

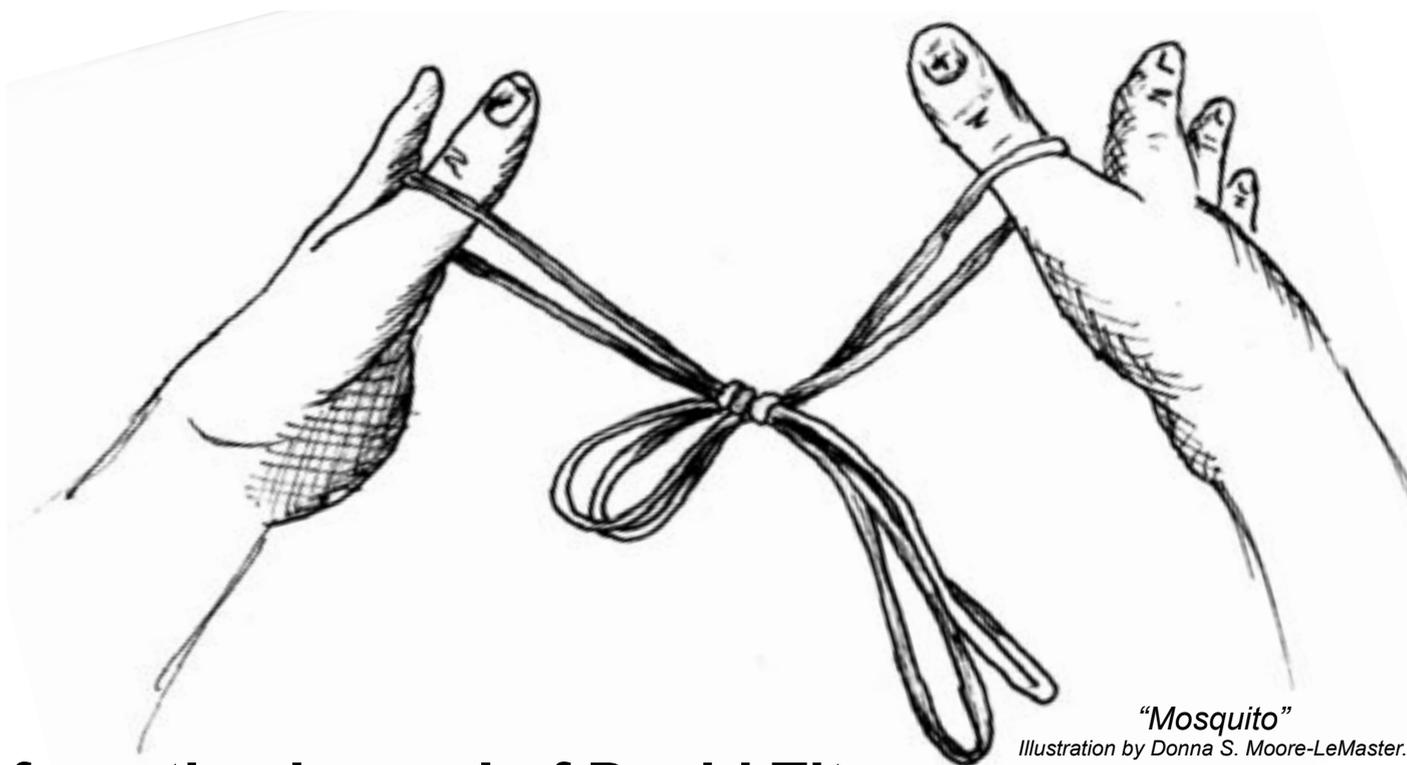


Dave demonstrates string figures at the Museum of the Great Plains in Lawton, Oklahoma. Instructions for "Navajo Drum" can be found in Dave's book, *Native American String Figures*. The figure "Knots" will be in his upcoming book, *Arctic String Figures*.

Photos by Sue Large and Randy Warren.

Spring 2006

A TELLER'S TRAVELS



"Mosquito"

Illustration by Donna S. Moore-LeMaster.

Notes and Pictures from the Journal of David Titus

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MOSQUITO

If you don't have a favorite string figure, now you will. It is so much fun to squash it. In Ghana this figure is known as a mosquito and in Uganda it is a locust.



Put string on both thumbs.



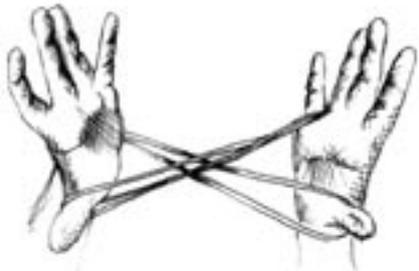
Left hand, point your hand down and bring it toward your body so the string is across the back of hand.



Turn left hand upward so the string is on the back of it. Look at the back of your left hand.



Right little finger come across and pick up both strings that are on the back of the left hand and return.



Extend hands with palms facing each other.



Left little finger come towards you over all the right little finger strings and picks up the two right thumb strings, both of them.



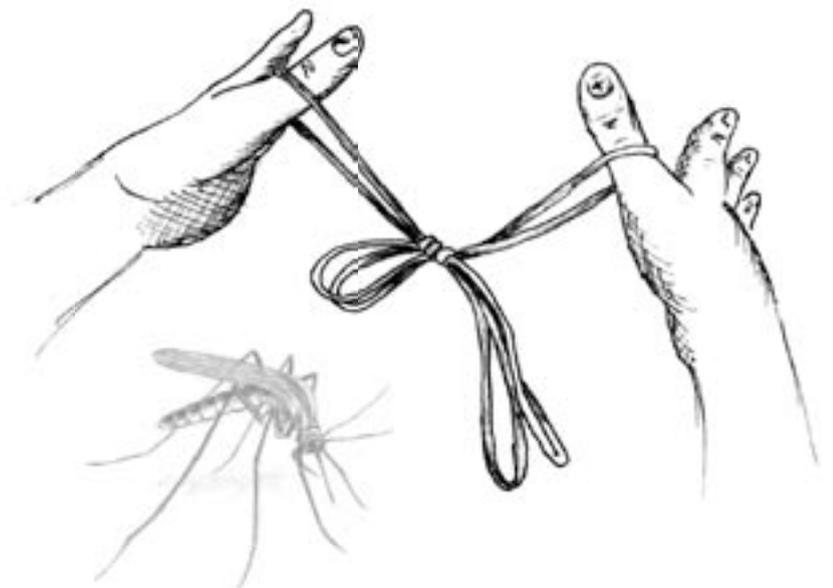
Take the strings that are on the back of the left hand off and put them in the middle. Be careful not to lose any strings off left thumb or little finger.



Extend hands to pull the knot tight.

Relax the tension. Release the little finger loops and you have a "Mosquito".

Put hand together to squash it. Extend your hands and it will disappear. Don't pull the wings off before you squash it. That would be gross.



*Excerpt from **African String Figures** by David Titus.
Illustrations by Donna S. Moore-LeMaster*

INTERNATIONAL STRING FIGURE ASSOCIATION



SUPPORT RESEARCH,
ACHIEVES,
NEW INVENTIONS AND
NEWLY DISCOVERED
FIGURES

by joining the *(ISFA)*
**INTERNATIONAL STRING
FIGURE ASSOCIATION.**

Annual dues in the US are \$25. New members receive everything we've published so far this year, plus a back issue of our 300 page Bulletin as a bonus (a \$10 value!). Additional publications are mailed as they become available (published in Mar, Jun, Sep, and Dec). ISFA accepts US checks, money order, Visa, MasterCard and PayPal. Mail your payment to:

**International String
Figure Association
PO Box 5134
Pasadena, CA 91117**

Be sure to include your full mailing address and your email address if you have one. For more information, phone (626) 398-1057.

www.ISFA.org

MEXICO

In February I made a trip to Mexico with an Oklahoma Volunteer in Missions group. We went to build Casitas (Little Houses). We spent a week and built two Casitas. They were approximately twelve by eighteen feet, made of cement block on a cement slab with a corrugated metal roof - no interior walls, plumbing or electricity. They will run a wire to have a light. They were crowded in between other casitas, cooking shanties and outhouses.

My job, when not moving block and painting, was to keep the children out from underfoot. The strings worked wonders. The children from the families we were working with were so excited to invite other barrio children in to do string games. We had lots of fun and each day I would bring a fresh supply of strings and ask in Spanish, "What color do you care to have, today?" They were so much fun and learned so fast. I also taught some of the other team members to do some strings, so if I was not at their site, they could work with the children.



The "Maestro" or foreman was unhappy when the translator stopped to learn something, until I taught him the "Eye of the Needle" trick. Then he was happy to teach the others. I also taught our cook and her helpers strings, went to the park and showed some string figures. Then I went to a church and worked with their kids, all the while speaking in halting Spanish!



All in all, it was a great trip and I made some connections to go back and do more with the schools, orphanages and the like.

Photos by Marj Hillmann and Kip Wright.

NEW BOOK

NA'ATL'O', NAVAJO STRING GAMES by Don Mose. San Juan School District, Utah.

When Mark Sherman and I were traveling through the Navajo Reservation several years ago, Don put together a string figure gathering from four high schools and we were able to video tape the kids making figures.



The book is a bit unusual in that the text contains no instructions for figures but does

illustrate the figures and relate a number of Navajo stories that are associated with the figures. A DVD that accompanies the book contains video showing the construction of 43 figures. The video is actually one that Mark and I made in Gallup, NM several years ago. It's a good chance to see Mark's hands in action.- by Will Wirt, ISFA.



Dave shows string figures at Sadler Book & Teaching Supply, Lawton Oklahoma.

ATTENTION TEACHERS

If you are writing a grant or trying to explain the Educational Benefits for a visit from "The String Man," here are some terms to consider:

- CROSS HEMISPHERE LEARNING
- MULTIPLE LEARNING STYLES
- FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
- "BRAIN GYM" ACTIVITIES
- INTER GENERATIONAL
- STUDENT SUCCESS
- RIGHT/LEFT BRAIN
- NATIVE AMERICAN
- MULTICULTURAL
- STORYTELLING
- COOPERATION
- READING



STRING NOTES & THANK YOU'S

Dear David Titus,
Warm greetings to you from Eiguliai United Methodist Church. You have visited us and stayed in our hearts. We often pray for you during our worship services. May God bless you and all that you do in His name.

Blessings,
Pastor EV Erbele
Kaunas, Lithuania

The Waller family recently visited China to lead "Character First, Family Training Seminars" for the Character Training Institute. Along the way they took the time to teach string tricks to the locals. The Wallers learned string figures while in Mongolia from David Titus.



Samuel had a ready audience as he explained the meaning of some of his string tricks.

Dear Dave,
Thank you so much for coming to Noble! I know the kids (and adults!) really enjoyed your presentation. As you know, they were excited to get strings to take home, too!
Thanks for helping to make our summer a success!
Hope you can come again!
Chris Kennedy
Noble Public Library
Noble, OK

Dear Mr. Titus,
What a joy you brought to our church! To come in this morning and see children and adults still working with their strings was a delight. Your generosity in giving each one a string was a great surprise. Thank you again for coming, we will highly recommend you to others. May God continue to bless you and your ministry.
In Christ,
Matt Passmore
First Baptist East
Lawton, OK

Dave,
Thanks for your recent visit to Alaska Children's Services & for being such a faithful spirit-filled friend to ACS! It is such a blessing every time you visit.

Please accept the enclosed check as a small token of my appreciation.

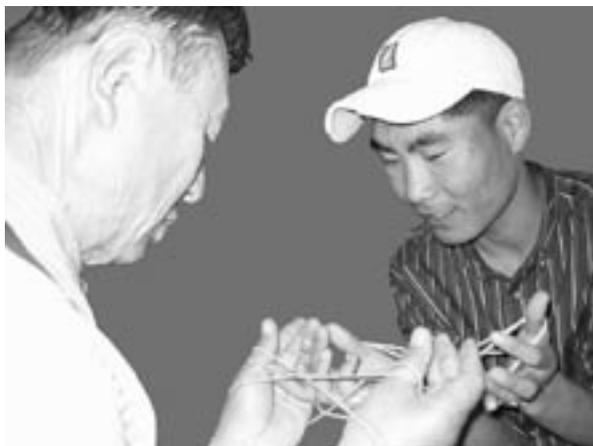
Peace,
Kelli Williams
Anchorage, AK

Dear David,
Thank you for lending your time and talent to lead a workshop for the Bible Telling Conference. Please know that you are appreciated.

Blessings,
Alicia Galyor
United Methodist Ministry Center
Oklahoma City, OK

Dear David,
So...Gladys Wood kids are under the string spell & I'm now scheming ways to travel the world & become a storyteller! You've certainly lit a few fires around Anchorage! And they're all good! Thank you so much for rising to the rigorous occasion of dazzling well over 500 kids in one very short day. Please come back! The kids are already asking when that will happen!
Happy tales & travels,
Amy Dalton
Anchorage, AK

Spencer Garner of the Joint Christian Services in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia went to the Gobi desert and reported that he was trying to show some string figures when a 22-year-old preacher in the area said "Here let me help you." He, of course, was fluent in the Mongolian and could teach and tell the stories. He remembered them from when he was seventeen and a man came to his camp at Sumer. Guess who that man was?



Zolzaya is the young man that remembered Dave's string figures and stories from five years ago.



December 18, 2005

Here is a four year old trying to do strings by reading the diagrams in your book. He was really hard at work last Sat. in San Antonio, Texas. He did learn several tricks and shapes before the day was over.

Mike Spiller L.T.D.F.
www.PhysiciansofPhun.com

A big "thank you" to singer, songwriter Mike Wood of Lawton, Oklahoma. Mike organized a Christmas music concert to help benefit String Ministries. He played guitar and sang traditional and modern holiday melodies. Lawton Heights United Methodist Church hosted the event and provided refreshments. Thank you to all who participated and gave donations. Mike's efforts helped raise \$350 for future mission trips.



Photo by Charles King.

Dave,
When we used your string in Alaska on our VIM (Volunteers In Mission) trip, we saw what an effective teaching tool they were. Thank you for the work you do.
Gloria Eppler
Geronimo, OK

Dear David,
Many thanks for your "Notes and Pictures from the Journal"!!!
It's brilliant!
Best wishes,
Annika Warms (Germany)

SUBMISSIONS for A Teller's Travels may be sent to Lynna Warren at ljgraphics@swbell.net.

How are you using strings in your community? Do you take strings to camp, to church, or on a mission trip? Send in a photo and a paragraph or two telling how you got started making string figures.

Oops! Photos on the cover of the 2005 newsletter should have been credited to Sue Large of Lawton, OK.

**LETTERS FROM
HIGH SCHOOL
READERS**



*United Methodist Boys Ranch
Gore, Oklahoma
"In His Service Since 1963"*

*Dear Mr. Titus,
Thank you for taking time out of your day to teach us all of the string tricks. It was a really fun experience and thank you for getting me out of English class. And I have been practicing a lot of the string tricks and I am actually getting pretty good at it.
Sincerely,
Kyle*

*Dear Mr. Titus,
Thank you for coming to teach us string magic. It was really cool and for giving us your movies to watch. I hope you can come back so we can learn to do some even better ones. Thank you. I have been playing with my string and now I know a new thing to do. It's called the Batoka Gorge.
Thank you.
Sincerely yours,
Mathew G.*

*Dear Mr. Titus,
Thank you for teaching us to do string stuff. I really enjoyed it. It was fun and it was the only way to get out of school work. I really like that red string you gave me. The favorite string activity I really like was the drum activity.
Thank you for taking the time and money to come to our school and doing the class. It was great making string stuff. Hope you have a nice day. So long my friend. Hope to see you again in life.
Your friend,
Hunter*

*Dear Mr. Titus,
How are you doing? I am doing ok. I enjoyed what you did for us the other day. I hope you come back to see us. I still know some of the stuff you taught me. Well I have to go now. I hope you come back again. I enjoyed all of your movies and books.
Have a nice day.
Sincerely,
Jason*

*Dear Mr. Titus,
Thank you for the strings. I enjoy practice with someone who knows what they're doing. Thank you for showing your string skill. Keep trying and you will learn more skills. I learned a lot from watching you.
Sincerely,
Michael*



Dave's not picky about his travel accommodations as shown here in Alaska.



A TELLER'S TRAVELS



Dave taught string figures to patients at a leprosy hospital while traveling in Nepal.



In Mongolia, Dave fetched water from a well and taught children string figures outdoors.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Besides conferences, school residencies and bookings, as well as church and camp bookings, Dave will be traveling out of the 48 contiguous states to the following:

April 2006 - **ALASKA** to teach string workshops at schools, libraries and churches in Anchorage, Kenai, Soldotna, and surrounding areas.

May 2006 - **NEPAL** for the Annual Conference of United Missions to Nepal and a youth meeting of the Raute people. The Raute are Nepal's last hunter-gatherer forest nomads, who are on the edge of extinction.

October 2006 - **MONGOLIA** to teach at rural boarding schools throughout the Gobi desert. Dave will visit five school each week for a month.

February 2007 - **PHILIPPINES** to teach string workshops. Dave's first visit to this country.

Let Dave know if you have connections in an area you think he needs to visit.

For a list of all Dave's current travels or to see when he might be in your area, check his online calendar at www.storyteller-wordsmith.com.

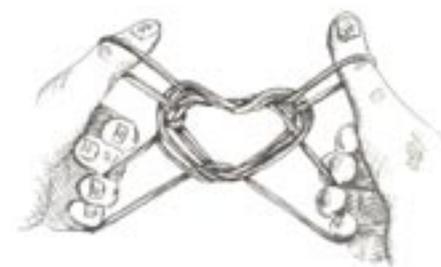
NOTE: In the last newsletter, I said that I was going to Liberia, West Africa to work with some of the people that I had met in Ghana at Buduburan refugee camp. Due to political unrest after the elections in Liberia, the US State Department has issued a travel advisory against travel to Liberia. I decided that it was appropriate to follow the advice of the State Department and not travel to Liberia at this time. It was with regret that I informed the people on the ground in Liberia that I would not be traveling there, but would put that trip into the future plans of String Ministries. - Dave



STRING MINISTRIES

www.StringMinistries.org

BOARD: Charles Boyle, Peggy Brock, Doris Hyde, Rev. Kevin King, Hazel Stall, P. J. Umland emeritus, Randy Warren, and Mike Wood. DIRECTOR: David Titus THE PURPOSE OF STRING MINISTRIES: String Ministries is a Christian organization founded to share the love of Christ through string figures, especially working with the people in developing nations, refugees, oppressed, imprisoned or disabled. Some examples of these would include, but not be exclusive to: leprosy patients in Mongolia, reindeer herders of Mongolia, Palestinian refugees, aids affected inner city children of New York, Alaska Children's Services group homes, children of prisoners, Pokera Drug treatment center in Pokera Nepal, isolated Alaskan villages, and East European children. String Ministries would also prepare materials such as videos, books, pamphlets or interactive CD's for teaching. These materials would be provided at reduced or no cost. Staff would also be available to teach and equip people, including such things as teaching at Missionaries Annual Conference in Nepal and Mongolia, speaking at churches and organizations to promote the ministry, and other activities as needed. String Ministries may also provide strings to missionaries, Volunteer-in-mission people, special groups, etc. at reduced or no cost.



MOZAMBIQUE

by Michele Hibbins
Victoria, BC Canada

On the map, Kapasseni Village is in Sofala province of Mozambique, near to the Zambezi River. The nearest big town is Beira, almost half way up the coast. For 16 years, there was a brutal civil war in Mozambique, and the people of Kapasseni became refugees in neighboring countries and in Canada. Two of these refugees, Joseph and Perpetua Alfazema, arrived in Victoria, British Columbia in the mid 1980's to rebuild their lives. In 1998 they returned to Kapasseni, and Joseph reunited with his mother after 28 years. People had returned after the war, but were devastated. There was no infra-structure, and the whole area was strewn with landmines.



The Alfazema's promised to help, and returned to Canada to begin the "Kapasseni Project", a fundraising body whose first goal was to help build a school for the village. In 1999, the Gettin'

Higher Choir, co-directed by Shivon Robinsong and Dennis Donnelly, joined the Kapasseni Project efforts by hosting an annual fundraising concert. Through 7 years of involvement, many choir members have initiated individual projects to assist in the rebuilding of this war-torn village. In 2003, Perpetua made a request to the choir to collect something that she could bring to the children of Kapasseni. Now that the school was underway, wells had been drilled, a breakfast program started for the students, and a medical building had been built, it was time to turn our thoughts to small luxuries. But what can you carry in your luggage, half way across the world, for hundreds of children? Why, Strings of course! Michele Hibbins, a choir member as well as a member of the International String Figure Association, offered the perfect solution of lightweight, low-volume, non-

breakable strings. They were so well received in 2003 that the choir continues to send books and hundreds of strings each year with the Alfazema's on their annual visit to Kapasseni. To see images

of people enjoying such simple pleasures as sharing String Games brings Michele much joy, and reminds her of the power we all have to change the world, one small action at a time.

Thank you to David for his support of this project through offering the strings at a reduced rate. If you would like more information on The Kapasseni Project, please visit www.kapasseni.org.



Villagers play with strings sent to them by the members of the Gettin' Higher Choir in Victoria, British Columbia Canada.

WANTED

INDIVIDUALS, CHURCHES, OR GROUPS
that would like to help sponsor future mission trips.

A \$100 donation would allow over 500 to have fun with strings. Please be a part of this joy-filled experience for the needy of the world. Donations are tax deductible.

I am donating \$ _____ to String Ministries.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Phone: _____

Send mail-in donations with check or money order to:
String Ministries, PO Box 1406, Lawton, OK 73502
Phone (800) 357-9854 or (580) 357-9854
Fax (580) 357-9787

NOTES FROM DAVE

It is so much fun going to a small village and stopping in the square or at the market and pulling out my string. All I have to do is one figure and I have an audience. Someone wants to show me what they know and someone else wants me to teach the figure that I just did. I may go to the local school which is usually two or three classrooms of fifty kids or so each. There, the kids are captivated with the figures and trying to listen to English also.

Often, it is the principal or head teacher that is translating and some of the kids jump in when they have a problem with a term. We all work together with English, Sign and gesture to get the message across. One of the first terms I learn is "like this." I then start a figure and say, "Like this, like this, then like this." Doesn't take much skill in a language to translate love and caring for the individual. After school or later in the day, someone will come to me and ask, "Do you know this one?" It is one that I showed to the other class and they have passed it along. As Juan teaches it to Pedro and Pedro passes it along to Juanita, they think it is something just invented or made up. They want me to know about it and how smart they are to know it. Nothing works like success.

When I go to another country, most of the bookings (programs) are not for pay. I am there to share love. Love of God and also love from the US. We are getting a lot of bad publicity abroad. Americans are not held in high regard many places. When I leave a program or village I want the people to say, "Who was that Masked...no String Man?" "Oh, he is a Christian from America." If that is the only message they get, I think it is enough. Thanks for your support and prayers in making this happen.

"Spreading the Gospel Message Through String."