

# The Houston Storyteller

Winter 2009 Quarterly V2-1 (revised) Houston Storytellers Guild

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P.O. Box 130801 Houston, Texas 77219-0801 281-775-9318  
Edited by: Scott Hill Bumgardner

Dedicated to:

Sharing stories and storytelling techniques. Developing storytelling skills.  
Encouraging diverse tellers. Having fun listening and telling.

Next Story Time February 19th, Thursday  
Montrose Library 4100 Montrose 6:30 Social 7pm Swap Stories  
We meet there every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday. Our gatherings are for sharing stories,  
promoting storytelling, and having fun. Storytelling is not just for kids!

**Tentative!!**  
**Concert and Workshop**  
**Featuring Elizabeth Ellis**



We are ironing out the details to host this world renowned storyteller.  
April 4th @ Heights Church of Christ, Heights at 16th  
Workshop: Folklore, The Original World Wide Web  
Check our web site often for further details.

**Houston Liars' Contest - 21st Annual**

**May 23rd, Saturday @ 7 pm**

Houston Baptist University 7500 Fondren, in the Mabee Theater  
Tickets \$7 for members \$8 for nonmembers - Affordable Laughter

**Have You Renewed Your Membership??**

## **National Storytelling News**

Hey there, I am writing to you at the suggestion of your friend and National Storytelling Network Texas Liaison Donna Ingham. NSN is conducting a fundraising campaign called Heroes to raise funds for the relocation of NSN to a large metro area for more effective networking and increased awareness of storytelling. Please see our website <http://www.storynet.org/support/heroes.html> You are a strong supporter of storytelling and I hope that you will consider sponsoring a Heroes event in your area to raise \$250 for NSN during 2009. For detailed event ideas see <http://www.storynet.org/support/heroes-list.html> I am your Heroes Campaign contact and I hope to hear from you soon.

Tellingly, Marcia Donovan [marcia@pclibrary.org](mailto:marcia@pclibrary.org) 931-319-3803

## **Suggested Story Viewing**

From Board Member Robert Nagle

I wanted to tell somebody about this. For the last 10 years I've been listening to an amazing radio show/podcast. From Our Own Correspondent, which contains lots of first person stories by BBC reporters. Most of them are story-behind-the-news; they are both moving and entertaining. Each are about 25 minutes and consist of 4 or 5 different stories by different reporters. There is a newsy angle to a lot of them, but it's more human interest than journalism.

Here's the URLs for the podcast

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/radio4/fooc/rss.xml>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/podcasts/fooc/>

and also, to give an example here's an mp3 of the latest broadcast

[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/radio4/fooc/fooc\\_20090115-1130a.mp3](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/radio4/fooc/fooc_20090115-1130a.mp3)

(This episode is particularly amazing).

## **Galveston Grand 1894 Opera House**

Wow, Hurricane Ike destroyed a lot of the better businesses in our gulf coast area. But the Grand opera was back up and running in January.

Our very own Don Sanders did a wonderful job entertaining there January 18th. Unfortunately I only saw a couple of our members there. Sheila Phillips will be on stage there., Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 3 pm. Anyone interested in a road trip?? Give us a holler.



[www.thegrand.com](http://www.thegrand.com)

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**Texas Storytelling Festival**  
**Tejas Storytelling Association**

**Denton, Texas    March 26-29th**

**You can look forward to these Traditional Favorites at the Texas Storytelling Festival:**

**Thursday night GHOST TALES:** Start with something shivery! Tales begin at 7:00 p.m. with frights appropriate for the younger set and continue with stories and legends that get progressively more hair-raising as the evening goes on. Stay as long as you dare! (The public is invited to join us in this traditional festival opener at no charge.)

**Friday School FIELD TRIPS and PRESCHOOL OUTREACH:** Area schools are invited to bring students to the festival, or, in the case of preschool children, to call and request a storyteller. Details here.

**RISING STARS CONCERT, TSA Annual Meeting, Affiliate Guilds Council:** These special festival events help us strengthen and develop the storytelling tradition, support up-and-coming storytellers in our region and build community within our professional organization.

**TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN STORYTELLING AND STORY CIRCLES:** A unique and very special feature of the Texas Storytelling Festival occurs on Saturday morning with 2 hours of traditional Native American stories. Produced by storyteller and author, Tim Tingle, a member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma.

**TALESPINNER DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION:** On Saturday evening, join our featured storytellers and other story lovers for dinner before the evening concert. Renew connections with old friends and build ties with new ones at a delicious buffet with beer or wine plus a chance to place bids and win the purchase of an exciting array of goods and services at our Silent Auction. (Tickets sold separately.)

**SACRED STORIES CONCERT:** Sunday morning invites the most spiritual and, for many, the most powerful stories from the world's religious traditions and from the storytellers' own hearts. (The public is invited to join us in this traditional festival event at no charge.)

*All concerts and workshops are included in festival package except as noted.*

*Learn More @ [www.tejasstorytelling.com](http://www.tejasstorytelling.com)*

The page has a yellow background decorated with handprints in white, blue, and orange. The handprints are arranged in a border around the central text area. At the top, there are four handprints: white, blue, orange, and white from left to right. On the left side, there are five handprints: blue, orange, white, orange, and blue from top to bottom. On the right side, there are five handprints: orange, white, orange, blue, and orange from top to bottom. At the bottom, there are four handprints: orange, blue, orange, and white from left to right.

# THE WHEELS OF OUR LIVES

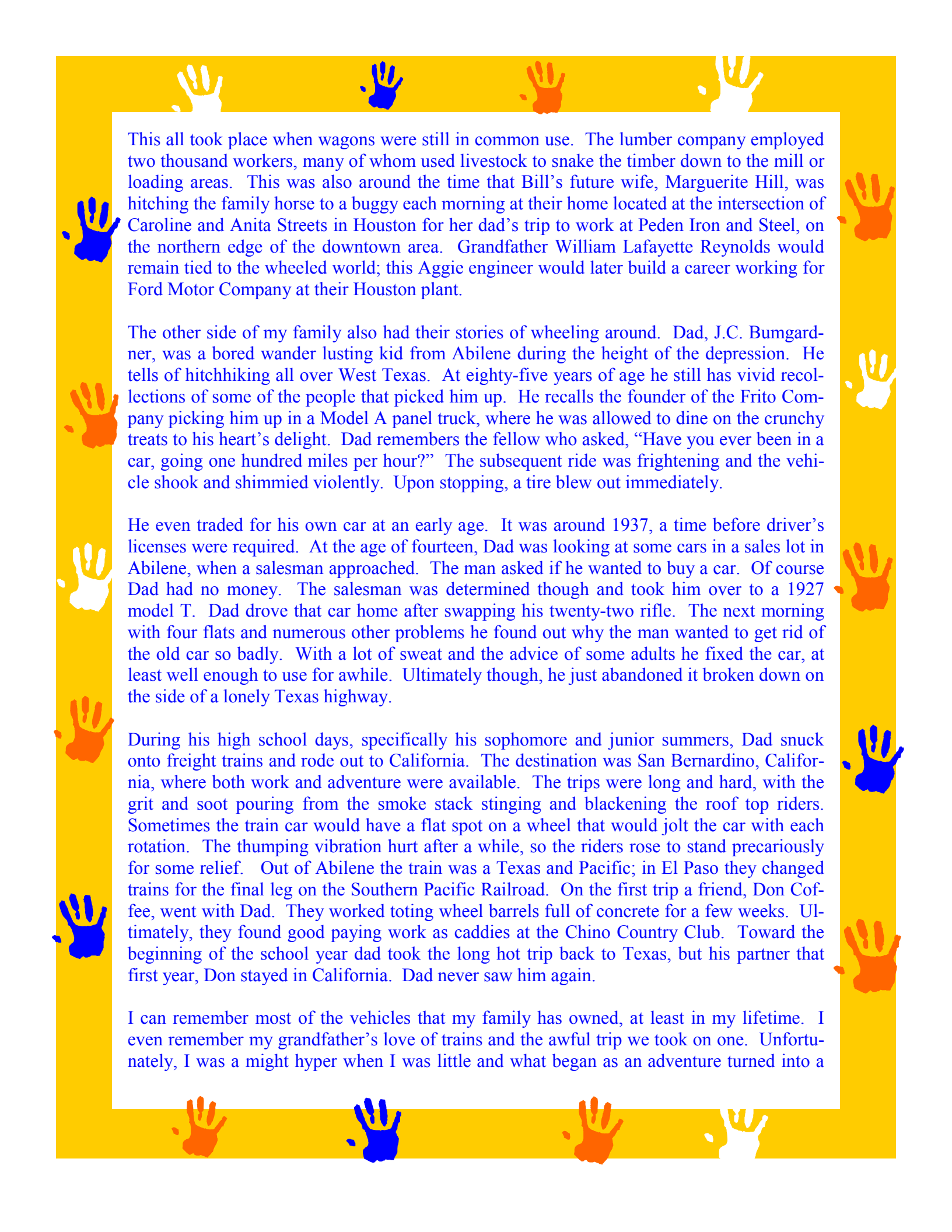
By: Scott Hill Bumgardner

Apparently Gronk, the caveman, was inspired when he observed a round rock roll down a hill. This mystery man's invention really, well, to use a bad pun, "started the ball rolling." The wheel revolutionized the world of transportation and machines. It simplified the moving of materials and people with carts, chariots, and wagons. Its use in virtually all machinery, with the coming of the mechanized age eventually gave us trains, automobiles, and much more. My life has been greatly enriched with, not only the use and misuse of automobiles, but with the stories of my family's wheeled past.

The value of wheeled transportation really struck home when I discovered the stories of my ancestors' flight from their home in the "Run Away Scrape" during Texas' revolt against Mexico's tyranny. In April of 1836, my 4<sup>th</sup> great grandmother, Lucy Thomson Kerr, was left in charge of the family at Gay Hill, when she heard the frightening news that Santa Anna's troops were approaching. The Mexican Army's approach was accompanied by rumors of death and devastation to all who were in the area. She gathered the children and servants to quickly load most of their worldly possessions into a wagon that was hitched to several yoke of oxen. The path of escape was made difficult by storms and flooding streams. Lucy and family finally had to abandon the wagon and team to reach safety away from the approaching Army. Once fate had smiled on the Texas Army, the family made preparations to return to their home. In order to secure a wagon for the return trip, Lucy had to sell a half league or twenty-two hundred acres of prime Texas land. Now I think those were some expensive wheels!

Jumping forward to the Christmas season of 1914, we find Lucy's descendant, Marguerite Ruth Hill invited for a ride in a set of expensive wheels. Marguerite's friend, Bess Reynolds, and her brother Bill Reynolds were delivering live Christmas turkeys to the needy in their family's 1912 Packard. This top of the line, fine set of wheels seems to be an unlikely livestock delivery vehicle, and perhaps that is why a turkey escaped leading the young folk on a merry chase. It was this exhilarating time that was remembered as the event that sparked a relationship, eventually leading my grandparents, Bill and Marguerite, into a life-long marriage.

My grandfather Bill also told tales of how he traveled north to buy a locomotive for the family business, the Livingston Lumber Company. He traveled to Pennsylvania where he handed over cash to purchase the H. K. Porter engine number one hundred. Upon completion of the purchase, Bill piloted the locomotive from Pittsburg back to Livingston, Texas, at the ripe old age of sixteen. Even in his mid eighties, he would smile in remembrance of that engine and the pride he took in having the most powerful locomotive in that neck of the woods. Grandfather often told of helping push the railroad carriers' cars over steep hills, their less powerful engines couldn't negotiate.

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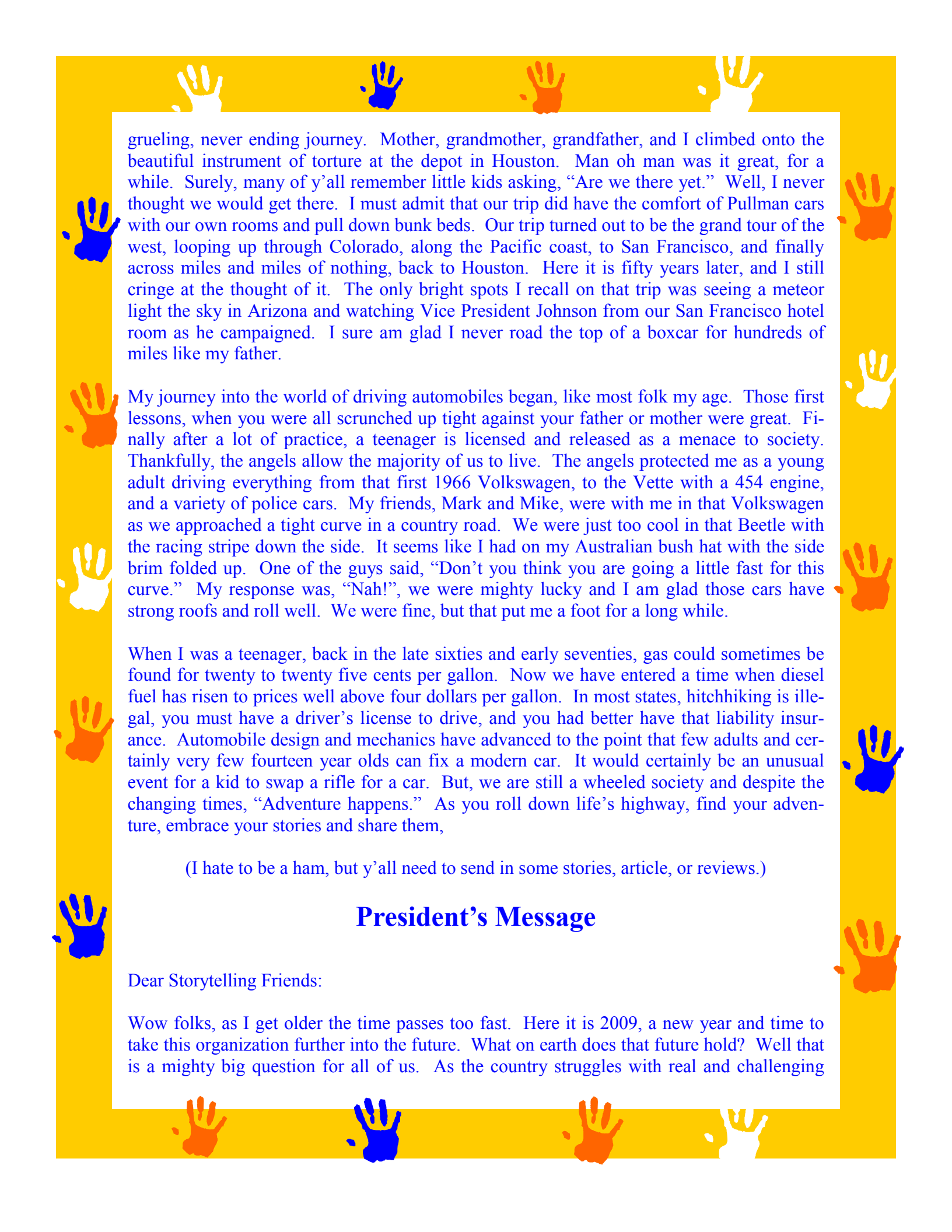
This all took place when wagons were still in common use. The lumber company employed two thousand workers, many of whom used livestock to snake the timber down to the mill or loading areas. This was also around the time that Bill's future wife, Marguerite Hill, was hitching the family horse to a buggy each morning at their home located at the intersection of Caroline and Anita Streets in Houston for her dad's trip to work at Peden Iron and Steel, on the northern edge of the downtown area. Grandfather William Lafayette Reynolds would remain tied to the wheeled world; this Aggie engineer would later build a career working for Ford Motor Company at their Houston plant.

The other side of my family also had their stories of wheeling around. Dad, J.C. Bumgardner, was a bored wander lusting kid from Abilene during the height of the depression. He tells of hitchhiking all over West Texas. At eighty-five years of age he still has vivid recollections of some of the people that picked him up. He recalls the founder of the Frito Company picking him up in a Model A panel truck, where he was allowed to dine on the crunchy treats to his heart's delight. Dad remembers the fellow who asked, "Have you ever been in a car, going one hundred miles per hour?" The subsequent ride was frightening and the vehicle shook and shimmied violently. Upon stopping, a tire blew out immediately.

He even traded for his own car at an early age. It was around 1937, a time before driver's licenses were required. At the age of fourteen, Dad was looking at some cars in a sales lot in Abilene, when a salesman approached. The man asked if he wanted to buy a car. Of course Dad had no money. The salesman was determined though and took him over to a 1927 model T. Dad drove that car home after swapping his twenty-two rifle. The next morning with four flats and numerous other problems he found out why the man wanted to get rid of the old car so badly. With a lot of sweat and the advice of some adults he fixed the car, at least well enough to use for awhile. Ultimately though, he just abandoned it broken down on the side of a lonely Texas highway.

During his high school days, specifically his sophomore and junior summers, Dad snuck onto freight trains and rode out to California. The destination was San Bernardino, California, where both work and adventure were available. The trips were long and hard, with the grit and soot pouring from the smoke stack stinging and blackening the roof top riders. Sometimes the train car would have a flat spot on a wheel that would jolt the car with each rotation. The thumping vibration hurt after a while, so the riders rose to stand precariously for some relief. Out of Abilene the train was a Texas and Pacific; in El Paso they changed trains for the final leg on the Southern Pacific Railroad. On the first trip a friend, Don Coffee, went with Dad. They worked toting wheel barrels full of concrete for a few weeks. Ultimately, they found good paying work as caddies at the Chino Country Club. Toward the beginning of the school year dad took the long hot trip back to Texas, but his partner that first year, Don stayed in California. Dad never saw him again.

I can remember most of the vehicles that my family has owned, at least in my lifetime. I even remember my grandfather's love of trains and the awful trip we took on one. Unfortunately, I was a might hyper when I was little and what began as an adventure turned into a

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grueling, never ending journey. Mother, grandmother, grandfather, and I climbed onto the beautiful instrument of torture at the depot in Houston. Man oh man was it great, for a while. Surely, many of y'all remember little kids asking, "Are we there yet." Well, I never thought we would get there. I must admit that our trip did have the comfort of Pullman cars with our own rooms and pull down bunk beds. Our trip turned out to be the grand tour of the west, looping up through Colorado, along the Pacific coast, to San Francisco, and finally across miles and miles of nothing, back to Houston. Here it is fifty years later, and I still cringe at the thought of it. The only bright spots I recall on that trip was seeing a meteor light the sky in Arizona and watching Vice President Johnson from our San Francisco hotel room as he campaigned. I sure am glad I never road the top of a boxcar for hundreds of miles like my father.

My journey into the world of driving automobiles began, like most folk my age. Those first lessons, when you were all scrunched up tight against your father or mother were great. Finally after a lot of practice, a teenager is licensed and released as a menace to society. Thankfully, the angels allow the majority of us to live. The angels protected me as a young adult driving everything from that first 1966 Volkswagen, to the Vette with a 454 engine, and a variety of police cars. My friends, Mark and Mike, were with me in that Volkswagen as we approached a tight curve in a country road. We were just too cool in that Beetle with the racing stripe down the side. It seems like I had on my Australian bush hat with the side brim folded up. One of the guys said, "Don't you think you are going a little fast for this curve." My response was, "Nah!", we were mighty lucky and I am glad those cars have strong roofs and roll well. We were fine, but that put me a foot for a long while.

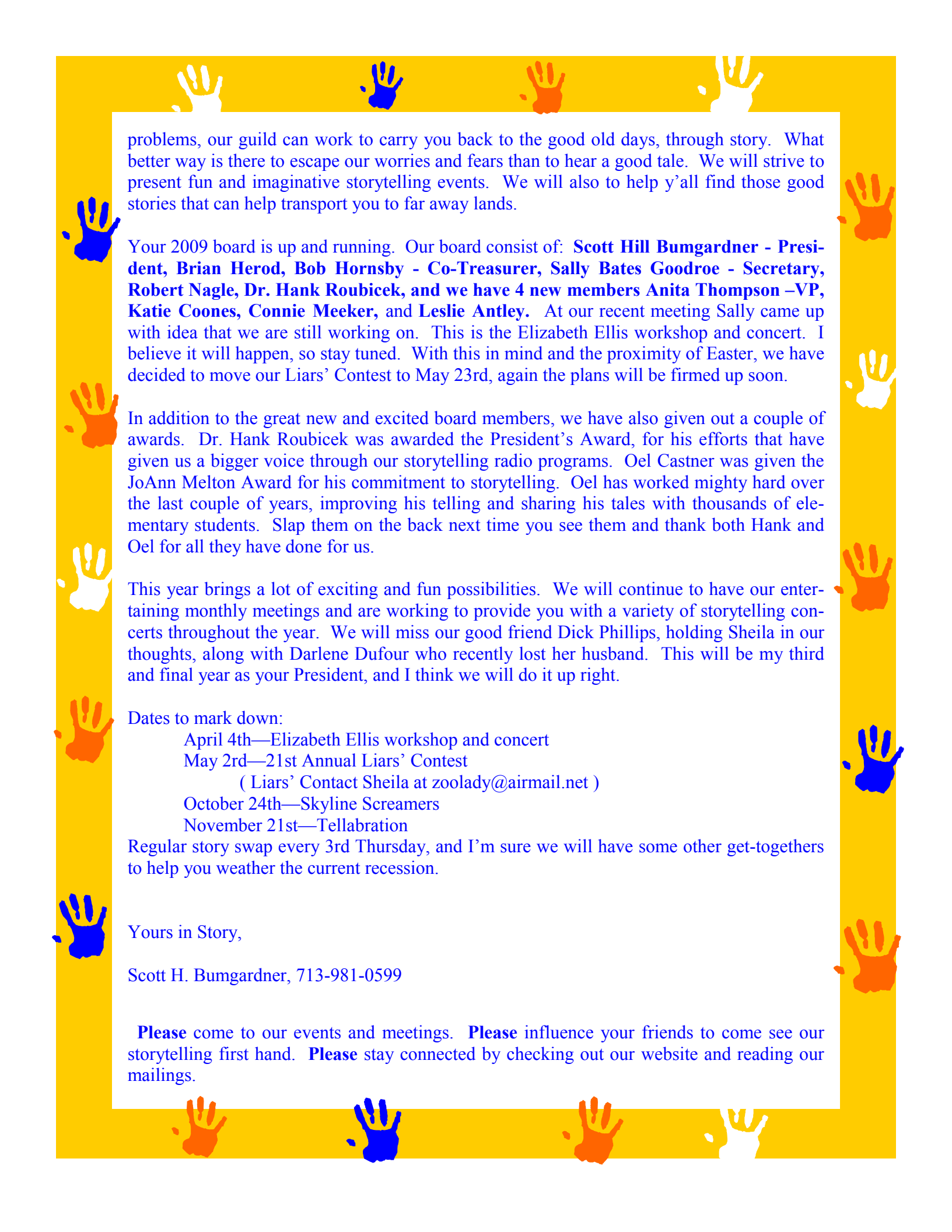
When I was a teenager, back in the late sixties and early seventies, gas could sometimes be found for twenty to twenty five cents per gallon. Now we have entered a time when diesel fuel has risen to prices well above four dollars per gallon. In most states, hitchhiking is illegal, you must have a driver's license to drive, and you had better have that liability insurance. Automobile design and mechanics have advanced to the point that few adults and certainly very few fourteen year olds can fix a modern car. It would certainly be an unusual event for a kid to swap a rifle for a car. But, we are still a wheeled society and despite the changing times, "Adventure happens." As you roll down life's highway, find your adventure, embrace your stories and share them,

(I hate to be a ham, but y'all need to send in some stories, article, or reviews.)

## President's Message

Dear Storytelling Friends:

Wow folks, as I get older the time passes too fast. Here it is 2009, a new year and time to take this organization further into the future. What on earth does that future hold? Well that is a mighty big question for all of us. As the country struggles with real and challenging

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problems, our guild can work to carry you back to the good old days, through story. What better way is there to escape our worries and fears than to hear a good tale. We will strive to present fun and imaginative storytelling events. We will also to help y'all find those good stories that can help transport you to far away lands.

Your 2009 board is up and running. Our board consist of: **Scott Hill Bumgardner - President, Brian Herod, Bob Hornsby - Co-Treasurer, Sally Bates Goodroe - Secretary, Robert Nagle, Dr. Hank Roubicek, and we have 4 new members Anita Thompson -VP, Katie Coones, Connie Meeker, and Leslie Antley.** At our recent meeting Sally came up with idea that we are still working on. This is the Elizabeth Ellis workshop and concert. I believe it will happen, so stay tuned. With this in mind and the proximity of Easter, we have decided to move our Liars' Contest to May 23rd, again the plans will be firmed up soon.

In addition to the great new and excited board members, we have also given out a couple of awards. Dr. Hank Roubicek was awarded the President's Award, for his efforts that have given us a bigger voice through our storytelling radio programs. Oel Castner was given the JoAnn Melton Award for his commitment to storytelling. Oel has worked mighty hard over the last couple of years, improving his telling and sharing his tales with thousands of elementary students. Slap them on the back next time you see them and thank both Hank and Oel for all they have done for us.

This year brings a lot of exciting and fun possibilities. We will continue to have our entertaining monthly meetings and are working to provide you with a variety of storytelling concerts throughout the year. We will miss our good friend Dick Phillips, holding Sheila in our thoughts, along with Darlene Dufour who recently lost her husband. This will be my third and final year as your President, and I think we will do it up right.

Dates to mark down:

April 4th—Elizabeth Ellis workshop and concert

May 2rd—21st Annual Liars' Contest

( Liars' Contact Sheila at [zoolady@airmail.net](mailto:zoolady@airmail.net) )

October 24th—Skyline Screammers

November 21st—Tellabration

Regular story swap every 3rd Thursday, and I'm sure we will have some other get-togethers to help you weather the current recession.

Yours in Story,

Scott H. Bumgardner, 713-981-0599

**Please** come to our events and meetings. **Please** influence your friends to come see our storytelling first hand. **Please** stay connected by checking out our website and reading our mailings.

## Houston Storytellers Guild Membership Application

Fill it out and send it to the address below for membership in the Houston Storytellers Guild. Membership will run through the end of 2009. Membership is for your entire household, event attendance discounts will apply to family and guest.

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(or primary contact)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:  
Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership: \$25.00

Additional Donations: Please write in the amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please list household member names here:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and payment to:  
The Houston Storytellers Guild or just HSG  
P.O. Box 130801  
Houston, TX 77219-0801

Sheila Phillips is the Membership Chair and can be reached at [zoolady@airmail.net](mailto:zoolady@airmail.net).

**The Houston Storytellers Guild**  
**A 501 (C)(3) not for profit corporation**  
**For Information Call: 281-775-9318**  
**[www.hsginfo@houstonstorytellers.org](mailto:www.hsginfo@houstonstorytellers.org)**

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