



## StoryMasters: Estivated in Zoomland

When the clock struck three on July 11, StoryMasters had a fantastic start to the new Toastmasters term as our newly elected Sergeant-at-Arms, **Jill Vanderweit**, opened the meeting with big smiles and the gavel. After our President, **Mallery McMurtrey**, introduced the club officers: VPE **Jacki Williams-Jones**; VPM **Margaret Mitchell**; VPPR **Miyo Yamauchi**; Secretary **Lin Van Gelder**; Treasurer **Tina Tomiyama** and SAA **Jill Vanderweit**, we welcomed not one, not two, but three (!!!) new members; **Arihant (Andrew) Murdiya**, **Daniel Dyba**, and **Jon White**. Having **Michael Jones**, who has been on medical leave for over a year, back officially was the cherry on top!

Who is an overachiever? **Mallery McMurtrey**! She wore multiple hats on the day: Presiding Officer, Toastmaster of the Day, and an educational moment presenter! In her educational moment, she shared the resources that are available on our StoryMasters website <https://thestorymasters.org>. As our former VP Education, she's become a staunch advocate of the website and shared her favorite sites and findings with us. Thank you for the lesson, Madam President!

### **Lin Van Gelder – Getting Old Is Not for the Faint Hearted**

Here is the truth. We don't have a choice about getting old, but we can choose our attitude about it. **Lin Van Gelder** has been dealing with a difficult period in her life as her husband is having emotional challenges. She encouraged us to get help when needed and check up on others by sharing a story about her friend whom she thought would be dead by now from drinking, but turned over a new leaf. Her heartfelt story gave us teary eyes as well as hopes.

### **Cynthia Moore – Goodbye Herbie**

**Cynthia Moore**'s story started with the day when she decided to say farewell to Herbie after their 47-year relationship. Who is Herbie? Soon we learned it was her car, a 1974 gold beetle Volkswagen. *Whaaat? Can Volkswagens last that long? Sorry, that wasn't her point. I got too distracted.* When Cynthia's mother bought a car for her brother, but not one for her, she felt outrage. Resentment drove her to get a job, leave home, and buy her own car. Although the purchase was made out of anger, over the years Herbie gave her nothing but joyful times.

### **Miyo Yamauchi – I Know It All!**

At the age of 10, **Miyo Yamauchi** thought everybody in Japan spoke the same language. Her "common sense" was denied when she couldn't understand what her Kyushu friend's grandparents were saying. At the same time, she realized she spoke a dialect, too! Since then, wherever she goes, her know-it-all attitude has been revoked. By using self-deprecating humor, she reminded us that everybody's normal is different.

*Here is a little behind-the-scenes story. When we learned that **Bharat Sangekar**, who was originally scheduled to speak, was sick and couldn't make it (Bharat, I hope you're feeling better by the time you read this newsletter!), we broke into a cold sweat. How could we find a superb speaker like him on the very same day? When the situation seemed desperate, a marvelous storyteller, **Erica Blumfield**, agreed to share a story about little miracles. That was exactly what we needed!*

### **Erica Blumfield – The Café**

To survive in NYC, be an exclamation point, not a question mark! That's what veteran New Yorkers told **Erica Blumfield** when she first arrived. Erica was working as a waitress while pursuing her dreams. When she lost her first job, Café Centosette in the East Village gave her a second chance, and she started finding little miracles all around. Erica painted the city, people, and scenes colorfully and vividly. When she finished telling her story, we all wanted to be exclamation points!

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Mallery McMurtrey**, General Evaluator **Lee Amatangelo**, Timer **Catherine Magruder**, Wordmaster/Grammarians **Jill Vanderweit**, Videographer **Jacki Williams-Jones**, and Evaluators **Antoinette Byron**, **Harold Gee**, **Tina Tomiyama**, and **Michael Jones**.

*Next meeting is August 8. (GUESTS, [RSVP FROM HERE](#))*

**President's Address****What are your goals? by Mallery McMurtrey**

Do you make resolutions or goals? I do, twice a year. The first goal-setting occasion is my birthday. I think it's the perfect time to check in and set my intentions for the year ahead.

The second is the end of my Toastmaster year. I say end, because I think it is important, especially in a voluntary position, to know why we say yes. And, equally important if not sometimes more important, why we may say no.

One of my goals is to make the most of this virtual environment. Many of us felt it forced upon us. I would never have been giving this video any other way. And hopefully, through practice we'll get better and better.

What are your goals? How can we help you achieve them? StoryMasters has bountiful resources in our members, our website, our newsletters, and our meetings.

Want to try your hand at writing? Submit an article for our newsletter. Have a good idea to make our meetings better? Let us know. We want to hear from you. Let's make this a fantastic Toastmaster year and beyond.

See you soon, in the virtual town or maybe even an in-person visit.

Looking forward!

Mallery McMurtrey  
StoryMasters President 2021-2022



<https://youtu.be/GdbiMpD-v6c>

**UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS**

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

**July 17 Workshop: Create Compelling and Memorable Messages Through Storytelling**

<https://bit.ly/d1tli2021>

9:30 AM PDT/ 12:30 PM EDT and 10:45 AM PDT/ 1:45 PM EDT

At this workshop, you will learn storytelling fundamentals to get you on the path to delivering compelling and memorable messages. Trainer **Lee Amatangelo** is a long-time storyteller, offering storytelling, humor, and public speaking workshops for the past 29 years.

**July 18 Backstory ~ Some Like It Hot**

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/backstory-some-like-it-hot/>

7:30 PM PDT/ 10:30 PM EDT

Six writers perform—two poets and four prose storytellers. The prose stories may be fiction or true personal tales based on a play, a movie, or a TV show. Strong Words' co-producer, **Marlene Nichols**, will be one of the tellers!

**July 21 SAC Story Swap Genre Storytelling Series — Humorous & Laughing Stories**

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/sac-story-swap-genre-storytelling-series-humorous-laughing-stories/>

7:00 PM PDT/ 10:00 AM EDT

Want good laughs? If you do, join us for the Storytelling Association of California Genre Storytelling Series. The genre for this month is Humorous & Laughing Stories and **Miyo Yamauchi** will represent StoryMasters!

**July 21 National Storytelling Conference**

<https://storynet.org/nsnevents/conference/>

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Storytelling has been shown to be a powerful tool to help bridge differences with compassion and empathy. Stories help us see humanity in one another, understand motivations, and appreciate similarities. This July, we will be exploring all the ways that stories and storytelling help us reach across the divides that separate us.

We handpicked various shows and workshops and posted them on [our event page](#). Here are some examples:

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/ancient-wisdoms-from-asia-through-folktales-and-mythology/>

<https://thestorymasters.org/events/humanity-healing-and-humor/>

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.*

## A MAGICAL EVENING AT ATWATER VILLAGE ~ STRONG WORDS

## Oh, What a Night!



Imagine . . . you're in a moonlit patio under a spreading ficus tree, surrounded by friends and fresh air, glass of wine (or can of limonata) in your hand. You've scored great seats in the second row left, and you leave your belongings so you can mingle with friends who look just so damn beautiful out of their masks and Zoom rectangles. You stroll through the small (but choice) pop-up photography exhibit by **Garth Buckles**. A few chords on **Abby Posner's** live guitar warn you, "It's showtime!" You hustle back to your seat and Strong Words begins its 75th live storytelling show in Atwater Village.

And what a night it was! After Abby's song, our host **Larry Dean Harris** introduced **Barbara H. Clark**. The petite 87-year-old storyteller, teacher and producer delivered "Free," a haunting tale of how soldiers came to tell the slaves of a Virginia plantation (including Barbara's then-5 year old great-grandmother) that they were free. Folks were crying, cheering, and at the end they leaped to their feet to give Barbara Strong Words' first-ever standing ovation.



Courageously, **Russell Alexander-Orozco** followed with an amusing recap of his acting gig on "The Man with Two Brains," and next, the congenial **Roy Cruz** offered a bittersweet tale of his mother's passing, including her choice to be cremated in her new purple and gold outfit with matching purse. What a high-wire act!

The fourth speaker, **Vicki Juditz**, gave us a clinic on how to turn stage fright to advantage with "The Gun," playing her nervous self taking a gun lesson from Dave, the creepy gun dealer. Marvelous!

It was a treat to hear the elegant blonde **Marlene Nichols** read a brilliant story in an impeccable Mississippi accent. **Jonathan Tipton Meyers** conveyed all the anguish of love lost and found, and Abby Posner closed out the program with songs from her upcoming album.

The one disappointment of the night: our StoryMaster **Ashton Cynthia Clarke** was sick and unable to tell her story — on her birthday eve too. Ashton, we missed you!

StoryMasters who did make it to Strong Words on July 10 were **Miyo Yamauchi**, **Jon White**, and **Jiro** and **Tina Tomiyama**. The next show will be early September — bookmark StoryMasters' Events page at <https://thestorymasters.org/events/>.



The Purse!

## STORYTELLING STUB

## How to Organize Your Thoughts Digitally

What do you use for writing a story? Pen and paper or computers? All of my stories are catalogued digitally. Google Drive is my friend. It works fine as is, but when I work on a bigger project that requires lots of research, character building, and note taking, I sometimes wonder if there is a better way to organize these elements. If you are like me, you may want to check *Scrivener*.

*Scrivener* is a word processor for Windows and Mac. Various templates are available: novels, scriptwriting, short stories, academic papers, lectures, and so on. It helps writers organize concepts, notes, research, photos, videos, and documents. It has many great features, but here are my two favorites:

### Corkboard

A classic way to visualize the whole story is to write down each scene on an index card, spread them on the cork board or floor, move scenes around until the story flows. With *Scrivener*, each file in your project gets a "card" automatically that you can customize with colors and labels. On the Corkboard, you can track scenes and characters visually.

### Linguistic Focus

Are you aware of your writing habits? Without knowing, you may be repeating the same tired adjectives throughout your writing. Linguistic Focus helps you see how you use dialogue, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, or conjunctions.

We all have different preferences and expectations when it comes to editing. *Scrivener* is not the only digital option; other tools include Reedsy and Plottr. Regardless of whether you write with your hand or computer, when you understand how these tools help you organize your projects, you may find new ways to use your traditional method.

Reference:

- [Scrivener - A Tool You Need to Start Writing and Keep Writing](#)
- [Reedsy - A Tool Built for Book Production](#)
- [Plottr - Plan Your Books the Way You Think](#)

## EDITOR'S NOTE

## Time to Change!

*"I cut ties with friends who don't make progress and maintain the status quo,"*

said my friend. His comment started a train of thought...about my stories. Each of my stories takes its own journey. They usually start from a Work-in-Progress folder. After numerous edits, they are destined to a Story folder. Then, after telling them and more editing, some stories make it to an A+ folder. Sometimes they emerge with variations. Lately, I started feeling like something is not working.

The stories I wrote years ago are falling behind because my writing style has changed over the years. Although they are still popular, some of them don't seem to deserve the A+ status anymore. What should I do with them? Kick them out like my friend does?

Then, I remembered a picture my brother sent me recently. In the picture, my 10-year-old nephew's football team was having lunch, which made me realize...

### *The times have changed.*

It was refreshing to see boys wearing pink uniforms, which I didn't see when I was a kid. Generally speaking, in Japan, pink was a girls' color back in the day. Boys might wear pink hats if they were still in kindergarten, but not 10-year-old boys. I don't want to "dis" the country of my birth, but when it comes to gender equality, Japan is embarrassingly low-ranked. Even now, it's not unusual to hear male politicians using obsolete, discriminatory language against women. I thought Japan would maintain its outdated status quo forever, but the picture made me feel hopeful. The changes may be subtle and slow, but definitely, things are changing in Japan. Maybe those boys who pull off pink uniforms see the world from different angles and treat each other with respect.

### *It's time to change.*

If Japan can change, so can my stories. I don't need a break-up with them. I just need to give them a boost. My stories need some make-over to come to life once again. What does it mean? Well, it means I need to operate big surgeries!

— Miyo Yamauchi

