

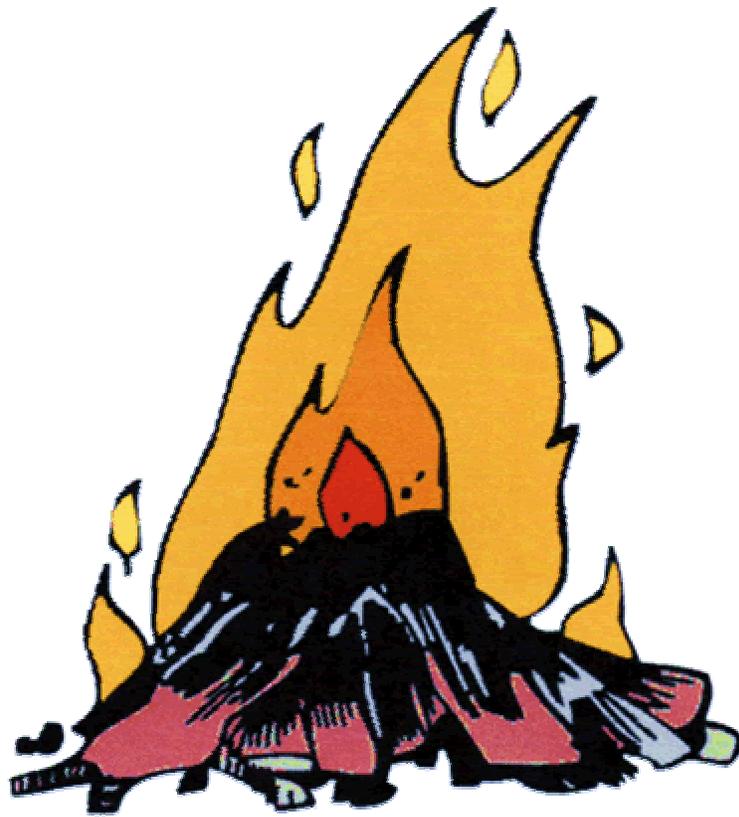
FLORIDA SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION

“E”VERSITY 2008

THE ART AND CRAFT OF STORYTELLING

Presented by

Mary Lou Williams June 14, 2008



The World of Storytelling

A brief history of storytelling

- Its origin in prehistory
- Its existence in illiterate societies
- How and why it became a lost art
- Places where storytelling stayed alive

The revival of the art of storytelling

- Jimmy Neil Smith, the mayor of Jonesborough, Tennessee, and his inspired idea
- The first annual National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough

Famous stars of the storytelling world

1. Carmen Agra Deedy
2. Donald Davis
3. Bil Lepp
4. Kathryn Tucker Windham
5. Kevin Kling
6. Willy Claflin

Storytelling as a performing art

A storyteller is just as much a performing artist as an actor, a singer, a dancer, a musician, or a humorist. In fact, many storytellers are also all of the above.

The many hats a storyteller wears

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Two famous storytellers in the American mainstream

1. _____
2. _____

Why become a storyteller?

- Gain audience attention. Everyone loves a good story
- Convey your message in a story, the best messenger there is
- Be memorable

The story of how I became a storyteller

Introduction to the world of storytelling for adults

- The elderhostel at Appalachia University in Boone, North Carolina
- Charlotte T. Ross, Ph.D., Storyteller
- The first story she told, “An Appalachian Romeo & Juliet”

Membership in Toastmasters

- The storytelling manual:
 1. Initial motivation - to apply storytelling skills to nutrition
Lectures
 2. Second motivation - to have fun
 3. Reaction to stories I told
- Mystery theatre party game
 1. Friend from Kentucky, storytelling country
 2. Her suggestion
 3. My decision to become a storyteller

A folk tale

“An Appalachian Romeo and Juliet”

The two aspects of the art of storytelling

- the story and the telling

The Story

The three elements of a good story

- Reversal of fortune - the state of affairs at the end must be the exact opposite of the state of affairs at the beginning.

Examples

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- Unity of Effect

Examples

1. _____
2. _____

- The unexpected ending that is inevitable

Examples

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sources of stories

- The literary story - stories written in books and meant to be read
- The traditional story - stories transmitted orally for hundreds of years
 1. Folk tales
 2. Fairy tales
 3. Tall tales
 4. Fables
 5. Myths
 6. Legends
- The historical story
- The personal story
 1. Donald Davis - pioneer of the personal story
 1. The personal story - ideal for incorporation into informational And motivational speeches
 2. Doug Stevenson, master of incorporating personal stories into Business presentations
- Fractured fairy tales - a reworking of a traditional fairy tale that retains familiar elements such as characters and plot, but alters the story in unexpected ways, often with a contemporary “spin” or ironic twist. From The Oxford Companion To Fairy Tales

Examples of fractured fairy or traditional tales

1. Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat
2. Into the Woods
3. Once Upon a Mattress
4. My Fair Lady
5. West Side Story
6. Shrek
7. Wicked

The Telling

Using the tools of the actor's trade

- Vocal variety
 1. Volume
 2. Pitch
 3. Rate
 4. Quality
- Body language
 1. Movement
 2. Gestures
 3. Facial expression
 4. Eye contact
- Props

Learning the story

- Memorizing the words
- Memorizing the structure, improvising the words
- A combination of both

The difference between the actor and the storyteller

- In acting - the fourth wall
- In storytelling - no wall
- The actor performs with the lights down
- The storyteller performs with the lights up

A literary story

“Grand Central Station and Three Red Roses”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

REFERENCES:

Tatar, Maria, *The Classic Fairy Tales*. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Zipes, Jack, *Creative Storytelling: Building Community, Changing Lives*. NY/London: Routledge, 1995.

STORYTELLING ORGANIZATIONS:

Florida Storytelling Association
P.O. Box 49023
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32240-9023
407-830-6605
www.flstory.org

National Storytelling Network
132 Boone Street, Suite 5
Jonesborough, TN 37659
Toll-Free: 1-800-525-4514
Direct: 423-913-8201
www.storynet.org

International Storytelling Center
116 West Main Street
Jonesborough, TN 37659
Mon.-Fri. 9-5
800-952-8392
423-753-2171
<http://www.storytellingcenter.net/>

(The National Storytelling Festival is produced by the International Storytelling Center.)