

**REPORT FROM THE BNN COMMITTEE MEETING AND THE BNN MEETING,
Miami, 20 and 22 October 2016**

1. At the BNN meeting which took place on 22 October 2016 in Miami, the following **BNN Committee members** were elected for the period 2016-2020:

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I will be sending the updated list of the Committee members to be put onto the ISFNR / BNN website as soon as we learn who the new administrator will be.

2. The BNN Committee decided to amend **article 8 of the BNN statute** with the additional sentence that the president of the BNN can be elected for a maximum of two successive terms. The proposed article 8 in the Statute will now read as follows (changes highlighted in yellow):

»Committee members are elected for a term of four years. Existing members may put themselves forward for re-elections. The position of a chairperson can be occupied by the same person for a maximum period of two successive terms.»

3. The BNN Committee has decided to launch **an award for the best student's paper** in the field of belief narratives. The award will be given every second year, that is at the interim ISFNR conference and at the ISFNR congress. Mare, Kaarina and Tok will prepare the Call for Applications, along with details about the award, that is the requirements, criteria, profile of the students involved, nature of the award, and so on. We have envisioned the winning paper being published in *Folklore, Electronic Journal of Folklore* (Tartu), with perhaps some additional benefits for the winner.

4. We strongly feel that **the BNN website** at the ISFNR website (as well as that of the ISFNR itself) should be improved significantly. Our belief is that it should become a site where every scholar interested in belief narratives should be able to get useful information related to belief narrative research, where ongoing scholarly debates can take place, and where users can find other interesting data and information related to belief narratives . (It was suggested, for instance, that links could be given to recent newspaper articles on the appearance of supernatural beings). It was also felt that this could **be** a site where scholarly questions could be placed and discussed etc.. Information related to the BNN would also be published there. As far as we know, the improvement of the ISFNR website is one of the priorities of Sadhana Naithani, the new ISFNR president, and we will be in contact with her with regard to the form and structure of the BNN website.

5. Kaarina volunteered to take care of the **regular update of cv-s and bibliographies** on the BNN website. She will soon invite all the BNN members to (again) submit their updated cv-s and bibliographies and will then send them, adapted to the

common sample, to the BNN / ISFNR website. Putting the data on the web might take a while, though, due to the transition process of the presidency, as it is still not clear who the new administrator will be.

6. During the ISFNR conference it was announced that the next interim ISFNR conference will take place in Sicily in June/July 2018. As the date of the interim conference more or less overlaps with the time scheduled for the announced **BNN human-animal relationship conference** which was supposed to take place in Estonia, the Committee members decided to hold the BNN conference on human-animal relationships *within the frame* of the ISFNR interim conference, rather than to organise it as a separate event in Estonia. Possible additional panels on other belief related topics within the same conference will be discussed once we get to know the overall theme of the interim ISFNR conference.

7. The members of the Committee were also of opinion that the publication of the papers presented at the BNN conferences should receive more encouragement, material being published with in the form of the conference proceedings, or as a section within a journal (for example one of the ISFNR journals). The Committee will make additional efforts in trying to assure one of these options.

8. Dilip Kumar Kalita, the new member of the BNN Committee, has offered to host the **BNN conference in February 2019 in Asam, India**, and this offer has been gratefully accepted. The topic(s) of the conference will be announced in due course. Publication of the conference proceedings is also planned.

9. We decided to hold an independant BNN conference every second year (in the years when ISFNR conferences are not held), as well as session within each ISFNR congress and ISFNR interim conference. This means one BNN conference a year; our feeling is that more than one conference per year should not be encouraged.

The **current plan for the future BNN conferences** is as follows:

- October (December?) **2017** (the exact date is still somewhat under discussion): a joint conference of the BNN and the Charms Committee in Budapest
- **2018**: a BNN conference within the framework of the interim ISFNR conference in Sicily;
- February **2019**: the BNN conference in Asam;

- **2020:** the BNN conference within the framework of the next ISFNR congress in Zagreb.

All BNN members are encouraged to volunteer to organise a BNN conference. We are now booked up until 2020, but please feel welcome to let us know about your readiness to organise a conference. Please make sure, however, that it is well in advance. The themes of the conferences are open for discussion and people are free to suggest any topic. Here are a few of the possible themes that have so far cropped up in the discussions of the BNN Committee members:

- New-Age belief narratives
- Legends and rites about secular leaders/ heroes (pop stars, politicians, sport stars, artists ...)
- Belief narratives in the new media/How media influences belief narrative
- Belief narratives associated with construction projects (hotels, highways and dams)
- The reformation of old religious phenomena / concepts
- Narratives about pop stars
- Urban sites of pilgrimage/ghosts
- Romantic adaptations of belief narratives in literature and film.
- Belief narratives relating to cursing or enchantment.

Robin Gwyndaf also suggested the topic of Rites of Passage in narratives.

As always, all BNN members are most welcome to suggest their own ideas about the future activities of the BNN and to comment on the decisions taken at the BNN meeting.

Best wishes,

BNN Committee:

Willem de Blécourt, Terry Gunnell, Anders Gustavsson, Desmond Kharmawphlang, Fumihiko Kobayashi, Mare Kõiva, Kaarina Koski, Dilip Kumar Kalita, Mirjam Mencej, Maria Ines Palleiro, Tok Thompson and Ülo Valk.

