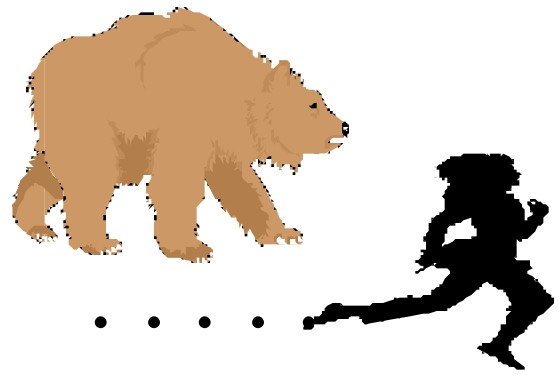


"As I reached for my brief case, I heard a grumbling sound in the bush in front of me. I slowly parted the branches. I don't know who was more startled, the bear or me, but I reacted faster. With my brief case in one hand and my fishing rod and newly caught trout in the other, I did a quick retreat up the nearest tree. The bear regained its wits and charged after me. Just then the train whistle blew causing the bear to stampede into the woods, leaving me with frazzled nerves and the gash in my boot."

STORYTELLING
 by Mrs. Terry Peters



Each holiday my family gathers for a traditional feast. Although the food is wonderful, it's my father's stories, afterwards, which provide the real motivation to tolerate a room full of relatives. These stories bind my family together. Each member has a share in the traditions and experiences which are woven into the quilt of stories my father tells. My family is defined by the hunting, fishing and parenting tales. Is there a story weaver in your family? Now you will have an opportunity to display your storytelling skills as the NFL brings Storytelling to the Portland Nationals as its newest consolation event. Begin listening or reading those stories who, like my father's, give meaning to culture and answer life's riddles.

Storytellers in all cultures pass on their society's narratives. According to narrative scholar Didier Coste, one function of narratives is to explain cultural realities. These realities are natural, social or ultimate in form. Natural realities explain scientific positions such as evolution. Social realities present narratives which describe how our institutions or cultural structures came into being. Readers surely recall the story of the Pilgrims arrival or of the North's victory over the Confederacy during the Civil War. Finally, ultimate realities answer the great philosophical questions such as: Who are we? or What is our purpose on earth? These stories may also incorporate historical events but are primarily value centered and well-represented by the parables of Christ, mythology and Native American lore.

"My father carefully explained to my younger brother, my sisters and myself the presence of cancer in our mother. He ex-

plained my mother's dream of living in a home with a chandelier. A few weeks later we moved into town. The dining room with the crystal chandelier became my mother's bedroom and each day for the remainder of her life we would come home from school and sit on our mother's bed. We would share the stories of the day as we stared in wonderment at the rainbows on the wall made by the sun's reflection through the chandelier."

My father's stories of his parents provided me with the opportunity to know the grandparents I would never meet. It wasn't just the stories but the delivery which helped me to understand the relationship which had existed between parent and child.

My own children delight in my father's delivery style. *Each time he repeats a tale the integrity of the story is maintained. Yet, the story is never exactly the same because it is not memorized but retold. Although my father uses gestures to pantomime action, it's his voice and his facial expression which gives life to the story. My father leads us into each tale with an introduction which establishes the setting and theme for the story. He knows how to create the appropriate mood.*

Students who are eliminated from Main and Supplemental Events may register for either Impromptu or Storytelling. Those of us who listened to Alberto Rios at last year's National Opening Ceremony will attest to the appropriateness of Storytelling as an event. It provides a nice contrast to Impromptu. The format allows for minimal preparation but rewards the speaker who can weave words into a story. The student should become familiar with the story so it

can be delivered extempore but it should not be memorized. The meaning and the mood of the story should be apparent through the introduction and delivery of the story. For the sake of competition there is a four minute maximum and no minimum. The student will use the same story each round.

"The plane took an unexpected dive. The pilot immediately recognized the presence of wind shear and compensated with an abrupt tug on the controls. My stomach was doing a series of fish flops. The small Cessna felt like it was tearing apart but my seasoned pilot continued to pull back the control and managed a slightly less than perfect landing on the frozen river. The village natives ran out to meet our plane. As I stepped out of the plane, the wind tore my well-worn stocking cap from my head exposing my bald dome to the elements. As soon as they recognized me the male village members began to wave and clap while the older women clucked their disapproval of my poor choice of head gear. It was apparent, the owl had not called my name."

In his 25 years as a BIA agent, my father became familiar with Native American lore. It enhanced his understanding of the cultures of the people and made him a welcomed friend.

Each year the theme for Storytelling will change. At my own Novice Tournament this year the theme was children's literature but the Portland National's theme will be Western tales and Native American lore. To prepare, students should select a Western or Native American story. Areas which have a Native American population will discover there are resources available in the community library, tribal library or through a tribal

elder. In the Pacific Northwest Rodney Frey and Jeanne Givens are superior resources.

This fall the Council determined Storytelling would be a new consolation event. They have refined the rules and will provide more exact information in the February *Rostrum*. As you prepare for Nationals consider Storytelling. Encourage your students to become the forensic community's weaver of tales.

(Mrs. Terry Peters has had numerous state finalists in the "Retold Story" category. Mrs. Peters coaches at both Lake City (ID) and Whitworth College (WA). She has been a Forensic Director for 13 years, and a National official in the Supplemental Tab room for three years.