



SPREAD THE WORD

National Association of Black Storytellers

P.O. Box 67722

Baltimore, Maryland 21215

www.nabsinc.org

Summer 2013

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Photo: JT Smith

"The compassion of a people is cultivated at a grandmother's knee" - Zimbabwe

Ring a ling ling!

Dear NABS Family,

Peace and blessings. Here in Baltimore Spring has Sprung, Summer is Sizzling with sweet rain showers in between. I hope you are enjoying your summer and will take the much needed time to rest, reflect, restore, and renew.

Let us remember to keep one another in prayer and in love especially those who are continuing to get well, Sister Mildred Stennis of DABS and Charlie Brown of the Griots' Circle. If any of NABS members are ailing or in need of prayer please let us know. I want all NABS members to have my love and support. Please contact our Executive Director, Vanora Legaux and let her know who is sick and shut-in.

Email: vflegaux@hotmail.com • Phone: 504-394-2585 • P. O. Box 2037 Gretna, LA 70054

Let us continue to:

Lift Every Voice! Shout and Rejoice!

Telling Our Stories, The Old and The New.

Wake Up Each Heart With Our Storytelling Art.

Spreading The Word To The Thousands and The Few.

© 2013 by Linda Goss

I wish all of you a safe and blessed summer.

Asante sana! Thank you!

Imani and Ife, Mama Linda

"I have been born again and again and each time, I have found something to love" - Gordon Parks



Congratulations to NABS Co-Founder Mama Linda Goss on receiving the Kathryn Morgan Award for Folk Arts & Social Justice. The Award was presented by the Philadelphia Folklore Project on June 1, 2013 at the Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia, PA during their 26th Birthday Bash. As reported on PFP's website, the Award honors: "people who have drawn on the power of community-based folk arts and cultural tradition to advance social change in our region (and beyond). The 2013 Folk Arts and Social Change Awards recognize how decades of work have built new futures for all of us: creating community well-being, disturbing the peace of racism and injustice, building self-determination, equity and power.

Linda Goss has been 'waking up the people' for more than 50 years. Bringing her African American Appalachian family storytelling traditions into the Black Arts and Black Power movements, Linda insisted on (and made room for) the power and validity of folk culture. A pioneer of the storytelling movement, she was the first storyteller to perform at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife. Addressing racism and exclusion, she organized other African American tellers, co-founding the National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference, the National Association of Black Storytellers, and Keepers of the Culture: enduring resources that have opened the way for countless people. Linda's lifetime work has been to connect ordinary people caught in oppressive situations - people who don't see themselves as storytellers or performers - to African American traditions of survival, resistance, and struggle.

About the award: Kathryn Morgan (1919-2010) was a native Philadelphian, the first African American woman to get a Ph.D. in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania, and the first Black woman to be on the faculty of Swarthmore College. A pioneering folklorist, she opened the field of family folklore, paying attention to African American and women's experiences, showing how family stories were "antidotes to racism." As a board member in the 1990s, Kathryn built PFP's commitment to "disturbing the peace of racism." - www.folkloreproject.org.

As NABS members, we are blessed to have such a quintessential exemplar in our Founder, Linda Goss.

Reported by Vanora Legaux, Executive Director

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dr. MaryAnn Harris



Thank you for providing me an opportunity to serve as the President of the National Association of Black Storytellers. As we move forward I continue to ask for your support, prayers, and words of wisdom. This is a rewarding journey and labor of love. I am pleased and proud to present this report of activities for January-April, 2013.

Enthusiastically, I presided over Board meetings, participated in some committee meetings and responded to over 350 e-mails, mailed congratulation letters, sympathy cards, returned more than 50 telephone calls, telephoned committee chair persons or members, communicated with NABS's Board members, (by mail, e-mail, or telephone) and made donations to NABS or NABS's members, (for various causes).

Please review the information below:

- Compiled more than 23 suggested names for the 2013 Festival & Conference, (The Board selected one of my recommendations, *One Voice, Many Stories*, (with additional revisions).
- Appointed Chairpersons for the following Standing committees:

Membership Committee: This committee is responsible for publicizing, promoting and securing memberships in all categories for the Association. The membership committee shall recommend strategies and other approaches for maintaining memberships. Members of this committee shall include regional representatives and affiliate president, **(Chairperson: Mama Edith Armstrong).**

Public Relations Committee: this committee shall assist the public relations chair I publicizing the association, its events, and activities. This committee may include affiliate presidents (or their designees) and regional representatives, **(Chairperson: Sade Turnipseed).**

Editorial Committee: This committee shall assist with the publication of the newsletter. This committee may include regional representatives, board members or affiliate presidents. **(Chairperson: Sharon Holley).**

Fund Development Committee: This committee shall be responsible for researching and writing proposals for fiscal development and managing grant programs which will augment the fiduciary capacity of the association. The Treasurer shall be a member of this committee, **(Chairperson: Diane Williams).**

- March 3, 2013, Prayer Circle for/ Kenneth Douglass Keeling (Fellisco's son)
- Created / Resolution of Sympathy for Kenneth Douglass Keeling
- Created letters/mailed letters of Congratulations to the following individuals:
Mother Ruth E. Hill, *Brother Blue Elders Circle Award*
Baba Jamal Koran Harambee Youth Award
Mama Linda Goss Spiritual Breakfast
Charles Edward Brown *Linda Brown Service Nia Award*
- Former Chairperson of the Mama Linda Goss Museum Enshrinement Committee (Recently appointed Kooki Davis and Jackkia Boyd as Chairpersons)

I have consistently worked and served on behalf of the National Association of Black Storytellers, members, and Board of Directors. I offer deep appreciation to the members of the NABS Board of Directors, committees, Founder, Mama Linda Goss, Executive Director Vanora Legaux, the elders and the youth of Shaw High School, (East Cleveland City Schools, East Cleveland, Ohio).

I express my thanks to my affiliate, the Cleveland Association of Black Storytellers. Let us continue to tell our story, engage youth and seek the wisdom of the elders.

Yours in Service,
Dr. MaryAnn Harris
President, NABS

NUMBER 31 – “IN THE TRADITION...”

“Connecting With Our Youth - One Voice ... Many Stories”



Our 31st Annual National Black Storytelling Festival & Conference, “In The Tradition...” will prove to be among the most memorable because of Hampton’s rich history, Hampton University’s legacy and, of course, the gathering of members, affiliates and Blackstorytelling lovers as we fulfill our theme “Connecting With Our Youth; One Voice...Many Stories!

Hampton is a proper place to connect with our youth as well as the history and culture we preserve! It was in Hampton, at Fort Monroe’s Old Point Comfort, where in 1619 a Dutch ship named the White Lion carried the first documented Africans to the American colonies. It was in 1861, at Fort Monroe where enslaved brothers and sisters reached Union lines and became the first “self contained African American community” as contrabands of war. Later, Mary Peake began teaching about twenty students from that community under the

Emancipation Oak, located on the campus of what’s now Hampton University. It was under this old oak where the first Southern reading of the Emancipation Proclamation was publicly read...hence the naming of the tree being appropriately titled. Also, in 1878, seventy male and female Native Indians attended Hampton beginning a forty-year presence and effort to educate.

The Emancipation Oak symbolizes and mirrors NABS’ mission and expression of purpose oh, so well! With its limbs bending mightily toward the ground and its massive trunk proudly and solidly planted firmly in the ground, it exemplifies where we’ve come from...why we are...the importance of educating our youth and people...who we are! That old tree reminds us that it is we and we is it!

This year’s Festival & Conference will be a bit different. Gonna have a different “flow” when it comes to time; a different order of venues but respectful of keeping those events that we have come to cherish as traditional NABS events; a different conference itinerary since we will take advantage of Hampton University being, literally, one-tenth a mile across the bridge!

One thing you can be sure of...you’re really going to be disappointed if you miss this one! If you thought the 30th reunion was “off the chain”...and it was...this year’s 31st Annual National Black Storytelling Festival & Conference is all about breaking the chains!

Go ahead and make your hotel reservations, right now, from our website homepage. Be looking for NABS’ registration brochure online and in your mailbox real soon. Register early. Check your emails as I will be informing you about transportation and Festival & Conference tips. Start getting excited all over again! Whew!!! What you waiting for? Don’t ‘crastinate ... I’m already wif muh bags pac’t an’ standin’ at da do’!

ADOPT-A-TELLER REPORT

The Adopt-A-Teller Program (AATP) was developed to increase the awareness of the African and African American oral tradition and to promote NABS goals and mission by procuring performances and workshops in the community, typically during the annual festival and conference. NABS storytellers are placed in schools, libraries, museums, colleges & universities, cultural organizations, assisted living residences, community groups and more. Most AATP assignments are for one 45-minute assembly or a small group program. Successful performers are experienced storytelling professionals who have an extensive repertoire and have demonstrated ability to perform for a wide variety of audiences.

Last year was a banner year for AATP. We sent tellers to 32 venues (schools, libraries, and colleges) where they presented thirty-two 45-minute performances and four 90-minute workshops. Bunjo Butler (bunjobutler@gmail.com) and Linda Gorham (lgorham3@gmail.com) are gearing up for 2013.

Submitted by Linda Gorham and Bunjo Butler

NABS YOUTH BLOSSOM-JALIYAH!

By Elisha T. Minter

NABS National Youth Director

A beautiful flower only becomes beautiful and blossoms, when and because it is nurtured and properly watered. Even in the wild, without proper cultivation from the sun, the winds, the rain and other natural processes that nature has put into place, can a wild flower grow and prosper. So it is with our youth.

We are thankful to the ancestors and to our founders for leaving us such a creative tool as the National Association of Black Storytellers to encourage and guide our youth towards the love of storytelling and the art of storytelling..."In the Tradition."

Our youth grasped and participated in a program at last year's conference that thrilled the audience and their peers. Their utilization of the storytelling provided invaluable exposure. The camaraderie and spirit of togetherness garnered from learning dance and movement as they worked out in their movement classes, afforded them a finished piece to perform at their youth program.

During their down time, they grew even closer as mentors helped them to design a collaborative backdrop and set design created with their own hands. The young mentees joyously engaged in gift-making for our Elders. Last but not least, as they continued to grow in love for this organization, our history and our culture, they were led on a tour of language with Elder Teju and a physical tour of our history at the National Blacks in Wax Museum.

A special thanks to all of our instructors and parents for their participation in making last year's conference in Baltimore one to be remembered.

The name "Jaliyah" has an Arabic/Hebrew origin and is seen throughout literature and in songs. It means "High and lofty"; "great and exalted"; and "sublime." These terms describe the direction in which our youth are headed with their Storytelling. This year's conference in Hampton, VA, will take us to a new level as we combine to celebrate our youth, our today and our tomorrow.

We will celebrate their oneness in Storytelling..."In the Tradition..." as we present workshops to help our youth glean from our time honored tellers from both near and from afar. We will work together to obtain an understanding between youth and elders and the stories that need to be told that they may continue on throughout history...life ...infinity.

We encourage all Affiliates and families to bring your children and your children's children to partake in this wonderful learning and sharing atmosphere. We will remember the old as we share the new and embrace our youth as we celebrate our oneness in the spirit. ***"Well Oh Well, Oh Well! It's Storytelling Time," as Mama Linda says. Let's cultivate our Youth and educate them ... "In the Tradition..."***





NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK STORYTELLERS, INC.
 P. O. BOX 67722 · BALTIMORE MARYLAND 21215 · (410) 947-1117 · NABSinc.org

The Power to Have Your Say...

We are excited....ecstatic! Like the caterpillar evolving into a butterfly...NABS is transforming. The Board of Directors, Program Chairs, and Committee Members are diligently working to enhance the brand of the National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc. on a global scale. We are upgrading our social media and implementing innovative new projects, including:

- hosting our First National Online Storytelling Contest: Deadline, Sept. 28
- promoting NABS at National Festivals
- increasing membership communications
- seeking and writing grants
- initiating a Blog
- participating in Google Hangouts
- upgrading our website
- re-establishing the Heritage and Archives Committee
- generating College Affiliates
- redesigning our newsletter
- producing a policy handbook
- establishing an exploratory committee for “Read on with NABS”
- creating a NABS Resource Center
- initializing a building campaign
- conducting business training for the Board
- implementing progressive operational standards

The African Oral Tradition is rich and the vision of our Founders, Mother Mary Carter Smith and Mama Linda Goss has forged a unique organization to preserve this treasure. As we work vigorously to forward the mission of *NABS to promote and to perpetuate the art of Black storytelling*, **we need your valued input.** If you have not already completed the **NABS Membership Survey** on line, please complete the following pages. If you wish to maintain the integrity of the newsletter, you may fill in a copy the survey. **Please mail to NABS by September 30.** It is crucial that the concerns and ideas of membership are actively heard, embraced and responded to as we move the organization into an interactive and robust 21st century design.

We look forward to your participation in the promising future of our beloved organization. We encourage you to keep your membership current in order to move our mission forward. You may pay your dues by U.S. postal mail or by PayPal on our website.

Much Love and Many Stories...

National Association of Black Storytellers
 Board of Directors and Membership Committee



NABS Membership Survey 2013

How many years have you been a Member of NABS? *

I am a life member: *

- Yes
 No

My membership is paid for 2013: *

- Yes
 No

I am a member of an Affiliate: *

- Yes
 No
 If Yes, Please specify

What is your age?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am aware of all NABS activities:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that NABS' communications to membership is sufficient:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participate in NABS committees or program planning:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I attend the NABS Festival and Conference:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I keep my membership dues current:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly donate to NABS:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please check all that apply:

- I am a storyteller
 I am a supporter of storytelling
 I am a musician
 I am a craftsperson
 Other, please specify

What is the level of your storytelling?

- Beginner
 Intermediate
 Advanced

What is the status of your storytelling?

- Volunteer
 Part-time Professional
 Full-time Professional
 Applied within context of another Profession
 Other, please specify

Do you have an active e-mail address? *

- Yes
 No

If the answer to the above question is Yes, please enter your preferred e-mail address:

Would you like to receive NABS Newsletters? *

- Yes
 No

Would you be willing to receive the Newsletter by e-mail? *

- Yes
 No

Standard features in our Newsletter are:

President's Message
Founder's Message
Festival and Conference Updates
Affiliate Information
Youth Information
AATP Information
Membership Information
Fundraising Campaigns

What other features would you like to see? *Please check all that apply:*

- Calendar of Events
 Storytelling Resources
 Health & Well-Being
 Historical Perspective
 Stories
 Elders Speak
 Youth Page
 Member Spotlight
 Educational/Professional Development
 Storytelling for Today's Issues
 Financial Update
 Social Media Information
 Other, please specify

Do you have any works of fiction or non-fiction to contribute to the next NABS' Anthology?

- Yes
 No

Do you use the NABS Directory? *

- Yes
 No

Which social media forums would you most likely utilize?

Please check all that apply:

- FACEBOOK
 LinkedIn
 Blog
 Pinterest
 Youtube
 Twitter
 Instagram

We are currently updating our website. What features would you like to see on our website?

Which NABS products would you purchase? Please check all that apply:

- Pens
- Luggage tags
- Cups
- Water Containers
- Books
- DVDs
- CDs
- Webinars (Online training)
- Clothing
- Bumper Stickers
- Window Decals
- Engraved Business Card Holder
- Journals/Composition Books
- License Plates
- Historical Posters
- NABS Archival Festival Cover Posters
- NABS Logo Jewelry Silver
- NABS Logo Jewelry Gold
- Other, please specify

What benefits do you expect to gain from your membership with NABS?

What talents and skills would you like to contribute to NABS?

I am interested in serving on a NABS Committee. Please check all that apply:

- Membership
- Public Relations
- Heritage & Archives
- Product Development
- Educational
- Budget & Finance
- Fund Development
- Constitution and By-Laws
- Editorial (Newsletter)
- Linda Goss Enshrinement (Blacks in Wax)
- Building Campaign

I am interested in working on NABS National Programs. Please check all that apply:

- Affiliate
- Youth
- Adopt-a-Teller

Are you aware of the NABS' Adopt-A-Teller Program?

- Yes
- No

Are you a teller with the Adopt-A-Teller Program?

- Yes
- No

If the answer to the above question is No, are you interested in becoming an Adopt-A-Teller?

- Yes
- No

Please list any ideas, suggestions or concerns:

Thank you for participating in the survey.

powered by [obsurvey](#)

Thank you for participating in the survey.

powered by [obsurvey](#)

KUUMBA STORYTELLERS OF GEORGIA



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Margaret Rose Edinburgh (“Margaret Rose”) has been living in the Atlanta metropolitan area since 1984. She has been quite an inspiration to those who know her, and to those who have worked with her. For a number of years, Margaret created and designed faceless African American cloth dolls. These faceless beauties emerged with costumes that reminded Margaret of many of the women she knew in her South 14th neighborhood in Terre Haute, Indiana. One of her creations, “Sis-A-Mama” begged to have her story told. As a result, Margaret began telling stories derived from some of the dolls in her Order of NZingah Doll Collection. TM

As a member of Toastmasters International, she began volunteering as a storyteller through an Atlanta Metropolitan Area hospice. This led her to Kuumba Storytellers of Georgia and the National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc. After 30 years in corporate America, she retired and focused on volunteering as a storyteller, logging more than 100 hours. As a result, she received a Daily Points of Light Certificate of Award for Volunteerism from President George H.W. Bush and a letter, lapel pin, and the “President Means Service” Certificate of Award from our current President Barack H. Obama. We are predicting that these awards are just the beginning of a long list of accolades Margaret Rose Edinburgh will receive. We are proud to have her as a member of our group of storytellers.

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LuvDrop Productions will present “My People” a Showcase of Art & Talent. The title was inspired from the Poet Langston Hughes. We will do many stories to educate our West End Community about the struggles of our ancestors and the importance of the Oral Tradition. Opportunities will be available for our Youth Tellers, “Home Grown Tellers” to share their stories. African art and artifacts will be on display to share with the public. Several Kuumba Storytellers will be performing Stories in this Production. Yes, we are still Tellin It Well, In the ATL. The history of our people must live on through our Youth. This event is scheduled for August 23 and 24 at 7:30 pm in Atlanta at the West End Performing Art Center, 945 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. Contact info – missludrop@yahoo.com.

Many Thanks,
Gwendolyn J. Napier

AN ELDER SPEAKS ...

by Thelma Thomas

When you are young and asked your age, you usually say twelve and a half, or sixteen and a half, etc. But after thirty, most people say I'm pushing 40, or I'm pushing 50, etc.

*So I decided to change my attitude toward aging,
Now I am*

SEVENTY NINE AND A HALF-THAT'S ME.
SEVENTY NINE AND A HALF-THAT'S ME.
I'M A OLDER WOMAN WITH A STORY TO TELL,
I EXERCISE FIVE TIMES A WEEK WHICH CAN BE HELL.
WORKED ON MY SWIMMING FOR A YEAR, TO COMPETE,
IN THE SENIOR OLYMPICS METE, AND THAT WAS A FETE.
SO WHY DO YOU RAISE YOUR EYEBROWS WHEN I TELL
YOU MY AGE? CAN I REALLY BE,
SEVENTY NINE AND A HALF THAT'S ME.
I CAN DANCE, SING, TELL A STORY TO, DRIVE A CAR ,
COOK A GOOD MEAL AND TALK TRASH TO YOU.
SO WHY DO YOU SHAKE YOUR HEAD IN SURPRISE
WHEN I TELL YOU MY AGE? CAN I REALLY BE,
SEVENTY NINE AND A HALF THAT'S ME.
I HAVE TRAVELLED TO THE LAND WHERE MY ANCESTORS
ARE FROM, GHANA, SENEGAL, THE GAMBIA ARE SOME.
AUSTRALIA, TANZANIA, FIJI, MOROCCO,
FRANCE, I'VE ALREADY HIT.
NOW KENYA IN SEPTEMBER IS MY NEXT TRIP.
SO WHY DO YOUR EYES WIDEN WHEN I
TELL YOU MY AGE? CAN I REALLY BE,
SEVENTY NINE AND A HALF-THAT'S ME.

*Folks, I have not written a poem in years, except when my heart is broken, but this poem was fun.
Give me some feedback. - Thelma*

Onawumi Jean Moss

ELDER

As an elder storyteller I am constantly thinking of “Connecting With Our Youth”. It is at once an exhilarating and daunting pursuit; one that is made more attainable when informed by the NABS tradition of finding, creating and telling stories that empower our rising storytellers and listeners to dream and achieve BIG!

That standard has prompted me to step-up my inquiry into bright AND dark sides of trying to grow up in this society while being of African heritage. My conversations with middle, high school and college students confirm our NABS tradition of telling stories that encourage reflection and self respect.

These young people also show considerable interest in creating cautionary tales as a means of exploring such hard core problems as bullying, feeling “dissed” and cultural differences!

I have found listening to be one of the most reliable ways to stay connected. It is good to be a NABS storyteller! THANKS MOTHER MARY CARTER SMITH! THANKS SISTER LINDA GOSS! THANKS TO ONE AND ALL for a legacy such as this! Ah'm jes' sayin' OJM www.onawumi.com



JUNETEENTH – LET THE STORY BE TOLD

By Queen Nur

Throughout the country, members of NABS perpetuated the Griotic tradition during the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of the American Enslavement Period.

“Dating back to 1865, it was on **June 19th** that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new Executive Order. However, with the surrender of General Lee in April of 1865, and the arrival of General Granger’s regiment, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.” – www.juneteenth.com.

The jubilation in receiving the knowledge of Freedom on that historical day transformed into an annual celebration called Juneteenth. However, the celebration began to decline in the early 1900’s due in part to the suppression of the Galveston truth, and the propagandizing of Lincoln’s January 1, 1863 Emancipation Proclamation as the official end of slavery.

Juneteenth is our story to tell. Today, the celebration is growing in a rapid resurgence and Blackstorytellers are integral to its historic reprise:

Beverly Fields Burnette and **Carolyn Evans**, NCABS members appeared with the **US Colored Troops, 37th Infantry, Company G** at the **Rocky Mount, NC** Juneteenth event on June 1, 2013.

Charlotte Blake Alston participated as a panelist at the **Johnson House Historic Site Juneteenth Festival** on Saturday, June 15th in **Philadelphia**. This site was used capaciously as a Safe House during the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. The panel topic was: William Still’s Journal C Manuscript and the Underground Railroad. Discussions included, “fugitive experiences, such as gender, age, methods of flight, family situations and strategies used to connect and maintain connections on the journey north.” Charlotte sang choral excerpts from her work – *The Good Raised Up*, and identified such sites at the Pennsylvania Historical Society where every page of William Still’s detailed interviews of escapees are held.

Griots’ Circle of Maryland filled the afternoon with history, stories and song at *A Juneteenth Celebration: A Day of Remembrance* held at the **Benjamin Banneker Historical Park & Museum in Catonsville, MD** on June 15th. Harriet Tubman appeared through re-enactor/storyteller Janice Curtis Green. Harriet’s spirit is still urging her people on as she encouraged the audience to cherish their freedom and to hold helping others above worldly possessions. Grandmother Edna Lawrence, Charles Johnson and John “Kinderman” Taylor led the audience in a song about the Black Hall of Fame celebrating our African American heroes and sheros: Gwen Marable, Bob Smith and Charles Johnson told just the right stories for the event.

Toni Simmons was a featured teller at the annual Juneteenth Celebration in **Houston, Texas** sponsored by the Houston Institute for Culture. Over 3,500 people attended the **Miller Outdoor Theatre** on June 19th. Accompanied by the drumming of Lipan Urban, Toni told the story of the holiday and enjoined the audience to chant, “Free at Last, Free at Last, Come Celebrate. We’re Free at Last!”

Denise Valentine rendered the *Life of Truth, Sojourner (1797-1883)* at The **African American Museum in Philadelphia** on Sat, June 15th. Over 100 hundred people were captivated by her telling.

Tradition Keepers: Black Storytellers of Western New York has presented a pre-Juneteenth activity for **Buffalo, New York** for the past ten years. On the Saturday, before the Juneteenth Festival in Buffalo, the storytellers sponsor: “**Git on The Bus**” – a mystery storytelling crawl where participants go to four locations of significance to the African American community. Tradition Keepers tell 30 minutes of stories at each location. This year, the bus stopped at H.O.M.E. Housing Opportunities Made Equal (Leave Me Alone, I’m Going Home), Masten-Ellicott YMCA (Fit and Fabulous), Mt. Aaron Baptist Church (Place of Refuge) and Juneteenth Headquarters (Still Standing). Except for the base location, Tradition Keepers have not repeated a location or theme in ten years. They have told at churches, a park, funeral home, beauty salon, dance studio, school, library, historical home, jazz club, theater, museum, and many other venues. All of the stories celebrate Black life, history and culture and culminate with libation, stories and light refreshments back at Juneteenth Headquarters.



Beverly Burnett & Carolyn Evans

Author, **Eleanor E. Tate** has a story to tell: “Since I’m not an oral storyteller, I didn’t do any storytelling during Juneteenth but I did attend and helped to hold down the amen corner. I remember the following anecdote with a smile: When I attended **Durham, NC’s Annual Juneteenth Festival** last month, I told myself that afternoon that I was so glad I’m here, so glad I’m here! I sat near chewing distance at a popcorn stand and clapped my hands, stamped my feet and even shook my shoulders as the gospel group *Sensational Nightingales* lifted our spirits in song. During the intermission, between acts, the MC called out, ‘Hey, ya’ll, we’re celebrating the end of slavery! It’s Juneteenth! Let’s Wobble!’”

BLACK STORYTELLERS OF SAN DIEGO



Black Storytellers of San Diego, Inc. had a very successful twenty thirteen performance year. We performed in over twenty-five venues including one teller using story telling techniques to teach the Bible to villagers on the Amazon in Brazil. The programs that I am highlighting were very unique storytelling experiences: storytelling at the International Mingei Museum, the Pacific Southwest Railroad Museum and in honor of African American Music Month, performing with the Richard Thompson Quintet.

The International Mingei Museum of San Diego requested BSSD to write original stories about pieces of Bill Traylor's art. Each Teller selected a piece of art and wrote and performed a story. William "Bill" Traylor was a self-taught

artist born into slavery, at age eighty-five he moved to Montgomery, where he slept in the back room of a funeral home and in a shoemaker's shop. During the day, he sat on the sidewalk and drew images of the people he saw on the street and scenes he remembered from life on the farm. In four years, Traylor produced between 1200 and 1500 drawings.[2] Traylor is among the most highly regarded and sought-after of self-taught artists.

In April we sponsored a train tour to the Pacific Southwest Railroad Museum to visit the only refurbished Jim Crow Car in America.

What an exciting and informative tour. The tour included a train ride on an old wooden train, a tour of the Jim Crow Car and ended with lunch and storytelling. The stories were based on the life and experiences of Blacks and the Railroads.

Our third event was performed in honor of African American Music Month.

In June BSSD hosted a program titled Jazz and Spirituals. Our featured artist was the Richard Thompson Quintet. Richard Thompson is a Jazz pianist and composer. His compositions combine classical European and African-African American Jazz styles. Teller's presentations intertwined between the musical performances of Jazz and Spirituals.

On Memorial Day BSSD performed at the Festival of Sail, the largest Tall Ship festival on the West coast.

Bringing our 2013 year to an end and culminating on an extremely high note. BSSD applied for and received an NEH grant. We will keep you posted.

Festival of Sail is the LARGEST Tall Ship festival on the west coast and is hosted at the Maritime Museum of San Diego.

MAMA LINDA'S TRAVELING STORYTELLERS

By Janice Curtis Greene

In March of 2013 a cadre of Griots' Circle Members formed a group proudly called "Mama Linda's Traveling Storytellers". This project was the brain child of Janice Curtis Greene and her brother Hon. Tom Gene Curtis both life members of the Griots' Circle and the National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS). Having been one of Mama Linda's chauffeurs to and from the hospital during her illness along with Eslyn Hinmon and Fellisco Keeling (whom Mama Linda affectionately called her angels) Janice witnessed the courage and perseverance of not only Mama Linda but others battling Cancer. She thought what joy storytelling would bring to these incredible people, young and old alike.

Janice talked to her big brother Tom, her hero (but that's another story) and he immediately said to count him in. Then, she asked Mama Linda's approval for her project and permission to use her name. The original name was Mama Linda's Story Visitors but Mama Linda requested to use the name Traveling Storytellers since that was the name she had used before her illness slowed her down. When the idea was presented to the Griots' Circle 10 members joined the group and others have joined since then.

The group began to solicit Hospitals, Pediatric Centers, Geriatric Facilities, Counseling Centers and Long Term Care Facilities to bring the joy of the African Oral Tradition to those who are facing illness and loneliness. All members agreed to volunteer their services and to provide their own transportation. A data base is being developed and evaluation sheets provided. Groups would perform in teams of three and rotate venues.

To date Mama Linda's Traveling Storytellers have performed for John Hopkins Hospital Bloomberg Children's Center where tellers were video streamed for confined patients, Bon Secours Hospital Seniors Program, HopeWell Cancer Support Center (of which Mama Linda is a patron) and TuTtie's Place residential Facility for Young Men.

Other members of Mama Linda's Traveling Storytellers are Mama Linda Goss, Fellisco Keeling, Deborah Pierce Fakunle, David Fakunle, Cheryl Hinton, Bob Smith, Clarence Mollock, Bunjo Butler, Angela Roberts-Burton, Gwen Marable, Gail Harrison, Gail Parker-Murry, Kay Merrill and Simone Rollings.

We love Mama Linda and hope that this program will honor her and as she sings, "Let her little light shine" for years to come.

Get Social with NABS

Look for the launching of our New Website and be sure
to
Like, Tweet, Pin and Blog with us!



Social Media

Blog www.nabsinc.org

Twitter link: <https://twitter.com/NABStalking>

Pinterest Link: <http://pinterest.com/nabstalking>

Facebook Link: www.facebook.com/Black-Storytellers-NABS

Born To Tell!

1. Diane Williams
2. Jackkia Boyd
3. Oni Lansana
4. Donna Willingham
5. Mama Linda Goss
6. Sandra Williams Bush
7. Linda Gorham
8. Sharon Jordan Holley
9. Vanora Franklin Legaux
10. Denise Chapman-Acosta
11. Queen Nur
12. MaryAnn Harris
13. Ramona King



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