



REJOTI Productions

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Steeped In Stories: African, Multicultural, & Inspirational Storytellers

NEWSLETTER – the Fourth Quarter 2015

THE SPEED OF LIGHT/LIFE

Welcome back to REJOTI Productions. It is rhetorical to mention how quickly time flies. Yes, we are still operating in various venues and wanted to catch you up with our progression.. We LOVE theatre but our storytelling branch seems to have allowed us to reach more audiences and take us farther and faster than we had imagined. The following is a brief summary of what we have been doing and propose to do.

SEPTEMBER 2015

I started by telling stories at the Martin Luther King Jr. Senior Center, in Hackensack, NJ.



On September 20, from noon to 6 PM, our “Steeped In Stories” group was represented by four tellers at the New Jersey Storytelling Festival at *Grounds for Sculpture* in Hamilton, N.J. The venue was outside under tressa among the sculptures. The weather was perfect. and our tellers were: Vicki Lynn Bryan, Shirley Johnson, Bernie Libster, and Veona Thomas — who regaled listeners with tales for all ages.

October 2015

We videotaped another, “Family Story Hour” at Channel 34- Montclair. (Executive Producer Marcia Almeida) This is the link that you can

use where you will find the latest “Family Story Hour.” The credits were a typo. I, Veona Thomas, hosted this presentation. Enjoy. <http://vp.telvue.com/preview?id=T01411&video=255934>

The Biblical Storytellers had their festival on 10/25 at *Canaan Baptist Church* in New York. I was scheduled to tell but unfortunately I could not attend this year. I usually enjoy this event. In the past I have told the story of the Bible’s famous twins and others.

NOVEMBER 2015

My friend, the actress DEE DIXON was honoured at the *Museum of the City of New York*.” Her youthful photo was part of FOLK CITY, a Folk Musical Exhibition. She has performed in many of my plays but the fact is that she was a viable part of the music of the Civil Rights Movement, before I knew her, singing with greats like Pete Seeger and others. I had to be there and was. I am so proud of her.

I am also a member of the *Uptown Playwrights*, in New York City (Director Gail Huland El). We hold meetings twice a month at the *Emma Bowen Center*. Professional actors and playwrights attend. I recently had part of a new script that I’m working on read and critiqued. It was the first time I had heard it live and it has inspired me to continue writing and working on my plays.

“In the tradition.”

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On 11/12 we went to the 34th *National Association of Black Storytellers Festival and Conference.* It was held in Arlington, Virginia and Washington, DC. The NABS (as we call it) Festival is usually filled with workshops, lectures, storytelling concerts and contests, socializing and runs 5 to 7 days. It is an emotionally charged experience where we are encouraged to share and pass on our stories. A band of musicians played African instruments And the constant sound of African drums enveloped the tellers. There are youth, regular and elder groups who can win awards and trophies. Famous authors often attend, bring, sell and sign their books and DVDs. We had an African Market Place where vendors sold jewelry, African style clothing etc. It is like taking a course for your Master’s Degree of Doctorate in a few days. This year we took a tour of the National archives, the Library of Congress and visited the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial. The memorial is so beautiful We visited at night and it was all lit up and right next to the water. If you want to experience peace, go to the memorial.

My co- founder of *Steeped In Stories*, Shirley Johnson and long time actress/friend, Norma Powell (from Cleveland) also attended.

I am so excited about the newest Smithsonian building, the *National Museum of African American History and Culture*. It is almost completed and has a beautiful exterior. We had a lecture and video by the Director who told us how the museum will contain thousands of gems of knowledge about Black history. Construction completion is expected in September 2016. Check it out on the internet. You will want to be there when it opens.

(We attempted to get a photo for you but it was not very clear. Sorry.)

Our website has been out of date for a while etc. We move so quickly it is hard to document. We intend to get it back to keeping you informed through E blast and possibly on Facebook.

IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE:

I have been missing theatre and plan to see Vy Higginson’s latest production. I plan to tape another show for *Family Storytelling Hour*. I would like to have a private reading this month (possibly around my birthday.) or in January, of something that has not yet been produced.

I would also like to see some of my previous hit pieces on the stage again , such as:

“Nzinga’s Children,” “The Diva & the Rapper,” “Heaven Sent,” “Girlfriends,” “Forever Friends,” “A Candle For Kwanzaa,” “Tuesday In No Man’ Land,” among others.

Veona Thomas is available for storytelling for all occasions and don’t forget, I have some books still available.



Wishing you all a

**Happy, Healthful, Prosperous and Joyful
Holiday Season**

Happy Kwanzaa