



Dave traveling in Pedro Bay, Alaska.
Photos by Roz Goodman.

A TELLER'S TRAVELS

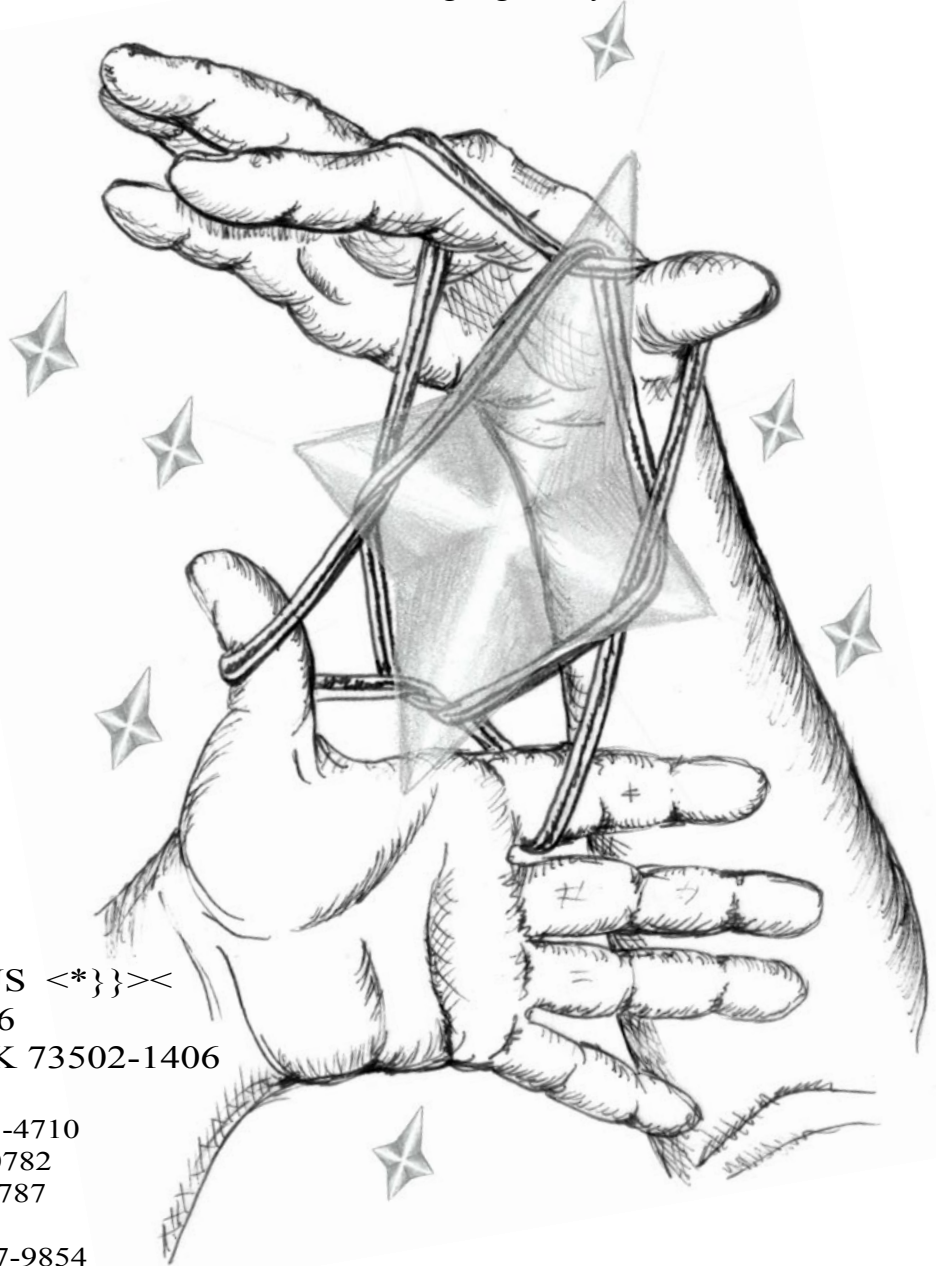
Notes and Pictures
from the Journal of
David Titus

Spring 2007

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"Kiowa Star" from the book, *Native American String Figures* by David Titus. Directions on back cover.



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PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Drop out of the sky onto a landing strip where the people still come out to see the “Noisy Pigeon” and then try to reorient myself to another way

of life. This is Papua New Guinea. An economy where everyone grows their own food, and pigs are used in bargaining. A wife cost 30 pigs, by the way. Disputes are settled by the elders and the entire tribe assembles at the ancient grounds to see money or pigs given in retribution. Each clan sits together and makes sure the proceedings are handled correctly. There are still tribal wars going on because some things are settled by retribution killings and the like.



I was there with a retired missionary as my guide and translator. Herb Schaan was the first white man some of the people saw in the 1960's, when they were living as in the stone-age. He was able to get me to some very remote places and meet some interesting people. This was a mission trip for String Ministries, Inc. and I took 5,000 strings along with me. We worked with churches, schools, a hospital, and in many market areas and left the country with only 300 strings. Those, I needed for Australia.

We were busy every day doing string figures with some group or the other, often traveling in the back of a pickup over the one very rough road. One of the times we went through enemy territory, I was in the back of the pickup with the sheriff and his shotgun and five strapping young men with long machetes. As formidable as we were, we had no troubles. I was not in danger of harm, as they were. Had we been stopped, my contribution would have been all my money to help fund things.

Two times we flew to another area because it was not safe to use the road system without a police escort. While in the most remote part of the country, we stayed with a man who Herb had known at the mission school as a boy. He is now the tribal chief and very involved in politics. We stayed at his compound with his five wives and children. We had a generator that made electricity for three hours in the evening when there was kerosene, and a solar shower that gave warm water on sunny days. This was quite a luxury. Another time we stayed at the Lutheran Hospital guest house. We were treated to a solar shower, electricity (most of the time) and the hospitality of Anton Lutz, the son of the Dr. and our host. We ate at his house, sharing the duties of KP and kitchen cleanup. What a grand time. Anton and another missionary, Liz, loved the string figures and wanted to learn every one I could teach them. They will use them in their work with people in Aids Education as they travel the back trails.

Dr. Steve was in the States on furlough and the hospital was run by the nurses. Of course, anyone staying in the hospital has to have family members stay there to take care of them, fix their food and do all the things that LPN's and aids do. There are usually a number of outsiders around just for the diversion. I worked with patients and family as well as some of the staff.



It is impossible to share the excitement that we brought to these people. Most of them knew some string figures so it was not something new to them. I would go to the market or a gathering place with a pocket full of strings. Giving out one, I would ask if that person knew any

figures. If they didn't, the person next to them would say they did and take the string. Then we were off and running. I would ask if they knew this one...and show an Eskimo or American Indian figure and then someone else would want a string. When my pocket was empty, I would say “Sorry but my pocket is empty.” I didn't tell them I had a backpack full of strings. I found that it was a good way of not having a mob of people wanting strings just to get something. I then would refill my pocket and try another area. I did learn some great new figures from many people. Some I had seen in literature, but it is wonderful to see them in real life. I also learned some very interesting stories that went along with the figures. Some, I can't tell in mixed audiences.



At the one Catholic church we had about 400 people gathered after the church service. Good thing that Anton and Liz were there with Herb and I. We each had our own spot of lawn with a group of people around us. We passed out strings to everyone and then started teaching. Herb had some of the elders and was talking to them in their tribal language. Liz had some of the women, while Anton was working with the young men. I had an assortment. What fun we had that afternoon with strings. After that, at the market, we would see people with strings around their wrists and they would come over to show me one or get me to teach them one more.



Photos provided by Herb Schaan.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



of the time and strings. The teachers had many nice things to say.

What joy to bring something to people who have no TV, phone, IPOD, or even a flashlight. They eat whatever is in season and drink fresh water from the mountain streams; and how majestic those mountain waterfalls are. Sharing a little of the Christian message of Grace and Love is so exciting. Many of the people are Christian and just need to be brought a little further along the path. It is also rewarding to be able to be a pleasant American experience for them. The US has some very bad press right now in the world.



I thank each person who has helped to get me to these remote places to share some love with people. Thanks to the great people at Goodwill Industries, Inc. who make all the strings. I am growing in the process and God seems to protect me on these trips. Only after I get home do the physical ailments seem to multiply. Maybe I should stay away. - Dave

At the schools, Herb would introduce us and then I would start in. We would have a class or two together. Since you have to pay to go to school, some of the third graders had mustaches and many of them had a machete lying on the floor under their desk...rather formidable. Schools were usually grade 1 through 7, or high school. As I said, ages at them were varied and there were usually some kids just hanging around trying to learn something until they could pay their tuition. Classrooms were very sparse and teachers had little but a chalkboard to work with. They were not formal and did not stand when we entered the room. They were all very appreciative



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LETTERS

Dear David,

Every year we give our fourth graders strings for Christmas and then buy an extra bag for the students to buy extra. This year, we sold the extra strings for \$1 instead of \$.50, so we're sending part of our profits to you to help with your ministry to others. Strings are such an important part of our year. Thanks for all you do.

Sincerely,

Judy Miller - Flint, TX

Mr. Titus,

Thank you for the fabulous assembly. We really enjoyed the string tricks you taught us. We hope you'll visit again.

Ms. Hewitt's 1st Grade Class , Oklahoma

Dear Dave,

We truly enjoyed having you visit our school! The kids loved learning how to make new string figures and are still "practicing!" Thank you for sharing.

Sincerely,

Strasburg Elementary School, Colorado

David,

Thank you for sending the books so quickly. I have enclosed a check for your costs plus a donation to your organization. Please continue to send your newspaper.

Regards,

George Kroboth

Fletcher, OK

Dear Dave,

I am the librarian from one of the many schools you have visited in the past. I am now retired from Eisenhower Elementary School in Fort Leavenworth, KS. However, I understand you made a return trip to the 3 elementary schools the past fall. I am sure that the children were most happy to see you again.

In all my years of being a librarian and hosting many guest speakers, I have never seen such a reaction to a presentation as yours. There is something magical about you and the strings. The kids talked about you long after you were gone and the string books that we purchased from you were constantly borrowed and reserved. (And, yes, many kids continued to utilize the strings during the day.)

Please accept my small donation and use it as you will to continue your wonderful program of storytelling and encouragement of reading folk tales.

I wish you well in all your travels and in all your good work.

Sincerely,

Barbara Sonnenmoser

Leavenworth, KS

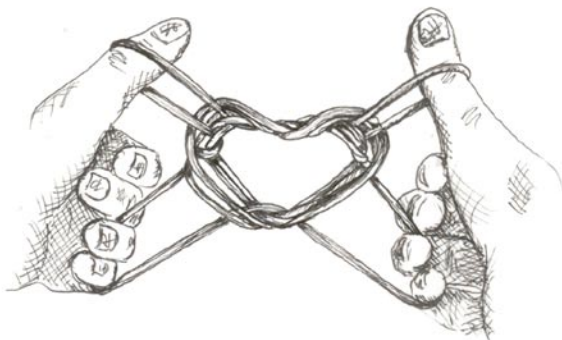
STRING MINISTRIES

BOARD: Charles Boyle, Peggy Brock, Doris Hyde, Reverend Kevin King, Hazel Stall, P.J. Uhland 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.

www.StringMinistries.org



Individuals, Churches, and Groups
would you help sponsor a future mission trip?

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: _____

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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

Ministry Letters

Dear Dave,
I just want to say thank you for coming to Wapenamanda International Christian School and also the Foursquare High School. The staff and students greatly appreciated your presentation. It is now 2 weeks since you were here and still the children keep bringing their strings to school every day. It has been interesting to learn how many people in the community knew various string patterns and were able to share with one another their own knowledge. I found it a great way of communicating with the students. God Bless you in your ministry

*Rosalie Bell
Mt Hagen, WHP, Papua New Guinea*

Dave,
Thank you for sharing your talent with our kids last night. It was amazing to see a piece of string do so many tricks and I was thrilled to hear the gospel message along with it. Thanks for driving so far to be at our camp.

*Ruth Charlson
Second Baptist Church - Baytown, TX*

Dear Dave,
Thank you so much for teaching us about "String Ministry". Kids really enjoyed the activity. We appreciate so much that you gave of your time. Thanks again,
DeNeise Nettles Barlow
Louisiana United Methodist Children's Home



The following notes & photos are from Mrs. Creighton's 3rd graders at First Baptist Church School, Shreveport, LA:

Dear String Man,
Thank you for coming to our school and teaching me some tricks. I can almost do all the tricks. I am still doing them at home. I am still trying to do the bananas. You are so awesome. I hope you can come back when we are older so we can learn some more harder ones.

Your friend,
Amelia



Dear String Man,
Thank you for giving me that wonderful string. Everyone thinks its cool. I play with my string every day. It's really really fun to play with. That was a really cool story. I never know stories were made like that.

Your friend,
Taylor

Dear String Man,
Thank you for coming. I had a fun time. I love showing my parents the Scissors. I almost know all the tricks. I wish I knew all the tricks. I also like showing my grandparents the Jumping Flea.

Your Friend,
Christian



Dear String Man,
Thank you for letting us learn those awesome tricks like The Scissors, The Knots, The Sewing Machine, The Jumping Flea, and The Bananas. Maybe I could be String Girl.
Sincerely,
Katie



Hello David,
Here are photos taken during a mission trip to Moldova in August 2006. We programmed camp for 100+ orphans who live in a state boarding school. Your string figures were a big hit!!! I left 2 of your DVD's, a string figure book and a bag of strings with our translators who caught the vision and learned everything I could teach them. I linked several string figures to illustrate the gospel story. Thanks for sharing. I enjoy your newsletter.

John C. Worden, Trinity Baptist Church - Kerrville, TX

Note: The Republic of Moldova is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, located between Romania to the west and Ukraine to the east and south.



HOW FAR WILL A PIECE OF STRING STRETCH?

Mayme Strange of Mansfield, LA, found that it will go halfway around the world! In 2002 she was living in Karamay, Xinjiang Province, People's Republic of China teaching in Middle School #1 with 600 Eighth and Tenth Grade students in 12 classes. She had to find a way to bridge the language and cultural gap since she spoke no Chinese.



Having met David Titus shortly before leaving the United States, she pulled out her bag of tricks (really bag of strings) and began to illustrate her lectures with string figures. That advanced to providing strings for the students and using them in teaching.

She found that as an educational instrument, string activities could enhance education by teaching listening, giving and following directions, creativity, and tactile learning while maintaining interest in classes that ranged up to 57 students.

When she returned to Karamay in 2005 and again in 2006 for short term teaching assignments, she carried even more strings and used them not only in class work but as a means of connecting with adults.

In airport lounges, in informal park meetings and even with street cleaners, she was able to bond with the locals by using a string ministry to illustrate Christian truths with string figures, which she also taught to the eager audiences who would gather to see what this foreigner was doing.

Trying to increase her knowledge of the string culture, she haunted bookshops in Western China even though the books she bought were in Chinese. This barrier was overcome by getting her local friends to translate for her and by following the illustrations in the books. And are there many Chinese string books? She shipped more than 40 pounds worth back to the U.S.A.

The fame of "Mayme Teacher" in this city of 250,000 is such that when a Chinese colleague went into a large bookstore with a string wrapped around her wrist, a clerk said, "You must know Mayme."

As she is packing her bags in preparation for returning to Karamay in 2007, she has already put more strings on her list along with other teaching supplies.

Is this an effective bridge to another culture? Mayme, a teacher with more than 40 years of experience, says that it is as effective reaching Chinese students as she has found it to be instructing American teens in her stateside classes.

"More than the youths," she says, "it is effective with adults and creates a common bond between children, their parents, and even their grandparents, providing a means of family communication that other media do not."

So a string from Dave Titus has stretched from Lawton, OK, to Karamay, China, by way of Mansfield, LA, providing more than a moment of entertainment with the illustration of eternal truths.



Mayme老师与学生建立了深厚的感情

NOTES FROM DAVE

"Spreading the Gospel Message Through String."

I spent a week in Northwest Louisiana in February. What a good time! I gave all day string programs in 3 schools, and also worked in 4 churches, one public library, one after school program and two orphanages. Yes, I was busy. Oh, I didn't mention two homes and one Chinese restaurant!

My original booking was at Grace United Methodist Church in Ruston for their evening award ceremony for the Upward Basketball League that they support. What a challenge to talk about the Gospel Story in string and teach all 400 kids and adults. We were in their family life center and had a camera and big screen to deal with as I was presenting. Everyone said they had a great time.

Mayme Strange, a disciple from Mansfield, heard I was coming to the area and she got busy coordinating other programs in the area. I started at a small Baptist church in Pelican with their morning service. It is so gratifying to go to places that do not get many visitors bringing something new. Monday I was at Central school, a private school in Grand Cane, my toughest time. Miz Mayme has been working with the kids for 4 years at this school, so they knew all my favorites string figures. I really had to stretch for this one. I worked with grades 2 through 12.

I went on to the DeSoto Parish Library in Mansfield for a program for some of the community people. Tuesday was Grace Methodist in Ruston and Wednesday was First Baptist Church School in Shreveport. Those kids were fresh territory and became excited at this new venue. Wednesday night I visited Grand Cane Baptist Church



for duck gumbo and Valentine cupcakes. The age span for my audience was 104 years. We had one child age 4, and one woman 108. She comes to every Sunday and Wednesday night service. She remembered doing string figures as a girl.

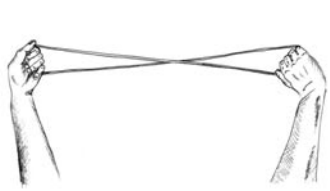
Thursday I was at Logansport Public Elementary School as part of the DARE program. Strings are a great alternative to drugs. Boy did the kids get into the fun. "Leave them wanting more" was the phrase for the day. They will be busy with the books and videos they got, learning more. In the evening I was at Shiloh Methodist church, a little country church. We had a fun string program and then fellowship with hot cocoa to ward off the cold. We actually had snowflakes that night.

Friday I went back to Ruston to work with 100 teenagers at the residential Methodist home. These troubled kids go to school and everything at the home and were very receptive to the string activities. They don't have much diversion. Staff and students alike really appreciated the program. I spent the night at the Baptist Children's Home in Monroe. I ate at one of the cottages with the kids and we did strings that evening and talked about mission work. Saturday morning, I gave a program for those youngsters and staff. A couple of the office staff came in for the Saturday program after seeing a preview on Friday at the main office. What dedication they have to the kids and their activities.

Saturday afternoon I headed home, tired but full of joy at being able to work with approximately 1,700 kids and adults. I was able to share Christ's love with them in a very unique way, one in which many of them will remember and pass on. It is also a great educational tool to exercise their brains and bodies. Thanks to all who helped to make this trip possible.

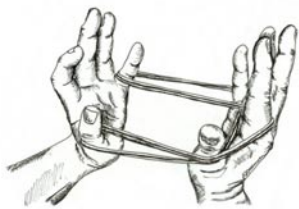
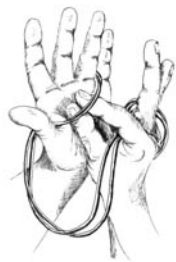
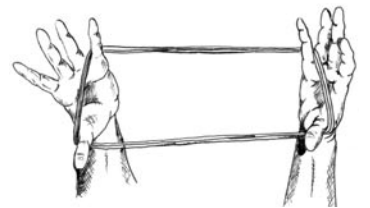
Upcoming mission trips: Poland, Haiti, Kenya, and Bolivia.

I learned this from a Kiowa Elder in Anadarko, Oklahoma.

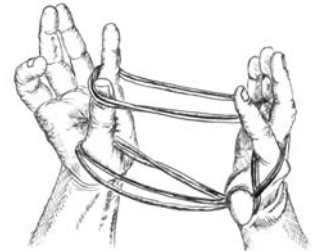


Double the string. I do this by twisting the string and putting it together. Then make Position 1.

Position 1



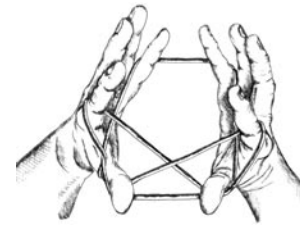
With right thumb and index finger together, slip both under left palmar strings and pick them up. Open the fingers and extend.



Left thumb pick up left near little finger strings.

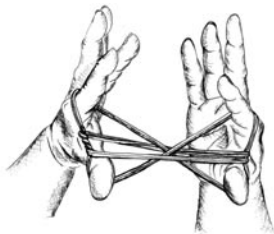


Left index finger, pick up left far thumb strings. Do this near the thumb.



Take the lower straight strings over and off thumbs.

Drop little finger strings. Twist the left hand half a turn to display the "Kiowa Star."



Caution:
String placed
around neck can
be a choking
hazard.

When I make it, I like to think of the rhyme:

*Twinkle, twinkle little star. How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky.
I can twist my hand back and forth to make it twinkle.*

Illustrations by Donna S. Moore-LeMaster.



Dave Titus demonstrates various ways to engage students in String Figures to a group of Oklahoma educators at Encyclo-media '06 held in Oklahoma City.



BOOKING INFORMATION

Dave Titus is the author of three World Culture Series books, "Native American String Figures," "African String Figures" and "Native Alaskan String Figures." He also has produced three string figure DVD's: "String Magic From Around The World," "String Fun With The Parables" and "Sharing With String Through String Ministries." Basic booking fee for an author visit is \$400 per day plus round trip travel from Lawton, Oklahoma at .48 per mile. Overnight accommodations are sometimes required. You will need to provide a string for each participant. For more booking information, visit www.Storyteller-Wordsmith.com.

Teachers, if you are writing a grant or trying to explain the Educational Benefits for a visit from "The String Man," here a few terms to consider: cross hemisphere learning, multiple learning styles, following directions, "brain gym" activities, inter generational, student success, right/left brain, multicultural storytelling, cooperation, and reading.