



The Storyline

November 2013

Legends say that hummingbirds float free of time, carrying our hope for love, joy and celebration. The hummingbird's delicate grace reminds us that life is rich, beauty is everywhere, every personal connection has meaning and that laughter is life's sweetest creation

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



Editors Report

Last issue for 2013 and we are heading for the AGM.

I have just returned from my annual visit to the USA. We had 5 Guild members at Jonesborough this year. The International Storytelling Festival in that little Tennessee town is a powerful event. Although it has shrunk in size a little, due to the economic situation, it is still amazing. Being there and sharing story with thousands of like-minded people is an experience hard to describe.

Wherever you look people are involved in listening, telling, or getting to the next tent, or finding food on the run.

For three days and nights everything seems to revolve around those 5 enormous tents. All is subordinated to the simple purpose of hearing story.

But in the process there is a depth of sharing, of connection that is unfathomable. How can one measure such an experience?

The stories heard, the skills displayed, the friendships made, the indelible pictures printed forever in my mind, the richness in my heart that can never be taken away.

I was doubly blessed this year as I went on down to Shriveport in Louisiana with Diane Ferlatte and attended the Red River Revel for one week. Music, arts and story.

I will keep going each year and maybe more of us will make it in 2014

In the meantime, how do we make our



connection with each other more vibrant?

One suggestion is that we could all commit to making at least one contribution each year, more if possible, to our web-site and to The Storylines.

That would be a start.

The web-site address is listed in each issue.

Here it is: nzvoyageur@gmail.com

Subject of your email to Tere should be 'storytellers' website'

I find it exciting to read about what is happening in Christchurch.

Hawkes Bay has a vibrant programme with Mary and Peter.

KapitiCioast, too.

Where else?

Liz Miller - lizm@xtra.co.nz

Editor

A century ago, a young student at the great Oxford University in England was taking an important examination in religious studies. The examination question for this day was to write about the religious and spiritual meaning in the miracle of Christ turning the water into wine.

For two hours he sat in the crowded classroom while other students filled their pages with long essays, to show their understanding. The exam time was almost over and this one student had not written a single word. The proctor came over to him and insisted he commit something to the paper before turning it in.

The young Lord Byron simply picked up his hand and penned the following line:

“The water met its Master, and blushed.”

- *Christian*



President's Report

I never cease to be amazed by how quickly the end of the year rolls around! And the years never get any less busy, either...

This year has seen some wonderful storytelling here in the south, from the variety of our Southern Storyteller's concerts, the visits from the irrepresible Geraldine Buckley and the enormously talented Bill Harley (both from the USA), to the enthusiasm and laughter of the children involved in the recent 'Children as Storytellers' event.

This event was started many years ago by Liz Miller and continues annually, with the wonderful support of the Invercargill Licensing Trust. This year we had 20 Year 6, 7 and 8 children from 12 Invercargill and Southland schools attending a full day workshop, learning and refining their storytelling skills. They now have a couple of weeks to practice their stories before we have a lavish dinner followed by a concert, with the audience made up of the children's parents, teachers and other invited guests – the most supportive audience that they could wish for but

still quite a daunting prospect for many ten-to-thirteen year olds!

I'm looking forward to reading all the reports from the storytellers from all around New Zealand who attended the recent National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee – there was quite a contingent from Down Under this year and many of them have sent in their thoughts for this Storyline. I was lucky enough to go last year with Liz and would happily go every year if I could; it's such a marvelous experience!

I hope the rest of your year is full of stories and laughter. As I read on a website recently, "Let the stories be told... Let the stories be heard... Let the stories be told again."

Tania Faulkner-McKenzie

andrewtania@hotmail.com



Treasurer's Report

Balance at end of September is; Bonus Saver - \$4641.79, Current Account - \$770.75

The balance sheet will be audited for the AGM in the next few weeks.

There are 33 members and two live in USA. 6 are group memberships.

Secretary's Report

AGM, the notices have gone out with a nomination form.

We do hope as many as possible will join us on the phone for the meeting.

Do send in your nominations, too.

DEADLINE for next issue is end of January

I do apologise if I have missed anything from this issue but I have been having trouble transferring some things from email to word processor.

A half truth is a whole lie.

Website

This will be discussed again at the AGM but we have updated our current web-site and we feel that if we all contributed to it we would not need to change.

- We could ask Tere to put a more modern illustration at the opening.
- We could all contribute information about our events, reviews of books we find, stories and so on.
- Also many have not submitted their names and profiles for lists of those telling.

However much we spend, whatever changes we make, will be of no effect if we go on failing to contribute.



Here is a delightful bronze statue of Haley who wrote the book "Roots" about slaves.

Three bronze children are shown listening - and I joined them.

Antoinette

News from around the Regions

Southland

After small attendances over the winter months, we were able to hold the AGM in July, where Heather Perriam resumed the presidency and Nicol Macfarlane took over as secretary. We decided to have future AGM & elections in March.

As an exercise in creativity, we had a character building exercise, where each member selected a case or a bag, investigated the contents, and built up a profile of a possible owner. Who will forget the old man who watched through binoculars as his named flowers grew? The whisky-toting school inspector who eloped with the headmaster, or the man who poisoned his wife with the contents of a bogus first aid kit. (A blue eye-bath and Sloan's liniment were involved!) Then there was the romantic young woman whose leather satchel held clues to a torrid love-life, and a reluctant scholar whose school bag told of non-academic interests. We heard tales attached to Hannah's hat-box, Lady Ramsbottom's vanity case, young Audrey's clutch purse and the mysterious gentleman's bag for grooming (or was it for disguise?) Lastly we were told of a storytelling neighbor who enchanted children with fairies and tea-parties on the lawn. Surely some of these amazing characters will reappear in a fullblown story. Our monthly exercises, which Liz Miller initiated many years ago, are a great method to expand our imaginative horizons.

It has been great to welcome new members in recent months, and to have new committee members, too. We are now working to bring stories up to standard for a concert in November.

Planning is underway for the children's workshop and dinner, on 29th October, another long-standing tradition for the active southern group.

Nicol Macfarlane



Domino

Judy Collingwood Green 1933-2013



Timaru storyteller Judy Green was known as “Domino” and often when telling in the community she dressed in black with a black & white scarf. She was in her element writing stories and poems and telling her original writings along with favourite adaptations of stories she had read, folk stories or whimsical tales from the internet.

Let us share Judy's own story. Judy was born in Kenya and then went to England where she attended University. In 1958 she decided to start a new life in New Zealand. After studying Horticulture at Lincoln College, she met and married her husband. In the following years she was a biology teacher at Buller High School. The now growing family then moved to Waiau and finally Timaru. It was here that she became a storyteller, using her skills to entertain the wider community.

Our Judy was gifted with a beautiful voice. It was resonant, well enunciated and rich in timbre. It made the listeners hang on her every word. After Judy's husband Les Green was admitted to Timaru's Talbot Park Hospital Judy began a regular weekly session for the hospital residents. It was her gift to her community – to the sick, to the aged and to all community groups whether they be Probus or church groups.

At her funeral service this gentle little original poem was read:

Dog and I went walking in Centennial Park.
Dog and I went stalking rabbits after dark.
Dog and decided it would be a lark
To give up chasing rabbits
For hippopotamus or shark.

Out came the picture book,
We both had a jolly good look

And decided then and there,
Hippopotamus was out.
We'd try our hand at bear.

“Well, young dog, what have you in mind?
Do we go for the polar kind?
Or the grizzly one who climbs up trees?
Nothing you fancy bigger than these?”

Dog sat down to have a think.
Then looked at me with a wink.
“Do you know what would be a lark?
A walk round the lake in Centennial Park”!

Submitted by The StoryspINNers Circle of Timaru.

The StoryspINNers Circle meets at the Timaru Library on the last Tuesday of the month at 3.30pm. Our little group regularly has a couple who tell their stories by singing. Janette and Reg are talented folk musicians and Reg begins by telling the origin of the folk song and its continued history. A new teller, Dawn, uses memories to make highly original stories, often with a charming “twist in the tail” A local historian and poet Neville writes and shares new poems and stories with the group and we are learning much more about our area's history from his presence.

We are just a small group, but the meetings are enjoyable and we are regularly called to tell in the wider community. Please come and join us if you are in Timaru.

Margaret Dockrill dockrill@xtra.co.nz

It's not what you gather, but
what you scatter that tells the
kind of live you've lived.

Story Circle - *a place of discovery, creativity, learning and friendship - everyone welcome!*

On the second Wednesday of every month there is an open gathering for all those who love or are curious about the power of story at 7.30pm at the Avon Loop Community Cottage, 28 Hurley Street, Christchurch. Come along and enjoy trying out stories on friendly ears, listening to stories, learning new skills, discussing and sharing ideas and experiences and meeting new friends. Everyone is welcome - tellers, writers, poets, artists, listeners... anyone who loves stories... the curious... Refreshments provided. Food to share welcome. Suggested Koha, gold coin to cover costs.

Christmas and Year End Celebration with fine food, fabulous friends, stories, poetry and more... 6.30pm Wednesday 4 December, Avon Loop Community Cottage, 28 Hurley Street, Christchurch

We are bringing our monthly story circle forward a week to celebrate Christmas and the Year End with a night of sharing food, friendship and connecting through story. We are delighted that special guest Clare Coburn, a fabulous storyteller, poet, writer and educator from Melbourne will be joining us with some wonderful stories and poems. Clare was the keynote speaker at the recent Singapore International Storytelling Festival. You are welcome to bring your favourite true and traditional stories, poetry, songs, images or anything else that depicts a story for you to share with others, or just bring your eyes and ears! Please bring some food to share if you can. We look forward to seeing you there.

Get involved in Tales @ The Pallet Pavilion

Tales @ The Pallet Pavilion is on again Friday evening 14 March to Sunday afternoon 16 March 2014. We're looking for awesome folk to offer their talents and share their passion for anything to do with story! Tales @ the Pallet Pavilion is a Story Festival for adults and children using multiple art forms that tell a story in some way - storytelling, writing, books, spoken word and poetry, creative movement and dance, music,

photography, video, visual arts and crafts. This experimental showcase for new, emerging and established local talent could include displays, performances (including interactive and participatory events) and workshops. It operates on an exchange or gift economy where donations are collected for each session. Would you like to be involved? Or just a bit curious? We'd love to hear from you! Drop us a line or give us a call to chat through your ideas. We're here to help. Email thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com or give Anne a call on 021-146-6968 or Hermione on (03) 313-7830. Please pass this invitation on to others who might be interested.

Circles begin again in February 2014 after the new year break.

Unique workshops with Clare Coburn, from Melbourne. Christchurch 1-3 December. We are almost at capacity!

Although these workshops are almost at capacity and likely to have a waiting list, we'd like to let you know that they are happening and to get in touch with us if you would like to go on the waiting list or would like to find out about any more that we offer in the future. We have had such an overwhelming response we think that we will bring Clare back - perhaps some of you would also like her to visit your area?

Cross the threshold: moments of insight and transformation. Sunday afternoon, 1 December 2013, Travis Wetlands Education Centre, Christchurch

In this storytelling workshop, you will hear a traditional story full of moments of challenge and change and work with the material. This engaging experiential workshop offers:

- experience in storytelling
- awareness of thresholds as places to encourage transformation in our personal, community and organisational lives
- creative ways to enhance threshold moments in stories

Suitable for new and seasoned storytellers as well as those working with transformation and change. Cost is \$25 per person.

Radical receptivity: the patient power of listening. A full two day workshop designed to stimulate, enliven and enrich our work and our lives. Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 December 2013, Travis Wetlands Education Centre, Christchurch

When faced by complex problems, crisis or difficulty, we often long to do something. Yet, the most important step is to listen deeply first. In this reflective and experiential workshop, you will:

- explore your innate capacity for deep listening with others
- hear wise stories from world traditions, from your own lives, and from the lives of others

- consider ways to offer your own deep listening to yourself, your friends and family, clients and co-workers

- investigate listening theory

Suitable for professional practitioners of listening as well as those interested in storytelling. It may also support those at risk from stress and burnout. Cost is \$135 per person. Find out more about Clare and her work at <http://fabled.com.au/>

Please email thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com with any questions or interest in booking for these or future workshops.

Circles begin again in February 2014 after the new year break.

The future belongs to those who believe in
the beauty of their dreams.

Wellington

The October line-up for our Café Programme was:

Emily Duizend is a storyteller based on the Kapiti coast who trained through the International School of Storytelling. She enjoys performing stories woven with rich imagery and sensory detail to enchant people of all ages. Her website is www.storyisland.net

Graham Ibell is a consulting astrologer with a

passion for music, poetry, telling stories and making naturally-leavened bread. Graham trained with the International School of Storytelling and lives on the Kapiti coast.

Todd Chaplin is a player and creator of Native American flutes. To find out more about Todd's work visit www.southerncrossflutes.com

Judith Jones

I thank God for the medium of story that enables us
to preserve our culture, pass on truths,
teach difficult lessons, appreciate diversity,
find humour in the hardships of life and nurture the
community of mankind.

Victoria Burnett

Wairarapa

NGA TAONGA TUKU IHO-TE TUNA. Tuna (Long Fin Eels), unique to New Zealand, are about 80 years old before they mate. They travel 6,000km along the Ruamahanga River, through Lake Onoke and out to the deep sea to spawn, and their eyes turn sea-blue for the journey. Months later, if all goes well, the young eels return to the Ruamahanga.

We invited adults and children to join us on a symbolic journey, by bus, to Lake Ferry to celebrate these ancient animals, mihi/greet the eelers as they arrived, and hear stories from internationally acclaimed performer Tanya Batt and Wairarapa tellers. After fish'n chips by the sea, the bus (with 53 seats) returned to town. A round-trip performance.

TUNA – THE RETURN OF THE EEL

Was on 26 October Saturday, 9am – 3pm

Plus optional fish'n chips/lunch at Lake Ferry Pub

A symbolic bus journey, eel-viewing at Papawai Marae, eel stories, poetry, mihi/greet the glass eels at Lake Onoke, and a visit to the Dirty Fingers Pottery Studio on return.

This round-trip performance is a collaboration with Rangitane, Ngati Kahungungu o Wairarapa, and the Glistening Waters Storytelling Festival, with Mike Kawana, Joe Potangaroa, Tanya Batt, Mick Ludden, Sam Ludden, Gaye Sutton, Ali Foster, Clare McLennan-Kissel and Madeleine Slavick.

STORIES FROM THE ISLAND

Was on 24 October Thursday 7:30pm

A solo performance by Tanya Batt, author and internationally acclaimed artist with a flair for the fantastic. A writer arrives to live on Waiheke Island and begins a manuscript. With the woman starting a new life, and her writing beginning another, this is a story within a story. Batt, with roots in northern Europe, is struck by the incongruity between the landscape she inhabits as she writes and her immediate surrounding environment of the island. The performance considers the traditions that migrants inherit, their experiences as new 'New Zealanders', and that lingering sense of otherness.

FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA...

Storytelling / Art Workshops with Youth

Were held on:

24 October Thursday, 10am-12 noon, for ages 4-6

25 October Friday, 10am-12noon, for ages 7-10

25 October Friday, 1-3pm, for ages 10-13

Consider the magic and mystery of that life-giving essential – water – through stories of waitapu. Hear the story of Tuna Roa, discover the origins of water, and explore our place in the flow from the river to the sea. Storyteller and arts educator Tanya Batt led these workshops on water, and the history and legends of tuna, the long-fin eel.

Participants also created artwork

Dear Friends,

This year we participated in KOKOMAI CREATIVE FESTIVAL with three events. One a series of workshops for children on 24/25th October and then the splendiferous event. Thanks to Trust House Community Foundation we were able to bring Tanya Batt, whom many of you will know as an imaginative, theatrical performer, to star in our events. Her story within a story included some Wairarapa history so it was a winner.

Gladstone Vineyard hosted us for the evening and we kept our prices to a minimum.

I always look forward to seeing Glistening Waters friends.

Gaye Sutton

Sheriff Bubba why did your cousin Billy Bob shoot you? "Well, a bunch of us wuzhavin' a good time drinking, when Billy Bob stood up with his shotgun and said, 'Hey, der ya fellows wanna go hunting?' Last thing I remember, I stood up and said, 'Sure, I'm game.'"

Contributions

LITTLE SUPERMAN GOES TO THE MOON

I threw Little Superman
I was angry
I was crying
I didn't want to talk to Mum
and didn't want Mum talking to me
so I stared out the window
the moon was shining
it smiled at me
no way I was smiling back

but then I did
Mum stroked my hair
she gave me Little Superman

at kindy I got angry
there was no moon so I couldn't smile not even for Lisa
all I did was watch the clouds float by
and thought about flying to the moon
I needed a moon rock
it would help me smile

athometime Mum brought Little Superman
he can go to the moon
he's got rockets

in the car Mum and I talked
will the moon give Little Superman a rock?
should I give the moon a present?
how long will it take Little Superman to go to the moon?
what will the moon rock look like?

and Mum
Little Superman doesn't go tonight 'cos he will sleep with me
he can go tomorrow when I'm at kindy
and the moon can have Spiderman

in the morning
after breakfast
before we got in the car
I got Little Superman ready for his trip
and Spiderman

don't worry Mum
Spiderman will like the moon
I told everyone at kindy
Little Superman 's gone to the moon
bffffssssssssss *
he'll land there
bring me back a moon rock

but Jake said he's only a toy
so I stared out the window
and saw Little Superman flying to the moon
I stood at the gate with my bag on all afternoon
afternoon tea went by
all the kids went home
and now the teachers tidy up

Mum will never come

and when she does she talks with Lisa
then we have to go shopping
then we have to -
Mum

we are going home
Little Superman must be there by now
and he is
just where I 'd left him
and beside him
is a smooth and shiny stone
* 'rocket blast-off & away': unvoiced, initially explosive, hard, extended

Nic Oram

A friend asked me "Can I have \$3,000 for a cup of coffee?" I told him
"Coffee's a dollar!" "Yeah, but I want to drink it in Brazil!"

Vacation

We turn left on Skilling Road
As we have for thirty-five years.
We drive around Bobby and Cora Skilling's house
Through an opening in a humble stone wall
To a summer cottage called Camp Content.
We're here! We're on vacation for a week!

We bustle into the kitchen.
The checkered cloth is draped over the glasses and
silverware.

Straw hats hung up on the wall.
The round kitchen table smiles, glad
To hold our groceries and Italian sandwiches,
We just bought from Amato's down the road.

Next, into the big room,
The bookcases are crammed with detective
stories.
Imagine all the crimes we'll help investigate this
week.

But, in fact, Hercule Poirot and company
Will have to solve those mysteries alone,
For we'll be busy . . . doing nothing.

I put on my bathing suit, run out back to the tall
pines,
Where Dorothea Reeves was married back in
1918.

Her father bought Camp Content.
Dorothea was straight as the pines
She was the best of New England.
She offered us a week's vacation for little rent long
years ago.

At the time we were making almost nothing
Our children loved it here.
Now it's just my wife and I.

The path! The path winds down
Through the deep woods.
It twists and turns and is full of splotches of light.
The pine needle path gives way to
A pale oak leaf path
And then to mud.
My children and I used to run all the way down
Now I hurry but I do not run.

It's about a quarter mile
To Little Sebago Lake
And I plunge in.

Returning from my swim
We take our Italian sandwiches out to the long,
screened porch.
Tonight we'll sit on the rocking chairs,
And watch the spiders spin up and down like circus
acrobats.

For now we sit
At the table on the porch.
Eating Italian sandwiches.
"Are they too bready?" "No just right!
Pickles, tomatoes, onions. They're just right."

Then we go next door
To visit Cora and Bobby Skillings
Of Skillings Road.
You don't need to be a detective
To know we're on vacation!

Jay O'Callahan

Information about the forthcoming visit of my dear friend Jess Smith and her lovely husband Dave. Jess is a well known Scottish Gypsy/Traveller author of several wonderful books, storyteller and singer. I thought the storytelling network here would like to know about her visit. We plan to hold a Gypsy Gathering/New Zealand welcome for them here in Auckland when they arrive and any storytellers are welcome. They hope to leave Scotland soon after the 3rd April 2014 and plan to be in New Zealand for about 2 weeks. Jess has her own website.

Many thanks...Christine Bowker Wilson

Ed. I looked up the website and what I find is that you can reach her by googling Scottish Storyteller Jess Smith. Her email is info@jesssmith.co.uk

BRINGWONDER THE STORYTELLER: A NIGHT IN IRAN

In February of this year we went to the NZ Opera at the Dell in St Heliers. It was my 66th birthday, and in search of new experience and another me I'd just shaved all the hair off my head.

It was a lovely summer's night, and as we awaited the opera with food, drink, and conversation, I got talking to a young Iranian couple, Sanam and Saed. Sanam immediately began to speak about the forthcoming Nourous, the Iranian New Year, which happens in March. How sad it is, she said, that Iran is perceived by some to be just another Middle Eastern country wanting bombs and power. How wonderful it would be, she exclaimed, to hold an Iranian Festival to celebrate Nourous. And Iran is such a literate country, the written heritage is huge! Just for example, the epic of Rostem!

As you can imagine, hearing a young Iranian woman with her heritage bubbling from her, I was soon sitting up wide awake.

We began discussing possibilities. We met later. She told me stories from the Letters of Kings, the great Persian story epics, collected by Feydosi, the great storyteller of Persia. I knew a bit about all that, but I know a whole lot more now.

We went to Rand Hazou, the newly-appointed Drama Lecturer at Massey Uni at Albany. Rand's been working at La Trobe University in Sydney, but is originally from Jordan, bringing an insightful understanding to culture groups and identity. He enthusiastically gave us his support.

The project happened to coincide with a big picture vision of mine, which is to present evenings celebrating song, dance and storytelling of all the various cultures we have on campus.

Rand's support meant that apart from his production expertise, we had access to the Theatre Lab, the new drama space at Massey Uni's campus at Albany, where I teach sometimes. The Theatre Lab can hold about 80. It's a flexible theatre space with lighting and sound and was perfect for us.

March was too soon. We finally performed it in July. We had to generate a programme including stories, song, music and dance. What stories were we going to tell? I looked at translations of the

Letter of Kings – it is immense! So we restricted ourselves to the story of Siavash and New Year, and the romantic epic of Rostem.

Then we sought out dancers, singers, musicians. Sometimes we thought we had a group of dancers, then we didn't. We almost found a musician to play classic Iranian music, then he vanished.

However, we found a singer, Azita, and she began the programme, singing a deep powerful primal song from Iran. Yes, spine-tingling. During the stories, she sang songs at highly charged moments, like at the wedding-night outside the lovers' bedroom, or at a feast.

Sanam opened the evening. Throughout, she told the history and culture, stunningly illustrated with ornate Persian images of medieval romance on the cyclorama.

I did the actual storytelling, but this was an organic production, with history & song weaving through the stories.

My soul wept by the way with gladness at the opportunity to speak such enchanting and poetic language as Persian stories are adorned by.

It was earthy too. Early on in the programme I am in the persona of Kavou Shah, in an evening of entertainment at his court. As him, I welcome the guests, the poets and singers, the wise and cultivated – including the audience amongst all these of course, and on the night it was a packed house, a throng. So I say, "O good people, I welcome you to our feast – O cooks of rare dishes, bring us now your feast!" At this, Sanam and another Iranian brought in tables bearing an amazing Iranian feast. The audience gasped!! "Come, good people, feast yourselves with food and conversation." They needed no second bidding! So lights came up, everyone feasted and talked, that was our interval.

It became an utterly magical evening. Iranians from the city came, students and teachers came, it was a beautiful night, still remarked on.

Through evenings like this, we also aspire to incite consciousness changing in respect of minority culture groups particularly, whose voices are occasionally shouted down by majority arrogance

and prejudice, or ignored – I refer you to the Dr Seuss movie, 'Horton Hears a Who'.

Ali Kram, a director from TV3's Nightline programme, was kind enough to feature the programme on his show, so we felt quite chuffed. The whole project left us with an intense feeling of fulfilment. Seeded from a conversation beneath the stars, magic had come.

As storytellers we are gifted as vehicles to transmit stories. May we simply do our best to passionately serve the Muse.

I send my heartfelt hugs, with good energy and good cheer, to all you wonderful storytellers out there who are doing fine and beautiful work,

woven lovingly for the sustenance of heart and soul. Derek Gordon aka Bringwonder.

September 2013.

This summer, on a walk with my friend Nan by the shore of Lake Harriet in Minnesota, she pointed out a tiny door, complete with a lion's head brass knocker, tucked at the base of an ash tree. For almost 20 years, children have known just what to do - open that fanciful door and leave a question. When they return, they always find an answer written on fine silver-lined paper from the mysterious 'Mr. Little Guy'. Whoever you are, Mr. Little Guy, thanks for making our world more magical.

This was from Connie Reagan-Blake

Antoinette Everts

The story below is one of the many I make up for my granddaughter:

Sure, story telling friends. This one was from last night:

The Visitors..

The old lady climbed up to the well and carefully let the bucket go down till it touched the water; she drew it up on its rope and tipped the lovely fresh water into her water jar. Now home to light the fire, make tea and have the scones ready before her visitors arrived..

As always the boy and girl arrived just as the scones came out of the oven. Even before they opened the door, the lovely scent surrounded them. They hugged their grandma and went to sit on their own little stools. Soon they were chattering away about their lives in the village and any new people or animals they'd seen.

But one day the grandmother took the scones out and there were no visitors. The scones grew cold and still the children weren't there. The grandmother grew worried. She put her shawl on and went out onto her path through the woods. No children in sight. Maybe they'd been held up? She walked all the way to the village. But her daughter said they had set out at the usual time. Her son-in-law offered to come with her to look for them.

They walked through the wood, calling for them. They looked at the places the children sometimes

went to, a good climbing tree, the raspberry patch, but no sign of them.

"There's one other place we could try," said the grandma. She showed the way to the cave. It was very dark in there, so the father asked her to wait outside. He went in. Soon it was totally dark. He called for them - and heard his daughter's voice. "Daddy! Daddy! This way!" he found them by sound and touch - and carried his son out into the daylight. His leg was dangling at a strange angle.

The grandmother told the boy to be strong, this was going to hurt. While sister and father held his body the grandmother pulled his leg with all her might. The boy screamed. But the leg was back in place. The grandmother picked some leaves, chewed them into a green mush and put it in the leg. She ripped off a few strips from her long skirt, and then bandaged up his leg, then tied his legs together.

The father carried the boy to the grandmother's cottage. She nursed him for a few weeks, then challenged him to try and walk on it. He hobbled, but he could!

How can we thank her? With a party? But the girl suggested working on her vegetable garden would be even better. So they did, for a whole day. Then grandmother made tea and scones with raspberry jam for all the visitors.

The end

Jonesborough Storytelling festival

Dear storytelling friends, how are you all ? I'm writing from Baltimore in Maryland in the USA , and am just back from the giant storytelling festival at Jonesborough Tennessee . It was 9 hours driving to get there but well worth it . And guess who were there too?! My beloved long-term guild friends Liz Miller, and Mary and Peter Kippenberger! So good to see them again. They had travelled a lot further to get there . In fact, Liz won the prize for longest journey to attend the Jonesborough storytelling festival.

A true festival. A feast of wonderful stories by amazing storytellers such as Diane Ferlatte who has often been to NZ with her stories. She held us spellbound with her personal stories, and rollicking with laughter over Brer Rabbit's exploits. Friday night we gathered in the dark in the park around the eerily lit pagoda for ghost stories! They included Milbre Burch's original version of the Bluebeard horror story.

At the Swapping Grounds I got to tell the story of

"The Russian Gossip" that I heard from Mona Williams in her mid nineties workshop.

What a lineup of storytellers: Syd Lieberman who has been to NZ , David Novak, Victoria Burnett , Anne Thomas in her wheelchair who refused to be daunted in her wish to see the African gorillas - and was voted best teller at that Slam session . She said that all limits are self - imposed. The Rev Robert Jones, who with his fabulous skills on the guitar illustrated the history of American music from spiritual through blues to hip hop. And Jackson Gillman who taught us his song: "Give us the peace of the mountains, Give us the patience of the tree, Give us the open arms of the heavens , Give us the passion of the seas."

Yes, beautiful little historic Jonesborough village again showcased some of the best storytellers and we went home rich with the memories of fabulous stories. Hope you get to tell and hear many more stories !

Antoinette , at Antoinette.everts5@gmail.com

On the back of 45 schools in three weeks Peter and I limped excitedly toward the airport and into stage one of the ticking of the bucket list, the attendance at Jonesborough Storytelling festival. My Mecca. A never ending, dateline crossing flight saw us singing in New Orleans, a blink saw us yeehaaing in Nashville and a Greyhound bus rode us all the way to Johnson City. Greyhound driver told us and our fellow travellers that we were not to use drugs, if we were brave enough to use the toilet put the lid down so the smell didn't permeate and if the baby seated near him cried they could blinking well move to the back of the bus!

We were pleased enough when the journey ended and there, waiting at our stop, was Megan Hicks, Jack Abgott and our soon to be new friends, Lynn and Bill. I had met American Storyteller Megan nine years earlier at the Perth Story festival. We spent a night laughing, drinking whiskey and wearing chickens on our head. It was obviously going to be a forever friendship. (Megan will be telling in New Zealand next winter if you are looking for a superb teller)

Jonesborough appeared twenty minutes later invisible in the darkness and waited to present herself the next morning. Megan had managed to find accommodation in the town itself, no mean feat and the day dawned how it meant to finish, hot and still. Water bottles packed we piled into the cars, Megan, Jack, Lynn, Bill, Norris and our friend Cathi. Off on our adventure.

Jonesborough is a small town, picture perfect with not a hair out of place. The inclusion of huge fairytale marquees fluttering with flags and welcome gave it the air of once upon a time, a long long time ago, in a kingdom far far away... a drifting back in time. Churches at every corner set us in the Bible belt and I did spare some time feeling uncomfortable at this southern towns probable past.

That observation aside we were here to hear stories from some of the finest tellers in the world. Cathi and Peter had decided on a contingency plan in case these packed tents didn't produce the goods. They didn't use their plan. They were captivated from the first word and that first word came from Rev Robert Jones and the word was

good, very good. I laughed and gasped and at the end, without expecting it, I cried. The story snuck up on me. And so it was. Teller after teller. Some hilarious, some just plain extraordinary. A feast. But it wasn't just the tellers that made the journey happy. It was the in-between bits. It was sitting waiting, entering in to conversations with the people around, it was finding a shady corner to rest awhile, for Peter to play his guitar, for strangers to gather around and start to sing, to see fellow New Zealanders in the crowds and to

share our amazement at being there. Liz Miller has led the way for so many years. She is a fixture there and brings back to New Zealand the finest of tellers. I know next year she brings English teller Shonaleigh. Book your flights to Invercargill now!

We're home now, New York finishing our Stateside experience. We met nothing but kindness on our way and I'm saving my pennies. Maybe one day I'll be once upon a timing it in Jonesborough again. All fingers and toes crossed.

Mary Kippenberger

NOBODY ASKED ME

Nobody asked me!

That old sod house, where ghosts used to roam
They bulldozed it down, that was somebody's home!

Nobody asked me!

All those blackberry bushes we feasted on
Sprayed and withered and died and gone
Nobody asked me.

Grassy shingle road where our ponies could feed
Now tar-sealed highway where cars and trucks speed
Our country school's closed, they've moved it away
They crushed a community's heart that day
Nobody asked me.

Those sun-burned summers of childhood
Where have they gone, where did they flee
Did we really want to be grownups?
Nobody ever asked me!

Neville Guthrie, Timaru member

A man goes to a barbershop and asks "How many ahead of me?" "Five." The man leaves. He comes back tomorrow, and asks, "How many ahead of me." "Four." The man leaves. He comes back the next day and asks, "How many ahead of me?"

"Six." The man leaves, and the barber says to another, "Follow that man. See where he goes!" The 2nd man comes back and says, "He goes to your house!"

A man whose axe was missing suspected his neighbour's son.

The boy walked like a thief, looked like a thief, and spoke like a thief.

But the man found his axe while digging in the valley,

and the next time he saw his neighbour's son, the boy walked, looked

and spoke like any other child.

- *Traditional German*

Mulla Nasrudin decided to start a flower garden. He prepared the soil and planted the seeds of many beautiful flowers. But when they came up, his garden was filled with not just his chosen flowers but also overrun by dandelions. He sought out advice from gardeners all over and tried every method known to get rid of them but to no avail.

Finally he walked all the way to the capital to speak to the royal gardener at the sheik's palace.

The wise old man had counselled many gardeners before and suggested a variety of remedies to expel the dandelions but Mulla had tried them all.

They sat together in silence for some time and finally the gardener looked at Nasrudin and said, "Well, then I suggest you learn to love them."

- *Sufi*

Some old men came to see Abba Poeman, and said to him: "Tell us, when we see brothers dozing during the sacred office, should we pinch them so they will stay awake?"

The old man said to them: "Actually, if I saw a brother sleeping, I would put his head on my knees and let him rest."

- *Desert Fathers*

Family

We all love a great story and, as Miriam McCaleb writes, storytelling creates much more for the family than just folklore. "Once upon a time".

Once upon a time there was a mother whose words wove webs of pure love over the heads of her children. Once there lived a little boy whose grandfather's tales taught him great things. And have you heard the one about the daddy who reads stories with such funny voices that his little girls giggle until they snort? All of these lucky characters have had their lives enriched by the power of story. Since the first humans developed language — long before we invented print, let alone 3D animation — we've been telling stories. Telling stories with children is an amazing way to strengthen relationships, teach lessons and entertain. It's totally eco-friendly, uses no batteries and doesn't need to cost any money whatsoever. You can do it pretty much any time, any place. Storytelling is an incredible tool, but how many of us consciously embrace it as a means of enriching, entertaining and educating our families? Amidst the busy-ness of life, work and family, adding "storyteller" to your already packed parental resumé might seem overwhelming. Even unnecessary. But think how storytelling can add to

the quality of your family's life, and how it is something you already do. Much of our social connection is about stories — you might not even notice you're doing it. But think about how you connect with those you trust: "Oh, what a rough night. I think she's teething, and when she woke up at 3am ..." That's the story of your night. And "I had the biggest argument with my husband..." is a story waiting to be told. Let's be honest, friends, what is gossip if it's not the tasty retelling of others' stories? See? You're already a storyteller. You've got the skill set. Now, to redirect our storytelling energies from gossip to growth.

Tales to teach

This is an idea worth pursuing. Pay attention to those whose stories you enjoy. How do they use pitch, gesture or pace? Do they use humour, silly voices, or ... dramatic pauses? How do you use those things? Would you, could you, call yourself a storyteller? It's worth a crack. Why? In part, because stories are an incredible tool for teaching. Jonathan Gottschall is an author and academic. His book, *The Storytelling Animal*

How Stories Make Us Human, argues that science backs up the long-held belief that story is the most powerful means of communicating a message. He reminds us that facts alone don't change minds, but stories can change our hearts, and this is where transformations occur. Think of the way that all major religions have always communicated their beliefs and behaviour. The lessons of our cultures are learned through story. Consider how legends and fables helped people to understand the world, or how to function in it. In New Zealand, we inherit tales from all over the world (I promote the lesson in *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* despite there being no wolves here). The New Zealand Guild of Storytellers acknowledges the value of our heritage in the Celtic world and Te Reo Maori, — both keen users of story. As well as the cultural and ethical lessons that stories provide, they can connect us with our personal histories. In *The Power of Personal Storytelling*, Jack Maguire says that sharing real-life stories brings “a greater intimacy with each other” and “a stronger sense of self”.

We learn our whakapapa (our genealogy, our place in our family's history) through use of story. I asked Nathan Mikaere-Wallis to expand on this idea. Nathan is a trustee for the Brainwave Trust, a former university lecturer and a member of Te Runakaki Otautahi. He says, “It's as though pre-European Maori had an inherent understanding of the role of repetition in building brain connections. Whakapapa are learned through repetition and ritual and this begins in utero.” In fact, Maori have a special tool for this purpose. The pumotomoto is placed on the pregnant mama's belly, and the story of the baby's whakapapa is chanted through it, like a glamorous ear trumpet of old.

Family ties

There is a real sense of belonging that comes from knowing where we come from, either through knowing our own whakapapa, or through the random stories that are told about families. With story, we honour our family's past as well as present. My Nanna Marks died when I was a baby, yet I feel I know her. I know her because my mother took the time to tell me stories about her. I know that she made pikelets shaped like animals. I know she had a killer veggie garden. I hope that when she was little, her adults told her about the family who'd gone before, just as I will tell my kids about the family now gone. I love to imagine our children connected to our ancestors not just by the strands of DNA that link backwards through time, but also

by the stories that join us. And you know what? It's not necessary to delve so deeply into the past to find stories of interest and meaning. Start with more recent stuff: tell your kids about your own childhood, although I still struggle to accept that the late '70s are officially “the olden days” in the eyes of my big girl. Exploring childhood photo albums is an excellent starting point. An editor I know has a delicious phrase for this, invented by her older son. He begs her to “tell me a story from your voice”, and I can't think of a purer expression of this appreciation for the connection with family. Don't worry if you can't think of anything particularly exciting, the tiniest details are fascinating. (“No internet! Wow!”) And if you struggle to remember, don't be afraid to make something up. My dad had me convinced that I was named after the Good Ship Miriam, on which he'd been a cabin boy. I heard those stories for years and never quite knew if they were true or not. It was part of their appeal. Even more recent than your own childhood are the stories of your own kids in their infancy. It will be a sure-fire success. Try telling your ancient three, four or five year old tales of their birth or early days. Most children love nothing more than to hear again and again the details about their noisy cries during their first bath or the funny wee face they would make upon awakening. They will eat this up.

Fantastic fables

If you can't rustle anything up from your own or your family's history, call on those stories that have been passed throughout generations to intrigue, spook and mystify. For example, Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and their pals. The 200th anniversary of the first book of Grimms' fairytales has just been celebrated, and the extra attention has reminded us just how wonderful — and how macabre — the original versions were. You're the best judge of how bland or spicy to make the retell, depending on the age, temperament and preferences of your children. The anniversary was celebrated here with a competition to create a New Zealand fairytale. The winner of that competition (and you have to Google the story — it's wonderful!) is Renata Hopkins, a mother of two children, who lives in Christchurch.

She's also a professional at telling stories: years of writing scripts for Shortland Street confirms it. I asked Renata about life at the intersection of mother and storyteller. She says, “If I had a dollar for every time I've heard the words, ‘Tell me a story’

I'd be rich! I think all the stories I've made up for my daughter were there as background material when I came to write a fairytale, so I was grateful for all the schooling I've gained from her (sometimes incessant) requests. Now when she tells me a story of her own, she often opens with that magical story doorway, 'Once upon a time...'

Magnificent adults and children teaching each other with story. And how worthwhile it is to embrace made-up stories, whether a one-off tale, or an ongoing saga, like the Willie Weetbix stories.

The stories that my daughter and I make up these days are about a little girl and her family: characters remarkably like our own family (but with infinitely more patient parents!). Sometimes they are pure entertainment, and other times a launching pad for discussing dramas or hiccups of the day and re-imagining possible outcomes. The stories have helped us to work through life's biggies: birth, death, disasters and relocation. But it's not always quakes or death. I am often surprised by how simple the story can be. Some of my big girl's favourites have featured plot lines such as missing the school bus, the kids having to cook dinner or the neighbour's cat going missing. All you really need is a beginning, a middle and an end. Often, an introduction, a problem and resolution. Kids will like it best if there is a child responsible for the solution to the crisis. So don't be afraid to give it a whirl.

Once upon a time there was a geeky girl named Miriam. She grew into a teacher, a wife and a writer. But, alas! Her heart echoed... until she bore two beautiful daughters, then things were luscious, rowdy and blissful. Learn more of her grateful ever-after at www.baby.geek.nz.

Tell me a story from your voice.

Fun ways to warm up your storytelling muscles and get children involved: Check out books on tape or download treasures to keep you entertained and inspired while driving, working out or chopping vegies. One to get you started: "The Moth", is a storytelling podcast that is often fantastic. It's for grown-ups, but it's kid-friendly. Podcasts are many and various, just check out iTunes. If you're waiting in the car, in a queue or elsewhere, put down that smart phone and instead play a game of "I wonder..." Ask each other questions about the folks you see: I wonder

where she's going? Where has she been? What is her name? It can be fun to invent stories and scenarios about random passers-by. Try "Word at a Time Story". The title is kinda self-explanatory — people take turns at adding one word. There may be a phase when your kids are around age seven where their word is always "poo", "bum" or "fart" and this can kind of wreck it, but in the years before and after the toilet humour phase, this is a simple, fun game.

Useful props

Pull out a few props from your storytelling treasure trove. Of course, there are books. Be mindful of the myriad of ways to use children's books. It can be helpful to watch people whose speciality is storytelling, for example at story time in the library, or ask to gate-crash mat time at kindergarten. There is a huge range of styles for children of various ages — from babies' board books to chapter books. Don't fret if a young baby or active toddler doesn't want to sit through a book from start to finish. It's still valuable to offer them the experience. Toddlers might get a lot from lift-the-flap books. Babies benefit from having a cuddle and a chomp on a book. It all creates positive associations with literature. Be willing to make up your own story, or to sing a song inspired by the pictures (Oh, Old MacDonald, is there anything you can't do?). Remember, there really are no rules! Soft toys, dolls and puppets are all excellent helpers in telling stories — I keep a little knitted rooster finger puppet in my purse and he's abated many a near meltdown in the line at the supermarket. The kids like him too. Draw pictures or doodle as you tell a story. Maybe you'll wind up illustrating your tale, maybe you'll just keep your hands busy.

Miriam McCaleb



Gathered from the Maharaji

every day
every moment
celebrate this day
celebrate this life earnest.

"empty-handed you came
and empty-handed you will go."
take something with you
not in your head
but in your heart
be fulfilled

"empty-handed you came
but
empty-handed you don't have to go."

fear or freedom
choose freedom
choose freedom.

every day
in your life
let this magic unfold.

self-knowledge is
the true living art.
to enjoy each breath
one at a time
to understand
to be able to go within
this is the true art
the art of living.

you need daily witnessing of this heart
of this joy
of this heaven that lies within
that is the most powerful affirmation there is
be conscious
nothing is a better affirmation than that.

learn the art of forgetting
forget all those trivial things that don't matter

learn the art of remembering
remember every day what you have been given.
don't be duped by all that is happening around
you.

one breath
and another
and another
and another
it's the most important thing in your existence.

swing
swing in the swing
of this breath
become a child once again

you breathe, you're conscious
you have the capacity to exist
you have the capacity to know
you have the capacity to celebrate
that is your biggest forte.

in suffering
we read books
written by wonderful people
and what do they say?
what you lack now
you have
and had
turn within

when your heart dances
and
you don't know why
you are fulfilled.

With warm wishes,
Prabhat

Ros Miller

A Grandma is at the Florida coast with her little Grandson. The grandson is playing on the beach when a big wave comes and washes the kid out to sea. The lifeguards swim out, bring him back to shore, the paramedics work on him for a long time, pumping the water out, reviving him. They turn to the Grandma, and say "we saved your grandson." The Grandma says "He had a hat! Where is it?"

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 last Thurs 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	Claire Cooper Tauranga Library 07 577 7177	Tauranga Library, Claire.cooper@tauranga.govt.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		PO Box 10-868, Wellington Storytellers.cafe@buzz.net.nz
Blenheim	7pm, 2nd Thursday monthly	Katrina Oliver 03 577 7787	katrinao@xtra.co.nz
Canterbury	2 monthly	Sharon Moreham 022 121 3648	sharon@moreham.com
Timaru	3.30pm last Tuesday monthly in Timaru Library	Lorna McMaster 03 686 6204	Margaret Dockrill 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 day of month In public library	Tania Faulkner-McKenzie 03 217 2808	Chelmsford Street, Invercargill andrewtania@hotmail.com
Balclutha	7pm 2nd Wednesday monthly	Vicki Woodrow, Clutha Library	raine@ihug.co.nz

If there are any changes, please let me know.