



# DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

## StoryMasters Celebrate Pi Day

by Margaret Mitchell

The March 14 StoryMasters meeting fell on Pi Day, providing ample opportunities for members and guests to engage in word play and references to pies, both sweet and savory. The afternoon's speakers delivered a delectable variety of deliciousness. Here is a taste:

**Antoinette Byron** delivered a tutorial, *3 Seconds, That's All It Takes*, on how to make our presentations sparkle. Her talk was based on the premise that words convey 7% of our message, while audience perception (38%) and body language (55%) convey the rest. She demonstrated that the first 3 seconds of any talk are critical for making a positive first impression on your audience. Appropriate body language and personal appearance reinforce the message and impression. Antoinette's polished communication skills made this a convincing and helpful presentation.

To celebrate her father's birthday, **Catherine Magruder** presented a tribute to him titled *My Dad*. With utmost tenderness and respect, Catherine described James Taylor Magruder, born on March 11, 1922. A ravenous reader and writer, he loved baseball, football, car racing and tennis and enjoyed watching sports on TV with his daughter. He was a graphologist, requesting handwriting samples of Catherine's teachers so he could advise her on how to deal with them. He served his country during WWII and was a POW, experiences which profoundly changed his outlook on life. He forbade Catherine to watch *The Great Escape* because he said its premise of repeated escapes was a lie. A lifetime of fighting fires without proper equipment took its toll. He died on February 8, 2009, leaving behind a daughter who had many memories and no unfinished business with her father.

**Camille Miller**, in *Never Again*, reflected on a time when she felt compelled to take action to protect a girl named Ruby whose mother physically abused her. Despite the weighty topic, Camille employed touches of humor and her skills as a storyteller and wordsmith to maintain a light touch throughout her presentation. Her inspiring message was clear: "When it comes to the well-being of another human being, we must speak out. We must cry out for justice."

In *Füssen and the Lute*, **Pieter Severynen** traced the development of the musical instrument we know today as the lute. The instrument began as the Arabic oud and was introduced to Spain by the Moors during their conquest of that country. Over time and hundreds of years, it travelled to Füssen, Germany, where artisans found work crafting the pear-shaped instrument and transporting it by donkey to Italy. The emergence of this graceful instrument against an historical backdrop of wars and violence made for interesting and entertaining listening.

**Bharat Sangekar** delivered a contest speech titled *Corporate Dog*. In this satirically humorous presentation, he compared his life as a laptop-bound, suited, white collar, corporate employee; to the life of his 10-year old son, an avid player of the video game *Death Run*; and a hard working Indian street dog. The common thread that binds them is that they all love the game: the chaos and challenge of chasing after goals. Bharat's presentation brilliantly combined biting humor and truth.

The day's servers were: **Aprille Isham**, Toastmaster; **Anna Ziss-Patton**, General Evaluator; **Hiba Hamdan**, **Mallery McMurtrey**, **Margaret Mitchell**, **Lin Van Gelder** and **Tina Tomiyama**, Evaluators; **Jacki William-Jones**, Timer; **Jill Vanderweit**, Wordmaster/Grammarian; and **Tina Tomiyama**, Videographer.

Next meeting is April 11. ([RSVP FROM HERE](#))

**CONTEST UPDATE**

**District 1 Area F1 Humorous Speech Contest Winner, Bharat Sangekar!**



Who made a debut in District 1’s big stage on March 19? Our international member, Bharat Sangekar! He competed in Area F1 humorous speech contest and won the first place! Hooray! Watch out, Division F!

Our club President, Miyo Yamauchi came in second for Area F1 international speech contest.

Congratulations, Bharat and Miyo!

*Thank you, Camille Miller, Catherine Magruder, Jacki Williams-Jones, Mallery McMurtrey, and Tina Tomiyama, for your cheers!*

**Upcoming Speech Contests**

Let’s send the biggest cheer to our members!



**Lin Van Gelder**  
 April 17, 2021 @ 9 AM PDT  
 District 1  
 Area C3 International  
[Click here to RSVP](#)



**Camille Miller**  
 April 22, 2021 @ 5 PM PDT  
 District 50  
 Division Southern International  
[Click here to open Zoom](#)



**Bharat Sangekar**  
 May 1, 2021  
 District 1 Division F Humorous  
 Mid May  
 District 73 International

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Many interesting storytelling concerts and workshops are coming up. Check them out!

*Disclaimer: Events are posted as a service to our members, friends and the storytelling community. Posting is not an endorsement.*

**Apr 9–11**    **Earth Up**  
*A Weekend of Storytelling Aimed at Changing Our World*  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/bold-faced-secret-20210129/>

**Apr 16–17**    **Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival**  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/the-2021-georgia-mountain-storytelling-festival/>

**Apr 21**    **SAC Story Swap Genre Storytelling Series — Historical Stories**  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/sac-story-swap-genre-storytelling-series-historical-stories/>  
*Our own Pieter Severyn will be on the show! Don't miss it!*



Storytelling concerts presented by International Storytelling Center

**Mar 25**    **Tim Lowry** 4:30 PM PDT/ 7:30 PM EDT  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/storytelling-online-concert-tim-lowry/>

**Apr 08**    **Carol Birch** 4:30 PM PDT/ 7:30 PM EDT  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/storytelling-online-concert-carol-birch/>

**Apr 15**    **Kim Weitkamp** 4:30 PM PDT/ 7:30 PM EDT  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/storytelling-online-concert-kim-weitkamp/>

**Apr 22**    **Children’s Concert** 4:30 PM PDT/ 7:30 PM EDT  
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/storytelling-online-concert-childrens-concert/>

Check out more events at: <https://thestorymasters.org/events/>

## A STORYMASTERS FRIEND'S STORY

# Heartbreaker

by Julianne Ho

I joined Toastmasters to improve on my public speaking skills and to meet people. I was lonely, having recently moved to a new neighborhood. The Toastmasters meetings gave me somewhere to go. I made friends with one of the members, Jennifer, who was super-kind.

Jennifer had fair skin, wavy brown hair, and bright blue eyes. I felt comfortable around her, and found it easy to tell her about feeling lonely in this new part of town. Maybe she was truly fond of me too because she was soon introducing me to the other members.

I felt included, and she had this sweet habit of touching my arm while she laughed, which I was not really used to because I came from a family of unaffectionate people. My dad patted the top of my head to express his affection, and when he finally learned to say “I love you”, it always sounded awkward, like a joke that he wished he could take back.

After a few weeks at Toastmasters, I noticed that Jennifer always sat next to me. She remembered the things I told her and was smart, pretty, and vivacious. Men and women flocked to her, but she usually sat next to me.

“How did your presentation go?”, she asked smiling. “Did they relate to your story about that homeless girl?” She even remembered the details of what I told her from the week before. But it made sense that she was intrigued by me because I could be kind of fascinating. She touched my arm, and we exchanged phone numbers.

I wasn't surprised. I was wearing my mauve, cowl-necked sheath dress, which made me look both sophisticated and sexy. And I remembered that my college friend, Varnell, used to tell me that I was all sorts of cute. And he was pre-med, so those were practically the words of a health professional.

I was so flattered by Jennifer's attention that I imagined being in a relationship with her. She lived close by so commuting wouldn't be an issue. We could make this work. But I soon snapped out of this fantasy when I realized that it would not work, since I've always liked men.

This Jennifer situation was the most excitement that I have had in a while. But I realized that if I let the situation remain status quo, she would be completely in love with me by the end of the month. I imagined Varnell from college was still pining away for me. That poor guy never got closure. I couldn't let this happen to dear, sweet Jennifer. So I thought about how to tell her that I was not interested in women. But we were having such great conversations, I kept putting it off.

The following week, I offered Jennifer the seat between me and the guest with whom I was chatting. Soon she started chatting up the guest, while laughing and touching his arm. He looked mesmerized.

As I watched her talk, I noticed that she was glowing, giddy with happiness. I wondered if that glow was for him, or for me? I contemplated confronting her when she announced that her boyfriend had recently proposed, and she was over the moon.

I felt my cheeks grow warm and was so relieved I did not say anything to her earlier. I turned away and saw that the guest was watching us. He looked amused, but maybe that was just my imagination. He couldn't have known what I was thinking.

But then, perhaps it was me that he was staring at? I was wearing my emerald green dress with a pretty bow at the neckline. My friend Charity always told me I have a knack for picking out pretty dresses, and she was an artist so I trusted her sense of fashion. Perhaps the guest had found me fascinating? Maybe I should just trust my instincts?



**Julianne Ho** lives in Los Angeles and is a first-generation Taiwanese-American. She works as a financial manager for UCLA and enjoys arts & crafts and watching Hulu.

Read more Julianne's stories:

- **The Manifest Station:** [Gene\(s\)](#)
- **LA Times:** [L.A. Affairs: Wait a sec, was I being 'catfished'?](#)

## STORYTELLING STUB

## Respect Your Audience

In the article, "*How to Write With Style*," Kurt Vonnegut once wrote that we need to respect our readers when we write:

- **Find a subject you care about:** Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, and not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style. I am not urging you to write a novel, by the way — although I would not be sorry if you wrote one, provided you genuinely cared about something. A petition to the mayor about a pothole in front of your house or a love letter to the girl next door will do.
- **Keep it simple:** As for your use of language: Remember that two great masters of language, William Shakespeare and James Joyce, wrote sentences which were almost childlike when their subjects were most profound. “To be or not to be?” asks Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The longest word is three letters long. Joyce, when he was frisky, could put together a sentence as intricate and as glittering as a necklace for Cleopatra, but my favorite sentence in his short story ‘Eveline’ is this one: ‘She was tired.’ At that point in the story, no other words could break the heart of a reader as those three words do.
- **Sound like yourself:** English was Conrad’s third language, and much that seems piquant in his use of English was no doubt colored by his first language, which was Polish. And lucky indeed is the writer who has grown up in Ireland, for the English spoken there is so amusing and musical. I myself grew up in Indianapolis, where common speech sounds like a band saw cutting galvanized tin, and employs a vocabulary as unornamental as a monkey wrench. [ ... ] No matter what your first language, you should treasure it all your life. If it happens to not be standard English, and if it shows itself when you write standard English, the result is usually delightful, like a very pretty girl with one eye that is green and one that is blue. I myself find that I trust my own writing most, and others seem to trust it most, too, when I sound most like a person from Indianapolis, which is what I am. What alternatives do I have?
- **Say what you mean:** My teachers wished me to write accurately, always selecting the most effective words, and relating the words to one another unambiguously, rigidly, like parts of a machine. They hoped that I would become understandable — and therefore understood. And there went my dream of doing with words what Pablo Picasso did with paint or what any number of jazz idols did with music. If I broke all the rules of punctuation, had words mean whatever I wanted them to mean, and strung them together higgledy-piggledy, I would simply not be understood. Readers want our pages to look very much like pages they have seen before. Why? This is because they themselves have a tough job to do, and they need all the help they can get from us.

If you want to read the full article, [check the PDF here](#). When we tell a story next time, let’s respect our audience more, shall we?

## EDITOR'S NOTE

## The 10,000 Hour Rule’s Myth

*Miyo, you’ve become such a story artist!*

When my friend told me the other day, I asked myself. “Artist? Have I? Did I master?”

The question reminded me of the famous book, “*Outliers*” by Malcolm Gladwell. In his book, he says that it takes 10,000 hours of intensive practice to achieve mastery of complex skills and materials, like playing the violin or getting as good as Bill Gates at computer programming.

It led me to the next question. How long does it take to practice for 10,000 hours? If I practice for 3 hours every single day, it takes about 3,333 days — a little over 9 years. I’ve been a Toastmaster for over 11 years. Does it mean that I mastered it? The answer is no. Although I’ve done numerous projects, presentations, workshops, and storytelling shows, I’m nowhere close to 3-hour practice a day to achieve the 10,000 hours.

Now, let’s say I *had* practiced 3 hours every day for the past 11 years. Am I qualified to become a master? Again, the answer is no. Definitely not. Because not all my practice hours count towards the 10,000-hour practice. In the beginning of my speaking journey, I was ignorant about everything. I was just moving on the stage and changing my tone up and down without any purpose and I thought I was working on my body languages and vocal varieties. I didn’t know any better.

Ten thousand is not just the number. The quality matters. A couple of years ago, I wrote an article about ‘*practice is a science*’ in the newsletter. At that time, I was just fascinated by the story about [how a 11-year-old boy practiced cello](#), but I appreciate the information and understand the value of practice more now than before. Still, I don’t know what I don’t know. Probably, a year from now, I will say that I don’t know anything better. I guess that’s a good thing because it means that I’m on the right track.

Practice makes perfect. I still have a long way to go. How about you?

— Miyo Yamauchi