

The Storyline

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



SEPTEMBER 2015

How to Become Wise

Friend: "Nasrudin, how does one become wise?"

Nasrudin: "Listen attentively to wise people when they speak. And when someone is listening to you, listen attentively to what you are saying!"



Editorial

Greetings!

Since last issue we have been once again telling stories in all the schools in Invercargill which accept the programme. Sadly Tania can only come in afternoons and even then she sometimes misses.

However, it is such a gift and to come in to a school and have the children all know exactly what I am there to do is soul warming.

Not only are they fully aware but they are excited. They know there will be two little dogs, they know how we set up the room, and they come in so eagerly.

The two little dogs have become quite a feature as usually questions are asked and I can do some education in the matter of responsible dog relationships. When this happens the child who is brave enough to thank the tellers gets to demonstrate how to pat a dog.

This year I have been telling two stories for which I asked permission as they belong to the tellers I heard telling them.

Bil Lepp told his King of Little Things at Jonesborough last year. I bought the book and then emailed to ask whether I could tell it here. He agreed, but said he would love to come himself to tell it. He is on our list of tellers we want to bring.

Those who hear the story really get involved and it has had some exceptional responses.

At one school the teacher came to me after the session to tell me that the two biggest boys in the group had been tormenting the smallest boy in the lunch hour.

I walk in and the first story I tell is about little things and their power. She said she had watched their faces and then, as they went out, she leaned forward and quietly said, "Did you hear that story?" They did.

Then at another school the teacher is going to buy the book as she said that their school motto happens to be "Do the little things well."

Then the other tale I have been telling is Dan Keding's tale, The Tear.

So powerful and every time I have finished a



session with that tale the group is totally wrapped in the process.

Today, at question time, a boy asked me a question that had not been asked before.

The story tells of a dragon, the last of his kind. He shares his stories with a boy who offers his music in return.

At one point in the tale the dragon tells his own tale. A story of loneliness and fear.

This boy asked me what was the dragon's tale, please.

I had to say it would be another story for another time.

But questions like these let me know that these listeners are truly involved in the story.

There is another tale I want to tell you about the wonder of this programme that the Southland Committee of the Literacy Association supports and the Invercargill Licensing Trust funds.

Every year Donovan Primary School has a school wide competition. Every child in the school chooses a tale to re-tell. They have me choose a picture book that I will re-tell to every syndicate. Then each teacher reads that book to their class. When I come one teacher in the syndicate has a paper copy of the text and as I tell the teacher marks every deviation.

We talk about the fact that you don't have to learn the tale word for word. You need to know the story and then share it with confidence.

Later each class chooses their top re-teller.

Then the three top tellers for each syndicate tells before a judge and the entire school as well as teachers and family. It is a big school.

This year Tania was the judge and I came to listen. It was a wonderful experience and those children

were amazing.

Their principal, Peter Hopwood, remarked to us as we left that this was a powerful event and they see it as very important. Much more relevant than speech making competitions.

All of this gives me a great warmth as I believe that our children will value story and the telling of stories long after my shoes are lying empty.

Liz Miller

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President's Report

September 2015

Term 3 is rapidly drawing to a close, and for that I breathe a sigh of relief: it has been a long, wet winter, with many coughs, colds and tummy bugs knocking us around. Bring on spring! Term 3 is also a busy term with the storytelling around Invercargill schools – we love doing it but it does add extra time pressures.

At the end of most of our storytelling sessions there are a few minutes when children can ask us questions, but my favourite one is, "Why do you tell stories?" Our answers range from how storytelling makes us feel, how we see it makes them feel, how it teaches all of us many essential life skills, how it builds community... It is powerful to see the message of the importance of story in all our lives sink in, not just to the children but to their teachers with them, as well.

I was lucky enough to be asked to judge at a local school's Re-tell Festival. This is an event they have been doing for quite some years now, and the principal commented how they believed being able to deliver a story well was a much more important and useful skill than being able to deliver a prepared speech well. It was truly a privilege to listen to those children – three junior primary, three middle primary and three senior primary. They were all so very well prepared and confident, even the first teller on stage – a maybe-six-year-old boy, retelling 'The Three Billy-Goats Gruff'. But it was a middle primary girl's retelling



of Hans Christian Anderson's 'The Little Match-Girl' that really stole the show. She touched our hearts and brought tears to our eyes. What an inspiration it was to be there – and what an awfully difficult thing to judge!

Liz is off very soon on her annual pilgrimage to the Jonesborough Storytelling Festival. It is such a wonderful event, to be immersed in story for days on end. Whilst there she will be looking out for another talented teller to bring to Invercargill for the 2016 Art's Festival. We have already chosen one teller, the amazing Antonio Rocha, who was here a few years back and entranced us all with his blend of story and mime – a true artist who we are delighted is able to return here to the south. There will be no shortage of talented tellers to choose from and who would be keen to come to New Zealand – choosing just one is the hard part!

Here's hoping the winter hasn't been too hard on you, and that spring has sprung in your neck of the woods. Bring on the sunshine!

Happy telling, all.

Tania Faulkner-McKenzie

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Mullah Stories

The Loan Request

Nasrudin struck up a conversation with a stranger.

At one point, he asked, "So how's business?"

"Great," the other replied.

"Then can I borrow ten dollars?"

"No. I don't know you well enough to lend you money,"

"That's strange," replied Nasrudin. "Where I used to live, people wouldn't lend me money because they knew me; and now that I've moved here, people won't lend me money because they don't know me!"

The Moving Friend

"Nasrudin," a friend said one day, "I'm moving to another village. Can I have your ring? That way, I will remember you every time I look at it?"

"Well," replied Nasrudin, "you might lose the ring and then forget about me. How about I don't give you a ring in the first place—that way, every time that you look at your finger and don't see a ring, you'll definitely remember me."

Mad at the Fakir

A Fakir claimed that he could teach any illiterate person to read through an "instant technique."

"OK," Nasrudin said. "Teach me."

The Fakir then touched Nasrudin's head and said, "Now go read something."

Nasrudin left, and returned to the village square an hour later with an angry look on his face.

"What happened?" asked the villagers. "Can you read now?"

"Indeed I can," replied Nasrudin, "but that's not why I came back. Now where is that scoundrel Fakir?"

"Mulla," the people said, "he taught you to read in no more than a minute. So what makes you think he's a scoundrel?"

"Well," Nasrudin explained, "I was just reading a book that asserted, 'All Fakirs are frauds.'"

Nasrudin's Delicacy

Nasrudin and two other travellers stopped to eat the lunches each of them had packed for their journey.

One of the travellers bragged, "I only eat roasted salted pistachios, cashews, and dates."

The other said, "Well, I only eat dried salmon."

Then both men looked at Nasrudin, waiting to hear what he would say.

Seconds later, Nasrudin held up a piece of bread and confidently announced, "Well, I only eat wheat, ground up and carefully mixed with water, yeast, and salt, and then baked at the proper temperature for the proper time."

Man Demands Justice

One day, a man ran into Judge Nasrudin's room and said, "I was just robbed at the border of this village! It must have been someone from here, and I demand justice! The robber took everything from me—my shoes, my pants, my shirt, my coat, my necklace, and even my socks...he took everything, I tell you! I demand justice."

"Well now," Nasrudin replied, "I see that you are still wearing your underwear—so the robber didn't take that, did he?"

"No," replied the man.

Nasrudin responded, "Then I am sure he was not from here, and thus I cannot investigate your case."

"How can you be so sure?" the man asked.

"Because if he were from here, he would have taken your underwear as well. After all, we do things thoroughly around here!"

Nasrudin Gets a Cow

One day, Nasrudin's wife told him, "Let's buy a cow so that we can have milk every day."

Nasrudin replied, "We don't have enough space in our yard for my donkey and a new cow."

But despite Nasrudin's objection, his wife persisted until he finally gave in.

So he bought the cow—and just as he predicted, it crowded his beloved donkey in the barn. This prompted Nasrudin to start praying one night, saying, "Dear God, please kill the cow, so my wife can't bother me about it anymore, and so my donkey can live in peace."

The next day, Nasrudin went into the barn and was dismayed to discover that his donkey was dead! He looked up and said, "God, I don't mean to offend you or anything, but let me ask you this—after all these years, do you mean to tell me that you still can't tell the difference between a cow and a donkey?"

Editor's Report

We still need to have you all contributing to make this a representative magazine. Thank you so much to those who contributed to this issue. Feedback about what you would like to see in the newsletter would be helpful, too. This magazine may be quite slim unless many of you have sent in your contributions. DEADLINE for next issue is mid-November.

Secretary Report

We have 34 members. 3 live in the USA, 1 in the UK, 4 group memberships. This means just 26 individual memberships in NZ. We welcome a new member. Anne Hodge lives in Christchurch and we are so glad to have her on our list. Remember all members have a personal code for our website so you can just go in and use it. If you are unsure how to add your profile, an event or anything else you can send it to our webmaster, Hemi, and he will do it.

Things you can do on the website:

- Create a storytelling profile to advertise your storytelling services.
- Add your profile as a member interested in this amazing art.
- Post ideas, news and stories.
- Post upcoming events.

To login go to storytelling.org.nz and click the yellow "Member Login" button in the bottom right corner of the website.

We also have a more direct login – www.storytelling.nz

Then follow the instructions. If you have forgotten your password click the request for a new one.

Have a question or need help? Simply email the site administrator at: hemi.ruatoto@gmail.com

A web-site is only as effective as the members make it. We cannot make up things to add to it.

Some of our members have not posted their profile at all. Why?

Even just your name and what and where you tell or listen will at least let people know we don't only have the few members listed.

A new story on the web-site would be good.

Treasurer's Report

At 17th August we had \$7321.52

The reason I haven't given you the September amount is that the balance sheets didn't arrive from the bank in time.

From Auckland - Obituary

Our memories of David Storyweaver Guthrie

Auckland Storytellers first met David just a few years ago at Antoinette Everts' place in Hillsborough, when he gave us a thrilling memorised recital of the Book of Mark, a really good acting performance.

This was a rehearsal for a presentation at Auckland's Anglican Cathedral (he was an Anglican priest), but apparently there was little publicity for the performance, resulting in what must have been a frustratingly small audience of under 30.

David also told at Kings School at the Christian festivals such as Easter. Through this connection, the school's students recorded an Auckland Storytellers performance before an audience of their classmates, which we hoped would be on the Guild's new website, along with tellings from other Guild members throughout Aotearoa.

The motivation to get videos of members' work on website was David's, but unfortunately technical problems made the plan impractical. (Though this is now possible. ED)

His wonderful Snail stories originated in improvised tellings to his grandchildren when they were tiny. He was able to ad lib stories from seeds suggested by his audiences. This was a completely intuitive process; he couldn't predict where a story would go, and said he didn't think at all about structuring them, but they all had classical structure.

As well as at a number of Auckland Storytellers nights, he told the Snail stories at an Ellerslie bookshop, The Bookie. Here he had a toddler-sized chest of drawers filled with tiny dolls and animals, and invited the audience of tinies to open the drawers and take these toys out. Also present was the White Rabbit – far too large for the chest of drawers - under whose imprint he recorded CDs of the Snail stories. He gave solo performances of scenes from A Midsummer Night's Dream and Othello at colleges such as Tamaki College. The Dream performance used puppets, which provided a way in for students to a play that otherwise might have seemed extremely twee and uncool. He said his work was welcomed by the students, who had no other opportunities to see Shakespeare.

David became president of the Guild at a troubled time, and was able to help keep it afloat. He was creative at suggesting solutions in several fields.

David Storyweaver's costume was a bright patchwork rugby shirt with black trousers and boldly coloured odd socks, under his Vicar's cloak.

He had books published of daily readings and prayers, including his own beautiful and inspirational photos of sunsets and scenes in parts of Auckland.

We're not sure if his book on an innovative rearrangement of the chronology of Old Testament stories has ever been published. Here too, David can be seen as a storyteller.

His blog has long list of topics inspirational and radical. He has about 2 pages of Google entries, especially <http://david.guthrie.net.nz/Davids-Blog>, surely of interest to those who share his Christian beliefs.

David was an interesting and complex character who contributed a great deal to NZ and to storytelling. From Auckland Storytellers members Nick Oram and Margaret Blay.



Regional News

News from The Wairarapa

It's been a whirl and a twirl these past few months. Getting the novel manicured and teased for publication, cover designs and meetings with publishers, book designers and interviews with our little newspapers, planning and organising the book launch.

At the same time Junior classes in the Hutt Valley and Wairarapa are studying fairy tales, so some riotous mornings have been had, telling some old tales and role playing others, with 5-6 year olds. Such fun. In contrast, Janie Nott, an art therapist, and I, offered some Winter Gallimaufrys in August/September which were attended by counsellors, social workers, palliative care nurses, and other people who work with people. These set out to nourish and inspire so the tenor was very different. We began with some yoga warm-ups, a story and some art and poetry to explore the metaphors and meanings. Poems, stories and art do so much to help us reach inside and find our best resources for life and working with people. We are offering another in October, (a Spring Gallimaufry this time) to meet our waiting list. And more fairy tales are planned for Wairarapa schools.

Happy Spring everyone!

After all this time my novel (published by Fraser Books) will be launched on September 27th, at Aratoi and I'm asking for support by way of pre-orders to help me defray some printing expenses. Some say it's a really good read as well as being quite informative. Others said it should be required reading for all sixteen year olds... Please stay in touch.

Kind wishes,
Gaye Sutton

Southern Storytellers

Our group has kept active over the long winter with monthly meetings and other events. Members have been involved telling in schools, rest homes, Probus clubs and the like with practice nights to keep skills honed and presentation up to scratch. The winter concert was a great success with a large attendance and a wide range of enthralling stories. A new member this year, Nigel, gave the added dimension of a pastel picture materialising as his story proceeded. The illuminated ending was unexpected and dramatic. As is our winter custom, a delectable supper of hot desserts was shared and much appreciated. In our recent August meeting there was an exercise where none could resort to personal reminiscence and the range of stories created from arbitrarily selected character and genre was astonishing. A secret sentence was also distributed which had to be included. No-one realised until reading them out that it was the same sentence for us all. What fun we have developing further skills. Now planning is proceeding for the annual children's event for November. Some registrations have already been received.

So, looking ahead we have the workshop day, the following dinner and concert, and then a general concert (hopefully featuring some of the children) on 20th November.

Hibernation is never on our agenda!

Nicol Macfarlane

Here is the delightful story that Judith Thomas wrote as her response to the exercise on the meeting night.

Her given genre was A Western

The two characters who had to appear were a mortician and a taxi driver.

Everyone had to include the sentence I have put in italics.

The funeral parlour was packed to celebrate and remember the old man – 93 he was and a good life he'd had.

During the slide show scenes were shown of a young boy having a western adventure riding on a sack draped over a wire fence with feathers glued on paper trailing from his head. The theme music from the Lone Ranger was playing.

When it finished the lights flickered and went out. The ground shook, the coffin shook. There was a muffled coughing, very muffled and getting louder. It was enough to shift the flowers on top. A hand poked out the side of the lid.

"I only had a cold like everyone else. **Let me out.**"

Indeed, as soon as the unusual sound was heard there was a race to get out of there as soon as possible.

The first out hailed a taxi driver!

No one stayed for afternoon tea.

A report in the paper said that the mortician had done his best.

News from Canterbury

Otautahi Story Circle

Third Wednesday of every month, 7.30pm Sydenham Room, South Library, 66 Colombo Street

A co-creative learning space open to everyone interested in story in all its forms. No experience needed.

A new topic each month that covers skills, discussion, story sharing and fun. Homemade refreshments provided! Enquiries to thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com or call Sharon mob 022-121-3648 or tel 03-9677-888.

Storytelling 101

If you've ever wanted to give the ancient art of oral storytelling a go, this is your chance! Five weeks covering the basic skills needed to tell engaging stories to children and adults. Open to all - no experience needed. Beginning 20th October, 7.00-9.00pm, venue to be confirmed. Enquiries to thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com or Sharon mob 022-121-3648 or tel 03-9677-888.

Trail Tales

A magical discovery of hidden gems of places and spaces in our Christchurch natural environs combining story, nature and conversation.

Summer 2015/16 beginning Nov/Dec.

Natural Born Storytellers.

Based in Camden Town, London with sell-out tours of the UK, we're collaborating with the founders to

develop our very own kiwi-Christchurch version of Natural Born Storytellers! Everyone has a story to tell so we're creating a fun, supportive and welcoming space for anyone to tell true stories. Each night has a theme and entertainment is provided by pre-booked and experienced storytellers, combined with stories from the audience. Opening early 2016!

Louise Quigley - Specialist Storyteller from UK

We're looking for expressions of interest for bringing to Christchurch in February 2016: Louise Quigley, UK Speech and Language Therapist and Storyteller, creator of Lis'nTell, live inclusive storytelling. This is a practical and imaginative approach to working with children with speech language and communication needs in particular, but is also valuable for anyone interested in using storytelling in working with children or adults. Louise teaches and performs internationally and is coming to NZ early next year. She is offering weekend training workshops, short demonstration workshops and performances. Contact thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com or Sharon mob 022-121-3648 or tel 02-9677-888 for more details and to register potential interest as an individual, group or organisation.

And here is a quick piece about my trip to Europe:
European Story Adventures

The Stars once Spoke to Man

The Stars once Spoke to Man.
It is World Destiny that they are Silent now.
To be aware of this Silence
Can become Pain for Earthly Man.

But in the Deepening Silence
There Grows and Ripens
What Man Speaks to the Stars.
To be aware of this Speaking
Can become Strength for Spirit Man.
By Rudolf Steiner

This was the verse that inspired an 8 day enquiry into the rich tapestry that is the weaving of our biographical story and some of life's big questions, the wisdom of ancient Greek Mythology and the ancient philosophers, and our relationship to nature that is "Speaking to the Stars" with Roi Gal-Or and Stella Kassmati of the International School of Storytelling. The setting was idyllic; a small friendly village devoid of tourism in the heart of rural Crete - Amari, in the Amari Valley - nestled at the foot of the mountain where Zeus was raised, Psiloritis. Civilisation has walked these hills for thousands of years and the wisdom of the stories they hold is palpable. The time, European Summer, 4-11 August 2015.

Many thanks!
Sharon Moreham

INFORMATION AND REQUESTS

Bertha Tobias has been such a strong part of the storytelling world here in New Zealand and especially in Christchurch.

When I received this message, below, I had those kind of, “Oh No” thoughts we get when we hear bad news.

But then I remembered that she is not stopping the giving of her wonderful storytelling and we have to be glad that more people will be blessed.

Once she is settled she has promised to send me her address so we will be able to keep up with what she is doing.

I have so treasured your presence in the world, Bertha, and see no reason not to continue that delight in who you are and what you give just because you are over the ditch.

Go well, dear friend.

Dear Liz,

After much deliberation we have decided to join our children in Australia.

We have sold our house and will leave by the end of October.

I will treasure the time here.

We will be living in the Blue Mountains area and a neighbourhood centre which I visited in Blackheath have already lined up a job for me in helping children to read through storytelling so you see I will not be idle.

I will not be renewing my subscription to “Storylines” but have many back copies to re-read and enjoy.

Bertha

Recently both Tania and Liz have been asked to tell stories for Matariki.

We made a plea and Mary Sheddon has sent me in two books from her collection for us to use.

Thank you, Mary.

Syd Lieberman came to Glistening Waters Storytelling Festival here in NZ once and I, Liz, tell many of his stories. This year, as a memory, I have told at least one of his tales in each school.

With heavy hearts, the International Storytelling Center marks the passing of Syd Lieberman, an elder statesman of the storytelling community, who died earlier this year at the age of 71. A twelve-time featured teller at the National Storytelling Festival, Syd was a familiar face in Jonesborough and a great talent in the industry. He was a gifted performer, an advocate for the art form, and a long-time supporter of our work at ISC. Together, we made storytelling history when, in

2004, NASA invited Syd into the control room to witness the first Mars rover landing. Jointly commissioned by ISC and NASA, he later shared the story of that historic event from the Festival stage—the first in what would become a series of groundbreaking collaborations.

As it happened, storytelling was Syd’s second luminous career; first he was a high school English teacher in Evanston, Illinois. While he was a Harvard man, his approach to education was anything but traditional. His classroom was a home away from home, outfitted with real furniture and posters on the walls. He took his kids on field trips to farms or into the city of Chicago, where he’d drop them off at different points to collect oral

histories from the people they encountered. His unconventional methods—blindfolding students so they had no idea where they were going—once attracted the attention of the FBI, who pulled Syd over for questioning about his busload of “kidnapped” teenagers.

On a lark, Syd participated in a storytelling workshop in the summer of 1982, and he started performing at his local library soon thereafter. A prodigious talent, he was featured as a master teller at the National Storytelling Festival just five years later. His illustrious career was capped when he received the National Storytelling Network ORACLE Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013. It would be the last year he performed in Jonesborough.

As a storyteller, Syd’s natural style belied his consummate professionalism. His work was impeccably researched and technically masterful, but these qualities aren’t what his audiences will remember. His personality was bright—his warmth, palpable—and these gifts helped bring his characters to life. But what gave Syd’s stories their soul was his innate curiosity and deep appreciation for the potential he saw within each of us. His tales were about pilots and presidents and grandkids and townspeople, and each of them was singular. Exceptional. Remarkable. Syd understood from a young age that normal people could accomplish extraordinary things. A small man, you might not have guessed he was a football star in high school. But he had hard evidence: after scoring every point in the city championship, Syd made the local paper, which

he saved for posterity. The headline—“Tiny Lieberman Proves Giant”—proved to be auspicious.

An English teacher through and through, some of Syd’s favorite pieces to perform were by Edgar Allan Poe. His stories stretched across five generations of his own family and deep into the history of his people. He was fond of Jewish folk tales, and he performed his story about one of the unsung heroes of World War II at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Over the course of developing his many commissioned works, Syd also became a keeper of tales from some of the most critical moments in our nation’s history. His stories balanced the perspectives of grand historical figures with those of regular guys. His Civil War story was as much about a soldier named Isaac Taylor as it was about Abraham Lincoln. And his piece on the Declaration of Independence included everyone involved in the famous document’s creation, from Benjamin Franklin down to the lowly calligrapher, who was recruited from debtors’ prison. Whether he was describing a group of NASA scientists or his kids, Zach and Sarah, the storyteller conveyed such a vivid sense of their spirits that you felt as though somehow you knew them. Each performance was an act of generosity. With Syd, his life’s work was literally his life story. Though we at ISC join the town of Jonesborough and the worldwide storytelling community in grieving that story’s natural conclusion, we’re deeply honored that he chose to share it with us.

The National Storytelling Festival is fast approaching for the first weekend in October.

This is the festival, in Jonesborough, Tennessee, your editor will enjoy along with your vice-president, Antoinette. Last year your president was there, too.

Although Southland has already invited one international storyteller for next May it is here that we will see others to invite.

Just now the organisers are focusing on two critical tasks. The first is scheduling the 100 hours’ worth of programming for the Festival weekend. Then they’re also handling thousands of confirmations from visitors from all over the world. Last year alone, they hosted storytelling fans and travel writers from Brazil, New Zealand, England, Australia, Japan, India, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and France—and that’s on top of nearly every state on the continent.

As we creep closer to October, they’ll roll up their sleeves to get Tennessee’s oldest town ready for more than 11,000 guests. (That’s more than twice the size of Jonesborough’s permanent population!) Erecting the Festival grounds is sort of like building a miniature city, with hard work that begins about two weeks

out. A team of at least a dozen labourers will work for more than a week just to raise the tents around the festival grounds, including those where the tellers will work their magic. Then they'll build the stages, turn on the lights, set out many thousands of tables and chairs, and put up hundreds of signs so everyone knows where they're going. Then, the crowning touches: as the caterers start preparing some 600 meals for the talent, they'll make everything look pretty with 425 chrysanthemums, 450 hay bales, and 375 pumpkins. Finally, just before the regular programming begins at 10:00 a.m. Friday morning, they'll charge up the 19 electric golf carts, so they'll be ready to roll...literally.

Contributions

Diane Ferlatte, our member in Oakland, California, has sent this contribution. She and Tomas have just spent two weeks in India where Diane was going to share some of the Hodja stories.

HAVE you read *Once the Hodja? Once the Mullah?*

If you already know Nasr-ed-Din the Hodja, I may not need to tell you what you will find in a book about a folk character named Mullah Nasr-ed-Din. (Hodja is the Turkish title for a Moslem priest who acts also as a teacher and a judge. Mullah is the Persian word for the same.) The people of Persia, a country that is called Iran in newspapers and geographies of today, love to laugh about their Mullah Nasr-ed-Din just as the people of Turkey love to laugh about their Nasr-ed-Din Hodja. Some of the stories told in the two countries are almost alike, with small differences that make them either Turkish or Persian. Other stories are special for one country or the other. There are hundreds of these folk tales.

In all these stories, Nasr-ed-Din, whether Hodja or Mullah, is a kindly old fellow with an impish sense of humor. He is quick to help anyone, though he is sometimes so awkward in his helping that he makes more trouble than he cures. He loves to play practical jokes, but his jokes never really hurt. He is always getting into tight places, but pulls through without losing his dignity. He makes mistake after mistake, but his village neighbors love and respect him just the same.

In Turkey it is said that Nasr-ed-Din Hodja lived at Ak Shehir at the time of Tamerlane the Great. In

Iran I could learn no date, nor home town for Mullah Nasr-ed- Din, perhaps because his stories may have been told first in Turkey. But it did seem important for Mullah Nasr-ed- Din to have a time and a place, so I chose a village near Isfahan in the sixteenth century. Isfahan then was the capital of Persia and the home of Shah Abbas the Great. If you visit Isfahan today you can see the beautiful mosques and palaces, the great square, and the wide streets built so long ago by Shah Abbas. The city still has its big covered bazaar. It still has its clever craftsmen famous for their work in silver, brass, copper, mosaics, and block printing.

Though the cities of modern Iran are changed in many ways from the Persian cities of the days of Mullah Nasr-ed-Din, village life is very much as described in these stories. There would be a few changes if we were writing about a village of Iran today. The men and boys would save their money (paper rials and paper to mans now) to buy bicycles. The rich Agha Abdul Karim would have an automobile, and the next-to-richest villagers would be thinking about owning one. The people would not depend for light on tallow candles or wicks in glasses of poppy-seed oil. They might have electric lights, and they surely would have kerosene lamps and perhaps gasoline lanterns. The big empty oil tins would be used for water jugs, flower pots, or patches on the front gate. The shops in the bazaar would have factory-made articles from away as well as the hand-made products of the community. The women would not be so careful about veiling their faces, but they would still find it convenient when leaving their

homes to slip into an all-covering chuddar of factory-woven cloth, polka-dot design preferred. A village located on the main highway between cities would have buses passing through two or three times a day. There would often be a long-distance truck or a journeying car parked in front of the tea house.

But many things about village life are unchanged. The houses and garden walls are still made of the material nearest at hand, the local mud molded into bricks and dried in the sun. Trains of haughty camels still carry heavy loads, marching single file along the dusty roads. So do the patient little donkeys. Farmers still live in the village and go out by day to work their fields, vineyards, and orchards which belong to their landlord. Hens still wander about the village scavenging for food. Flocks of sheep and goats graze on the bristly growth of the untilled fields. Water for irrigating the fields and for village use flows through the ditches. The men and boys still gather on the slightest excuse while the women and girls hover in the background, always curious but never bold.

You may wonder how anyone collects folk stories in a foreign land. Fortunately many Persians speak English well, so we could use Nasr-ed-Din Hodja stories as bait for Mullah stories. A Hodja story would always remind someone of a Mullah story.

Also there was a book of Mullah stories written in Persian, and boys who were learning English were glad to practise this language on us by putting these stories into English.

American boys and girls who live in Iran because of their fathers' work love to hear and tell Mullah stories.

One eleven-year-old American boy tried to play a trick on me. When he found I was collecting Mullah stories for you, we swapped stories. I would tell him a Hodja story and he would top it with a Mullah story. When he ran out of real Mullah stories he tried telling "little moron" stories as though they happened to Mullah Nasr-ed-Din. But he could not fool me. The real Mullah has a wisdom all his own even when he is doing something that seems foolish. Anyone who knows Mullah Nasr-ed-Din would never confuse him with a moron.

I hope you will like Mullah Nasr-ed-Din. And I hope that these stories will remind you that people the world over like to laugh.

Alice Geer Kelsey

THE BROTHERS OF THE DONKEY

The life of a donkey is shorter than the life of a man. Often the Mullah had a young donkey growing up to take the place of his old donkey when she could work no longer. Once Mullah Nasr-ed-Din knew that his favourite donkey was growing very, very old. Her "Hee-haw" was quavering instead of saucy. Her step was stumbling instead of perky. She dozed whenever she had the chance. And she refused to budge if a heavy load was placed on her back. The Mullah loved the old donkey so much that he kept feeding her while giving more and more of her work to the

young donkey who shared her stable. It was no great surprise to the Mullah to find one morning that the little animal had gone to sleep, forever. "My donkey is dead," the Mullah told his neighbours and they were sorry. They all liked the little animal that had carried him hither and thither these many years. If the donkey had been a person, they would have moaned and groaned as is the way of mourners at a funeral. But because it was only the donkey, they came quietly to the Mullah's house. All day long they brought small gifts and said, "We are sorry." As Mullah Nasr-ed-Din and his good wife Fatima lighted their lamp of poppy-seed oil that night, it was a comfort to them

to know that they had such good friends. But there were in that village some rough boys who loved to make mischief, especially in the evenings. They liked to make loud noises whenever they had a chance. They liked to play tricks on anyone. Now they saw their chance to have fun. "The Mullah always treated his donkey like one of the family," one boy said to the others "Let's pretend we are mourners at a funeral for the donkey."

"Let's!" agreed the boys, chuckling over their joke. They marched through the dark village street toward the Mullah's house. They beat their breasts. They moaned and they groaned. They were making as much noise as though they had been paid many dinars to mourn the death of a great man. They sounded woeful as they made a dirge of the donkey's name, howling it in time to their marching. Other men and boys appeared from the shadows, following the noise to find out what it was all about.

The ruffians were wailing their loudest when they knocked at the Mullah's street gate. They softened their wails to low moans as they waited

for the answer. Curious men and boys made a silent circle behind them.

"Open the gate, please," they heard the Mullah call to one of his friends. The boys moaned louder as the door creaked open.

"Bring a light, Fatima," they heard the Mullah call to his wife. They groaned and wailed the name of the dead donkey.

"Who in the world can it be?" they heard Fatima ask her husband.

Then the loud voice of the Mullah carried easily across the walls to the boys in the street and to the men who were watching them. "It must be the brothers of the donkey. His family has come to mourn for him."

Then the boys sneaked off into the darkness. On all sides they heard laughing voices repeating, "The brothers of the donkey! The brothers of the donkey!"

I looked up on the internet and if you feed in –Mulla Nasrudin Folktales by Rodney Ohebsion you will get lots and lots.

Now I will add a Nasrudin story I have been telling this term in the schools.

Nasrudin lived in a smallish house with a garden and a fence.

He had a donkey.

He loved his donkey.

It wasn't just his good friend but his donkey kept his lawn tidy.

His donkey carried any loads that were too heavy for Nasrudin to carry.

Sometimes it even carried Nasrudin – as long as it wasn't too far.

Yes, he just loved his donkey.

One day Nasrudin went down to the village. He didn't take his donkey as he was just going down for some nice vegetables to share with his donkey.

When he came back his donkey was gone.

Oh, no!

Someone had stolen his beloved donkey.

Nasrudin went inside. After a bit he sat down and made a notice.

He took it down to the village market and pinned it up on the notice board.

Then he stood back and waited.

People came by, read the notice and then read it again.
They pointed it to each other and laughed.
Then they said to Nasrudin, "Why have you written that? It doesn't make sense."
"Yes, I know what I have written. It does make sense."
"No," his neighbours said. "We will read it to you.
Someone has stolen my donkey. If the thief returns my donkey I will give the thief my donkey.
Now that is crazy."
Nasrudin said, "No, it isn't crazy. You see I know the two greatest pleasures in life.
The first great pleasure is finding something that you lost.
The second great pleasure is giving away something that you love!"

Do you remember Santa from the time when you were young? How you thought that if you stayed awake, Santa would be sprung?

We'd each get one of Father's socks to pin there on the bed.
Then we'd be told to go to sleep once evening prayers were said.
We'd lie there staring skywards. Sleep we would not do.
Tonight we'd catch the big red man. Oh yes we would so too.
But alas we nodded off and dreamed the night away.
We woke to sunlight streaming in and it was Christmas Day.
Our socks were filled to bursting. We reached for them with glee.
Sticking out of mine I spied an orange just for me.
Below the orange cherries and some corn for us to pop.
Then I found the best of all - a raspberry lollipop.
There on my bed a package too big for my sock.
I stared at it in wonder. Was it a brand new frock?
I wrapped my arms around it and hugged it to my chest.
To get a parcel this big I was truly blessed.
I carefully took the paper off and shouted out "Oh look!"
For in my arms I held a massive storybook.
Xmas's have come and gone but none of them can touch
All the joy I felt that day. Oh! Santa thanks so much.
By Heather Perriam

The Transformative Power of Storytelling



As president of the International Storytelling Center, I'm very much tapped into the power that stories have to change the world. Sometimes people are surprised when I tell them I've had that awareness almost since birth. From the time I could talk, I recognized how stories help us reshape and redefine our identities as we move from place to place.

In 1972, four years before I was born, my own family was forced, at gunpoint, to flee their homeland in Uganda. Around 50,000 Ugandan

Asians fled the border and settled in new countries. My family went to Britain. They couldn't take personal possessions with them—even mementos or objects of faith—but they could take their traditions and beliefs. Though I was born in the UK, these values were passed to me through the stories of my parents and others. They helped me form a sense of identity that was closely connected to a home that I could not then see.

Those connections were especially important when I felt disconnected from the community I could see—the one around me, in England. Sadly, I felt that way often. I grew up in a small southern English town, the first visibly Asian person born there. My father wore a bright turban and an African shirt, and my mother an even brighter sari. I wore my hair long. As a family, we stood out. There was often a lot of social unrest and racism that made me feel ostracized. But I always drew strength from the stories of family and friends. They gave me that sense of belonging to a place. Their stories became my vehicle for understanding not just local, but global, traditions and cross-cultural connections. I began to see that there was a world beyond the divisions and labels that society imposes upon us, and that when you allow yourself to see beyond borders, you truly become a citizen of the world.

My story is not unique. Many know firsthand the power of storytelling and its transformative potential to build community. From the time when humans picked up colored rocks to etch drawings onto cave walls to the day when NASA scientists inscribed a visual story onto a pioneer space probe before it was sent out into the universe, we've been using some form of story to connect with the unknown. The stories on our library shelves are incredible, but even more amazing are the stories each one of us carry with us every day. They provide a safe space in which to discuss differences, to unpack what it means to belong to a place, and even to cross a divide.

When I began my museum work, I became acutely aware of how stories can be used to break down walls of silence and other barriers to engagement. As an outsider—an Asian, English-born Sikh living in Scotland—I was able to use storytelling, and especially my own story, to form connections with community leaders, ex-paramilitary groups, territorial gang members, politicians, and police officers. I used storytelling in settings from Belfast, in northern Ireland, to the city of Glasgow to help build empathy and peace among groups that had experienced extreme violence. Those projects helped participants tap into memories, then use those stories to build a more inclusive model of what it means to be a part of a community.

In 2002, following the attacks on September 11th and local attacks on a mosque and synagogue in Edinburgh, I helped organize an event where people of faith and secular traditions stood side by side to tell their stories. We invited imams, priests, and rabbis—Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and Baha'is—to explore faith, belief, and identity in the 21st century. Coptic Christians sang songs of resurrection in Arabic. Sikhs wore the Scottish Sikh tartan and performed traditional bhangra with bagpipes. Jewish Scots performed music that combined the Scottish Celtic and Klezmer traditions. All together, 6,000 people of diverse faiths and backgrounds came together to stand shoulder to shoulder, using stories to express solidarity as one community.

Now of course I live and work in Jonesborough, the birthplace of the American storytelling renaissance, overseeing the work of the International Storytelling Center. One night in October 2013, during my first Festival, I heard master teller Elizabeth Ellis tell a story about a difficult and divisive time in this nation's history: the Civil War. A group of Confederate mothers were laying flowered wreaths at the gravestones of their fallen sons. In a powerful act of empathy, they decided to also lay wreaths for the fallen Union

soldiers. Though these dead were, in name, the enemy, these women recognized that they were also children of mothers who lived far away.

To me, that story was a powerful reminder that we can, despite differences, understand one another on a human level. This is a theme I find myself returning to often, not just in my work, but in life. Again and again, storytelling has helped me establish connections in my own communities—and as a visitor and a peacebuilder in the communities of others.

All of us have the opportunity to use our stories as a binding force whenever and wherever there is conflict, tension, fear or suspicion. Finding those common threads helps us to build civility and to treat others as we ourselves hope to be treated. From your lips to other people's ears, storytelling is a truly democratic art, requiring no tools or props. We are, each of us, storytellers. To tell our stories is more than just a human right. It is a gift we can give the world.

Kiran Sirah
President

The car sales

Do you remember Noddy?

Of course you do, but here is something you may not know about Noddy.

I met Noddy quite by accident at the car yard, Oh I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, aren't I?

You will be wondering who I am.

My name is Big Ears and you may remember me, too, because I was there with Noddy in most of his adventures.

But back to the car yard. I was there to get myself a new bike of the motoring kind. My bikes tended to wear out quite quickly because you may remember I was just a bit on the heavy side. I still am, unfortunately, but that's another story.

As I was saying, I was at the car yard and I saw this funny wee guy with a big hat wandering around, so being a social sort of a chap I said,

"Hello, I haven't seen you before around the town."

He looked up at me, smiled as his head nodded up and down while the bell on the top of his big hat rang merrily.

"Hello my name is Noddy and I've just moved here and I'm going to get a new car and it's lovely to meet you and I'm waiting for a salesman and I thought I might buy that little red van over there and---"

He ran out of breath at that point, which was a bit of a relief because all those "ands" were sort of confusing.

The salesman turned up at that point looking hopefully from one to the other of us, no doubt hoping today was going to be his lucky day.

"Can I help?" he asked.

"Yes please," said Noddy, his hat ringing madly as his head bobbed up and down. "I'd like to look at the little red van over there."

"Certainly. You can take it for a drive if you like."

"Oh, yes please," said Noddy. "Will you come with me, with me...? Um..."

He was looking at me. Of course, he didn't know my name.

"Big Ears." I filled in helpfully for him. "Of course I would love to come with you."

Noddy climbed into the little red van. I, on the other hand, discovered no matter how I tried I was just too

big to fit in the tiny door.

"Oh dear," said Noddy sadly. "I can't buy this if my new best friend can't fit into it."

I stared at him in delight. I had never had a best friend and here was this dear little chap refusing to buy a car because I could not get in it.

Noddy got out of the little red van, took my arm and led me over to a two seater car sitting in the corner of the yard.

"Let's try this one Big Ears."

Heather Perriam

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

How to live a happy life.

- Compliment three people every day.
- Watch a sunrise at least once a year.
- Remember other people's birthdays.
- Have a firm handshake.
- Look people in the eye.
- Say "thank you" a lot.
- Learn to play a musical instrument.
- Use the good silver.
- Be the first to say hello.
- Be forgiving of yourself and others.
- Give the best to your employer – it's one of the best investments you can make.
- Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.
- Never deprive someone of hope. It might be all they have.
- Leave everything a little better than you found it.
- Never cut what can be untied.

Storytellers' plea.

Tune: What a friend we have in Jesus

We know how much you love your cell phones (lap tops)

You take them with you everywhere,

But if they ring when we are telling (But if they open while...)

You'll be standing in the need of prayer.

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
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	blackcherokee@actrix.co.nz
Blenheim	7pm, 2nd Thursday monthly	Katrina Oliver 03 577 7787	katrinao@xtra.co.nz
Canterbury	7.30pm third Wed of the month Sydenham Room, South Library, 66 Colombo Street	Sharon Moreham Tel 03 9677 888 Mob 022-121-3648	thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com
Timaru	3.30pm last Tuesday monthly in Timaru Library	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 021 180 6690	hrp@xtra.co.nz
Balclutha	7pm 2nd Wednesday monthly	Vicki Woodrow, Clutha Library	raine@ihug.co.nz
Okato	7 pm 1 st Thursday of the month Step into Story	Lesley Dowding 06 772 4545	lezley@xtra.co.nz

If there are any changes, please let me know.

Sender

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c/o Elizabeth Miller
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Invercargill - 9812
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