



# NEWSLETTER

February 2017

Volume 22 Issue 6

**President:**  
Rebecca Coleman  
740-407-6824  
[rebecca.coleman653@yahoo.com](mailto:rebecca.coleman653@yahoo.com)

**Treasurer:**  
Joyce Geary,  
614-885-3164 [jgeary@columbus.rr.com](mailto:jgeary@columbus.rr.com)

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Michelle Cornell**  
614-784-0538  
[csmithberger@yahoo.com](mailto:csmithberger@yahoo.com)  
**Veronica Fenney-Okafor**  
614-258-8884  
[vfennyokafor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vfennyokafor@sbcglobal.net)  
**Julie McGhee**  
614-891-6731  
[julie\\_mcgee@att.net](mailto:julie_mcgee@att.net)

**Melanie Pratt**  
614-481-9674  
[storytellermel@gmail.com](mailto:storytellermel@gmail.com)  
**Larry Staats**  
614-891-6293  
[cfmsstaats@gmail.com](mailto:cfmsstaats@gmail.com)

**Webmaster**  
**Cathy Jo Smith**  
614-875-3304  
<http://irishteller.com>  
[storyteller@dublin.com](mailto:storyteller@dublin.com)

**Editor**  
**Frank McGarvey**  
[frankmgarvey@gmail.com](mailto:frankmgarvey@gmail.com)

## Our Next SOCO Meeting

Our next SOCO meeting will be on **Feb. 10, 2018** at **09:30a.m.** in St. Matthias' Reading Enrichment Room. St. Matthias is located at 1582 Ferris Rd. in Columbus.

## January Meeting

As is her desire, Rebecca kept a fairly tight rein on the time. The business meeting lasted only 45 min.

We discussed the Ohio Storytelling Network meeting to be held Feb. 3 in the Bexley Library. (see last page)

We also talked about and made plans for Fireside Tales, which will be held on April 22.

At 10:15 sharp we turned the meeting over to LYN FORD, who presented "From The Beginning: A Storytellers Playshop .

We are blessed to have Lyn work us into her busy schedule. She shared her tools of her personal style. She was very helpful and entertaining.

## Bill Myers Contributed a great article

Our only contributor to the newsletter this month was Bill Myer, who shared a great article that he split into two articles; one for this month and one for next month, However since he was the only contributor I am including both parts in this issue.

*Wait a minute, Larry Staats contributed an article on the OSN (OHIO STORYTELLING NETWORK, which was formerly know as OOPS.)*

Attached is my latest "Schedule" for the Saturday event in Bexley. I haven't been able to get a page up on Facebook, since it now want's you to have a web page. I did list Sat. as an "Event" on Facebook & on <https://allevents.in/#> "All Events in Columbus". Also, I'll send out an email today listing some of the events coming up.

**Larry StaatsTHE**

## JOY OF MIXING, Part I

*This will be a two part article for our Newsletter. As I commonly do, the story got overlong for a single issue. Please bear with me.*

In the *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. 1 (1831)iii, Chief Justice Marshall observed the unique relationship forged between the United States and the Tribes. He also noted the special duty the federal government assumed in its dealings and agreements with American Indians. Marshall identified Indian Tribes as "domestic dependent nations" and observed that the relationship between Indians and the federal government was like that "of a ward to his guardian."



*Happy Valentine's Day*



Federal health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives is not part of the nation's social welfare program, nor is it insurance. Rather, it is a program founded upon the Federal promise to provide health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives in exchange for their willingness to stay wherever we placed them and not make any more war (defend themselves); a Federal promise made in treaties and authorized by the Constitution. Of the countless promises made, treaties signed, guarantees proffered, by white men to Native Americans, health care has remained as an honorable and rare promise kept. The ethnic cleansing attempted and almost completed by the white invaders (immigrants ?) against Native tribes resulted, for the most part, decimated numbers and displacement of the few remaining Natives on practically uninhabitable lands which were of no value to the white men. But we continued to provide reasonable levels of health care.

It was my great pleasure, after 40 years of private practice in a small Ohio town, Circleville, to join the Indian Health Services Division (IHS) of the United States Public Health Service. In a period of two years I served at seven different reservations; each was unique, each was hugely educational for me.

At the top of the North American continent is Barrow, Alaska, 350 miles north of the Arctic Circle, my first IHS assignment. Barrow is the governmental seat of the North Slope Borough (governmentally equivalent to a county in most states). The Borough is as a land mass equal to the size of Pennsylvania and Ohio combined. The total population is about 500. Almost half of the population resides in Barrow. "Eskimo" is not politically correct; half of the people are Inupiat, a tribe of the Inuit People. The other half is white men or other racial/national varieties. There are seven villages across the North Slope for which Barrow provides advanced Primary and Secondary medical care. The Barrow Hospital has two Lear Jets available for patient transfer as needed. Oil money bought many things for Alaskan residents. Kaktovik, the village farthest to the east, is the village I was assigned to follow during my service in Barrow in addition to my routine hospital staff work and emergency room coverage. I talked with a Community Health Aide in Kaktovik daily and was constantly available to her by phone for issues she did not feel comfortable handling, and sent a jet the 10 miles to pick up patients on four occasions. Video-conferencing was always available so I could see a televised image of any patient in the village.

Kaktovik is on Prudhoe Bay where the Alaskan Oil Pipeline originates; it is also the village closest to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the nearest village to the eastern mountains where polar bears often den.

Inupiat people are, as a group, the happiest, pleasantest, most generous humans I have ever encountered. They have great humor. They are beautiful people in most every way. The first white men into the Arctic waters were whalers of all nations. They began to arrive in 1854. Barrow was a frequent station visited and soon settled. Interbreeding began early and continues today. It is so extensive that I was piqued to find out if there remained anyone in Barrow who was 100% Inupiat. I began to make subtle inquiries into this matter soon after my arrival, in March, 2000. No one seemed offended by my search, in fact, the hospital staff got interested in my project and began to help me. Fascinating !! They frankly don't care about the "purity" and are downright proud of their mixed roots. From my brief investigation I can assure you that the white invaders, and recently a few black ones, have been VERY busy mixing their gene pool across the tundra.

Our story will now be continued **Joy of Mixing part two**

I was serving with the Indian Health Service in Barrow, AK, the top of North America. Enjoying the wonders of the Arctic world and loving its people, the Inupiat, I was joined by the medical community in looking for someone in Barrow who was ethnically pure, 100% Inupiat.

I couldn't find a single native around the hospital that was not related by blood to a white man. "Great Nurse" (names will be obscured), the diabetes coordinator (common disease among the Natives), had been among those I had asked about Inupiat bloodlines. She is white, married to a Native. In my search for a "pure" Inupiat, she had suggested her husband's grandfather, Kind Old Man, age 85. She promised to ask him if he would be offended if I came and took his picture. I saw her husband as a patient the next week and finalized the arrangement.

**"The Kind  
Old Man  
AND HIS  
DRUM"**



After attending the regular 8 AM staff rounds for an hour, I was a free man until another meeting to be at noon. I arrived at Kind Old Man's home promptly at 10 AM, on time (My friends and colleagues of former days will find my punctuality a surprise. This is a retirement acquisition.) Grandson was there to interpret for me and to generally ease the progress of the visit and greeted me at the door with pleasant smiles. An arch of dried baleen (bowhead whale "teeth") decorates outside the front door. He had assisted "Aapa" (grandfather in Inupiaq) dressing in a nicely starched, dress shirt, clean pants, and brightly colored, beaded slippers. Grandson, a schizophrenic controlled with medications (but with a striking medication induced movement disorder) had slicked-up by putting on a clean T-shirt. Kind Old Man lives alone in a small, clean home about three blocks from my cottage in Browerville, the expansion of Barrow. The interior was very warm, heated by a large, natural gas heater sitting in the center of the room. Grandson and Aapa had been watching CNN on cable TV as I arrived, and kept it on throughout my visit, though neither seemed to watch it while we talked. The home was cozy, cluttered, and similar to many I have visited on house calls in Circleville. Mismatched furniture, but serviceable, plethora of family pictures tacked to the wall, mostly kids, a couple of calendars, and close to his over-stuffed, green recliner was a scanner and CB radio, his family's version of the "LifeLine" devices used for emergency communication by frail seniors in our world (including my Mother). Kind Old Man's stories were delightful. He grew up with his grandparents in the interior, around Meade River, now called Atkasuk, one of our hospital's villages of responsibility. It is about fifty miles from Barrow. He spoke proudly of his grandfather, who had been a whaling captain, a position held by only the most esteemed men of the community. His childhood recollections were of moving frequently, which fits with the information I had learned earlier about itinerant patterns of many Inupiaq groups many years ago. He lived on caribou, rabbit, squirrel, owl; in other words, any living thing they could kill and cook. Even today the Inupiaq diet is the highest in protein of any humans on earth, but they lace it liberally with fat if they can get it.

His favorite food? *Maktak* (whale skin with attached blubber), and as a villager will receive his "share" of any whales killed in the coming season. The Inuit temperament is very appealing. They are honest, direct, slow to anger, soft-spoken, openly emotional, and amazingly generous. The tradition of sharing is primal in their culture and survival, if one kills, all eat.

Kind Old Man talked for over an hour, slowed by his mixture of English and Inupiaq which Grandson would have to help me with and my questions which Grandson would relay to him. He recalled for me the adventure of guiding oil exploration crews across the tundra in the late 1950's and early 1960's. His stories were sprinkled with frequent references to "white men," always without hostility. Village events, successful hunts, family happiness and some unpleasant events such as deaths are "celebrated" with singing and dancing, usually accompanied by groups of drummers. Kind Old Man is a drummer. The drums are wooden hoops of about three feet radius with tightly stretched membrane heads, held with one hand by a handle across the back attached to the hoop, and struck with a springy, wooden stick held in the other hand. In the days before plastics the drumheads were made from walrus stomach or from the integument that covers the whale's liver. After a little coaxing, he got out his drum. I think its head was an opaque plastic with fibers woven through it. He demonstrated how to play it and insisted that I try. The springy stick is longer than the diameter of the hoop and you strike the rim of the hoop in such a way that with hard blows the stick bows against the head of the drum. So you can get soft sounds by the vibration of hitting only the rim and you get loud beats by whacking firmly which bows the stick against the drumhead, and with skill, everything between. The sticks are carefully selected, flexible pieces of driftwood that are whittled to shape. To my delight, "Aapa" proceeded to drum and sing/chant a song for me. He said it was the song of his grandfather. I did not want to tire him so I concluded our visit with expressions of my deep thanks (and a box of chocolate candy which opened many doors of the North Slope) for the privilege of talking with him.

As I reached the front door Kind Old Man gave me a wink and sly smile, saying, "My Grampa was 'Portagee!'" This visit was the absolute high point of my Barrow stay.

**Bill Myers, MD**



# STORYTELLERS OF CENTRAL OHIO



**Ohio Storytelling Network's Quarterly Meeting**  
**Bexley Public Library, 2411 E. Main St., Bexley/Columbus, OH**  
**Saturday, February 3, 10am - 5pm**

This event is free for every one, of any age, who is interested in storytelling & any or all of the items set forth below. People who are interested in learning more about storytelling, might be interested in attending all day & possibly joining up with the Storytellers of Central Ohio, which is hosting the event, and/or the Ohio Storytelling Network.

People who just want to be entertained may want to just select a particular item on the schedule below.

## **Schedule**

**9:30 – 10am:**

Meet & Greet, etc.

Doughnuts, fruit, veggies, coffee, soft drinks, tea, & fruit trays will be available free for everyone.

**10 – 10:20am:**

Storytelling

**10:20-10:30am:**

Introduction of people present

**10:30-11:30am:**

OSN Business meeting including discussion & vote on new By-Laws, membership, web site, etc.

(For OSN members & other interested attendees)

**11:45am -12:30pm:**

Mini Storytelling Workshops

**12:45 – 2pm:**

Lunch & Story Swap

**2:15 – 3pm:**

Mini Workshops for 10 - 15 minutes each

**3:30 - 4:30pm:**

Public Family Oriented Story Concert

(Open Stage, i.e., Storytellers names to be pulled from a hat. 5-8 minute stories)

**STORYTELLERS OF CENTRAL OHIO**

**<http://socotales.org>**