets	
Prepaid Expenses	4,000.00
Undeposited Funds	1,151.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$5,151.00
Total Current Assets	\$106,567.84
TOTAL ASSETS	\$106,567.84
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	0.00
Total Accounts Payable	\$0.00
Total Current Liabilities	\$0.00
Total Liabilities	\$0.00
Equity	
Net assets	98,985.30
Net Revenue	7,582.54
Total Equity	\$106,567.84
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$106,567.84

Northeast Storytelling (online)

Statement of Activity
July 2021 - February 2022

	TOTAL
Revenue	
Donations - Benevity Fund	7,395.30
Donations - General	518.17
Donations - Restricted	
Membership Assistance Fund	0.00
Total Donations - Restricted	0.00
Interest income	2.66
Membership	9,351.14
Sales	0.00
Total Revenue	\$17,267.27
GROSS PROFIT	\$17,267.27
Expenditures	
Credit Card Fees	299.71
Insurance	
D&O	759.00
Total Insurance	759.00
Office	
Computer Software	1,095.41
Total Office	1,095.41
Postage	
Mail Forwarding	18.30
Total Postage	18.30
Professional Services	
Administration	2,240.00
Bookkeeper	943.50
CPA	350.00
Executive Director	1,653.13
Tech	1,963.27
Total Professional Services	7,149.90
Telephone	159.54
Training	75.00
Website	
Security	127.87
Total Website	127.87
Total Expenditures	\$9,684.73
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$7,582.54
NET REVENUE	\$7,582.54