



DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

StoryMasters: Enveloped by a Passion for Stories

by Margaret Mitchell

StoryMasters and friends gathered on June 13 for another fine afternoon of storytelling. Below is my take:

Antoinette Byron – *New York, New York*

When she was eight years old, **Antoinette Byron** discovered a brown, mushy bad spot on a Granny Smith apple and wanted to throw it away. After her mother cut away the bad spot, Antoinette learned that the rest of the apple was sweet and delicious. Years later, she recalled this lesson when she went to New York during the COVID-19 pandemic to help a friend clean and prepare her neglected, 1920s-era apartment for sale. Antoinette staged her presentation against a background of the Manhattan skyline and sang snippets from *New York, New York* throughout. It was an entertaining and sweet story with the theme of restoration and revival at its core.

Lee Amatangelo – *Poetic Mockery: Can You Dig It?*

Lee Amatangelo employed call and response, literary and cultural references, humor, and an array of rhetorical, poetic, and other oral communication techniques to engage the audience in his lyrical story, *Poetic Mockery: Can You Dig It?* Using the mockingbird as a metaphor for the voice that each person carries, Lee likened himself to the Johnny Appleseed of sound, catching and releasing mockingbirds wherever he goes. A rhythmical beat and delightful sense of whimsy helped Lee drive home the message that we should learn all we can from Toastmasters, so we can release our unique voices to craft and deliver stories to the world.

Hiba Hamdan – *The Sales Storytelling Formula*

In October 2010, **Hiba Hamdan** auditioned for the District 1 Speakers Bureau—and failed. A year later, in October 2011, she auditioned again—and failed. These two failures compelled her to develop the *The Sales Storytelling Formula*, which brought her success during her third audition. The formula is based on storytelling that incorporates (1) Then, (2) Now, and (3) How. In this informative presentation, Hiba modeled her own experience of failure and success to demonstrate the effectiveness of her formula for crafting stories that help sell one's skills, products or services.

Harold Gee – *The Spell Was Broken*

This icebreaker speech captured the time when **Harold Gee** transitioned from being a schoolteacher to landing an interesting job with the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA). However, when required to speak before an auditorium of teachers, he suffered from a fear so paralyzing he felt he was under a spell. He sought the services of a hypnotist, a senior lady who taught him a technique for self-hypnosis that involved placing two fingers together. The technique worked! However, he fell under the spell again because he did not practice the technique regularly. Ultimately, he joined a Toastmasters club, where he drank the elixir of praise and support that permanently broke the spell.

AlyceAnn Crump – *My Anger Is in My Big Toe*

As a teenager, **AlyceAnn Crump** was always angry. Then, in her mid-20s, she became pregnant and began to pay greater attention to her body. That's when she noticed that her anger began in her big toe and traveled upward through her body—from toe to knee, to hip, to arms—right up to her neck, ears and head. Throughout life she has employed various remedies to control her anger, including walks, prayer, and hugs. She even announces to others how far the anger has risen up her body because she understands that once anger gets to your head, you are no longer thinking. In the culminating scene, AlyceAnn described gathering together her four children and all of their stuffed toys. She threw their stuffed toys at them (deliberately missing) until everyone began laughing and her anger dissolved. What a fun way to bring home a serious message about controlling your anger before it controls you!

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster, **Catherine Magruder**; General Evaluator, **Cynthia Moore**; Timer, **Jill Vanderweit**; Wordmaster/Grammarian, **Ashton Cynthia Clarke**; Videographer, **Tina Tomiyama**; and Evaluators, **Miyo Yamauchi**, **Margaret Mitchell**, **Anna Ziss-Patton**, **Mallery McMurtrey**, and **Camille Miller**.

Next meeting is July 11. ([GUESTS](#), [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

WELCOME OUR NEWEST STORYMASTER**AlyceAnn Crump**

Dr. AlyceAnn Crump is the epitome of being driven in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.

She has completed all 11 paths. Yes, 11 paths in Pathways! We assume she has completed more paths by now because she's been in more than 30 (!!!) clubs. And I hear she will be Area C4 Director in 2021-2022.

To get to know Dr. AlyceAnn, she's a wife of 36 years, mother of 5 and grandmother of 10. She recently received her Doctoral degree in Theology.

Welcome to StoryMasters, AlyceAnn! We're looking forward to hearing more of your stories!

**STORYMASTERS 2020-2021****Looking back...**

What a year! So many things happened in so little time. Do you remember our first virtual meeting back in April last year? We had rehearsal meetings, an online Zoom coaching session by Jennifer Kelley Lublin, insightful tips from a film industry expert, Sherwood Jones, workshops, a "Technical Tips" handout, practice, practice, and practice. But now, look at you! I'm impressed to see how much each one of us has improved our online presence.

In the past twelve months, 63 friends visited us. We conducted a successful showcase, *From Soup To Nuts*, which drew 50 attendees. Eleven friends became StoryMasters (5 of them are long distance). Six members competed in Toastmasters speech contests and shined. Many members achieved educational goals and played important roles in Toastmasters. Also, some of our members stretched their wings and told stories at dozens of non-Toastmaster venues.

In addition, we did something unique this term. When the virtual meetings became our new normal, Aprille Isham formed the Club Evolution Team, observed how other clubs in the world were handling the virtual meetings, analyzed pros and cons, and created a comprehensive report that many clubs can appreciate and take advantage of. [Check this out](#) if you haven't seen the report yet. It's filled with pearls of wisdom!

Now, shall we acknowledge our outgoing club officers who have been working behind the scenes tirelessly?

VPE: Mallery McMurtrey guided us and made sure each meeting would go smoothly.

VPM: Catherine Magruder sent lovely personal notes to our guests and newly-joined members every month.

VPPR: Who didn't enjoy Margaret Mitchell's wonderful meeting recaps, poems, and articles? I surely did! We also need to give special recognition to Anna Ziss-Patton's insightful storytelling/writing tips.

Secretary: Jacki Williams-Jones took minutes and kept notes so that everything is in our records.

Treasurer/SAA: Tina Tomiyama kept our club financially healthy and her smiles set the right tone for our meetings.

As my presidential term is ending, I realized again how fortunate I am to be a part of this amazing community. I'm grateful for each one of you!

StoryMasters and friends, thank you for your continuous support, generosity, and collaboration. Because of you, we can get out of our comfort zone and try something different. Because of you, we continue to grow together. Because of you, our community is standing strong. Because of you, StoryMasters rocks.

With gratitude,

Miyo Yamauchi

StoryMasters President 2020-2021

2020-2021 Club Officers:

President: Miyo Yamauchi
 VPE: Mallery McMurtrey
 VPM: Catherine Magruder
 VPPR: Margaret Mitchell
 Secretary: Jacki Williams-Jones
 Treasurer: Tina Tomiyama
 SAA: Tina Tomiyama
 Club Evolution: Aprille Isham

**2021-2022 Club Officers:**

President: Mallery McMurtrey
 VPE: Jacki Williams-Jones
 VPM: Margaret Mitchell
 VPPR: Miyo Yamauchi
 Secretary: Lin Van Gelder
 Treasurer: Tina Tomiyama
 SAA: Jill Vanderweit
 Mentor Chair: Catherine Magruder

UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

Many interesting storytelling concerts and workshops are coming up. Check them out on [our event page!](#)

June 26 INSECT Storytelling Fest

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/insect-story-fest/>

11:00 AM PDT/ 2:00 PM EDT / Zoom

In honor of Insect Week, Artists Standing Strong Together transforms their monthly Saturday Story Fest into a day of stories all about...bugs! Are we going to hear a story about [Brood X Periodical Cicadas](#)? We shall see...

June 27 Dilemma Tales: Reimagine Our World

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/dilemma-tales-reimagine-our-world/>

4:00 PM PDT / 7:00 PM EDT / Zoom

This is a monthly discussion series based on the ancient African tradition of the dilemma tale, an open-ended story designed to provoke thoughtful group discussion about the story's possible outcomes.

July 13 Storytellers Project: Stories about Stories

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/storytellers-project-stories-about-stories/>

4:00 PM PDT / 7:00 PM EDT / Zoom

It's your chance to hear the news behind the news. Journalists from across the USA TODAY Network will share true stories about journalism.

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.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT IN RECENT EVENTS

SAC Story Swap Genre Storytelling Series — Legends: Urban & Traditional

We did it again! **Camille Miller**, an enthusiastic storyteller, represented StoryMasters at the SAC Story Swap Genre Storytelling Series by sharing a very original and entertaining story, *the Shadow of the Great Black Bird*.

Watch Camille's story here: <https://youtu.be/qSGRrhfoK-0?t=2341>



Strong Words ~ Voice of the City #74

When Strong Words started going live (I mean, LIVE!) in April, some StoryMasters rushed to Atwater Village. When Strong Words invited **Miyo Yamauchi** to their stage on May 23, more of us joined the festivity enthusiastically.



The show was not exactly the same as before because everybody was still wearing a mask and the stage was shielded with plexiglass, but still it was such an enchanting experience to feel the togetherness. We laughed, gasped, cried, and cherished the moment together under the stars. Oh, what a magical night!

p.s. Hugging Barbara H. Clark for the first time in over a year was the icing on the cake!



[From L to R] Jiro Tomiyama, Barbara H. Clark, Miyo Yamauchi, Ty Fance
Photographed by Tina Tomiyama

(Disclaimer: We took our masks off when we took the picture!)

Story Salon ~ I Was So Naïve

On May 26, **Ashton Cynthia Clarke** was invited to Story Salon again and shared her one summer memory during adolescence — a boy, first kiss, and confusion. (Do you remember yours? What's your story?)

Watch Ashton's story here: <https://youtu.be/aIsF35sHGgw?t=1083>



San Francisco Free Folk Festival ~ The SoCal Showcase



Oh, what a delightful Saturday afternoon it was! **Tina Tomiyama** and **Margaret Mitchell** were invited to tell their stories and represent the [Storytelling Association of Southern California](#) along with other phenomenal storytellers. How cool is that?

Margaret shared her childhood story, *Family Vacation* — a family collects lasting memories during their first camping trip.

In Tina's story, *In the Tunnel*, a balmy, rapturous evening at the Hollywood Bowl in the late 70's turns terrifying. Not only was she a storyteller for the show, but she was also a co-host for the SoCal Showcase who made sure everything would go smoothly behind the scenes! And it did! Everything was seamless!

Check out the SFFFF event page at <https://rb.gy/sheybh>

POP-UP Storyphile

Miyo was not the only person who did a live show. So did **Ashton Cynthia Clarke!** The *Pop-up Storyphile* is a storytelling show with diverse art like storytelling with sign language, poems, music, and songs at a cool art gallery with a warm audience. What else do we need?

Ashton shared a captivating story about her exploring her ancestors, connecting with her aunt, and cherishing her childhood. Her telling was superb!



Homewood Stories

Do you remember the comedy storytelling show, *The Antidote*? The other day, **Miyo Yamauchi** was invited to Homewood Stories to celebrate their 90th anniversary. It turned out *The Antidote*'s host, Deanna Moffitt in LA, California, and the Homewood Stories' host, Karen O'Donnell in Homewood, Illinois, used to share stages in Chicago back in the day. What a small world! Don't you love how our world has become boundless?

StoryMasters, thank you for sharing your stories and supporting each other!

FOOD FOR THOUGHTS

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion

Do you think you make your own choices for what to eat and what to wear? Think again! Big or small, our choices are influenced by people around us, society, or information we receive.

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion is a book the social psychologist Robert Cialdini wrote in 1984. When the book was published, it sold only a couple of thousand copies, but word-of-mouth grew. Three years later, it became a New York Times best seller. As of today, it sold roughly 5 million copies in 44 languages.

The book is organized around these seven principles:

- **Reciprocation:** People tend to give return to somebody who has helped them before.
- **Liking:** People like to be liked. Also, they are easily persuaded by the person they like compared to the person they are not familiar with.
- **Social proof:** People tend to do what they see the others are doing.
- **Authority:** People tend to obey legitimate experts. In real life, marketers often use professionals to prove the superiority of their products.
- **Scarcity:** The less of something there is, the more people tend to want it.
- **Commitment and consistency:** People like to be consistent with their identity or sense of self image.
- **Unity:** The Unity Principle is the shared identity that the influencer shares with the influencee.

Have you ever used any those principles when you craft a story to persuade your audience? Whether you have or not, think about what influences your decision. The awareness may make you feel like making a different choice.

Reference: [How to Get Anyone to Do Anything](#)

STORYTELLING STUB

Don't Underestimate the Power of Editing

Last month, I was talking with a storyteller after a show. His story was delightful and I really enjoyed it, yet something was missing, I felt. I wondered why. While we were chatting, I found out he didn't edit his writing. Aha! That's why! His presence and delivery were phenomenal. I may never be able to reach his level even if I try my hardest. His performance was great as is, but I thought his story fell short compared to his strengths.

Writing is important, but it's just a starting point, not a goal. Don't stop there.

American novelist and non-fiction writer [Anne Lamott](#) says:

Every writer you know writes really terrible first drafts, but they keep their butt in the chair. That's the secret of life. That's probably the main difference between you and them. They just do it. They do it by prearrangement with themselves. They do it as a debt of honor. They tell stories that come through them one day at a time, little by little.

So true! Do you think Margaret Mitchell is done with the meeting recaps after her first writing? The answer is no! She spends her time editing, editing, and editing. That's why they are so captivating that our readers keep coming back. In fact, when we posted her recap about one of our showcases on the District 1 website a few years ago, we had more guests than usual because of her writing.

Don't underestimate the power of editing. Editing is essential. Go back to your story a few hours or even days later, read it out loud, and edit. Your story deserves more than the first draft.

Reference:

- [12 truths I learned from life and writing by Anne Lamott](#)
- [The Myth of One and Done: Why you need to edit multiple times](#)
- [Why is Editing Important in Writing?](#)
- [The Importance of Editing and Proofreading before Manuscript Submission](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Perfect Story

The other day, I was watching a Lifetime drama—not a good Lifetime movie but a soapy one with deceptions and murders. (*Hey, don't judge me! I may get an innovative idea for my stories!*) When a protagonist took a fall after being chased by a villain, I chuckled because it was way too hammy. Even kids can do a better job than that. On top of that, the setting was all wrong. It was obvious that she was supposed to fall there. But the cheesy scene triggered a surprise flashback.

I had a perfect story.

A few days before that, I wrote a story...in my dream. Yes, you read it right. In my dream. It isn't unusual for me to be productive while I was sleeping. I've found a solution for a programming issue and learned some new tricks before. So writing a story in my dream was no surprise to me.

The structure, story arc, plot, character setting...everything was exquisite. I even choreographed movements because they were key elements for the story. A dramatic fall would come in the end. Oh, that would be splendid! My only issue was how to execute the fall. I didn't want to make it cheesy or mediocre because the story was so good! (*Now, you know how the silly Lifetime drama played an important role here!*) I knew I was dreaming in my dream, so before I woke up, I told myself to write it down because as you know, we tend to forget our dreams as time goes on. But obviously, I forgot about it until now.

So...where is my perfect story? What was the story about? Seriously! Are there any such perfect stories in the first place? What is perfect? Did I really write it? Or was I dreaming in my dream?

I guess I need to watch another soapy drama!

— Miyo Yamauchi

