

MARQUEE

Numbers don't lie: Rabbit Box's story expands exponentially

By **ANDRE GALLANT** published Wednesday, May 7, 2014



Rabbit Box normally traffics in words, stories, memories and emotions. But lately, the live personal storytelling experience is talking numbers: a two-year anniversary, 23 shows, 170 individual storytellers, participants aged 11 to 85, 200 to 250 regular patrons, and a collection of 181 stories told (many available online).

Marci White, one of Rabbit Box's founders and leaders, credits the event's success to storytelling's accessible, egalitarian format.

"Everybody knows when you hear a good story," White said.

But what exactly is a Rabbit Box? For starters, as many now know, it's a reference to a song written by the late Vic Chesnutt. This Rabbit Box, though, catches storytellers telling true tales each shorter than eight minutes, recounted without notes. Telling a personal story on a stage to a crowd of mostly strangers tends to intimidate Rabbit Box's contributors, but White said hardly no one has frozen up holding the microphone. Each Rabbit Box show has a theme, and storytellers are either found or find the group, and then dig out a story from their memories that meets the theme — "On The Road" was a particularly entertaining travel-focused show, White remembers. Storytellers are given little guidance: Just give the story a beginning, middle and end; don't make it a stand-up routine; no essays; and don't memorize.

Everyone worries they'll choke up without learning the story by rote, but "that almost never happens," White said. Most importantly, the story must be true,

Show themes are kept broad on purpose; the type of story that could be told for a show about animals, say, is up for interpretation. All White, along with other Rabbit Box board members

All Access Membership

Spotted@: The Weekend Around Athens:
UGA Graduate School 2014 Commencement



2014 UGA Spring Graduation

2014 Spring Undergraduate Commencement

- [2014 UGA Graduation](#)
- [Remember the One Celebrity Golf Tournament](#)
- [Pre-K through 2nd Grade Field Day](#)

[More Photos](#)



Rabbit Box: Silver Box
?My Life In Black and White?

Mary Whitehead, Pat Priest, Roger Stahl, Matthew Eppersonh, will do with a storyteller's idea is make sure its not a philosophical rant.

When: 7 p.m. Wednesday
Where: Melting Point, 295 E. Dougherty St.
Cost: \$5
Online: www.meltingpointathens.com
Call: (706) 254-6909

To celebrate its two-year anniversary, Rabbit Box returns to a successful theme called "Silver Box," a gathering of local histories told by those who lived it. This time around, "Silver Box" will focus on race — the show is subtitled, "My Life in Black and White" — after a few of last year's speakers memoirs of the Civil Rights Movement made for one of the better Rabbit Boxes ever.

As always, White and the team work to create a diverse group of storytellers, between race and age.

"We try and achieve a general balance in each show, and we try to have equal men and women," White said.

It's all in an effort to create community in a world that's increasingly fragmented by economics, movement and technology.

"Stories are the lifeblood of human culture," White said.

And they can be used to build bridges between disparate peoples.

"Rabbit Box should be a forum for the community," White said. The group's slogan is "Creating Community, One Story at a Time."

"We can break down some barriers between us by listening to other people's stories. It's really all about connection, getting in touch with people in real time."

Contact arts and entertainment reporter André Gallant: (706) 208-2230, www.twitter.com/andregallant and www.facebook.com/GallantABH.

..... **MARQUEE**

PREV



Mini Reviews

NEXT



Blog: Sources report Josh Murray is in the final four on 'The Bachelorette'

.....

Athens, GA • Athens Banner-Herald ©2014. All Rights Reserved.



CLOSE X