

**11 July 2008**

**From:** Jessie Goh  
**Sent:** 11 July 2008 11:32  
**Subject:** SAS July Newsletter

**STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)  
NEWSLETTER  
JULY 2008**

Half a year has just gone by making time really feel like tiny grains of sand escaping through your fingers. It's supposed to be summer in temperate climes, but it snowed in London last month and the cherry blossoms only just bloomed in Japan! Half a year remains for us to get through that unread book, clear that clutter off our desks and make time for what we promised ourselves at the beginning of this year.

This brings to mind the '*Tale of the Half-Chick*' that our Associate Member, Heather Reutens told at the SMRT '**Tales on Trains**' event last month. Five of our members told stories to 300 children on board five different carriages of a moving train for an hour! That's the spirit of our storytellers who will overcome all odds to make sure their stories are given life and their audience kept enraptured. The theme this year for the SMRT storytelling event was about saving the environment and being green. Rosemarie Somaiah, Ordinary Member, told the haunting story of '*Shingebiss and the North Wind*', making us acutely aware of how global climate changes will affect all mankind. Other members who generously gave of their time for this event were Juriah Atan, Ignatius Ng and Helen Tan. Between them, seventeen stories were told and various story rhymes and activities carried out. The Association thanks them for all their preparation and professionalism in participating in this event and making it a success. We hope more of our members will take up the opportunities that come your way to tell stories.

Storytelling has always been perceived as entertainment for children or something you read out aloud from a book. Well, this August the Association will be disproving all that with our very own dinner-theatre storytelling evening especially for adult audiences! We are changing the face of storytelling; we are taking storytelling to new heights with carefully selected tales performed in an intimate and elegant setting. Do spread the word about "**Meat Of The Tongue: Seductive Tales at SupperTime**" details of which can be found below.

Many of you have contacted me asking about a Storytelling Workshop for Beginners and you'll be delighted to know that we have such a workshop planned for November especially for beginners! Read on for more information.

Some of our Ordinary Members will be participating in the upcoming **Singapore International Storytelling Festival 2008 (SISF)** and it will be great if you could make the time to take your family (aged 7 years and above) and enjoy the various storytelling performances that have been scheduled.

If you have young children, take a look at the July issue of Young Parents Magazine for 'My Survival Kit' as a storyteller-mom!

Enjoy the next month chocker block full of storytelling in many forms and be inspired by the tellers and their tales.

I welcome feedback from you and please feel free to contact me at [president@storytellingsingapore.com](mailto:president@storytellingsingapore.com) or on 92732383 with your ideas and suggestions.

**STORYTELLING EVENTS**

**1. FREE STORYTELLING FOR CHILDREN**

Come to *SAFRA Toa Payoh* for free storytelling by tellers from ASN from 3.00 – 3.30pm held on the first Sunday of every month until December 2008. For more details contact [rosemarie@asianstorytellingnetwork.com](mailto:rosemarie@asianstorytellingnetwork.com) or call SAFRA on 63554506 or view: [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#SAFRA\\_\(Toa\\_Payoh\)](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#SAFRA_(Toa_Payoh))

## 2. **FREE STORYTELLING FOR CHILDREN**

*Storytelling for McDonalds' Red PEA Programme*

Verena Tay of *MoonShadow Stories* will be telling stories for children for the [McDonalds' Red PEA Programme](#) during the following dates and times:

- Sunday 20th July:

Sun Plaza (11.30 am) / Serangoon Ave 3 (1.30 pm) / King Albert Park (3.30 pm)

- Sunday 3 August:

Bukit Batok (11.30 am) / Queensway (1.30 pm) / West Coast Park (3.30 pm)

-Sunday 10 August:

Admiralty (11.30 am) / Yishun Ring Road (1.30 pm) / Sun Plaza (3.30 pm)

More details: [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#McDonalds\\_Red\\_PEA](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#McDonalds_Red_PEA)

## 3. **SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL 2008**

The SISF 2008 is almost here! From late August to early September it covers Storytelling Showcases of both International and Asian tellers, the Asian Congress of Storytellers with inspiring keynote speakers and wonderful workshops, various Seminars and even Digital Storytelling! Please view [www.bookcouncil.sg/sisf](http://www.bookcouncil.sg/sisf) for more details on various storytelling performances and workshops.

- *The International Storytellers Showcase:*

30 August 7.30 pm & 31 August 3.00 pm at The Chamber, The Arts House for ages 7 years and above. Listen to Mabel Lee and Dolly Leow tell stories at this event.

- *The Asian Storytellers Concert:*

4-5 September 7.30 pm at The Play Den, The Arts House for ages 7 years and above. Listen to Chuah Ai Lin and Verena Tay tell at this event.

- [http://www.theartshouse.com.sg/event\\_details\\_2008.php?id=749](http://www.theartshouse.com.sg/event_details_2008.php?id=749) for ticketing for all storytelling performances and Festival events.

## 4. **VOLUNTEER FOR SISF 2008 and PARTICIPATE FOR FREE!**

This is the chance you have been waiting for! The Book Council has requested for volunteers to assist the facilitators during their *Seminar* and *Workshop* sessions. In return you will be able to participate in that *Seminar* or *Workshop* for FREE! Do take a look at [www.bookcouncil.sg/sisf](http://www.bookcouncil.sg/sisf) for full details of the different sessions, dates and timings. If you are interested in being a volunteer do contact Miss Regina Kwan at [regina@bookcouncil.sg](mailto:regina@bookcouncil.sg) or call her on 68488294 / 68488290

## 5. **STORYTELLERS CIRCLE**

*The Storytellers Circle* is a special interest group of the *Society For Reading & Literacy*. The next meeting of *The Storytellers Circle* is on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July at 7.00pm. For more details: [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Storytellers\\_Circle](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Storytellers_Circle)

## 6. **TALK / WORKSHOP "Forever A Family"**

Rosemarie Somaiah will be giving a special talk as part of the *Singapore Heritage Festival* on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 2.00 pm at The Asian Civilizations Museum. This workshop is for anyone who understands the need to be connected to family and community. Come alone, or with your loved ones to explore, enjoy and celebrate your stories! Call 6736 0503 to make a booking or go to [www.heritagefest.org.sg](http://www.heritagefest.org.sg) for more details.

## 7. **STORYTELLING DINNER-THEATRE EVENING FOR ADULT AUDIENCES**

**"Meat Of The Tongue: Seductive Stories At SupperTime"** is the Association's first storytelling event targeted at a purely adult audience. Chuah Ai Lin, Denise Bertrand and Kamini Ramachandran will entertain with specially selected stories suitable for adult audiences at the brand new elegant venue The Hall, at The Arts House on Saturday 23 August. Dinner is from 7.30 pm onwards and storytelling is from 8.30 pm onwards. Please visit <http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Meat> for details and visit [http://www.theartshouse.com.sg/event\\_details\\_2008.php?id=825](http://www.theartshouse.com.sg/event_details_2008.php?id=825) for ticketing details.

## 8. **EXCLUSIVE! MASTER CLASS FOR EXPERIENCED STORYTELLERS**

As part of the Festival this August and September, the Association is organising an exclusive Master Class for its Ordinary and Associate Members; *“Permission to Play: Using Community Coaching to Work with Story Development”* conducted by eminent storyteller from the USA Mr. Kevin Cordi.

To find out more about Kevin and what he does and what he is famous for, take a look at [www.kevincordi.com](http://www.kevincordi.com) and [www.youthstorytelling.com](http://www.youthstorytelling.com).

Date: Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2008 from 9.30 am – 5.00 pm

Venue: The Arts House, Old Parliament Lane.

*Special rates apply only for SAS members:*

Ordinary Members: \$150

Associate Members: \$180

Public rate: \$290 (early bird \$260)

Bookings: please contact Sheila Wee at [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) or 62555007.

## 9. **VERENA TAY’S ARTICLE IN THE *Far Eastern Economic Review Magazine***

Our Ordinary Member, storyteller and writer Verena Tay has published an article on writing and being a writer; do read this insightful and light hearted piece online on <http://www.feer.com/authors-corner/2008/june/Bringing-Life-to-a-Simmer>.

## 10. **THE LUNAR INTERVIEWS**

This August, Verena Tay’s play *“The Lunar Interviews”* will be featured as part of the *Singapore Theatre Festival*. This is a piece about the myths of the various Moon Goddesses, from Chang-Er to Hina to Diana; it humanises the mythic and brings the mythic into everyday reality. For more details and ticketing please visit: [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Lunar\\_Interviews](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Lunar_Interviews)

## 11. **SAS SOCIAL**

Our last SAS Social gathering for the year is scheduled for Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. We’re planning an *‘Evening Of Sexy Stories’* If you have a story that’s rather too risky for younger ears, or a story you have been wanting to share but were unsure of the setting, this is the time to allow that story to take the limelight! Come and listen to other tell stories, come and share your stories, come and meet others who are passionate about stories and storytelling.

Please view [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Future\\_Story\\_Swaps](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Future_Story_Swaps) for more details

## 12. **STORYTELLING WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS**

Keep these dates free for *“An Introduction To Storytelling”* workshop specially targeted at those who are interested in storytelling but don’t know where to start.

Dates: Saturday 8 November 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Saturday 15 November 10.00 am – 1.00 pm & 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Rates: Associate Members \$270

Friends Members \$300

Non-Members \$310

Facilitator: Sheila Wee of Asian Storytelling Network

Enquiries & Bookings: [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) or call 62555007

## **WHAT’S BEEN HAPPENING?**

### 1. **SMRT ‘Tales On Trains’**

During the June school holidays, five of our members told stories to more than 300 children inside a special SMRT train for a one hour train ride.

### 2. **SAS RESOURCES**

The Association is a member of the National Storytelling Network (USA) and their bi-monthly magazine *‘The Storyteller’* is available for loan to Ordinary and Associate Members. We also

have Doug Lipmann's *'The Image Riding Toolkit'* and *'The Professional Storyteller's Collection'* comprising of audio CDs. Please contact Sheila Wee, our Resource Librarian at [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) if you would like to find out more about this magazine or any other materials available for loan.

### 3. SAS WEBSITE

Our website has up to date information on storytelling events, benefits offered by our partners as well as contact details for storytellers. Archived newsletters are also available for your perusal. Do visit [www.storytellingsingapore.com](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com) for more information on your Association.

### STORY VEIN

I have always enjoyed listening to stories told in a different language, sometimes even in a language I do not understand. There is something magical and powerful about the rhythm of the words and the mystery of the pauses and the tone the storyteller chooses to use to create a mood. In many ways, it does not matter if we speak a different language, somehow we can get the gist of the story (of what we want to say) across to our listeners, through the devices I have just mentioned as well as facial expression and body gestures. All of these are universal codes that help us get our stories across.

Have you ever heard a story that made no sense? Like the one about the *Two Dead Boys*? Somehow, all the words make sense and the grammar is perfect, it makes for great, rapt listening, and yet its complete nonsense! But that's the magic of storytelling, so much of it lies in the selection of the right word to convey the right mood and allow the listener to suspend disbelief, so to say. Its a story told in rhyming form and can also be sung as a story-song. So, for those who haven't heard it before, here it is, say it out aloud for full effect:

One fine day in the middle of the night,  
Two dead boys got up to fight,  
Back to back they faced each other,  
Drew their swords and shot each other.  
One was blind and the other couldn't see,  
So they chose a dummy for a referee.  
A blind man went to see fair play,  
A dumb man went to shout "hooray!"  
A paralysed donkey passing by,  
Kicked the blind man in the eye,  
Knocked him through a nine inch wall,  
Into a dry ditch and drowned them all.  
A deaf policeman heard the noise,  
And came to arrest the two dead boys.  
If you don't believe this story's true,  
Ask the blind man he saw it too!

Many of us are familiar with the opening lines of Lewis Carroll's *'Jabberwocky'*. It sets the mood for something dark and sinister yet the words do not make any sense. Use it as an opening for a scary story to create an atmosphere, use it to draw people into your story:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogroves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Whatever it is we want to say, say it as a story, and people will listen. Even if its Jabberwocky!

Happy telling!  
*Kamini Ramachandran*,  
President,  
Storytelling Association (Singapore)

*"Thou shalt not"* is soon forgotten, but *'Once upon a time'* lasts forever."  
—*Philip Pullman* (during his Carnegie Medal acceptance speech in 1996)

## **7 August 2008**

**From:** Jessie Goh  
**Sent:** 07 August 2008 16:05  
**Subject:** Storytelling Association (S'pore) August '08 Newsletter

### **STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE) NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2008**

August is here! It's the time of year when all things related to Storytelling happens with the Singapore International Storytelling Festival! This is your opportunity to get to meet international tellers, take your family and friends to listen to various storytelling showcases or participate in workshops and seminars. Our local storytellers will also be weaving their magic and casting a spell on the audience, so do support storytelling in Singapore and attend the various events.

Storytelling has always suffered from the misconception that it is only for children and suitable in libraries. Well, this month, the Association is going all out to disprove this!

'Meat of the Tongue: *Seductive Stories at Suppertime*' will be performed not in a library, but at the elegant and very adult *The Hall*, The Arts House on Saturday night 23<sup>rd</sup> August. The storytellers will entertain with stories definitely not suitable for young ears! Stories for adults are all about content; stories that are erotic, seductive, that use highly satirical language, create a mood of ambiguity and sometimes leave the audience with many endings to choose from.

The Association has worked hard to promote storytelling for adult audiences and this year, this month, we celebrate with 'Meat of the Tongue'. Please pass the word around to all your friends (aged 18 years and above!) and I guarantee you a wonderfully enjoyable and seductive evening of stories like you've never imagined before. Plus, you will be able to have a nice dinner before the storytelling begins, so sit back with your coffee and desert and listen and be seduced by the stories.

I welcome feedback from you and please feel free to contact me at [president@storytellingsingapore.com](mailto:president@storytellingsingapore.com) or on 92732383 with your ideas and suggestions.

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For actual details about this workshop and registration form, please click: <http://storytellingsingapore.com/courses.htm#Kevin%20Cordi>

Date: Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2008 from 9.30 am – 5.00 pm

Venue: The Arts House, Old Parliament Lane.

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#### 6. **THE LUNAR INTERVIEWS**

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#### 7. **LITERATI!**

Do come to this interesting collaboration of wordsmiths from various genres on August 29<sup>th</sup> at The Substation. Kamini will be telling stories while others will be reciting poems, singing songs and speaking words. <http://www.substation.org/septfest/> for more details.

#### 8. **SAS SOCIAL**

Our last SAS Social gathering for the year is scheduled for Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. We’re planning an ‘*Evening Of Sexy Stories*’ If you have a story that’s rather too risky for younger ears, or a story you have been wanting to share but were unsure of the setting, this is the time to allow that story to take the limelight! Come and listen to other tell stories, come and share your stories, come and meet others who are passionate about stories and storytelling.

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#### 9. **STORYTELLING WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS**

Keep these dates free for “*An Introduction To Storytelling*” workshop specially targeted at those who are interested in storytelling but don’t know where to start.

Dates: Saturday 8 November 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Saturday 15 November 10.00 am – 1.00 pm & 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Rates: Associate Members \$270

Friends Members \$300  
Non-Members \$310

Facilitator: Sheila Wee of Asian Storytelling Network

Enquiries & Bookings: [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) or call 62555007

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### **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?**

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#### 2. **SAS WEBSITE**

Our website has up to date information on storytelling events, benefits offered by our partners as well as contact details for storytellers. Archived newsletters are also available for your perusal. Do visit [www.storytellingsingapore.com](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com) for more information on your Association.

#### 3. **WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS PROGRESS**

The 6 participants for Verena Tay's special workshop 'Beyond Storytelling 101' exclusively tailored for Associate Members has come to an end. The second phase of this workshop continues now with each participant going through their 2-hours of one-to-one coaching with Verena to hone their storytelling skills and get their stories down pat for the performance in November. Do keep these dates free if you would like to come and listen to our participants tell: Fri & Sat Nov 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> at The Substation. I had the pleasure of sitting in during their story-selection meeting last week, and the line-up of stories are truly engaging and different. The participants enthusiasm for their public performance event was so palpable! Will keep you all updated on their progress. Well done to all of you who took part in this workshop!

There will be no Story Vein this month.

Happy telling!  
Kamini Ramachandran,  
President,  
Storytelling Association (Singapore)

"Australian Aborigines say that the big stories—the stories worth telling and retelling, the ones in which you may find the meaning of your life—are forever stalking the right teller, sniffing and tracking like predators hunting their prey in the bush."

— Robert Moss, *Dreamgates*

**12 September 2008**

**From:** Jessie Goh [mailto:jessgoh77@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** 12 September 2008 09:41  
**Subject:** SAS Newsletter September 2008

**STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)  
NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2008**

What a month it has been! *The Singapore International Storytelling Festival 2008* was two weeks full of stories, workshops, seminars and performances! I attended the Opening Event for the SISF on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August held at the lawns of The Arts House and graced by NTUC Secretary General and Minister at The Prime Minister's Office, Mr. Lim Swee Say who gave a very witty speech dotted with short story-anecdotes. It was wonderful to see many people from the local storytelling community present at this event, and the highlight for me was Bobby Norfolk's *Anansi* story and Jeeva Ragnath's inimitable storytelling prowess! The Festival has grown each year to encompass many aspects of storytelling from telling stories, to writing stories to animating your own story. The international tellers who participated this year had all heard many good things about the revival of storytelling in Singapore and the prestige of the Festival. Many of our members took part in the Festival in one way or another, and I have a special section at the end of this newsletter focusing especially on their experience during the Festival.

And did you see the SAS on television? Well, we made it to Channel 5 and CNA with our adult storytelling event "Meat of the Tongue: Seductive Stories at Suppertime" and the Association got much deserved publicity! Read on below to find out more.

I welcome feedback from you and please feel free to contact me at [president@storytellingsingapore.com](mailto:president@storytellingsingapore.com) or on 92732383 with your ideas and suggestions.

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**2. SAS SOCIAL**

Our last SAS Social gathering for the year is scheduled for Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. We're planning an '*Evening Of Sexy Stories*' If you have a story that's rather too risky for younger ears, or a story you have been wanting to share but were unsure of the setting, this is the time to allow that story to take the limelight! Come and listen to others tell stories, come and share your stories, come and meet others who are passionate about stories and storytelling.

Please view [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Future Story Swaps](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Future_Story_Swaps) for more details.

**3. STORYTELLING FOR ADULTS**

MoonShadow Stories presents "*A Matter Of Evil*" – an evening dedicated to spooky tales, tales of the supernatural, and all things evil in nature... What better way to enjoy All Hallows Eve than by coming and listening to these stories on Fri & Sat 31<sup>st</sup> Oct & 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at The Substation. For more information and bookings please visit: <http://moonshadowstories.org>

**4. STORYTELLING WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS *few places left!***

Keep these dates free for "*An Introduction To Storytelling*" workshop specially targeted at those who are interested in storytelling but don't know where to start.

Dates: Saturday 8 November 2.00 – 5.00 pm  
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Rates: Associate Members \$270  
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Non-Members \$310

Facilitator: Sheila Wee of Asian Storytelling Network

Enquiries & Bookings: [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) or call 62555007

Please visit: <http://storytellingsingapore.com/courses.htm#Beginners>

#### 5. **NEW STORYTELLING BOOK OUT!**

The Association is proud to announce that *"The Singing Top: Tales from Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei"* retold and edited by Margaret Read MacDonald is out now! Turn the pages to see stories from this region submitted by Kiran Shah, Jessie Goh, Panna Kantilal, Sheila Wee, Rosemarie Somaiah and Kamini Ramachandran. It's a great resource book of traditional folktales from this region. Published by Libraries Unlimited [www.lu.com](http://www.lu.com) as part of The World Folklore Series its ISBN#: 978-1-59158-505-3 for ease of ordering at bookstores.

#### 6. **STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE by the graduates of 'Beyond Storytelling 101'**

Do mark these dates in your calendars to come and support our Associate Members who have completed Verena Tay's exclusive workshop 'Beyond Storytelling 101'. *"Touch of Wisdom: Wise Tales from Around the World"*

Dates: Fri 7 Nov & Sat 8 Nov 2008

Time: 8pm

Venue: The Substation (Classrooms upstairs, Level 2)

Please visit our website for more details.

### **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?**

#### 1. **SAS RESOURCES**

The Association is a member of the National Storytelling Network (USA) and their bi-monthly magazine *'The Storyteller'* is available for loan to Ordinary and Associate Members. We also have Doug Lipmann's *'The Image Riding Toolkit'* and *'The Professional Storyteller's Collection'* comprising of audio CDs. Please contact Sheila Wee, our Resource Librarian at [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) if you would like to find out more about this magazine or any other materials available for loan. New issue of *The Storyteller* is here now!

#### 2. **SAS WEBSITE**

Our website has up to date information on storytelling events, benefits offered by our partners as well as contact details for storytellers. Archived newsletters are also available for your perusal. Do visit [www.storytellingsingapore.com](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com) for more information on your Association.

#### 3. **STORYTELLING DINNER-THEATRE EVENING FOR ADULT AUDIENCES**

**"Meat Of The Tongue: Seductive Stories At SupperTime"** was a huge success! It was a sell-out performance with Kamini, Ai Lin and Denise taking storytelling to new levels at The Hall, The Arts House on 24<sup>th</sup> August. The audience loved the novel dinner-theatre style adult storytelling evening and many wanted to know when the Association would be doing something similar again! Channel News Asia's reporter, Nina Varghese was present and interviewed Kamini, filmed the other tellers in action and asked the audience questions about the evening. The segment was aired on CNA's Singapore Tonight programme on 31<sup>st</sup> August. The Association is really very proud to have had air-time on primetime television! We're already brainstorming about what to plan for next year's adult evening of stories...

#### 4. **EXCLUSIVE! MASTER CLASS FOR EXPERIENCED STORYTELLERS**

Each year, the Association organises a Master Class for its more experienced members, and in the past we have had the pleasure of learning from Doug Lipman and Laura Simms. This year, as part of the Festival, the Association organised an exclusive Master Class for its Ordinary and Associate Members; *"Permission to Play: Using Community Coaching to Work with Story Development"* conducted by eminent storyteller from the USA Mr. Kevin Cordi. This seven hour workshop was a hit with participants who were blown away by Kevin's style of mentoring and coaching. Seventeen of us took part in various exercises using stories that we needed to work on

or improve upon, and we watched as these stories morphed and grew and came alive right before our eyes as the time passed; and in the end we were gifted with the option of using our story the way it was before the Class, or the way it was after the Class! But the real value came from learning how to coach your fellow storyteller within a group or community situation, and how it can benefit all of us in that group. We look forward to putting into practice all that we've learnt from Kevin!

## 5. SAS STORYTELLERS VOLUNTEERS SERVICES

As an Association representing storytelling as an art form as well as storytellers in Singapore, we are often asked to provide our services voluntarily. On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September three of our Ordinary Members, Sheila, Dolly and Rosemarie told stories for the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation's afternoon tea honouring MGS scholars. Dolly is an old MGS-girl and jumped at the opportunity to be able to tell to an MGS audience! All three of them enjoyed the afternoon at the TCTF Mansion and shared information with the audience about the Association and what we do. Thank you ladies for giving your time and stories! If anyone else is happy to provide their services voluntarily (should the opportunity arise) do let me know. I'll keep a record of your names for future events.

### SPECIAL REPORT SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL 2008

I have compiled here a mosaic of thoughts from our members who took part in the recent Festival. I hope their honest feedback will inspire you to participate in the next SISF in 2009 and experience storytelling like never before. For some, it is their first time, for others, it is a wonderful continuation of an annual event. Read on to find out what it's like to be a storyteller at an international festival.

Mabel Lee: *"This year I got a chance to share the stage with international storytellers again and it always gives me a thrill. It is an honour and challenge as we are rather 'young' (and I don't mean my age) and will always be judged by our own locals to see if we are worth the fees we charge. This year some of us OMs got into shows for free. What a treat!"*

Jessie Goh: *"This was my first experience taking part at in the Singapore International Storytelling Festival. I only told on Sunday 31st August matinee at the International Storytelling Showcase. Actually I replaced Eth-noh-tec who told on 2 days but couldn't make it on the last day. I had only 2 weeks to prepare! Sheila and Rosemarie gave very helpful feedback at our practices. What I enjoyed most was the team spirit backstage and onstage. Sheila, Rosemarie, Mabel, Dolly and I got along with Kevin Cordi, Jeeva Rangunath, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk like a house on fire. Taking part gave me the opportunity to be up close and personal with great tellers. Every day was a new show with so many stories to enjoy!"*

Rosemarie Somaiah: *"...those of us SAS members who were present at the Russell Lee Fright Night, which featured ghost stories by Alton Chung, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk, and was hosted by Arif Choudhary, had a delightful evening. Having run away from even a mention of ghost stories all my life, I would never have believed myself capable of listening enthralled to ancient Japanese tales of terror, Native American stories of supernatural monsters and traditional American stories of 'Skeleton Woman' and 'Tailey Po' – and all at one sitting. I am now even looking forward to retelling some of the stories! Despite the challenges posed by the venue of the Chambers for the International Storytellers Showcase, the experience was wonderfully fulfilling. The packed shows and responsive audiences were inspiring. The improved publicity had drawn new audiences from all walks of life, including many who had never been to a storytelling show before. It was an affirmation of the efforts of all, when Mr Ramachandran of the Book Council proudly proclaimed to all at the dinner reception that followed the Asian Congress of Storytellers on 2nd Sep 08, that Dolly and Mabel too were now undoubtedly 'international' storytellers! The applause that followed said it all. It is a pity that Mr Rama had not been present when Jessie had performed or he would have, no doubt, have added another name to the list."*

Roger Jenkins: *"The worst moment had to be our matinee for kids. We were told it would be a teenage audience but maybe only 10% were teens. Most were much, much younger and they came totally unprepared for what was a storytelling show. All the tellers were struggling to decide what tale to tell. Mabel deserves a special commendation for braving the lion's den (the kids had been overwrought by some excessive invitations to participate in the previous tale) and for managing to calm them somewhat and delivering her story with remarkable composure and effectiveness in the circumstances. But the experience shows the importance of having a variety of tales up your sleeve."*

Sheila Wee: *"I think the best moment was right at the end, our last event which was Kevin Cordi's master class for the SAS. This eminently practical workshop gave us tools that we could use in coaching as well as bringing our stories along in wonderful and unexpected ways. Coming up a close second though would be Bobby and Sherry's Seminar on Storytelling in Curriculum and their workshops at the congress. They are a great team. Bobby was the entertainment and Sherry was the solid teaching, (though her storytelling is no less entertaining). I particularly liked their use of pattern stories in teaching writing. What was heart warming for me at this year's SISF was to see so many people come to the International Showcase as their first experience of storytelling and to meet so many people at seminars and at the Asian Congress of Storytellers who were keen to use storytelling in all their oh so varied fields of work. Particularly gratifying was to hear that some schools are planning to form storytelling clubs for their pupils. If they can succeed we will be on our way to creating a new generation of storytellers."*

Dolly Leow: *"As usual it was with great trepidation that I went on to tell the story of Pak Pandir for the Festival. Thanks to the usual camaraderie, Mabel, Sheila and I got together at Jessie's place for rehearsals and that really helped boost my confidence. It was also with thanks to Kamini who so willingly shared her story and helped me in shaping it. This was the first time that I really got to mingle with the international story tellers and they were just so warm and so sharing and oh so hilarious. Just being with these "giants" and even Sheila, made me feel so small. I rehearsed two stories and that was it but to them every night they told different stories depending on the audience. I am so proud that I had two stories dedicated to me and there were even three dogs in Kevin's story and he named them Mabel, Jessie and Dolly!!!!!"*

### STORY VEIN

As a child, I used to love the song 'Clementine' and its poignant story of the little girl who drowned in a mining pool because she caught her feet on her incredibly long eye lashes and couldn't be rescued though she blew bubbles with her rosy lips. I remember details of how she drove her ducklings to the water and how her father was a miner and they lived in by a cavern in a canyon. The details stick because it's a story-ballad. A story that is sung. Its telling is in its singing. The melody and the repetitive chorus reinforce certain elements of the story and give it a natural pattern that makes it suitable for memory. There is a whole genre of story-ballads or story-songs in nearly all cultures. Most of the famous long epics were sung in the olden days, and some took nights and days to complete. The Norse legend of "Beowolf" is said to be a long poem that is sung. The Australian ballad of "Waltzing Matilda" is also a story that is sung. In Borneo, the Dayak people sing the stories of their heroes way in to the night. Nearly all songs tell a tale of some form, nearly all song-writers are a teller of some sort and I suppose the next time you listen to a song, think of the singer as a storyteller and the lyrics as a tale!

Happy telling!  
Kamini Ramachandran  
President  
Storytelling Association (Singapore)

"Tales are meant to be told. Storytelling, the oldest of arts, has always been both entertainment and a cultural necessity."

—Jane Yolen

### **11 October 2008**

**From:** Jessie Goh  
**Sent:** 11 October 2008 14:03  
**Subject:** SAS October Newsletter

### **STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE) NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2008**

It's autumn in many places and for us it's the beginning of rainy days and nights heralding in the final quarter of the year. This time of year is always a busy period for parents and teachers but the rain sometimes provides the excuse to curl up with a good book and read late into the night! October is

also about festivals and celebrations like Hari Raya and Deepavali, and the visiting and eating that always accompanies it! And of course, this month ends with Halloween!

October for me has always been about pulling out the ghost story books and sitting with my children and reading tales of witches, wizards, Jack-O-Lanterns and creating that spooky atmosphere which they anticipate. I also tell them old folktales about Will-O-The-Wisps and how they lure you into swamplands and trap you there for the Boggles to feast upon; popular urban legends about haunted highways and classics like Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Children love listening to scary stories, they love the build-up and the hair-raising parts in the story, but we must always be careful to create a safe space when we tell scary stories. Always let the child know that this is just a story and end the session with something happy to 'break the spell' of the spookiness created and to distract them.

As we near the close of the year, it is time to renew memberships. SAS membership year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year. Membership for Associates and Ordinary Members must be renewed by 31 January 2009 to qualify for waiver of the \$10 registration fee. Please Note: Current membership expires on 31 December 2008 and any renewals after 31st January 2009 will incur the \$10 registration fee. Please visit [http://www.storytellingsingapore.com/membership.htm#Join\\_SAS](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com/membership.htm#Join_SAS) for details on how to renew your membership.

I welcome feedback from you and please feel free to contact me at [president@storytellingsingapore.com](mailto:president@storytellingsingapore.com) or on 92732383 with your ideas and suggestions.

### **STORYTELLING EVENTS**

#### **1. FREE STORYTELLING FOR CHILDREN**

Come to SAFRA Toa Payoh for free storytelling by tellers from ASN from 3.00 – 3.30pm held on the first Sunday of every month until December 2008. For more details contact [rosemarie@asianstorytellingnetwork.com](mailto:rosemarie@asianstorytellingnetwork.com) or call SAFRA on 63554506 or view: [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#SAFRA\\_\(Toa\\_Payoh\)](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#SAFRA_(Toa_Payoh)).

#### **2. FREE TALK BY FRENCH STORYTELLER ABBI PATRIX**

Well known French storyteller Abbi Patrix will be in Singapore as a guest of the French Embassy and will be giving a free talk: *"The art of storytelling, a surprising resurgence around the world, from Europe to China"* on Saturday 25 October at 6.00pm at The Library @ The Esplanade. *(more information will be e-mailed to all members soon)*

#### **3. STORYTELLING FOR ADULTS**

MoonShadow Stories presents *"A Matter Of Evil"* – an evening dedicated to spooky tales, tales of the supernatural, and all things evil in nature.... What better way to enjoy All Hallows Eve than by coming and listening to these stories on Fri & Sat 31<sup>st</sup> Oct & 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at The Substation. For more information and bookings please visit: <http://moonshadowstories.org>

#### **4. WISDOM TALES: WISE TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE by the graduates of 'Beyond Storytelling 101'**

Do mark these dates in your calendars to come and support our Associate Members who have completed Verena Tay's exclusive workshop 'Beyond Storytelling 101'. *"Wisdom Tales: Wise Tales from Around the World"*

Dates: Fri 7 Nov & Sat 8 Nov 2008

Time: 8pm

Venue: The Substation (Classrooms upstairs, Level 2)

Please visit [http://www.storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Wisdom\\_Tales](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Wisdom_Tales) for details.

#### **5. STORYTELLING WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS *last few places left!***

Keep these dates free for *"An Introduction To Storytelling"* workshop specially targeted at those who are interested in storytelling but don't know where to start.

Dates: Saturday 8 November 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Saturday 15 November 10.00 am – 1.00 pm & 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Rates: Associate Members \$270  
Friends Members \$300  
Non-Members \$310

Facilitator: Sheila Wee of Asian Storytelling Network

Enquiries & Bookings: [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) or call 62555007

Please visit: <http://storytellingsingapore.com/courses.htm#Beginners>

## 6. **OH CARDS WORKSHOP**

Find out about how to use OH cards ([www.OH-cards.com](http://www.OH-cards.com)) with trainer Moritz Egetmeyer. The Asian Storytelling Network is organising 2 separate workshops: 1 full day session on Nov 4, 2008 (for therapists and counsellors) and 2 half day sessions on Nov 6, 2008 (for teachers, educators, parents and interested individuals). For more details email [admin@asianstorytellingnetwork.com](mailto:admin@asianstorytellingnetwork.com) or call Vinod at 63522009 or 97886975 or visit [www.asianstorytellingnetwork.com](http://www.asianstorytellingnetwork.com). Discount on fees for SAS members for the 2 half day sessions on Nov 6, 2008.

### **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?**

#### 1. **SAS RESOURCES**

The Association is a member of the National Storytelling Network (USA) and their bi-monthly magazine *'The Storyteller'* is available for loan to Ordinary and Associate Members. We also have Doug Lipmann's *'The Image Riding Toolkit'* and *'The Professional Storyteller's Collection'* comprising of audio CDs. Please contact Sheila Wee, our Resource Librarian at [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) if you would like to find out more about this magazine or any other materials available for loan. New issue of *The Storyteller* is here now!

#### 2. **SAS WEBSITE**

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#### 3. **SAS SOCIAL**

Our last SAS Social gathering for the year "An Evening of Sexy Stories" was held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. For the first time, the SAS opened the Social to non-members and Friend category members. We had a great turn out of members as well as curious non-members who came to find out what storytelling was all about (and many joined the SAS on the spot!) and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. As usual we gathered early to meet and chat and eat the wonderful food prepared by our members! Ai Lin got us all started with group activities that helped to break the ice and get everyone in the mood to tell and listen to stories. Kamini, Ai Lin, Mabel, Dolly, Rosemarie, Kordial, Nancy, Joo Hymn and Heather shared stories.

### **STORY VEIN**

Each year I tell my children the story of Diwali, better known as 'The Festival of Lights'. Did you know that Diwali always falls on the darkest night of the year? The story of Diwali is the final part of the lengthy epic, *Ramayana*; when Prince Rama finally returns to his home after fourteen years of exile in the forest, he is welcomed by all the citizens of the city of Ayodhya. As it is the darkest night of the year, they light oil lamps and pave the way from the forest to the palace gates to light the way for Rama, his devoted wife Sita, his faithful brother Lakshman and his loyal soldier Hanuman. Five thousand years later, Rama's homecoming, his defeat of the tyrannical ten-headed Ravana and his subsequent coronation is celebrated by Hindus all over the world with plenty of light to symbolise the triumph of good over evil.

But there is another date nine days before Diwali that is celebrated by married women predominantly in the North Indian community. Karva Chauth is when wives fast an entire day for the longevity and safety of their husbands. Before they break their fast in the evening, they must do two vital things; listen to the story of *karva chauth* itself and be able to sight the moon in the sky! Women usually gather in the evening where a storyteller (an elder in the family or a temple priest) will recount the tale of how once upon a time Queen Veerawati accidentally broke her fast when she saw the glow of a

false moon (a glow cast by fire) and her husband, the King, died as a result. But Veerawati listened to the advice of Goddess Parvati and begged for forgiveness and she was given the chance to keep her fast under strict rules, and since she abided by them, the King was revived. Today, this story is recounted many, many times all over the world on the evening of *karwa chauth* October 17<sup>th</sup> before the women go out and look at the moon and pray for their husband's longevity.

I find it amazing to know that the same story will be told on this same day and listened to by so many women all over the world. I will be one of them this year.

Happy telling!  
Kamini Ramachandran  
President  
Storytelling Association (Singapore)

"If you don't know the trees you may be lost in the forest, but if you don't know the stories you may be lost in life."

—Anonymous Siberian Elder

## **11 November 2008**

**From:** Jessie Goh  
**Sent:** 11 November 2008 06:56  
**Subject:** SAS November Newsletter

### **STORYTELLING ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE) NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2008**

We're all breathing a sigh of relief that exams are over and the school holidays are just around the corner! It's time to celebrate! And there are many reasons for the Association to celebrate.... all our Associate Member participants of the exclusive workshop '*Beyond Storytelling 101*' graduated with a two night public performance, '*Wisdom Tales*'. They shared stories of magic fish that grant wishes; boys who sell wisdom not by quantity, but by quality; blind men who see with their ears and listen with their hearts; mystical crones that sell books of wisdom in return for bags of gold; stubborn seeds that refuse to grow; generous kings that sacrifice their own flesh so the poor get their daily gold; and words of wisdom spoken from the mouths of babes when common sense fails the adult mind.

We celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with an evening dedicated to touching stories of justice, dignity and rights, '*Tales of Hope and Spirit*'. At the end of World War II, on December 10th 1948, the 48 member states of the United Nations (UN) voted to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm> Each year, International Human Rights Day is observed on December 10. Join the Association and come celebrate for FREE on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

We celebrate the tremendous success of "*An Introduction To Storytelling*" beginners workshop! Sheila Wee of the Asian Storytelling Network has had overwhelming response to this workshop specially targeted at those who are interested in storytelling but don't know where to start.

I hope the year ends with more reasons to celebrate!

I welcome feedback from you and please feel free to contact me at [president@storytellingsingapore.com](mailto:president@storytellingsingapore.com) or on 92732383 with your ideas and suggestions.

### **STORYTELLING EVENTS**

#### **1. FREE STORYTELLING FOR CHILDREN**

Come to SAFRA Toa Payoh for free storytelling by tellers from ASN from 3.00 – 3.30pm held on the first Sunday of every month until December 2008. For more details contact [rosemarie@asianstorytellingnetwork.com](mailto:rosemarie@asianstorytellingnetwork.com) or call SAFRA on 63554506 or view: [http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#SAFRA\\_\(Toa\\_Payoh\)](http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#SAFRA_(Toa_Payoh))

## **2. FREE! SPECIAL STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE**

The Association is proud to present *'Tales of Hope & Spirit'* on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November to celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Do come and join us at The Substation for an 8pm start to storytelling by seven of our Ordinary and Associate Members. This event is open to the public aged 16 years and above and is a FREE performance! So hurry and book your seats at [iwanttickets@storytellingsingapore.com](mailto:iwanttickets@storytellingsingapore.com). Please visit <http://storytellingsingapore.com/events.htm#Hope & Spirit> more details.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

As we near the close of the year, it is time to renew memberships. SAS membership year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year. Membership for Associates and Ordinary Members must be renewed by 31 January 2009 to qualify for waiver of the \$10 registration fee. Please Note: Current membership expires on 31 December 2008 and any renewals after 31st January 2009 will incur the \$10 registration fee. Please visit [http://www.storytellingsingapore.com/membership.htm#Join\\_SAS](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com/membership.htm#Join_SAS) for details on how to renew your membership.

## **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?**

### **1. SAS RESOURCES new items available!**

The Association is a member of the National Storytelling Network (USA) and their bi-monthly magazine *'The Storyteller'* is available for loan to Ordinary and Associate Members. We also have Doug Lipmann's *'The Image Riding Toolkit'* and *'The Professional Storyteller's Collection'* comprising of audio CDs. Please contact Sheila Wee, our Resource Librarian at [sheilamwee@yahoo.com](mailto:sheilamwee@yahoo.com) if you would like to find out more about this magazine or any other materials available for loan. New issue of *The Storyteller* is here now! New! Abbi Patrix's wonderful live recording dvd of his English storytelling performance *"To The End Of The World"* as well as several other recordings in French are available for loan.

### **2. SAS WEBSITE**

Our website has up to date information on storytelling events, benefits offered by our partners as well as contact details for storytellers. Archived newsletters are also available for your perusal at [http://storytellingsingapore.com/about\\_us.htm#Newsletter Archives](http://storytellingsingapore.com/about_us.htm#Newsletter_Archives)

Do visit [www.storytellingsingapore.com](http://www.storytellingsingapore.com) for more information on your Association.

### **3. SAS SOCIAL 2009 DATES**

Each year the Association organizes three Social dates for Ordinary and Associate Members to gather and share stories and activities related to storytelling. Please mark these dates for your 2009 calendar:

- i) Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 8pm
- ii) Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 8pm
- iii) Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 8pm

### **4. VISIT BY FRENCH STORYTELLER ABBI PATRIX**

Well known French storyteller Abbi Patrix was in Singapore recently as a guest of the French Embassy and gave a free public talk on *"The art of storytelling, a surprising resurgence around the world, from Europe to China"* on Saturday 25 October at The Library @ The Esplanade. Abbi entertained the audience with his mesmerising and soothing style of storytelling. He took us all on a worldwide journey of different tales using simple instruments and his voice. It was great to see so many SAS members in the audience and some of us ended the evening with Abbi under the stars eating chilli crab and cereal prawns! Abbi is one of the founders of the Federation for European Storytellers (FEST) <http://storytelling.eu/> and [www.swisstales.ch](http://www.swisstales.ch) for more details. Abbi also kindly gave the Association his English DVD for our resource library!

### **5. WISDOM TALES: WISE TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE by the graduates of 'Beyond Storytelling 101'**

The 7 ladies who took part in this wonderful performance charmed the audience and enchanted all who came for the two nights' of storytelling! I was there on both nights and the room was

packed with newcomers and supporters who listened to Helen Tan, Tan Joo Hymn , Safiah, Nancy Leppard, Juriah Atan, Karen Lee and Dee Palanisamy as they weaved their intricate web of wise tales. Congratulations to all of them for completing the exclusive course '*Beyond Storytelling 101*' and for taking to the stage to a sold-out performance! The Association thanks Verena Tay for conceptualizing this special course and for her tireless efforts in coaching and mentoring the participants.

### STORY VEIN

I was interviewed for a radio talk show recently and was asked how I got inspired to become a storyteller. It made me think back to my grandparents and how they were both natural storytellers, and how as a child, I was surrounded by their tales and tellings. Last week I was a judge at a community development centre's storytelling competition. But this was a competition with a difference, the participants were all seniors aged 45 and above! There were twenty-six of them and the eldest was in his mid-eighties! All of them were so eager to share their stories and some of them truly brought back memories of my grandparents.

The older generation have so many stories to share; real-life stories, cultural stories, fables from their land before emigration, personal stories and more. All of them are storytellers, we see them in groups at coffee-shops, as chatty taxi drivers, aunties who clean at school and we see them in our own families as our parents and grandparents. But all they lack is a listening audience. Nobody has time nowadays to sit with an older person and listen to them tell us about their life.

This brings to mind the classic tale of '*Tell It To The Walls*'. An old woman was ill-treated by her family and nobody would listen to her or allow her to talk. All her pain and hurt and grievances grew inside her, unsaid, unspoken, and she began to get fat. This became a matter of ridicule by her family members. In the end, she left the family home and walked for ages until she came to a derelict house with no roof. She found herself standing in front of a wall and unable to contain her woes anymore she spoke to the wall and when she had finished, the wall slowly crumbled and crashed to the ground. The old woman turned to the other wall and began to tell it all her worries, and when she had finished, that wall too crumbled and fell. One by one, she told the walls all that was in her heart, and one by one the walls crumbled. She realized she not only felt lighter in mood but also in body as well, for she had lost all the weight she had gained in her misery!

There are many stories about silence, about keeping it all stored within oneself, of untold and unshared stories. One that comes to mind is '*A Story Not Told, A Song Not Sung*'. Again, it has the same theme of a woman who cannot tell all the stories or sing all the songs inside her. She used to sit and tell her husband these stories, she used to sit and sing for him, but now he has no time to listen and they quarrel most of the time. So the poor stories and songs struggle to come out of her body and after being suppressed for many years, one night as the woman sleeps soundly with her mouth wide open, the stories and songs escape! They turn into a rich robe and grand slippers and place themselves by the entrance. Of course when the husband asks his wife to whom the robe and slippers belong to, she replies she does not know! He suspects his wife and walks off to sleep in the village temple. She cries herself to sleep that night.

Now, in that village, when all the clay-lamps and candles are put out for the night, all the tiny flames flicker and fly off to the temple where they gather and chitter and chatter and gossip among themselves. The sleeping husband wakes up and hears about the new robe and slippers in a particular house being untold stories and unsung songs! He goes back home, gently wakes up his wife, they sit by moonlight and she tells him all her stories, and he listens; she sings him all her songs, and he joins in.

Our stories will always find a way to come out and be heard!

Keep telling

Kamini Ramachandran  
President  
Storytelling Association (Singapore)

"It has generally been assumed that fairy tales were first created for children and are largely the domain of children. But nothing could be further from the truth."

—Jack Zipes