

## HOW TO TELL A STORY

- 1) Find a story you like.
- 2) Read the story.
- 3) Read the story again.
- 4) Read it one more time!
- 5) Think about the order in which things happen.
- 6) See the story as a filmstrip.
- 7) Read the story paying attention to the parts you forget and over which you stumble.
- 8) Look for important or beautiful phrases you want to keep exact. Memorize them.
- 9) Try telling the story to yourself. Practice the rough places. Practice while waiting in the grocery line; at the doctor's office; in traffic.
- 10) Read the story.
- 11) Try telling the story to others (your kids while driving or making dinner) or even try yourself in the mirror (horrors!) or on video. The more you tell it, the better it will become.
- 12) When you feel you really know the words of the tale begin working on what the words mean and how to express that meaning.
- 13) Read the story again!
- 14) Do not 'act out' the story. This is not acting!  
This is storytelling. Let the language tell the story!
- 15) Watch out for common faults:
  - Speaking too fast
  - Speaking too slowly
  - Speaking too softly
  - Speaking with too high a voice
  - Failing to maintain eye contact
  - Using distracting gestures
- 16) If you forget or go blank, don't panic, just think!
- 17) Read the story again.
- 18) Share the story you like with enthusiasm and your audience will reward you with their attention and enthusiasm, too.
- 19) After a story is told, encourage others to tell it because the story is theirs after they have heard it. It is ours.
- 20) Find a place to tell the story again.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY [A small sampling]

1. Aurelia, John R. *Fables for God's People*. Crossroad, 1988.
2. Bauer, Caroline Feller. *Handbook for Storytellers*. American Library Assoc., 1977.
3. Botkin, B.A. ed. *A Treasury of American Folklore*. Crown, 1944.
4. Botkin, B.A. ed. *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*. Crown, 1949.
5. Chase, Richard. *The Jack Tales*. Houghton Mifflin, 1943.
6. Chase, Richard. *The Grandfather Tales*. Houghton Mifflin, 1948.
7. Chase, Richard. *American Folk Tales and Songs*. Dover, 1971.
8. Credle, Ellis. *Tall Tales from the High Hills*. Thomas Nelson, 1957.
9. Crossley-Holland, Keven. *The Dead Moon*. Andre Deautsch, 1982.
10. Davis, Donald. *Jack Always Seeks His Fortune*. August House, 1992.
11. Eustis, Helen. *Mr. Death and the Redheaded Woman*. Green Tiger, 1983, 1950.  
[Story originally published in "The Saturday Evening Post" as *The Rider on the Pale Horse*.]
12. Green, Ellin. *Clever Cooks*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1973.
13. Harrell, John and Mary. *A Storyteller's Treasury*. Bx 9006, Berkeley, CA., 1977.
14. Kronberg, Ruthilde & McKissack, Patricia C. *A Piece of the Wind and Other Stories to Tell*. Harper & Row, 1990.
15. Jones, James Gay. *Appalachian Ghost Stories...* McClain Printing, 1975.
16. Jones, Loyal & Wheeler, Billy Edd. *Laughter in Appalachia*. August House, 1987.
17. Jones, Loyal & Wheeler, Billy Edd. *Curing the Cross-eyed Mule*. August House, 1989.
18. Justus, May. *The Complete Peddler's Pack*. Univ. of Tennessee, 1967.
19. Lester, Julius. *John Henry*. Dial, 1994.
20. MacDonald, Margaret Read. *Twenty Tellable Tales*. H.W. Wilson, 1986.
21. Maguire, Jack. *The Power of Personal Storytelling: Spinning Tales to Connect with Others*. J.P. Tarcher, 1998.
22. Mellon, Nancy. *Art of Storytelling*. Element, 1998.
23. Musick, Ruth Ann. *The Telltale Lilac Bush*. Univ. of Kentucky, 1965.
24. Milnes, Gerald. *Granny Will Your Dog Bite and Other Mountain Rhymes*. Knopf, 1990.
25. Pellowski, Anne. *Hidden Stories in Plants*. Macmillan, 1990.
26. Perdue, Charles L. Jr. "Old Jack and the New Deal: The Virginia Writers' Project and Jack Tale Collecting in Wise County, Virginia." *Appalachian Journal*, Winter, 1987.
27. Sanders, Scott R. *Wilderness Plots*. William Morrow, 1983.
28. Sawyer, Ruth. *The Way of the Storyteller*. Penguin, 1976.
29. Smith, Jimmy Neil, ed. *Homespun: Tales from America's Favorite Storytellers*. Crown, 1988.

compiled by Marc Harshman and Cheryl Ryan