

Storytelling Festival Descriptions:

Friday May 30—3-5pm

Why Story Sells: The Power of a Well-told Tale

If you want to convince anyone of anything, tell them a story that appeals to their emotions and capacity for empathy. If you deliver a well-crafted tale, you can transport a client from a perceived problem to a solution that your company or organization can provide. Through personal stories, your clients will connect more solidly with you, your product, and your mission making you the one who scores in service and sales.



Join Storyteller, Speaker and Narrative Consultant Jenifer Strauss for a Keynote/Workshop designed for businesses and community organizations interested in using narrative to boost sales and service.

Jenifer will share the brain science behind Why Story Sells and guide participants in the Turning Point Process, designed to help identify and craft stories specific to unique products and services. Marketing venues will be explored to provide examples of storytelling applications intended to boost public awareness of local businesses and attract potential customers.

Saturday May 30—10am-3pm

Saturday Morning Program

Keynote: Jenifer Straus

Michigan Legends and Lore: A Personal & Historical Tour of Michigan Through Story

Storyteller & Touring Artist, Jenifer Strauss has nurtured a life-long love affair with the Great Lake State of Michigan. By sharing stories, songs, and verse, Jen will guide us on a lively and interactive journey through Michigan while spotlighting the power of story to inform and preserve history. Discover a storytelling lamp that came from Finland, get lost at the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore, hear about the spirit of a lighthouse, hear a wolf howl on Isle Royale and learn why Michiganders can claim Paul Bunyan as their own.

Saturday Morning Workshops (choose one)

The Turning Points Process for Finding, Telling and Writing Your Personal Stories— Jenifer Strauss

Have you ever wanted to explore your life story? Have you ever wanted to write or record your family stories to pass along to future generations? This workshop is for you! Join, Storyteller and Narrative Consultant, Jen Strauss for her Personal Narrative Workshop called Turning Points. Jen will give you a step-by-step process for identifying the important events in your life, organizing the details of those events, and then sharing those stories by telling them orally or preserve them in writing.

Songwriting as Storytelling—Nancy Kelel



Nancy Kelel, born and raised in Detroit Michigan, relocated to Southern California, spending several years in the greater Los Angeles area. There she found her niche in the songwriting and performance scene. Returning to her roots, Nancy resides in Michigan's upper peninsula city of Saint Ignace. She performs at a variety of live venues, and maintains an online presence performing in several Open Mics and Singer/Songwriter Showcases. You can hear a selection of her songs on SoundCloud.com, ReverbNation.com and on her personal YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/c/nancykelel>

Please join Nancy for songs and learn how she turns her stories into songs.

Afternoon sessions:

Julie Buchholtz is originally from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan but has been a resident of Brimley Michigan for over 24 years near the shores of Lake Superior. She is a former teacher, Education Director for the Boys & Girls Club of Bay Mills, and currently works for Lake Superior State University Charter Schools. She holds both a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education as well as a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Central Michigan University. She is a proud member of the Bay Mills Tribe of Chippewa Indians.



"Who am I?" is Julie's inaugural children's book and winner of Cherry Lake Publishing's 20221 Own Voices, Own Stories Contest. It was released on July15,2023 through Sleeping Bear Press. Julie's second book, a prequel to Who Am I? will be released in spring of 2026. Julie will talk about the role of storytelling in Native American Culture and give us a preview of her new book featuring the Seven Grandfathers.

Frances Wyers Francie (Mosses) Wyers is a life-long resident of St. Ignace and is an Ojibwa Elder. She has worked in the school systems teaching her culture for over 20 years. She attended Northern Michigan University where she studied Art and Design. Presently she is the Cultural Director at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture where she loves continuing to teach her culture.



Francie has featured her artwork and Native Crafting skills in books, magazine covers, museums, schools and art shows. She comes from a long line of Ancestral Ojibwa and loves to continually learn and teach her customs to students and adults alike at the museum. “The Ojibwa people never wrote their stories down, our custom was to verbally pass down our teachings from generation to generation.” Francie will be doing a puppet show that she has designed to help teach the younger generation the story of “How the Ojibwa People were given the teaching of the Seven Grandfathers.”

Kyle Bagnall—Past into Present



Join Kyle Bagnall, of Mackinac State Historic Parks, as we explore how stories of our shared past connect us in community today. With a colorful blend of history, legend, folklore, and song, voices of our ancestors will spring to life in imaginative ways. Kyle will draw on the work of Richard Dorson. On April 17, 1946, folklorist Richard Dorson arrived at St. Ignace to begin a story collecting expedition across the Upper Peninsula. During his five-month journey, he discovered a living folk tradition from a tapestry of cultures in “one of the richest storytelling regions of the United States.”

With roots in Michigan’s Thumb, Kyle W. Bagnall grew up exploring the Great Lakes State. His ties to the Straits began in 1984, serving six years in the Mackinac Island Scout Service Camp. His career at Mackinac State Historic Parks (MSHP) began in 1990 with five seasons as a Fort Mackinac interpretive guide. In 1993, Kyle graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.A. in public history from Western Michigan University. From 1995-2017, he brought history and nature to life for all ages at Chippewa Nature Center, in Midland, Michigan. He joined Dow Gardens in 2017 as Whiting Forest program manager. Returning to the North Woods in 2021, Kyle became park naturalist for MSHP. His book, *Wonders of Mackinac: A Natural History of Mackinac Island* was published in 2024.