



DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

An Eclectic Afternoon with StoryMasters

by Margaret Mitchell

Six storytellers presented an eclectic mix of stories and speeches at the April 11 meeting.

Tina Tomiyama's tale, *In the Tunnel*, described an evening at the Hollywood Bowl she experienced 40 years ago with her husband Jiro. Using vivid word pictures, she described a pleasant summer evening spent enjoying a concert of classical music. They ate Japanese treats, sipped libations, and enjoyed a piano concert by Andre Watts so beautiful it brought Tina to tears. But as they hiked back to the parking lot, using the tunnel beneath Highland Boulevard, they were joined by a large, impatient crowd. The thickly-packed crowd was too dense to navigate a sharp right turn in the tunnel. Shoves, pushes, and panic rippled through the crowd. Tina and Jiro wondered if they would be crushed to death. Would they emerge from the tunnel alive? Deftly and with touches of humor, Tina wove this delightful tale to its thoughtful conclusion.

In *Let's Talk About Leadership*, **Lin Van Gelder** discussed the qualities she values in leaders and ways we ourselves can demonstrate leadership. For Lin, the foundation for leadership is integrity. Along with that should come visionary problem-solving, ability to inspire teams and garner respect, empathy for others, humility, and the ability to walk the talk. In conclusion, she asked the question: If we all lived up to what we expect from our leaders, wouldn't it be a wonderful world? It was a perfect way to end this International contest speech.

In *The Good Daughter*, **Cynthia Moore** described her experience serving as live-in caregiver for her mother during the pandemic. That meant putting aside her carefree, independent life and travel plans for the last year, and perhaps indefinitely. It also meant coming to terms with being the middle child and feeling her mother had given more love and attention to her two brothers, who are now deceased. While she longs to visit Vegas or go shopping with her mother, for now Cynthia must be content with being the good daughter—watching episodes of *Jerry Springer* and *Jeopardy* with her and providing food and service to her.

Hiba Hamdan informed and entertained us with a humorous presentation titled *Mind Your Language*. Hiba, who is multilingual, pointed out that communicating with people who don't speak your language can be embarrassing. She recounted the time 22 years ago when she had just moved from Canada to the state of Georgia and was enjoying a song on her car radio. The song was in French about an Alaskan seal. The driver in the car next to her looked disapprovingly at Hiba and shook her head. Only then did Hiba perceive the problem. In French, the word for seal is *phoque*. Phonetically, it is pronounced fok—a common curse word in English. To our delight, Hiba used anecdotes to give three lessons on communicating in a foreign language: (1) don't translate, (2) don't mix, and (3) don't assume.

Lee Amantangela, in his speech *Knock Knock*, spoke compellingly about the importance of stepping out of one's comfort zone and answering the call when opportunity knocks. Presenting scenarios from his boyhood to adulthood, he showed that in order to truly live to our fullest, we must answer opportunity's call daily. Also, sometimes opportunity presents itself to be taken advantage of at a later time, and sometimes it comes so we can give opportunity to others. The simplicity and universality of this speech could make it an International contest winner!

In *Old Dog, New Tricks*, **Jill Vanderweit** reflected on lessons she'd learned from completing the Innovative Planning path in Pathways. She noted her progress through the levels was uneven, and sometimes she hit the proverbial wall or had to shelve initial plans. However, she completed the path and learned four important lessons: (1) Pathways is more flexible than it was initially. You can skip around from level to level and work on more than one path at a time. (2) Some projects are really tedious, so pick something you're passionate about. (3) Some projects are perfect, but you may need to put them on the shelf until the time is right. (4) Even if you have years of experience, you can always learn something new from changes in technology, situation or perspective.

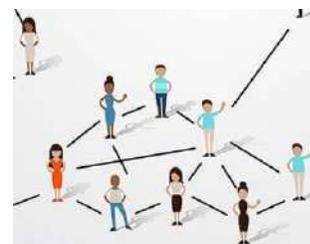
Those who facilitated the flow of the meeting included **Jacki Williams Jones**, Toastmaster; **Mallery McMurtrey**, General Evaluator; **Miyo Yamauchi**, Timer; **Harold Gee**, Wordmaster/Grammarian; **Mallery McMurtrey**, Videographer; and **Catherine Magruder**, **Margaret Mitchell**, **Aprille Isham**, **Camille Miller**, **Pieter Severynen**, and **Antoinette Byron**, Evaluators.

Next meeting is May 9. ([RSVP FROM HERE](#))

WELCOME OUR NEWEST STORYMASTERS

StoryMasters welcomed not one, not two, but three (!!!) members this month, which is all about connections. Or should we call it Six Degrees of Separation?

Six degrees of separation is the idea that all people on average are six, or fewer, social connections away from each other. As a result, a chain of "a friend of a friend" statements can be made to connect any two people in a maximum of six steps. It is also known as the **six handshakes rule**.



Harold Gee

To StoryMasters' delight, one of the most respected and beloved Toastmasters in District 1, Harold Gee, has rejoined the club. Harold has always enjoyed crafting engaging stories, but work and other responsibilities took up his time for several years. Now he's able to return, and StoryMasters couldn't be happier. Welcome back, Harold!

Julianne Ho

Julianne is in a writing group that Miyo Yamauchi sometimes attends. After Miyo read her captivating story, [Gene\(s\) on the Manifest Station](#), she begged Julianne to share a story with StoryMasters. As soon as her [Heartbreaker](#) story was published on StoryMasters newsletter and website, Julianne enthusiastically became a StoryMaster. Julianne, please do write more! We're craving more of your stories!

Lee Amatangelo

When Camille Miller invited her friend from Washington State, our VP Membership Catherine Magruder gasped. "OMG! That's my friend, Lee Amatangelo! We were members of the Xerox Xeroids Club a long time ago. We lost contact when he moved up north. I am so excited to have him visit!" Guess what? He not only visited, he joined us after his first visit. Read his introduction below. Lee, welcome back to LA virtually!

From the Latin, Lee's last name "Amatangelo" means "the angel loves him", which is not only cool, but also befitting as he was born in Los Angeles, the City of Angels. Might as well be in a place that has a lot of angels. His initials are also LA. Wait, this is starting to sound like a cosmic design!

Lee has been a semifinalist in the World Championship of Public Speaking twice and continues to have a keen passion for that competition as both a speaker and a coach. He has mentored five Toastmasters who have taken either 3rd, 2nd, or 1st in their semifinal round; one made it to the World Stage. Lee puts on many public speaking workshops and seminars that cover basic techniques (the science of speaking) and advanced techniques (the art of speaking). Storytelling, humor, comedy, acting, and figures of speech all fall into the category of the "art" of speaking because these techniques entertain the audience.



His favorite speaking engagement involves doing present-day style Chautauqua presentations (usually performed by Humanities scholars), which have three acts: (1) Start by presenting in the first person as an historical figure sharing your biography and how you came to be part of the historical event; (2) Take questions from the audience as that historical figure; and lastly, (3) Take questions from the audience as yourself. Lee has performed as J. Robert Oppenheimer discussing the Manhattan Project and the creation of the atomic bomb, and Thomas Jefferson discussing the birth of our nation during the Age of Enlightenment. Preparing for a Chautauqua involves studying the biography of the person, the history of the event, associated relevant material (such as quantum physics for the Oppenheimer role) and understanding why that person was poised in history to make a difference at that time and place. The hardest part of a Chautauqua is the second act. The key to success for the overall performance is being a great storyteller who brings the person and the event to life and having the audience feel as though they have just lived through a piece of history.

In his words: *I am very excited to be a member of StoryMasters. In this club I am certain I will continue to enhance my storytelling skills by learning from this esteemed group through educational presentations and personal stories, and in return, I will do the same. This free sharing of knowledge is the definition of the Age of Enlightenment. Benjamin Franklin encapsulated the essence of that period best when he said, "I will gladly let you dip your unlit candle into my lit candle, thereby illuminating you, without darkening me." When we share our stories with each other, we make each other brighter, but not at the expense of making ourselves dimmer. – Lee Amatangelo, DTM*

UPCOMING SPEECH CONTESTS

Let's send the biggest cheer to Camille and Bharat!



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



Bharat Sangekar
 May 1, 2021 @ 11 AM PDT
 District 1
 Division F Humorous
[Click here to RSVP](#)



Bharat Sangekar
 May 14, 2021 @ 3:30 PM PDT
 District 73 International
[Click here to RSVP](#)

UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

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

Apr 21 **SAC Story Swap Genre Storytelling Series — Historical Stories** 7:00 PM PDT/ 10:00 PM EDT
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/sac-story-swap-genre-storytelling-series-historical-stories/>



Following **Catherine Magruder's** and **Kathy Falco's** delightful appearances at SAC's Genre Storytelling Series, **Pieter Severynen** will be telling a story this month.

The theme for the April show is *Historical Stories*, and Pieter, an arborist, will relate "Füssen and the Lute," how the crafting of the Oud by Moorish refugees from Spain enriched a small town in Bavaria and brought lute-music to the world.

Apr 22 **My Place Cafe Storytelling — Ashton Cynthia Clarke** 7:30 PM PDT/ 10:30 PM EDT
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/my-place-cafe-storytelling-20210422/>

May 08 **2021 Regional Gem Honoree: Michael McCarty** 4:30 PM PDT/ 7:30 PM EDT
<https://thestorymasters.org/events/2021-regional-gem-honoree-michael-mccarty/>

StoryMasters Presents

The Storytelling Café will be Open on April 25!

- Craving nourishment from a seasoned virtual crowd?*
- Thirsty for words of wit, wisdom, and whimsy?*
- Hungry to put your memoir on the menu?*

If you say yes to any of the above, join us for our first Storytelling Café! It's free. It's open to all.

You're welcome to share any work-in-progress, finished material, or mumbled thoughts as you wish. First come, first served. Don't miss the opportunity! RSVP required!

Detail: <https://thestorymasters.org/events/20210425-storytelling-cafe/>

Contact: Mallery McMurtrey (mallery@thestorymasters.org)

3:00 PM PDT/ 6:00 PM EDT

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

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

PAST EVENTS

This Much Is True

Ashton Cynthia Clarke and Miyo Yamauchi wowed the audience with their stories at the longest running monthly storytelling show in Chicago, *This Much Is True* on April 13.



Soul Stories Live

Ashton also spoke at the audio storytelling show, Soul Stories Live, on April 18. For the 1970s theme, she shared memories of an adolescent summer.

StoryMasters was B-U-S-Y on the 17th! We had amazing events all day long. I hope you caught some or all of them!



Division C International Speech Contest

After our last meeting, **Lin Van Gelder** tweaked her speech, *Let's Talk About Leadership* by incorporating suggestions she received and inspired the audience. The improvement she made was remarkable! It was the perfect way to start the weekend!

Congratulations, Lin!

Poem for the Month

When Midday Is

*When midday is the dawn
from which your soft dreams break
and your arms trace rainbow arches
embracing lovely day
while old men shuffle lightly
through the halo of your smile
and children like morning glories
ring the hem of your skirts.*

*When your glance, like blessings,
showers star-crossed lovers
and the setting sun
breathes attar of roses
silken on your shoulders
while whispering night mysteries
to fill your breast with love songs
throbbing to be sung.*

*When you keen through purple midnights
pausing only at the dawning
of the new day's promises ribboned with love;
then it is not a dream
that catches at your throat
with such sweet pain upon your waking.
It is your own heart breaking,
daughter of Isis.*

Margaret L. Mitchell

Artists Standing Strong Together: Family Story Fest

In the afternoon, **Tina Tomiyama** delighted the audience with her beautiful story, *My Attic*.

It was thrilling to see her sharing the stage with phenomenal storytellers, Sheila Arnold and Cooper Braun.



Sacramento Storytellers Guild: Liars Contest



The Liars Contest concluded the fun Saturday. After busy days (Chief Judge at the Division A Speech Contests on Friday night and Toastmaster at the Division C International Speech Contest on Saturday morning), **Catherine Magruder** told her famous tall tale, *Angus*, and fooled the audience with her perfect Scottish accent once again.

Thank you all for making us proud to be StoryMasters!

STORYTELLING STUB

Surf the Audio Wave

The other day, I was invited to tell a story on Clubhouse. Clubhouse is new trending social media, an auditory communication app. “Hosts” act as moderators of live conversations and people hop from room to room...like in a clubhouse. Thousands of different rooms from all over the world are available to be tuned in 24/7. Education, storytelling, stand-up comedies, meditation, marketing...you name it, you find it.

It wasn't my first time to participate in audio storytelling, but maybe because Clubhouse is all live, it made me think twice. Books give us different feelings and mental imagery from movies, don't they? Then, audio storytelling should be different from visual storytelling. Without sight, audio gives more interpretation and creative freedom to the audience. Narratives may be even more critical to create the imaginary world in listener's mind.

What about the sound? I analyzed my tools and surroundings even more seriously this time. I tested 5 different microphones. Each device rendered sound a little differently. In addition, having different objects around me created different sound effects. I picked the one that sounded the best, but when I jumped on the call, my winning microphone didn't work for the app. Because I didn't have time to figure out how to adjust the setting, I used an alternative, putting the objectives around me (*I was glad I have alternatives just in case!*). After the show, my friend told me I sounded like radio, so I guess my effort paid off.

Why don't we all try a different type of storytelling from time to time? It doesn't have to be audio storytelling. Whatever it is, I'm sure it will give you different perspectives.

- [How Audio Story Begins](#)
- [Inside the Podcast Brain: Why Do Audio Stories Captivate?](#)
- [A Beginner's Guide to Audio Storytelling: What You Need to Know](#)
- [How to Tell Audio Stories: 8 Top Tips](#)



EDITOR'S NOTE

Knock on Another Door!

If you keep knocking and the door remains closed, it might be time to move on.

That's what my wise friend, Jon White, told me when we were chatting about my storytelling journey the other day.

His advice spoke to my heart dearly. He did not suggest giving up anything I was doing. But rather, he offered expanding my possibilities even further.

Looking back, I can only say I didn't know what I didn't know. I dived into the storytelling world without knowing what it was all about. Even after swimming in the storytelling community for a while, I didn't know where I fit. I tried whatever was present in front of me. I thought I could fit myself to any style, which can be true in a way . . . anyone can adapt to any style, right? But is it what I really want? That's the question. If I don't know my style and I'm still exploring my possibilities, it's a good thing to try different styles. But at this point, I *know* my style. I *know* my audience.

If I keep knocking on a door which remains closed, maybe I'm knocking on the wrong door? Even if it eventually opens, I may not enjoy the world behind the door fully if the door opens only because I molded myself into something I'm not.

So where am I now? I can feel some doors are ready to open for me. I'm excited for what the future holds. I hope you are, too.

— Miyo Yamauchi

