

Come to the Black  
Dirt...  
and enter the  
world of storytelling!



# Black Dirt Storytelling Guild at the Florida Public Library

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## In the beginning...our history:

The **Black Dirt Storytelling Guild** was founded in January 2001 by a group of Florida Public Library patrons, staff members and other interested individuals. Under the leadership of Library Director Madelyn Folino, an experienced storyteller, the library had offered storytelling programs for several years, including the popular summer **Campfire Storytimes** and **Winter Classics** programs. Our community values storytelling!

With the move to a beautiful new library in October 2000, story lovers in Florida found a home for their interest in the traditional art of storytelling. The library became a member of the **National Storytelling Network (NSN)** and in November, produced **Tellabration!**, an evening devoted to storytelling. Sponsored by NSN, **Tellabration!** is a worldwide event, held annually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, during **National Storytelling Week**. For more information on **Tellabration!**, go to [www.storynet.org](http://www.storynet.org).

Florida's **Tellabration!** was a success, attracting a mix of storytellers and story listeners with diverse interests, experience and proficiency. All who attended this wonderful evening of telling, listening and sharing, expressed interest in forming a group to explore the world of storytelling.

Regular monthly meetings followed quickly and the group chose four words to name our creation: **Black Dirt Storytelling Guild**. "**Black Dirt**" identifies our location in the heart of Orange County's historic and scenic farming community. "**Storytelling**" is what we do and indicates the ongoing nature of our art. "**Guild**" stands for the power of an association of people devoted to nurturing their own and others' growth and development as storytellers.

**The Black Dirt Storytelling Guild is dedicated to the following goals:**

- **To preserve and promote the art of storytelling and story listening.** Guild members, whether tellers or our active "just listeners," meet regularly

each month to enjoy the magic and mystery of the spoken word. We learn and share stories cooperatively and delight in listening to each other.

Through the programs we offer to the community, we “grow” interest in stories and cultures from around the world, not to mention, attention spans in young (and older!) participants. We believe that traditional oral performance provides many benefits for tellers and listeners of all ages.

Storytelling, in addition to being a creative and healing art, also fits perfectly into school curricula that emphasize reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

- **To inspire the discovery of the storyteller within each person.**

Guild meetings offer a supportive and welcoming place for novice and experienced storytellers to experiment with stories of their choice, learn new material and techniques and discuss the issues and ethics of storytelling. Stories and performances are gently critiqued to help each of us extend the reach of our abilities.

- **To encourage the collection of oral history and local history.**

Future plans include a program that will focus on untapped sources of local lore. We hope to record oral history, create and share “tellable” tales of our region’s heritage and augment the library’s Local History collection.

- **To explore the history and development of stories from around the world.**

Each Guild meeting is devoted to a different topic of mutual interest. We have tried our creative powers with Aesop’s fables, Jataka tales, Greek myths, and folktales and fairy tales, including traditional, modern, feminist and fractured versions. We love to discuss and compare how stories have evolved and changed to fit their times and cultures.

- **To establish and offer storytelling programs to the people of the Hudson Valley.**

We believe that everyone loves stories and we want to share our passion for storytelling. We are willing to visit your school, library or other group and present a program to suit your needs.

Prices and programs are flexible to suit both your audience and budget and our members’ desire to gain experience and try out new material.

If you would like to schedule a program or receive BDSG news, please call Madelyn Folino at (845) 651-7659 or e-mail: [mfolino@rcls.org](mailto:mfolino@rcls.org).

She will match you with a Guild member to fit your programming requirements.

### **Black Dirt Storytelling Guild**

- **Meets on the second Thursday of every month at the Florida Public Library, 6:30 p.m. Call to confirm meeting dates/times.**
- **For adults age 16 and up.**
- **New members and “just listeners” are always welcome.**
- **No charge to attend, but donation of refreshments is appreciated.**
- **Experiment with storytelling for fun or profit. Free advice!**
- **Tellabration! and BDSG were honored with the Ramapo Catskill Library System’s 2001 Library Program of the Year Award.**