

2022 Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival Session Descriptions

All videos will be available beginning at 9:00 AM Eastern on Friday, April 1st. The live (Zoom) sessions will take place at the times shown, and recordings will be posted afterward.



The following videos were recorded especially for our student viewers but have much to offer viewers of all ages. Teachers may also want to use the videos labeled “general audience” in their classrooms.



Sheila Arnold: Animal Folktales

20 minutes

Adapted here by Sheila Arnold, these traditional animal tales are full of fun and teach great lessons. This video is appropriate for all ages but is especially suited for elementary school viewers.

Sheila Arnold: Call to Action Stories

20 minutes

Sheila Arnold shares “Lucius and St. John’s Episcopal Church” (a story of freedom) and “Two Mountains” (an environmental story). This video is especially suited for middle and high school viewers but will be enjoyable for others too.

Bil Lepp: “The King of Little Things”

10 minutes

In a world of vast kingdoms lives a king who is happy and content to reign over all things small. Not so King Normous. He wants to be Ruler of All the World. After having erased every empire and raided every realm, Normous is enraged to learn that the King of Little Things still rules over his tiny kingdom. He sends his army to defeat this upstart, but he finds he cannot outfight or outwit a king who holds sway over the small things of the world. After all, it is the small things that keep the big things going. This story uses alliteration, rhymes, and other word play. Teachers may find it useful for teaching those things. It also opens the door to teaching about bullying and the feudal system. The story stresses a simple lifestyle, the importance of little things, and good manners. It is appropriate for grades 2-5 but will be enjoyable for others too.

Bil Lepp: “Buck Ain’t No Ordinary Dog”

15 minutes

This is a tall tale in the classic, humorous Appalachian tradition. Bil wants Buck-dog to be a hunting dog, but Buck is scared of guns going off. Bil ties a rope from the dog's collar to his own belt. Bil fires a gun, and the dog thinks he is supposed to chase the bullet. Because Bil is tied to the dog, the dog pulls Bil through the woods, and Bil eventually becomes frozen to the side of a train by his tongue. A 50' wing of frozen drool forms; the train takes off; Bil flies the train, and it just keeps going from there. This story employs alliteration, metaphor, similes, and puns, and thus is useful for many language arts lessons. It also uses exaggeration and hyperbole. The story is also useful because the rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution are very easy to recognize in this tale. It is appropriate for grades 2-12 but will be enjoyable for others too.

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Sam Payne: “Ghost Dog” and “Bobbie the Wonder Dog”

20 minutes

In “Ghost Dog,” a boy and his brother investigate a broken-down house down the street and find themselves face-to-face with a mystery. “Bobbie” is the amazing homeward-bound story of real-life pooch Bobbie the wonder dog.

Sam Payne: “With His Head So Noble and High” and “The Day Boy and the Night Girl”

20 minutes

In “With His Head So Noble and High,” an old movie musical comes to the rescue in a time of fear and distress. “The Day Boy and the Night Girl” is the story of a cruel witch who tries to keep two children from ever meeting each other.

Gayle Ross: “Rabbit and the Tribal Council”

15 minutes

In the beginning days, the animal society was very much like Cherokee society, with stickball game, dances, and a tribal council to lay down the law! But Rabbit always plays by his own rules!

Gayle Ross: “Friends of Thunder”

15 minutes

In “Friends of Thunder,” two Cherokee boys are raising what appears to be a harmless pet, but as time passes, they realize they are faced with an ancient enemy and must make a dangerous decision!

Kim Weitkamp: “The True Story of Jack and the Beanstalk”

25 minutes

Have you ever wondered about the truth behind a fairy tale? Join Kim Weitkamp for “Jack and the Beanstalk” as you’ve never heard it before. This video was made especially for students in grades K-3 but is a treat for all ages.

Kim Weitkamp: “Sledding”

15 minutes

Get ready for a wild ride! Kim Weitkamp shares the story of an out-of-this-world sledding adventure. This video was made especially for students in grades 4-5 but is a treat for all ages.

See also Stories for the Young and Young-at-Heart in the General Audience videos.

These folktales from three different cultures are terrific for young children!

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For General
Audience



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For General
Audience



Sheila Arnold: Social Justice Stories

25 minutes

- "Jackson"
- "The Hummingbird Story"

Sheila Arnold: "The Ties That Bind" storytelling program

25 minutes

- "The Noisy House"
- "Scaring Stories"
- Song: "The Ties that Bind"

Sam Payne: "When I Was One and Twenty" and "A Soldier's Tale Tale"

30 minutes

- "When I Was One and Twenty"—a recording date with a couple of musicians opens a box of musical memories that go all the way back to World War I
- "A Soldier's Tale Tale"—a flu-era piece of music opens the door of understanding between a grandson and his grandfather

Sam Payne: "There is a Telescope" and "The Scottish Play"

25 minutes

- "There is a Telescope"—an old slumber party memory filled with wonder comes back to mind at the unfolding of the James Webb telescope, a million miles away
- "The Scottish Play"—a cue from a friend leads to an on-stage Shakespearian adventure for the whole family

Gayle Ross: "The Cherokee Rose"

15 minutes

Cherokees have always woven history into told stories to ensure that important lessons are passed on and not forgotten. This is a traditional story woven into the Trail of Tears.

Gayle Ross: "The Three Brothers' Journey"

30 minutes

Story lovers will recognize the epic "journey" type story. What makes it special is the uniquely Cherokee lesson it teaches!

Bil Lepp and Kim Weitkamp: "Bil and Kim's Excellent Adventure"

Part 1: 35 minutes

Part 2: 55 minutes

A special show with Kim Weitkamp and Bil Lepp! This show was recorded in front of a live audience as an exclusive for the Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival. Kim and Bil will be chatting, answering audience questions, and taking us on a wild ride as they share stories of all kinds. The video is split into two parts; you'll want to see both!

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Showcase by Tellers from Our Region

30 minutes

- Leslie Shelley shares “My Hero,” a story about the importance of recognizing and celebrating the heroes in our lives.
- Alex Peers shares “The Polar Bear,” a story about a once-in-a-lifetime encounter.
- Amanda Lawrence shares “Ike and Spike,” a story about the virtues of playing cards with sneaky old women.

Stories for the Young and Young-at-Heart

25 minutes

- Judy Baker shares “Brother Possum,” a traditional folktale.
- Tom Lawrence Jr. shares “All about Platypus,” an aboriginal legend from Australia.
- Gwendolyn Napier shares “Under the Baobab Tree,” the African story of the tree of life.

Kennesaw State University Tellers

20 minutes

- Ben Holmes: “A Christmas Miracle”
A Christmas miracle cuts through the chaos of the Korean war.
- Mercy Mondt: “When Life Gives You Strawberries”
An ambitious girl learns to slow down, even when the strawberries are piling up.
- Sebastian Lopez: “Christmas in Columbia”
Moving can be difficult as we long for things that remind us of home, but family can make it easier.

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Live Events

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Friday, April 1

11:00 AM-12:00 PM Eastern

Workshop by Kim Weitkamp: “Our Town: Gathering Family Stories and the Stories of Those Around You”

Kim Weitkamp will teach you simple to use ways to gather the stories of your family and friends. Did you know that research has shown that gathering and knowing family stories is one major step to having a happy and resilient family? In this workshop, you will learn how to Memory Map, a fun and quick way to gather memories. This is also a great exercise for storytellers and writers. You'll also learn steps on how to turn a memory into a story that will be requested time and time again.

1:00-2:00 PM Eastern

Workshop by Sam Payne: “Time to Put Some Paint on the Walls”

There may not be room in your repertoire of great stories for every idea you have, but the more ideas you have, the more your repertoire will expand to hold the great ones. This is a workshop featuring a few hands-on practices that will keep new ideas flowing and give you ways to capture them.

3:00-4:00 PM Eastern

Workshop by Kanute Rarey, Denise Mount, and Terrell Shaw: “Starting from Scratch”

Would you like to see storytelling flourish where you live? Led by tellers from Georgia and North Carolina who have launched successful storytelling programs in their areas, this workshop will present strategies for growing storytellers and storytelling opportunities in your community.

7:00-8:00 PM Eastern

Q&A with featured tellers

If you have questions for our featured tellers or would just like to listen in to get to know them a bit better, come to the Q&A session. Sheila Arnold, Bil Lepp, Sam Payne, Gayle Ross, and Kim Weitkamp will join us for a chat via Zoom.

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Saturday, April 2

11:00 AM-12:00 PM Eastern

Workshop by Gayle Ross: “Choosing a Story—Making It Yours”

The first step in your journey as a storyteller is often the most important one. Whether you use stories in your work or performance, choosing the stories you want to tell can play a vital role in your success. In this workshop, we will look at some of the reasons you might be drawn to a story and the responsibilities you have both to the story and your listeners. Prepare to be interactive!

1:00-2:00 PM Eastern

Workshop by Bil Lepp: “Finding Ideas and Turning Them into Stories”

One of the trickiest things about being a teller is coming up with ideas for stories. I have several different techniques for generating story ideas. But getting an idea isn't all there is to it. You have to turn that idea into a story. In this workshop, I will discuss how I come up with ideas, and what I do with them once I have them.

3:00-4:00 PM Eastern

Workshop by Sheila Arnold: “Healing Racial Divides through Storytelling”

Storytelling has lots of purposes—entertainment, inspiration, history, and healing. Storytelling as a form of healing can be for the physical, the mental, the heart, and the community. Storytelling can begin and quicken the healing of racial divides. This workshop will share techniques of creating and using stories to create spaces that foster focused listening, encourage conversation, and assist in developing strategies that lead to equity and inclusivity. The teacher, Sheila Arnold, will share a story to start the conversation and then lead attendees in where they can find stories, what stories are helpful in the discussion, and how to create the space where these stories can be received.

7:00-8:00 PM Eastern

Olio: one story from each of our featured tellers

Each of our featured tellers will share one story live via Zoom. Join in the fun as we close out the festival with everyone together on the virtual stage.