

## **MR. JEFF'S SUMMER FUN SHOWS**

### **9 July Sessions @ 9:30am for 40 minutes**

**Tuesdays** July 7, 14, 21 - **Little Kidz Tales** (K-3 grade)

**Wednesdays** July 8, 15, 22 - **Folktales** (3rd grade & up)

**Thursdays** July 9, 16, 23 - **Hawai'i Spookies** (4th grade & up)

## **JEFF REFLECTS ON THE SHOWS**

**Program Audience** Initially, this was for quarantined kids in Oahu's Summer Fun program (I've done shows island-wide for 30 years.) Zoom could serve them all! Univ. of Hawaii Outreach agreed to host me... NONE of Oahu's parks signed up (could not or were not interested in tech. !!?) So anybody could sign up to watch (25-50 a show did.) All shows were recorded (& then I edited them.)

**Program Preparations:** I took a short walk each morning. I checked in at 9am, showed ideas to the techy (from experiments using computer's Photo Booth program for feedback.) I made little adjustments. Shows started at 9:30 & ran for 40 minutes (target.) I got some feedback notes too (see below.)

### **TUES 7/7- PARTICIPATION The Bird with The Hurt Wing**

Big Big Fat Fat Frog (13 min) <https://youtu.be/U4oQEtkgfeE>

The Bird With the Hurt Wing (33:30) <https://youtu.be/tHOKJrAK8o>

**Big Big Fat Fat Frog** is a 'warm-up' story used to 'get physical'. I hope you do!

'**Bird with Hurt Wing**' opened my Participation Workshop in Eric Miller's (Chennai, India) Virtual Storytelling Zoom Festival (May 15-16, continually for 24 hours)... with lots of asides & instruction & laughing. That session was in the Mosaic Format (not Webinar). I like seeing & hearing everyone (in that session, I told someone to mute- we heard them talking to their kid (distracting.) So here in this show, in Webinar format, I perform the story AS IF I could hear the responses. I just expected & insisted, & throughout & repeatedly I left room & mimed audience responses. It was all natural light. Behind me, I used the mask wall on my lanai (deck.) Also, I slid on a **bench** to change my distance to the camera- closer for facial close-ups & farther away to allow hands to show composing angles & shapes (wide shot), and to place my head to one side or in a corner. As 3 dimensional performers in a 2 dimensional Zoom rectangle, we need to pay attention to visual composition now.

**Chat Note** : A Hawaiian Jim Carey. Amazing and very funny faces and gestures. Interesting idea to add motions to a story and have children imitate them. Facial expression is so important for Zoom and Jeff, you've mastered that!

**EDITING:** Under Quarantine, I started to use iMovie (new to me, familiar in many regards to Final Cut Pro, but simpler.) I changed the 'saturation' to make hues deeper. Still, Zoom here looks a bit grainy. I separated the two tales - both performances were OK. Simple credits to end. These iMovie changes make uploading shows to YouTube A LOT (LOOOOT) SSLLOOWWWEEERRR!

### **TUES 7/14: SILLY N SPOOKY (45 min.)**

Get On The Bus (17:40 min.) [https://youtu.be/\\_alGFx7u1YA](https://youtu.be/_alGFx7u1YA)

Dapper Dan (11:20 min.) <https://youtu.be/Znqmpj4IUis>

The Secret Weapon (14:30 min.) [http://youtu.be/\\_aDgyj6csA0](http://youtu.be/_aDgyj6csA0)

I used the Yellow mask wall in my living room, my three lights & my bench. It sounds a bit echoey. I opened with 'Get on the Bus', then 'Dapper Dan', & 'Secret Weapon'. I turned off the lighting on the yellow wall behind to go 'spooky' for Secret Weapon' (little difference- Sunlight is strong!) Never mind- I effected change of lighting (mood) in editing. The performances were good.

These stories are old friends & It felt good to tell them.

**EDITING:** I changed/deepened colorations (changing temperature (color tinge), saturation, & light/dark contrast sliders.) I tired wrestling with poor tools to correct sound (my tales have a wide

range of dynamics.) In Secret Weapon, I found the audio 'cheap effects' (& added echos) & 'preset' video looks. AHA!

So I went through Secret Weapon again. Zoom is a rough tool for recording & so is imovie for editing. Fun & simple, I'll use what's given (& in future shows!)

### **WED 7/15- BEAUTY, DEVIL, & SHEPHERD (33:20)**

<https://youtu.be/Gc1zbh2CjqM>

This tale took up the entire session, performed on the porch with masks behind.

When the 'Devil' takes the 'Beautiful Girl' to Hell, I moved (carrying the camera facing into my shirt) to a nearby **closet**, darkened with black drapes. A hand-held clamp light created some good effects (I think.) Later, I returned to the lanai setting to finish the tale. I totally invented the poem the shepherd says to scare away the Devil from the First King (of 3, right?). I delight myself!

**MARY:** Just a quick note to say how much I enjoyed the Girl, Devil, & Shepherd. Not only are you animated & fun to watch, but you managed to make some contemporary allusions that were quite nimble! I love how you use the Zoom frame, moving from one set to the other- brilliant! I want to ask you about the character of the devil -- do you get pushback for using stories with a Devil? You even mentioned 'hell' (perhaps here on the East Coast we are too politically correct?). I'd like your take on this --

**JEFF** The Devil, of course, has a central part in biblical traditions. Here in Hawaii, only once did a woman complain to me about telling a tale with a Devil. 'Life is not like that.' I referred her to the front page of the newspaper. It would be hard to tell this tale without a Devil or without saying 'Hell.' Yeah, 'Hell' is a 'whoah' word, but it's not too bad. It does get a rise out of kids. 'Get off my back & go to hell'- how DARING! It's healthy to let some frank fresh air into discomfort, yes? Please note: the story is about FOOLING the scary Devil. He's outwitted by the spunky girl (I forgot a line, "that sharp tongued attitude helped her now") to get her way with the Devil & escape Hell. And my favorite part: "Do I believe a bad man can turn good? Does a person who's done bad things deserve a second chance? Let my philosophy inform my actions." And our Shepherd outwits the Devil & an Evil King changes. I stand behind that anytime. Thanks for the question. Thanks for tuning in & for writing.

**EDITING** I used the built-in colorations throughout (& a few sound effects) to effect the image. The Hell (closet) scene: Really GREAT in a grotesque way.

**BIG THOUGHT:** I'm using the iMovie program to manipulate the Zoom documentary footage to effect & extend the tales to create & effect a storytelling EVENT!

### **TUES 7/21- TEACHING TALES**

Two Aesop's Fables (11:00) <https://youtu.be/8K0Dmk93CRI>

The Freedom Bird (17:00) <https://youtu.be/6tl36MtRRxo>

Two Birds & A Starfish (5:30) <https://youtu.be/Sd8QAkHUOew>

I used the yellow mask living room wall behind me, entered wearing a mask for the first time (to model good social practices, right?)

**PATTY** I love the way you transition from one story to the next with that fluttering of your hands to bring a story to a close. Beautiful! I also enjoyed your funny faces & voices. My favorite tales were the last two because I thought a small child could learn from the wisdom in them. The "mean man" (Freedom Bird) story was a bit scary & abstract for younger children, though I could see how it relates to the deep need for freedom & the continuation of it...especially these days. I suggest that one be reserved for older kids & adults.

A question: Some of Aesop's Fables don't end as well as the Wolf & Crane did. Was that one of those fables? if so, did you change the ending? Well, no matter what you tell, it's very engaging & I like the way you use motions & words repeated with just your mouth moving- it gives young children a chance to really participate, when they couldn't otherwise.

**JEFF** Yes, you're right: The 2 Aesops & last 2 are best for little kids (like me). And The Freedom Bird is more sophisticated (for older kids) (like me). Yep. I'm doing a live show & a recording too, so here I strut out tales which haven't been recorded before. So that's the mix you saw today. **Aesops-** Two Boys & Bear - that's the original version. Wolf & Crane.- Aesop ends with crane asking, "What about my reward?" Wolf answers, "your reward is you can say you survived putting your head inside the mouth of a wolf!" BUT in a storytelling workshop in China, a student invented a

new ending (a kiss) which has stuck with me. The QUESTION: to trust the Wolf (or not) is the most interesting part. And sometimes the wolf argues, "Wolves have teeth, but wolves have a heart too. And wolves raise babies"...(in editing, I actually inserted that sentence earlier in the tale from when I actually said it at the end in the video). This intensifies the Crane's dilemma to trust (or not). It's really fun to do live with kids- they take sides! You likely know Aesop's story of the man who trusts & frees a snake & then gets bit. "You knew I was a snake." It illustrates the opposite lesson: Never Trust a Snake! I appreciate your note Patty- thanks - really.

### **WED 7/22- NW PRINCE & JACK & EVIL MOUNTAIN SPIRIT**

The Prince (Northwest Coast, 19:20) <https://youtu.be/hiOraumAnrU>  
Jack & The Evil Mountain Spirit (37:00) [https://youtu.be/H\\_JkckwyMB8](https://youtu.be/H_JkckwyMB8)

**EDITING:** I told the first NW Coast tale at the outdoor dining table with the wooden mask arch behind. I really used the iMovie's preset visual effects to contour the tone & change of the tale's scenes. Hammy? Perhaps, but storytelling is part entertainment & this archetypal tale seemed (on my tongue & editing senses) to lend itself to dramatic colorations (going black & white negatives as bones reassemble muscles, skin & hair)... WOW! I went through it a 3rd time, tweaking & making sure of choices. I REALLY LIKE it! Take a look!

**JACK & EVIL A FIRST:** Today, my iphone became the 2nd camera for Jack & Evil Spirit. It started at the porch dining table, but when Jack flies behind the princess into the mountain, I went to the hall closet (in black drapes) using the iphone on its side. Yes, of course, I tried it with the techy before the show. Every light was too bright, so we used the shady natural light. The phone's frame is closer & smaller somehow, so I wedged myself into closet corners & cavorted with gruesome faces & confusing hands for the Evil Mtn. Spirit. I went back & forth for each of Jack's 3 trips to the closet cave. Technically, the 1st trip was a little awkward, (edited it out) but the rest worked GREAT! And I had Jack say, 'wear a mask to help defeat the evil spirit' here & there. I like that.

**LUCINDA:** Whew. I woke my cat up numerous times as I gasped, shouted, did the participation for the NW Coast Prince & for Jack. Couldn't hold still. Jeff, I really appreciated how you used the medium. Character in lower corner of the viewer's screen. Hands coming close, face coming close. Cool to have the black space for inside the mountain. I love that you just 'let 'er rip!' You're so in the story so we are too. Great to bring in current events/situations/life. Old Tales Live!

**JEFF** I ran way long, but the SCEP host/ producer was not upset & he liked the tales. It FELT good, though new tricks in tech always come with bumps. I really like BOTH tales. The 1st Prince tale I rarely tell. The 2nd (Jack) is an old friend. I audio recorded it at Mana'o Radio on Maui (1st session of many with local musicians- the CD won a national award.) I wanted to get it on video (1st time.) Yeah, Intense! I liked the 2 camera experiment... less cumbersome. The short dead space between locations I've edited out.

**KC** Loved all 3 Wednesday sessions, but today's totally blew me away!! The new transitions, using 2 sources, are great. One suggestion: turn off video when you leave one for the other .... a virtual fade to black. Great stuff.

**LUCINDA:** Glad the host-producer let you go over time! Your old friend the Jack tale deserved to come out fully. I keep thinking of the NW Coast story—I had chills literally when the blue woman & the gold man crossed over the Prince. Seemed to me the center or peak of the tale. It's quite a story. THANK YOU for your efforts and fine work

**JEFF NW Coast-** I heard it once, told by Gioia Timpanelli at a Robert Bly Retreat- it stuck. Classic European archetypes entwined in Northwest Coast setting. Huge tale. When Sun & Moon switch sides (like the nervous system on the back of our necks) = Rejuvenation! There's Magic in that. This exchange fulfills Zoom as a storytelling medium, yes?

### **THURS 7/23- PELE TALES**

Kamapua'a & Pele (12:30) <https://youtu.be/TAOaEhEaxSE>  
Three True Pele Tales (28:30) <https://youtu.be/nJqz5KLNyRg>

**The set looked good today!** Zoom can be dynamic. From the start, I chose to sit on a bench, but that bench was old. It started to creak under me as I pushed it around. So I found a new bench. It's taller, so I scrambled for a box to raise the camera higher just before the show. And yep, same 3 lights: a small LED light under my chin (spooky when I get close to the computer camera), the LED

light on my right, the yellowish light (bigger older bulb type) on my left. I moved that one askew early on (don't know why, but I liked the look.) I try to move my eyes from Big Screen (seeing the visual composition) to the green dot of the camera- then I'm looking at the audience, an Intense effect. I could do it better. And yes, I enjoy scooting along the bench to change distances for characters in the scenes.

**ALSO** In other shows in my office 'dark cave' set, the camera's automatic light monitor had trouble with my changing face moving close & far... it would flare whiter for a second as it adjusted. So today, I covered the wood wall to my left with a black curtain so EVERYTHING behind me was black= less distraction. It helped.

I told this 1st Legend to share with a new storytelling friend in Java, Uncle Gery (some may recall him: he RoCKED his story at the end of the Indonesian session in NSN's June Virtual Story Party.) In Java, he asked me about the "fish- with-nose-of-pig' (the Humuhumunukunua'pua'a.) How did he know about it?

The others are new(er) collected Pele Tales. I hope Kate Schurish was listening. She gave me the Pig Hunter's tale. And both Saddle Road stories use sound instead of words as we get into the tales.

**LUCINDA** Incredible work, Jeff. Every bit. I loved that you made sure we knew these are true stories & what legends are & that in your world you take your Goddess seriously. Long live Pele. Be well.

**REGINA** Fabulous use of the medium. Bravo. But on the Saddle Road, they should have picked Pele up. No respect! I LOVED your shirt, man! Perfect.

### **WHO IS 'JEFF GERE' ANYWAY?**

Jeff Gere has been telling stories to Summer Fun kids for 30 years (27 as the Drama Specialist in Parks Dept. & 5 more years after he retired (end of 2014.)

He created & ran Talk Story Festival, Hawaii's largest & oldest storytelling celebration (27 years), story TV & radio shows. He toured internationally (in pre-virus life) & organized the International Sessions for the NSN Virtual Conference (June)... and the July ZOOM shows are edited up! Please enjoy them.

Comments? Sure- [jeffgere1031@gmail.com](mailto:jeffgere1031@gmail.com)