

The Storyline

Magazine of The New Zealand Guild of Storytellers Nga Kaikorero Purakau O Aotearoa



May 2014

Our stories are shining pearls we long to share with others. As we give them we find they can reveal glorious colours and so many layers of meaning.



Editorial

On the last Wednesday of May I took Shonaleigh from UK and Victoria Burnett from USA to visit the marae at Bluff, Te Rourou Whakaituranga O Awarua.

Jackie was our guide and she is a superb storyteller, opening our eyes to the traditions and stories of this area. Shonaleigh is Jewish and a drut'syla. That is a storyteller in the Jewish tradition handed down from grandmother to granddaughter over 800 years or more. She has 4,000 stories in her head – not on paper as she is dyslexic.

Victoria is a Christian and African American with all the heritage that entails. I am a Quaker and a European. Yet all four of us were linked in unity as the stories were shared.

It is how the world should be and storytelling is one of the ways we can change the world and bring it into harmony, don't you agree? We need to strengthen our Guild and grow it so that we can be more effective in this great mission.

We now have four members living overseas and considering we only have 32 members that is quite a percentage.

I have said before, and I say again, if we truly believe that storytelling is invaluable and needed so desperately in our society it is all of us who must show our passion for it. Not only by telling in our communities but by working to extend the audience base, extend the active membership of our Guild, and



contributing to the activities we offer.

Do you know an active storyteller living near you who is not a member and could you encourage that person to join? The annual fee is less than lunch in a coffee bar.

Do you know people who attend your events eagerly and would like to support the art by joining the Guild?

Have you put your name and profile on our new web site?

Have you entered your events?

Have you posted a story, or a thought, or an idea?

Have you looked at the web site?

Can you offer any suggestions for it?

I know that Shonaleigh made an impact in Christchurch as I spoke to her on the phone before she flew back to the UK.

So I say to all those who have sat at the feet of these superb tellers and all those who have felt the power of story in any way or in any place or from any teller, don't let the seed that may have been sown wither. Nurture it.

Share it.

Liz Miller - EDITOR

lizm@xtra.co.nz

PS Thank you Lesley Dowding for responding to the call for a cover picture. It is lovely.

President's Report

To be immersed in story is a blessing beyond words. Ordinarily an evening concert is the most story I would get to enjoy at any one time, and even those are only a few times each year. But the past ten days have been some of the richest I have experienced, with both Shonaleigh and Victoria Burnett being in Invercargill. Liz, Daphne and I, under the auspices of the Southland Branch of the New Zealand Literacy Association, organized to bring these tellers here as part of our local Arts Festival.

First there was Victoria's workshop which the majority of the Southern Storytellers attended. There was the Friday evening concert for adults that was again this year well patronised by folk who were entranced by both Shonaleigh and Victoria – they are very different in style but both so rich in culture, which they shared so eloquently. I knew nothing of the Buffalo Soldiers apart from the Bob Marley song but Victoria ensured I knew more by the end of the evening! And the drut'syla tradition of Shonaleigh truly amazed me – her stories are so interwoven and interconnected that links come up repeatedly throughout any tale, at which point she would say, "But that's another story..." and the audience would reply, "For another time." However, if someone from the audience wishes to hear *that* story Shonaleigh is duty-bound to tell it until it loops back to intersect with the story she was originally telling – an hour's telling could be extended for days!

A children's session in the public library on Saturday morning comprised more of adults keen to hear than of children but all there were treated to some wonderful stories. Then we took it on the road, travelling to Te Anau to share in a church service on the Sunday morning.

We managed to get to Te Anau School on Monday morning despite the heavy snow and power outages – storytellers are resilient people!



power outages – storytellers are resilient people! We went to Riversdale School in the afternoon on our way back to Invercargill.

Meet the Tellers Night was a less formal way to share with the tellers and there were some different people in the audience from the previous events so we are hoping that word of 'storytelling' will spread further in our community – despite all of Liz's efforts over many years there are still misconceptions about what storytelling is and isn't and who it is for and the value of it.

And the icing on our storytelling cake has been the fleeting visit of Diane Ferlatte on her way to be keynote speaker at the New South Wales Storytelling Conference. We had a wonderfully fun games night with song, story, laughter, banter and just maybe a little bit of cheating at cards before they all flew off to their next sharing-of-story-session.

Their being here has left us more passionate and determined to foster the growth of story in New Zealand, and ever so much richer of spirit. We have been blessed.

We hope to get them all back here again, sometime, somehow. But that's another story... for another time.

Happy telling, all!

Tania Faulkner-McKenzie
andrewtania@hotmail.com

Secretary

We need to consider how we should thank Tere Hide for all his years managing our web page. He handled it cheerfully without any recompense and I cannot recall for how many years but it was from the day we first opened a web page, I think.

Deadline for next issue is end of August.

We have three new members

Welcome to Heather Perriam.

Shonaleigh in the UK.

Victoria Burnett, USA

We have mislaid one member – Yolan 'John' Calermbo.

Does anyone know a new address for him?

And there is a message from a retiring member:

Hi, Elizabeth,

I have decided to resign from The New Zealand Guild of Storytellers. As I am getting older I do not have as many occasions now storytelling eg. children's parties, libraries and schools which I once frequented! With our tightening of budgets, the schools and libraries do storytelling by some member of their staff. I think it is a shame that storytellers are not used the same as they were – we are a talented bunch and are important in our community!! If I was younger I would do more advertising, but I feel that is up to the younger members now.

I wish you all the best and let storytelling continue for ever!

Regards and all the best for the future.

Marie Murdoch.

We will miss Marie on the list and she did give me permission to print this message. ED.

Treasurer

Our tax return has been completed and we do not owe anything.

Also our Incorporation has been brought up to date.

We have \$461.39 in the current account and \$4094.87 in the bonus save.

Web Site

It is so exciting to have our new web site and it has already brought us a new member enquiry.

Remember, though, that it takes the members to be involved to really make it a vibrant site.

Add your profile and its links.

Put your events on the events section.

Add stories, poems, ideas, thoughts.

This way it will be a living programme.

You have your own password so you are able to do these things directly.

I have found our web master very supportive when I can't manage things.

I do get lots of spam mail but it doesn't affect my private email address and I just delete them.

News from around the Regions

Southland

NZLA

Once again we have been able to bring two superb tellers to Southland and we told you about them in the last issue.

Now they have come and gone and we are enriched beyond expression.

Our president will tell you about it in more detail but it was so exciting to be able, for the first time, to have one teller visit Stewart Island where she shared her stories in the small school.

Report from Southern Storytellers

Since our last report Southern Storytellers has had two significant farewells. Near Christmas members gathered for the funeral of Hazel Harris, a loyal supporter who attended concerts and delighted us with tales of her days as a young high country wife after the War.

More recently was the death of Stan Hunt who had been a member for many years and for some time hosted the meetings in his rooms. Stan was the exemplar of a faithful member whose humour and quiet steadiness will long be remembered. With Stan over 80 and Hazel over 90 it is great to know that storytelling has no age barrier.

Once again (at the end of 2013) we held the annual children's event with the fun of a workshop day for over twenty lively Year 6,7 & 8 tellers. Later, at the sumptuous dinner and concert, their fine-tuned stories were shared.

We are grateful for the support of the Invercargill Licensing Trust for this long-standing event. Some of these children were able to tell again at our November concert.

Southern Storytellers continues to meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Over the winter we gathered in Tania's comfortable home where we also had our Christmas party.

We began this year with a shared meal in Nicol's new residence where tradition and mystery make a great venue for the tales that were told. This year, too, our visit to Willie Solomon's home finally took place. A jolly bus trip away through to Ardlussa near Balfour where Willie and Pauline made us so very welcome and again great stories were shared in a panoramic rural setting.

A concert in March was well attended with the Café style setting still proving popular.

Coming up will be a workshop with Victoria Burnett from California. This will be in May and also in May a repeat trip to the Riverton Environment Centre to share stories over soup and toasted loaves.

Several members have regular engagements at all manner of groups and association, so the delights of storytelling continue to be spread.

With all these lively events we hope to both enjoy and promote the Craft.

Nicol Macfarlane, Secretary

Dear Friends,

Most of you will remember the heady days of 1992 when Glistening Waters first festival opened its gates at Rathkeale and the golden words of storytellers from around the world fell into our ears.

For me, the memory of Jay O'Callaghan, singing his family song, which was the same song my family always sang and danced to at parties, and the story he told of his Uncle's return from the War, and then Nan Gregory's story, telling her story of the year her best friend was raped and the journey she began as a result will live in my heart and mind as my main influences in storytelling.

Like many storytellers in New Zealand I will always be grateful to Liz Miller and Joy Tutty for their vision and sheer hard work and to Janet Hayes who kept the dream alive after Joy resigned.

They put together committees, gained sponsors, organised bands of willing volunteers, sought venues and tellers from everywhere and persuaded them to come to New Zealand to tell at the kind of fees we could afford.

And you came, all of you over the years, to each of the biennial festivities until Janet reluctantly put Glistening Waters Storytelling Festival Inc into semi-retirement in 2008 because it was impossible to get together a committee to make a festival. A skeleton committee was kept on to keep up our registration.

In 2012, a small committee changed the rules of the Incorporated Society to enable us to hold small festivals which meant we could hold some events at Greytown Arts Festival.

These were received well and I was encouraged

to go on to do the Tuna events in the Kokomai Creative Festival last year. A small, hard-working committee of women made this happen.

Sadly, although there has been a lot of enthusiasm for the Tuna events and wishes that we could do them again this year, the AGM was attended only by the committee of four, one of whom had made only a year-long commitment to us.

So the decision to wind up the organisation of Glistening Waters was made early in March and the final paperwork is being attended to as per the rules of Glistening Waters Storytelling Festival Inc.

The remaining funds will be handed over to the New Zealand Guild of Storytellers to complete the process.

Glistening Waters ex-members may want to hold an event or two in the years to come, but it will be on an ad-hoc basis and not under the official name as Glistening Waters Storytelling Festival Inc.

The Facebook page we have will drop its 'Inc' but will stay there in cyberspace to post notices of storytelling-related events and to keep storytelling alive and well in the Wairarapa.

So, regretfully, this will be my last email to you as Chairperson. Many thanks go to everyone who made Glistening Waters the wonderful festival it was and to Sue Taylor for her emailing and all who did invisible tasks. It's been a great experience.

Regretfully,
Gaye Sutton

*When elephants battle, the ants perish.
(Cambodian)*

Shonaleigh Cumbers Comes to Christchurch!

Workshop: *Tale, Tongue, and Community*,
Saturday 31 May 1.00-4.30pm, Avon Loop
Community Cottage

Performance: *The Tower of Bagel*, Saturday 31
May 8.00pm, Heathcoate Valley School, 61 Bridle
Path Rd.

I first encountered Shonaleigh when she delivered the keynote address "The Way Forward" to the Society for Storytelling Gathering in Cumbria in 2004. As a listener, I went to the Gathering to be inspired and to explore new potential career pathways so here I am in 2014, an occasional storyteller who has had the great privilege of organising storytelling events for no ulterior motives whatsoever other than to bring more people to oral storytelling events.

Shonaleigh is a performer who enchants her audience, whether they are librarians on a training day, university academics, a gathering of storytellers, a class in school, avid listeners or bemused partners who have been taken out for a night of culture by their better halves. The first commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day in York in 2007 featured Shonaleigh performing "The Fool of the Warsaw Ghetto" to a packed Guildhall. As Shonaleigh reminds us, "Not all stories have a happy ending, but they should all begin with outrageous hope".

More recently, Shonaleigh has utilised the power of oral storytelling to enable communities to come together to create a new positive outlook and story. She will be offering this gift in Christchurch through the workshop "*Tale, Tongue, and Community*" on Saturday 31st May 1-4:30pm at the Avon Loop Community Cottage, 28 Hurley Street. \$20 including afternoon tea. By telling our own

story or the stories of our family we also tell the story of the community in which we live. Places hold the memories of the people that have inhabited them. The workshop will be flexible using a range of techniques from personal/family stories and anecdotes through to fairy or folktales to leave people with a story to tell in more ways than one!

After this engaging, creative workshop we will be opening the doors for listeners and the curious to be amazed and entertained by Shonaleigh's telling of "The Tower of Bagel" - an epic tale of terrible dreams, soaring hope, titanic despair and a crib made of pastry.

Rumour has it that Shonaleigh may also be found telling a few tales in a local cafe on Sunday 1 June

As Shonaleigh summarised the wise words of her mother, "Stories, schmories, just tell the buggers".

Anne Mortimer

Tales @ The Pallet Pavilion

When you plan for an outdoor event in Autumn, especially when it runs over three days, you cross your fingers and toes for good weather and assure yourselves (as you twitch nervously) that all will work out well somehow or other. So as we headed into the week of Tales @ The Pallet Pavilion Story Festival, we assured people that the "show will go on" regardless of weather. There were large umbrellas and big walls to shelter everybody if it happened to start to rain. They had previously had events perform in bad weather at the Gap Filler Pallet Pavilion, and it was unlikely to rain consistently anyway. A wet weather venue was not a viable option.

A little bit of rain is one thing but Cyclone Lusi predicted to arrive in time to join your story festivities is completely another! Cast your minds back to the weekend of 14-16 March and that was when Lusi decided to pay a visit to Aotearoa.

We watched the weather forecasts and rain radars with anticipation and opened on the sunny Friday night with a variety performance of stories told through Flamenco dance, Swamp Rock musical ballads, and a wide variety of tellers who enchanted the audience with tales from Spain, the UK and the Middle East. A highlight was a tourist from northern UK who asked if he could tell - his spontaneous, energetic and comical tale of Jack and Jill as you've never heard before delighted all! We very much appreciated the audience's messages that storytelling was new to them and they wanted more.

We awoke on Saturday to news of the cyclone's delay and decline, and so our workshops got off to a clear start. A steady stream of people joined to explore spontaneous story play, poetry writing, biographical storytelling, harnessing internal writing critics, and pacific story dancing. This was complemented by craft Kakapo-making with an Australian artist to highlight the plight and story of the Kakapo and create an ongoing story as they are placed around Christchurch in random acts of kindness to wander to new homes.

All these activities created a warm and wonderful buzz in the pavilion which turned into much laughter as our writer's panel of Gavin Bishop, Rachael King, Deborah Rogers, and Anneleise Hall engaged in a lively and humorous discussion. Their various perspectives and different opinions gave much food for thought. Local emerging writers read their work before we all had a hilarious time Morris Dancing followed by creating spontaneous musical stories with Random Acts of Music - street art using percussion instruments for a participatory musical performance. In perfect timing, the bad weather hit just as the musical instruments had been put away! The Open Mike evening ended up a small and dedicated group sitting around a table huddling under a giant umbrella!

As the rain poured down outside on Sunday, excited families streamed into the Peterborough Library just around the corner from the Pallet Pavilion. A friendly and flexible bunch of librarians welcomed our "refugee" festival with open arms and we only needed to cancel a couple of scheduled events.

Children and adults alike were enchanted by a variety of interactive storytelling that included dramatic performances, character parts, digital stories and even karaoke sing-a-longs! Everyone was blown away by the teenage talents of the School for Young Writers who read their works and then offered a workshop.

Delighted parents have told us that these talented young people inspired a number of primary school children to step deeper and with more confidence into their own writing after hearing the young writers and joining their workshop. The afternoon finished with dog tales and poems with Anneleise Hall sharing her new illustrated book, and a "Grimm" session, with local writer Renata Hopkins reading her award winning "The Cry Baby" - A Grimm tale for modern Aotearoa New Zealand - followed by a telling of The Elves and the Shoemaker.

We were very sad to wave good bye at the end of the day to the wonderful Hermione Rivison who left for life in Canada just a few days after the festival - we will miss her energy, talents and wisdom here at The Story Collective and throughout the Christchurch community.

Many thanks to all those who supported us: Christchurch City Creative Communities who helped us to pay the bills, Gap Filler for providing such a great space, the amazingly talented and generous artists who created such a great time for all, all those who came to join the fun, and all our friends and family who have encouraged and supported us to take on this idea!

With gratitude and warm wishes
Sharon, Anne, Philippa and Hermione

Otautahi Story Circle

The Story Collective supports a story circle gathering at 7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month at the Avon Loop Community Cottage, 28 Hurley Street, Christchurch. Story is explored in its many forms – written, oral, visual, physical movement, performed - in a friendly and co-creative learning space.

Enjoy listening, watching and learning with others as we try out our 'stories in progress' in a supportive environment, develop new skills, discover new concepts, and discuss and share ideas and experiences with others. Everyone is welcome – tellers, writers, artists, performers, listeners – anyone who loves stories, the curious. Refreshments provided. Koha appreciated to cover venue hire.

Enquiries to thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com or call Sharon ph (03)967-7888 mob 022-121-3648. The Story Collective also shares a brief email bulletin of local story related events. You can sign up to receive this by emailing

Sharon Moreham

Timaru

The Storyspinners Circle in Timaru is a small band at present.

We tell sing, or play music at a wide range of venues for audiences from 10 to 100. During May, Margaret Dockrill (aka as Merry Marg for her love of humorous tales) presented a one hour workshop on Storytelling at an Auckland Conference. This was most successful and she has been asked to present it again for an International Convention next year. As tellers we sometimes forget the pleasure others get from trying to tell a remembered children's story or in presenting a short event from their childhood. As

the author Ursula Le Guin said "There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories"

Margaret Dockrill

Please call in and visit our club. Contact Margaret 0272925270 or dockrill@xtra.co.nz

To learn and never be filled, is wisdom.
To teach and never be weary, is love.

Nelson

Barbara Rhodes

1992. The inaugural Glistening Waters Storytelling Festival lived up to its name indeed: it rained and rained and rained, stories were told by many voices, and it was a festival. We sang, we danced, we laughed and cried. So many different people were there from young dance or drama students to teachers and librarians (many of the latter); a Punch & Judy man with 40 years experience behind him; a Maori soldier on leave from camp; aspiring or active storytellers, and others who simply wanted the joy of hearing stories told by experts. Day visitors arrived in droves.

Everywhere there were the yellow-name-tagged organisers, whose faces changed from the Friday night look of rather flustered apprehension, to the mid-festival look of head-shaking incredulity that indeed it was succeeding, and ended with the Monday afternoon smiles of relaxed gratitude. Weaving through it all, Liz Miller, barefooted and tinkling, glistening with rain and stardust, indefatigable. Just two weeks after the death of her beloved little dog, she soldiered on, clambering on chairs in the dining-hall to make announcements, shepherding tellers to this or that venue, finding yet again the two aboriginal tellers who were off somewhere rolling a cigarette, or

deep in conversation with some wide-eyed, deferential festival-goer, and quite oblivious to the Necessity of Adherence to Time Tables!

What an introduction to the exhilarating, exhausting, emotionally draining world of storytelling where so many came from so far away to share with us. It was interesting to observe the different “stage manners”, the different styles of dress.

Some tellers wore everyday clothes, others clothing reflecting their cultural heritage. Picture Paul Middellijn, Rasta man with grey-speckled dreadlocks, bright loose Surinamese costume, his deep voice weaving Bob Marley lyrics into Anansi-man tales from out of Africa.

Picture David Campbell with long fading fair hair in a ponytail, amiably relating Scottish tales with his socks pulled well up to his kilt hem against the unseasonable damp chill of the Wairarapa.

Picture Norman Fisher and Victor Bond, wearing red loincloths and head bands, their dark aboriginal skin daubed with white lines, as they spoke in guttural, expletive-laden voices of life as an aboriginal in a white world. Their didgeridoo could scream like a human or thrum deep and animalistic rhythms.

Then see Nell Bell, a plump, grandmotherly woman also from Australia, whose story of the origin of “Waltzing Matilda” reduced me to tears, despite the predictability of the ending. Her years of experience and compassion shone from her.

That first Glistening Waters Festival provided affirmation and confirmation that there is a “way of the storyteller”; that storytellers are real people; that we can grow old and still be storytellers; and above all that story does work, it is a real Art.

California ---

Our Californian member, Diane Ferlatte, popped in for a three day visit to your editor in Invercargill on her way to Sydney, Australia.

There she will be a major contributor to the Sydney International Storytelling Conference, June 6-8 called Connecting with Stories. Diane will conduct two pre-conference masterclasses on the Friday.

Try it! You Might Like it. and What a Character!

She has been trying them out while she was in my home and I tell you the people will be so enriched.

She offers a keynote address on the Saturday called Connecting with Stories.

She will also be a concert performer along with Victoria Burnett (now one of our members) who has been here in Invercargill for two weeks sharing with us.

I also note that our member Kaitrin McMullen from Dunedin is offering a workshop called, Stringing it Together – string games for storytellers.

And Gaye Sutton from Wairarapa is offering Resouling/Restorying – Storytelling for Healing and Connection.

So you can see that our members are well represented and I hope they will send us a report for our next issue. Four Guild members participating in that conference.

I feel compelled to share my latest “adventure” with our two dogs (Harpo – about 10 years old, mutt, border-collie mix and Roscoe – about 3 years old, terrier mix)

I took Harpo to the vet early in the morning for a checkup and decided to bring Roscoe in the car thinking that he'd be happier to tag along (he hates being separated from Harpo and from me).

When I got to the vet Roscoe got out of the car (didn't have a leash on and I had to chase him around the parking lot while getting tangled in Harpo's leash) - anyway – got him back in the car and went in with Harpo (while Roscoe was howling in the car...so much for easier...). Harpo barked and howled so much they brought me in pretty quickly which was great. We were in there for about 10-15 minutes, the vet had just come into the exam room when we heard a huge commotion in the waiting room. Suddenly the door to our exam room opens and in runs Roscoe!

He jumped out of the car window (I had it open about half way) and apparently sat (for about 20 minutes) just outside the vet's door. Finally some guy came in and said to the receptionist “there's a cute little dog sitting just outside the door – he was there when I came in and he's still there now” - needless to say that when Roscoe came into the exam room all hell broke loose – both of them were howling, barking, running around – it was insane and HILARIOUS. Thank goodness Roscoe is very determined, smart and single minded. He was after Harpo and me – he had no interest in running away (or into the very busy road) and was SO relieved to find us.....

Everyone in the vet's office was in hysterics. It was a very funny start to my day.

I love the ways in which our dogs enrich our lives....

Debbie Block, USA

All fine here . I'm creating 3-4 stories per day plus making up episodes in long running sagas for my granddaughters . Plenty of practice!

Big complaints if I'm too tired to produce a story – or talk nonsense because of falling asleep while telling (Winnie the Pooh going to Towson University was a recent example)

Spring is here at last. We had snow once more last weekend, outrage ! But the daffodils and crocuses have come through at last. Whew! Hope autumn isn't too outrageous for you all.

Antoinette Everts – a letter from America

'Anansi was a spider, when the world was young, and all the stories were being told for the first time...'

It is always with a jolt of pleasure and recognition that I read words such as these in a novel; they jump off the page and insinuate themselves into my mind, and I feel my inner self nodding and smiling. So it was when I read Neil Gaiman's Anansi Boys for the first time, and again the other day when, after several years, I picked the book up and read it again. Just as good the second time around!

'In the beginning, after all, were the words, and they came with a tune. That was how the world was made, how the void was divided, how the lands and the stars and the dreams and the little gods and the animals; how all of them came into the world. They were sung.'

'Olden days, all the animals wanted to have stories named after them, back in the days when they were still singing the sky and the rainbow and the ocean in those days when animals were people as well as animals.'

' Everything that ran or crawled or swung or

snaked got to walk through those stories and different tribes of people would venerate different creatures'.

Gaiman weaves his story of Anansi, and his two boys, with light, deft skill. If you are a storyteller, even if you are not into fantasy, give the book chance – I hope it will grow on you. Then go on and read more by Gaiman, and remember, as he says in *Anansi Boys*: 'Stories are webs, interconnected strand to strand, and you follow each story to the centre, because the centre is the end.'

We are all strands in the Story, are we not?

Barbara Rhodes

Remember Sadako Sasaki?

Her story is so inspiring and sometimes I tell it. Her battle with the dread bomb sickness after the Hiroshima disaster continues to bring inspiration to people way beyond her own land of Japan. Her words:

"I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world." They referred to the 1,000 cranes she was folding for her recovery. On the statue raised to her:
This is our cry
This is our prayer
Peace in the world.

Using Puppets To Tell A Story

By Bertha Tobias

Puppets and puppetry are as old as human beings themselves. They are believed to be older than the human theatre.

In ancient civilisations puppets were used in religious rituals to instruct, entertain and often to terrify the audiences. These were not puppet shows as we know them today but the basic principles are the same.

Well, what exactly is a puppet? Any object brought to life in an animated and imaginative way by the person who operates it can be a puppet. A famous Russian puppeteer, Sergei Obraztsov, director of the Moscow State Theatre during the 20th century, demonstrated the ultimate and most beautiful puppetry simply using balls.

This is something that I have adopted and found to be practical and effective in both classroom teaching and in the theatre.

You can use tennis balls, ping-pong balls, large plastic and coloured balls, sponge balls and any other kind of ball that you can lay your hands on. Especially if you are using a puppet for the first time and want to enhance your story, use a ball. Simplicity is the secret.

I have made up a little story to tell with your ball puppet and you are welcome to try it as a springboard to telling with a puppet. Begin the story with no prop in your hand at all. You are going to build up the excitement and interest of the audience little by little.

Little Ball

Long, long ago, not in your time or in my time, there lived a kind and caring couple. They had a beautiful stone cottage with a red painted front door. Leading up to the door was a gravel path and on either side of this path grew a profusion of flowers of all colours. At the back of the cottage they grew their vegetables. (Invite the children to suggest what they might have grown.)

The little woman and the little man were so happy. They had a good life and a comfortable one too filled with love, but they longed to share this love and abundance with a child.

Years went by and no child came to their home. They had begun to reconcile themselves to the fact that they would have no children when a strange thing happened. (Bring out your ball) A little ball bounced through the door one afternoon and straight into the arms of the little woman.

(Cuddle the ball)

The couple were delighted. They carefully washed the little ball and made a bed for it in a basket lined with soft cloths. (Wipe the ball with a facecloth and place it in the basket covered with a tiny blanket or quilt.)

Every day they played with the little ball and talked to it. (Gently throw it up and down.) And every night when they put it to bed they kissed it and told it bedtime stories. (Bend and kiss the ball.)

All three of them lived contentedly together but little ball wished and wished that she could be a real child. She could see that her parents were growing older and if she were a real child she could help them in the garden. She would cut and carry wood for the fire. She could cook for them. How could she become a real child?

Then one evening after she had been put to bed, she heard the little old man telling the little old woman about a wise woman who had moved into the empty cottage in the woods.

“Folks say that she has many potions for healing and is a gentle, kind soul.”

Little ball became so excited. She couldn't wait for the old couple to go to sleep that night. As soon as all was quiet in the little stone cottage, little ball quietly rolled across the kitchen floor and out through the cat flap into the garden. She rolled and rolled along the path and as soon as she was far enough from the cottage she began to bounce. She bounced and bounced into the woods and up to the front door of the wise woman's cottage.

She bounced against the door. (Bump the ball as if knocking.)

Then she settled down on the mat to wait. “Who's there?” called the wise woman, but there

was no reply. She looked through the window and saw the round shape on her doorstep.

“Oh, it's you little hedgehog. Are you cold and hungry?”

She opened the door and was surprised to see a lovely shiny ball lying on the mat.

“Hello little ball and what do you want?” She was indeed a wise woman for she held the little ball to her ear and listened to the inner voice of the little ball. (Hold up ball and listen.)

“Ah, I see. You want to become a real child.”
“I wish I could help you, little ball, but such magic is beyond me.”

Little ball moved sadly in her hands as the wise woman looked down at it.

“Wait, I have an idea. Tomorrow I will be telling stories to children in the library and I know that children can often do the most magical things. Why don't I take you with me.” And she did.

(This is where I talk to the children about what could possibly be done to make little ball into a real child.

I produce a bag which contains several different coloured wool wigs, a puppet body or different squares of fabric, eyes, noses, mouths and what ever else I think they might suggest using.

Little ball of course can't speak until they have given her a mouth but I can hear what she says when I hold her to my ear. Gradually she takes on the form of a little person.)

She is so excited and can't wait to go home and show the little old man and the little old woman who will be delighted to have a real child.

1. Practise in front of a mirror to make sure that your puppet is upright. Many people lean their arms to one side and this has the effect of making the puppet look as if it is going to fall over.

2. Observe the way people or animals move. This is what you want to achieve with your puppet's movements. Eg. A snake will not walk like a human and a sly wolf will not skip like a rabbit.

3. Try not to jiggle your puppet all the time as you speak. Few and subtle movements are more effective.

4. Limit the use of the puppet so as not to interrupt the telling of the tale.

5. If a child rushes up to see the puppet, quietly put it away and continue with the story.

Remember you are using the puppet to enhance the story and not to perform a puppet show.

Cut a hole to fit your forefinger and middle finger. If you are using a large plastic ball you will find that it collapses when the air escapes. Fill the ball with polyester stuffing, the type used for soft toys.

If you would like to have a neck, insert a small cardboard tube and glue in place.

To attach features, use felt and double sided tape. For the body use a large square of fabric or a regular puppet body.

Healing Laughter for the Soul

I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked. As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5 year old shout from the back seat,

"Mummy! That lady isn't wearing a seat belt!"

The Following Is Taken From A Nepalese Good Luck Mantra. You'll Find It To Be Worth Reading And Worth Sharing:

Instructions For Life

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.

2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.

3. Follow the three R's:

Respect for self.

Respect for others and

Responsibility for all your actions.

4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.

5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.

6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.

7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

8. Spend some time alone every day.

9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.

10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.

11. Live a good, honourable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.

12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life. Do all you can to create a tranquil, harmonious home.

13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.

14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.

15. Be gentle with the earth.

16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.

17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.

18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.

A weapon is an enemy – even to its owners.

Turkish proverb

Tune: What a friend we have in Jesus

We know how much you love your cell phones
You take them with you everywhere,
But if they ring when we are telling
You'll be standing in the need of prayer.

Sound Of Music

Born Julia Elizabeth Wells on October 1st 1935, in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey to commemorate her 69th birthday, actress/vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance in Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP.

One of the musical numbers she performed was "Favourite Things" from the legendary movie "Sound of Music".

Here are the lyrics she used:

Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts and hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixadent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.

When the pipes leak,
When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Back pains, confused brains, and no fear of sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favourite things.

When the joints ache,
When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

(Ms. Andrews received a standing ovation from the crowd that lasted over four minutes and repeated encores.)

An old favourite:

If I Had My Life to Live over.

I'd dare to make more mistakes next time. * I'd relax.*
I would limber up.* I would be sillier than I have been this trip.*
I would take fewer things seriously.* I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers.*
I would eat more ice cream and less beans.* I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but fewer imaginary ones.* You see, I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day.* Oh, I've had my moments.* If I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them.* In fact, I'd try to have nothing else.*
Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day.*

I've been one of those persons who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat and a parachute.* If I could do it again, I would travel lighter than I have.* If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the autumn.* I would go to more dances.* I would ride more merry-go-rounds.*

I would pick more daisies.

By Nadine Stair Elizabeth Lucas

Storytelling Groups/contacts

Regional Contacts

The person nearest to you should be happy to talk to you or help you arrange an occasion or start a group or just talk storytelling! If there is no one in your area perhaps YOU would be the regional contact. Let us know.

Auckland	7.30pm 1st Thursday of month	Margaret Blay 09 630 6774	40 Croyden Street, Mount Eden, 1024 margaretblay@gmail.com
Thames	7.30pm 1st Wed of month	Jackie Black 07 868 1181	29 Station Road, Puriri, RD1 Thames
Tauranga	Last Thurs of month	Penny Guy	penny.guy@rely.usrful.com.nz
Central Hawkes Bay	Phone for details	Mary Kippenberger 06 856 8367	212 Argyll Road, RD1 Otane marykipp@hotmail.com
Wairarapa	Email for details gaye@storyweaver.co.nz	Gaye Sutton	Gaye Sutton, Te Pukeko, Chester Road, Rd1
Manawatu	Phone for details	Ken Benn 06 359 5024	3 Hardie Street, Palmerston North, kenbenn@paradise.net.nz
Wellington	7.30pm 1st Tuesday of month	Tony Hopkins 04 381 3307 txt 027 737 3185	PO Box 10-868, Wellington wellingtonstorytellerscave@gmail.com
Blenheim	7pm, 2nd Thursday monthly	Katrina Oliver 03 577 7787	katrinao@xtra.co.nz
Canterbury	7.30pm third Wed of the month The Avon Loop Com. College 28 Hurley Street, Christchurch	Sharon Moreham Ph 03 967 7888 Mob 022 121 3648	thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com
Timaru	3.30pm last Tuesday monthly in Timaru Library	Margaret Dockrill 027 292 5270	dockrill@xtra.co.nz
Dunedin	Phone for details	Kaitrin McMullan 03 467 9550	305 Malvern Street, Dunedin mail@kaitrin.co.nz
Invercargill	7.30pm 4th Tuesday of month	Heather Perriam 03 235 8263	hrp@xtra.co.nz
Balclutha	7pm 2nd Wednesday monthly	Vicki Woodrow, Clutha Library	raine@ihug.co.nz

Sender

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