

2019 – 2020
Annual Report
to the
Membership



Board of Directors:

Jim Brulé

Lynn Schweikart

Cris Riedel

Barbara Aliprantis

Mike Lockett

Northeast Storytelling
Annual Report to the Membership
June 20, 2020

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Northeast Storytelling ~ President's Report ~ 2020

We expected change this year: Hope's long and treasured tenure as President was complete, I was stepping into the role a newcomer to NEST, there were intriguing signs on the horizon from what was known as the Virtual Storytelling Guild (VSG), and we had just completed another successful Sharing the Fire. Those were the changes we expected.

At first the signposts remained clear, and were exciting: the VSG grew rapidly, encompassing the globe, resulting in its renaming to the Worldwide VSG – WVSG. Its success was sufficient to garner an invitation to present a workshop, complete with a live meeting, as a workshop at the NSN annual conference. The enthusiasm of employees at Google – thanks in substantial part to Elsa Zuniga – created a pleasant financial surprise, and the NEST Educators program, launched at Sharing the Fire, began to grow legs. The WVSG kept growing, adopting the Collaborative Storytelling meeting, resulting in a worldwide event every week. Planning was underway for STF 2020 in Saratoga, and discussions about how to consider options of streaming some of the event online were underway.

Less than six weeks away from STF, the initial impact of covid-19 struck. Heroic efforts on the part of our Executive Director averted any penalties or forfeited funds, and we optimistically delayed STF-2020 to the end of August. As the reality of covid-19's long-term endurance became clear, NEST pivoted in ways that were courageous and nimble.

The Board decided that now was the time to step up for our members. We crafted a "Storytellers Repository:" an online resource to help storytellers get their newly-developing offerings in front of schools, libraries, and any other channel they could suggest. We redesigned our website to feature samples of our members' best storytelling, and redoubled our efforts to populate and publicize our online events calendar. We forged ahead with the NEST Educators program as demand for those talents began to skyrocket. In close collaboration with Sheila Arnold, we helped support the creation of Artists Standing Strong Together (ASST), a new community of storytellers worldwide that provides performance opportunities and guidance on how to survive the transition to this new online-enhanced world.

In short, we took the position that – beyond all the financial difficulties, disruption of our lives, and loss of lives – we are moving into a new world in which we will have unimagined opportunities to ply our craft in ways and venues we had never considered.

All is far from roses. We will still face the substantial financial challenges from the likely disappearance of STF-2020. Instead of recruiting new Board members, we must form focused task forces to get us through the parade of new challenges / opportunities. And, as expansive as our ideas and excitement is, our resources are more limited than they were last year at this time.

Starting with our next Board meeting, we will publish our minutes to all our members. Please look at what we're doing, what we're struggling with, and let us know what you think. Share the good ideas we've missed, and let us know where you think there was a better course of action to be taken. We really want to know what you think, what you want, where you're headed, and how we can support you better.

Throughout this transition to a new world, we remain confidently optimistic. We will not be beaten down – we will lift each other up.

Together!

Jim Brulé

President of the NEST Board of Directors

Addendum

As I was writing the presidents' report, I was struggling with a difficult decision. Since I submitted it, I have come to the necessary conclusion: I must resign as President, knowing that Lynn Schweikart will be a most worthy interim president while NEST continues its growth and re-imagining. Even more to the point, the outstanding work of our Executive Director Deb Roe is really the sustaining force of NEST, and she should be commended for an amazing job conducted in extraordinary fashion in the midst of extraordinary circumstances.

This is not a decision I take lightly, and I will continue on the Board to assist. However, the press of personal commitments has been exacerbated both by the pandemic and other factors, and NEST was the last thing I wanted to let go of – but which I had to.

I want to encourage the membership in the strongest terms possible to embrace a new model of service to NEST and each other: to undertake smaller tasks amongst many more hands, rather than leaving too much to do in the hands of far too few.

I treasure my membership in and service to NEST, and expect that the years to come will be transformative to us all.

Thank you,

Jim Brulé

Northeast Storytelling ~ Executive Director's Report ~ 2020

Membership

The current membership as of June 2020 is 242. This number represents a ten percent increase in membership from March 2019. As NEST continues to expand its programming and outreach with projects like WVSG, the hope is to continue to increase and diversify our membership base. To this end, the Board agreed in April to offer a free one-year membership starting September 1, 2020 to anyone who is not a current (or former) member of NEST but would like to become one. We hope to publicize this initiative to targeted groups such as teachers and librarians.

Governance

NEST is in need of Board members. In June, Jim Brulé will be stepping down as president and Lynn Schweikart is expected to take over that role for the remainder of his term. Despite the challenges of a small Board, NEST continues to work on its goals:

1. Build NEST's reputation and presence as the umbrella organization for storytelling in the Northeast

- An online resource page was created for the NEST website to provide storytellers and story listeners with resources during the pandemic and post-pandemic that will support their business efforts, learning, and entertainment as it relates to storytelling. It includes a calendar, recorded videos, tips, and a repository where storytellers can post programs.
- The Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Group has taken off thanks to the efforts of Hope Lewis, Cris Riedel, and Jim Brulé. There are now four sessions a month and a waiting list for those who wish to share stories.
- The Story Trail project was put on hold and will hopefully be taken up again in 2021
- With funding provided by generous donors through the Benevity Fund, NEST is partnering with Children at the Well and Stories in the Street to develop a new online program for youth that will happen from June 2020 to August 2020 and serve as a pilot program for other such efforts.

2) Support awareness and development of the professionalism, art, and craft of storytelling

- NEST hired a technology and media specialist contractor to post and promote events. He also helped members update their profile page and upload videos.
- We are seeing a slight uptick in people contacting NEST in regards to hiring a storyteller. These requests are passed on to the membership.

3) Diversify NEST's membership and programming

NEST has taken on several new initiatives over the last year. The hope is that these initiatives will appeal to a broader audience

4) Develop an active membership willing to take part in helping NEST accomplish its goals

This is a goal that NEST continues to struggle with. Volunteers are the heart of the organization. Several more members are needed to create a truly sustainable Board that can effectively oversee NEST programs.

5) Help members develop their storytelling businesses

Jim Brulé established a committee to help storytellers make the transition from in-person storytelling to the online space.

6) Increase NEST's financial resources in order to support our mission

NEST was on track to increase its financial bottom line prior to the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic. In the end, NEST was forced to cancel the 2020 STF conference, NEST's main source of income. However, NEST has received donations and increased membership funds helping to offset the cancellation of STF.

Communications

NEST will be working on this area over the next year. One of the goals is to consistently produce the *Museletter*.

Programs

- The 2020 STF Committee, chaired by Madelyn Folino and Christie Keegan, did an excellent job of planning for the conference. The lineup of keynote, presenters, and performers was stellar. As such, this same lineup will be rolled over to STF 2021. The scholarships that were awarded for STF 2020 will now be honored for STF 2021.
- The WVSG is surpassing everyone's expectations with hundreds of members from around the world. We expect that this program will continue to expand.
- At the May Board meeting, it was decided that the NEST Educators program should be retooled. It has been a time-intensive project that has stretched NEST's resources, in terms of volunteer commitment, beyond capacity. There will a June meeting to discuss where to go from this point.
- The editing of the *NEST Storytelling Guide* is wrapping up. This how-to book of storytelling articles is expected to be available for sale, in virtual form and as a print-on-demand book, later this summer.

- The other major initiative which is just taking off is FLY! (Folktales, Lifetales, Youth). The program is a merging of ideas from Children at the Well and Stories in the Street. The program happening June 30 to August 6 will provide storytelling mentors to youth ages 12-15 in Lawrence, MA and Schenectady, NY. The project will culminate with a performance on August 10. NEST hopes to expand this program in two ways: working with tellers in other cities to duplicate the program and establishing an ongoing storytelling platform for youth that participate in the program.

Finances

The cancellation of STF 2020 due to the pandemic was a setback for NEST but one that NEST is able to weather primarily as the result of fiscal management efforts over the five preceding years and also due to an increase in donations and membership for 2020. The NEST Storytelling Guide, expected to be published within the next few months, will also provide additional funding.

Submitted by: Deborah Roe, Executive Director

Date: June 2020

Northeast Storytelling ~ Finance Committee Report ~ 2020

Our overall financial status has been stable since last year. For specific numbers on our cash and bank balance, please refer to the financial reports. At the time of this report, Sharing the Fire which had been postponed several months, has now been canceled. STF is a primary source of income for NEST. However, the organization received additional funding from donations and increased membership.

Our membership continues to maintain, with 242 members. As the Board attempts to increase that number, we voted to support a free one-year membership to new members. As with last year, the Board decided to hold the line with the current membership fees.

New this year, a member started a Benevity donation account with her workplace. It has been very successful; to date NEST has received over \$5000, and we thank her very much for her efforts. The Finance Committee and the Board are working on how best to make these funds work for our membership.

The finance committee continues to look for new revenue streams. The Board is looking into the possibility of putting together an online event for Fall of 2020. Also, the NEST Guide will be published and available for purchase in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

Cris Riedel, Treasurer

June 2020

Northeast Storytelling ~ Governance Committee Report ~ 2020

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

As of the end of 2019, there were five people serving on the NEST Board of Directors: Jim Brule, President; Lynn Schweikart, Vice President; Barbara Aliprantis, Secretary, Cris Riedel, Treasurer; and Mike Lockett, Director at Large and Chairman of the Scholarship Committee. There are currently three open positions on the Board.

President Hope Lewis, who had served NEST with grace and distinction since 2013, retired when her second term as a Board member expired. Hope had been president since the fall of 2014.

Because the Board has been having difficulty recruiting new Board Members, the Board amended the Bylaws to enable a Board Member to serve a third consecutive term, if need be. Lynn Schweikart agreed to serve a third term, which will expire in 2022.

Recruitment challenges aside, the Board continues to function well with each Board member jumping in wherever and whenever necessary.

There is so much going on with the NEST community. So many new and valuable initiatives. Each year at this time, we ask for people who feel they could help to let us know. This year, more than ever, we need to hear from you. Help us bring the plans we are creating to fruition. IF you can't join the BOD, help us by agreeing to run one of the committees or serve on a task force.

- Finance
- Governance
- Program
 - Sharing the Fire Task Force
 - Story Trail Task Force
- Outreach
 - Ad Hoc Scholarship Review Committee
- Other
 - NEST Educator's Program
 - Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild (WVSG)

Submitted by: Lynn Schweikart, Vice President

Date: June 2020

Northeast Storytelling ~ Program Committee Report ~ 2020

According to the NEST Bylaws, the Program Committee is responsible for long-range planning, oversight, and publicity for NEST events such as conferences, classes, teleconferences, etc., with subcommittees and task forces appointed to take responsibility for specific programs.

Program Committee members include: Brendyn Schneider, Doug Lipman, Hope Lewis, Jo Radner, Joanne Piazzi, Joy Kelly Smith, Lani Peterson, Linda Schuyler Ford, and Muriel Horowitz.

STF 2020/2021

Coordinators: Christie Keegan & Madelyn Folino.

Committee members: Lorraine Hartin-Gelardi, Karen Pillsworth, Jim Hawkins and Andrea Kamens

Sharing the Fire 2020 was scheduled to be held at the Gideon Putnam Resort and Spa in Saratoga Springs. Due to Covid-19, the conference was initially postponed until August. At the May BOD meeting, the Board officially cancelled the event. As of now, most of the performances, keynote, and other activities planned for 2020 will occur at the 2021 STF.

NEED: Christie Keegan may need help with event coordination. Please contact her.

STF 2022

In 2022, STF will move to the Portsmouth Sheraton Harborside Hotel in Portsmouth, NH. Conference will be held March 24 through 26.

NEED: Event coordinators and committee members to plan the event. Please contact Lynn Schweikart

Story Trail Task Force

Chairperson: Lynn Schweikart

Participants: Brendyn Schneider, Doug Lipman, Jo Radner, Joanne Piazzi, Muriel Horowitz, Lani Peterson, Joy Kelly Smith, Linda Schuyler Ford.

Story Trail is moving forward slowly. Event coordinators have been contacted and several have replied with very positive feedback.

NEED: Dedicated taskforce to continue this effort. Please contact Lynn Schweikart

Benevity Fund

Board Liaison: Lynn Schweikart

NEST has been selected as a Google-approved charity, eligible to receive funds through employee donations and corporate matches. These funds are helping Nicolette Heavy and Paula Weiss develop a joint program of Stories in the Streets and Children at the Well called FLY! (Folktales, Lifetales, Youth), the first of which will be run online this summer with participants from Lawrence MA, and Schenectady NY.

NEST Educators

Coordinators: Hope Lewis, Jim Brule, Jo Radner

See detailed report

Need:

Liaison/Taskforce to help continue this program

Virtual Storytellers Guild

Coordinators: Hope Lewis, Jim Brule, Cris Riedel

See detailed report

Need:

Taskforce to help Cris with scheduling and Zoom needs. Please contact Cris Riedel

NEST Guide to Storytelling

Coordinator: Cris Riedel

This online compendium of more than 40 articles has been edited and is undergoing final proofing and should be ready for publishing on the NEST website soon.

Storytelling Repository

Coordinators: Jim Brulé, Simon Brooks, Jo Radner, Lee-Ellen Marvin, Hears Crow, Paul Solyn, and Teddi DiCanio

NEST is offering a live, continually updated repository of programs that storytellers wish to offer online. This will be promoted to schools, libraries, senior centers, teacher organizations, etc. As of April 19th, there were more than 50 entries.

Need:

Taskforce to recruit more programs and contact potential audiences.

Prepared by Lynn Schweikart

Northeast Storytelling ~ Scholarship Committee Report ~ 2020

This was my second year serving as the chairperson of the Ad Hoc Scholarship Committee. Deb Roe sent out information advertising the following scholarships for Sharing the Fire:

- ELL Allen-Tamai Scholarship
- Helping Hands Scholarship
- Library Scholarship
- New Voice Scholarship
- Support Scholarship
- Jennifer Justice and Doug Lipman Educator's Scholarship

Applications were received and reviewed for the scholarships. Plans were made to give eleven scholarships to help qualified applicants to attend STF. The recipients were contacted by email by me and again by Deb Roe. Unfortunately – the 2020 conference was cancelled due to the Covid-19 Virus emergency. So no scholarship funds were used for 2020.

Scholarships awarded for STF 2020 will instead be honored for STF 2021.

Respectfully Submitted by: Mike Lockett

Date: June 1, 2020

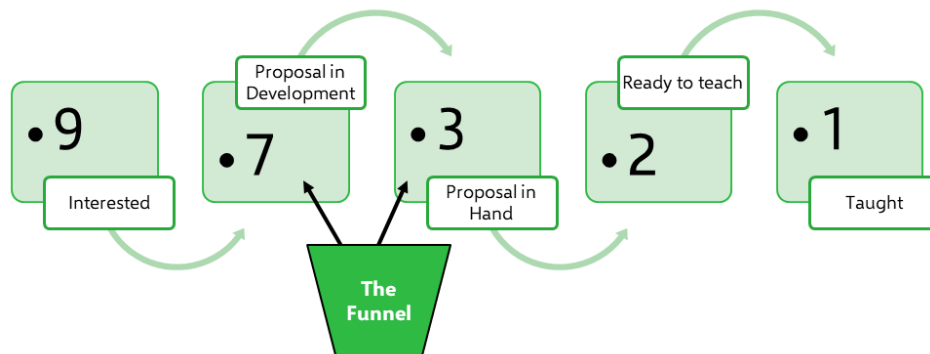
NEST Educators Annual Meeting 2020 Update

The NEST Educators program was launched a year ago at Sharing the Fire. At that time, the plan was to educate storytellers on how to teach online using zoom (then and up-and-coming new platform), support the development of courses to be delivered by zoom, and finally to market and administer the classes for a part of the revenue. There was no charge proposed at the time. Today, a year later, one class has made its way through the process, and two more are being actively marketed.

In that same time, demand has grown beyond anyone's expectations for online courses, and our membership is wrestling with zoom (and other platforms) to deliver their performances, workshops, and classes.

Bluntly, we have an idea and service for which there is great demand, and we are unable to meet the demand given our limited resources. We have (Hope has) done a tremendous job in bringing us to this point, from which we must make important decisions.

Currently, there are 22 individuals in some part of the NEST Educators process:



Our current resources consist of Hope Lewis, who recruits, trains, and negotiates the agreements with the NEST educators, and Deb Roe, who markets and does the administration of the courses. We have an unmet need which is to provide live technical support for each class, and the need for a second Zoom license to maintain control over the system.

Also missing from our "toolbox" is a specific curriculum to teach Zoom, a curriculum from which to teach and foster good online teaching skills, and a repeatable process for approving proposals. Currently, the most active members of the collection of people who have submitted proposals does an open review of the proposals, assesses the individuals' capabilities, and decides as peers whom and when to accept.

This is characteristic of a startup process, one that cannot be scaled. At best, we could expect to field 3 programs a year, which is 1/7 of our current demand. Fortunately, we have not recruited more proposals into this process.

As a further complication, Hope has wisely given notice that her own personal circumstances mandate her withdrawal from the process. This is further exacerbated by her lack of reliable internet at her home, upon which the entire teaching process depends.

If we are to proceed, I believe that we must establish a formal structure for managing this process, and recruit individuals to various components of it. Here is the “funnel” I propose:

The Funnel



Preceding Step 1 would, of course, be promotion and marketing of the program itself. Then we would receive proposals, which would be vetted for viability. For those proposals we accept, we would either require some evidence of the proposer’s facility with Zoom, or offer them a 2-3 class course in its use.

Next we would offer a specific class in online teaching skills. I expect this would be 4 classes in length, fairly interactive, and each student would use the course they proposed as grist for the mill. Naturally, in the process they might well discover that they want to alter or redo their class offering.

This would lead to a final, revised proposal from them, which NEST would assess along several dimensions, such as quality of the content, quality of the instructor, viability, demand, and marketability. Only after a proposal passed this final muster would we undertake to promote it.

There are ten storytellers who have been active in the calls and have volunteered to serve on a two-meeting taskforce to help us shape this program. The first meeting of that group has been set for Thursday, June 4.

At a minimum, I believe NEST must be prepared to recruit the resources to:



Develop specific curriculum for

**Online tech skills
Online teaching skills**



Enlarge teaching staff

**Specific assignments
Recruit current cohort**



Formalize approval

**Gate from #4 -> #5
Performed by NEST staff**

Discussion, please.

Update from June 8: The Board decided at its May meeting that it did not have the human resources available to continue this program in its current form. There will be a meeting to discuss the future form this project will take.

Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild Annual Meeting 2020 Update

The **Worldwide Virtual Storytelling Guild (WVSG)**, started by Hope Lewis and Cris Riedel, was created to provide an outlet for storytellers (especially geographically isolated ones) who are interested in sharing stories, learning about storytelling, and enjoying peer feedback and community. WVSG has attracted tellers from all over the world. The email list has more than a hundred emails. The Facebook group has 120 members so far. These resources are being used to expand promotion of NEST and WVSG projects.

Currently, there are four meetings held each month including the Collaborative Storytelling group. WVSG plans to explore offering special performance events several times a year. These would involve a fee to support NEST.

Jim and Eric Miller are developing a training meeting for the WVSG which will augment the opportunities provided by the WVSG gatherings.

9:09 AM

06/15/20

Accrual Basis

Northeast Storytelling
Profit & Loss
July 1, 2019 through June 15, 2020

	<u>Jul 1, '19 - Jun 15, 20</u>
Income	
Online Course	515.00
Conference Fees	
Performances	
Friday Night Concert	20.00
Performances - Other	-50.00
Total Performances	-30.00
Registration - Main Conference	
Full weekend - Non-Member	5.00
Stories Galore - Saturday	0.00
Stories Galore - Member or NonM	150.00
Saturday - Member	0.00
Full weekend - Member	5,395.00
Friday - Member	685.00
Registration - Main Conference - Other	50.00
Total Registration - Main Conference	6,285.00
PreConference Intensive - Mem	-65.00
Conference Fees - Other	1,045.79
Total Conference Fees	7,235.79
Donations - General	11,616.38
Grants Received	500.00
Interest income	7.37
Membership	11,850.00
Sales (Gross Sales)	
Program Book Ads	440.00
Total Sales (Gross Sales)	440.00
Total Income	32,164.54
Expense	
Credit Card Fees	1,290.53
Insurance (Insurance)	
D&O	722.00
Liability	240.49
Total Insurance (Insurance)	962.49
Miscellaneous Expense	249.38
Office (Office Expenses)	
Computer Software	1,210.00
Equipment	119.09
Total Office (Office Expenses)	1,329.09
Postage	
Operations	56.60
Total Postage	56.60
Printing	
Operations	67.07
Total Printing	67.07
Professional Services	
Administration	1,000.00
CPA	1,095.00
Executive Director	11,604.19
Total Professional Services	13,699.19

9:09 AM
06/15/20
Accrual Basis

Northeast Storytelling
Profit & Loss
July 1, 2019 through June 15, 2020

	<u>Jul 1, '19 - Jun 15, 20</u>
Program Expenses	
Advertising	50.00
Gifts	94.58
Printing	338.42
Supplies	101.02
Technology	15.93
	<hr/>
Total Program Expenses	599.95
Taxes	
Filing Fee - State Of Massachus	18.50
	<hr/>
Total Taxes	18.50
Telephone	567.24
Venue Deposit	1,000.00
Website	
Security	68.83
Storage of Backup Data (Updraft Vault - cloud storage - 5GB)	35.00
Plugins	32.00
Domain Name	412.40
	<hr/>
Total Website	548.23
	<hr/>
Total Expense	20,388.27
	<hr/>
Net Income	11,776.27
	<hr/> <hr/>

9:05 AM
06/15/20
Accrual Basis

Northeast Storytelling
Balance Sheet
As of June 15, 2020

	<u>Jun 15, 20</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Webster Checking	59,659.76
Webster Savings	40,038.50
Total Checking/Savings	<u>99,698.26</u>
Other Current Assets	
Prepaid Expenses	3,000.00
Undeposited Funds (Funds received, but not yet deposited to a bank account)	46.00
Total Other Current Assets	<u>3,046.00</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>102,744.26</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>102,744.26</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable (Unpaid or unapplied vendor bills or credits)	2.99
Total Accounts Payable	<u>2.99</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>2.99</u>
Total Liabilities	2.99
Equity	
Net assets (Undistributed earnings of the corporation)	90,965.00
Net Income	11,776.27
Total Equity	<u>102,741.27</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>102,744.26</u>