



DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

StoryMasters: Serene Sunday Afternoon

Toastmaster for our October 10th meeting was our big mama, **Tina Tomiyama**, with gorgeous smiles. After conducting the successful SAC Emcee Workshop (page 3), she stepped up her game even more. Was it even possible? Yes, it was! The meeting flowed like beautiful classical music. With our cheerful president, **Mallery McMurtrey** and witty General Evaluator, **Anna Ziss-Patton**, every single attendee got a chance to speak. We all enjoyed a *serene* Sunday afternoon. (*WordMaster, Catherine Magruder, do I get a point for using the word of the day?*)

Cynthia Moore – *Memories of Crenshaw Village*

Cynthia Moore treated us to reminiscences of the good ol' days in Crenshaw Village. In the 1960's, neighbors embraced what they had and each other's company. Kids were counting stars in the sky, parents were prepping meals together, and everybody's screen doors were open. The whole neighborhood took care of Cynthia and her brother while her mother, a single parent, was working. That's what villages looked like, but now things are different. The doors and windows have bars. You can't visit schools without being interrogated. No more neighbors taking care of each other. Will the good ol' days ever return?

Camille Miller – *Kimchi*

Camille Miller entertained the audience with her tale of going shopping with a friend, then afterwards stopping to eat at a restaurant. With self-deprecating humor, she described carrying, not a muffin top, but a whole bakery around her waist — and related her efforts to cook her own meal at an all-you-can-eat Korean restaurant. The meal she prepared, including naked calamari that stuck to her throat, was a complete debacle. This was Camille's rehearsal of a Humorous speech contest speech. It rose to the occasion by giving the audience ample opportunities for laughter. I found myself laughing out loud and wished I could have heard the laughter of the rest of the audience.

Kathy Garr – *The Intruder*

It was Halloween night in 1999 when an intruder broke into George and Olivia's house while they were sleeping. The intruder threw an exterior statue of St. Michael (a spiritual warrior in the battle of good versus evil) through the window in order to gain access inside the home. Does anybody remember the story about former Beatle, George Harrison, having a knife plunged into his chest? **Kathy Garr** retold the dramatic true story with a spooky background and a skeleton shirt. Perfect setup for Halloween!

Miyo Yamauchi – *Steep Narrow Stairs*

The story started in Kyoto, Japan where **Miyo Yamauchi's** boss explained the reasons behind their new client's steep narrow stairs, which made her wonder if the client was Yakuza, Japanese mafia. They are known for making money from extortion, gambling, pornography and prostitution, but are they really social evil? Miyo wove a gripping tale about how Yakuza saved her when she was being frightened by a bullying futon salesman.

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Tina Tomiyama**, General Evaluator **Anna Ziss-Patton**, Timer **Jacki Williams-Jones**, Wordmaster/Grammarian **Catherine Magruder**, Videographer **Andrew M.**, and Evaluators **Elizabeth Smith**, **Margaret Mitchell**, **Harold Gee**, and our newest member, **David Chittenden**.

NEW TIMING RULE — DON'T LET US APPLAUD!

If we applaud you while you're speaking, don't flatter yourself. It's not a compliment. It means your time is up...literally. Have you watched the Oscars? Academy Award acceptance speeches are restricted to 45 seconds. There is play-off music after an actor has reached their time limit, and there are reminders on the teleprompter. At StoryMasters, we don't play music, but we applaud at you! If a teller goes over the grace period and does not appear to be ending, the Timer will start applauding. So please—finish your story within the given time. Don't leave us hanging! We'd love to know the ending of your story. Let us hear every word you'd like to share with us.



Next meeting is November 14. (GUESTS, [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

As Halloween is approaching, many intriguing storytelling events are coming up. Check them out on [our event page!](#)

OCT 21 International Community Storytelling Festival ~ Our Stories 2021

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/our-stories-2021-confronting-lifes-challenges/>

4:00 PM PDT / 7:00 PM EDT

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Zoom

Cost: Free

Celebrate our common humanity and the beauty of diverse experiences during this community festival, where friends (including Miyo) from Maryland, California, India and the Philippines share stories about facing life's challenges.



OCT 24 StoryMasters Storytelling Café

<https://thestorymasters.org/storytelling-cafe/>

3:00 PM PDT / 6:00 PM EDT

Category: Storytelling swap

Location: Zoom

Cost: Free

StoryMasters Storytelling Café is a safe place where you can share your work of art. Bring one whether it's still work in progress or a finished product. Anybody is welcome!



OCT 28 Night Terrors: Strange Encounters Around the Pacific

<https://thestorymasters.org/storytelling-cafe/>

6:30 PM PDT / 9:30 PM EDT

Category: Storytelling concert

Location: Zoom

Cost: Free

If you gaze long into the Abyss, the Abyss notices, and gazes into you. Join us for a short sojourn into the world of spirit, light, and shadow – an evening of ghost stories for grown-ups presented by master storyteller Alton Chung.



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.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How Professional Are You?

A phone rang. It was my client whom I had helped with his website recently. He offered me a new project, but I didn't have time for it this time, so I pulled out my contact list to see who would be the best fit for the project.

Sometimes I see people downplaying their roles when it comes to volunteer work, but I wonder how professional they are at work. If they are erratic about responding to emails, following given instructions, or committing to deadlines, how can I trust their capabilities and know if their work is worth paying for?



A few months ago, I saw some coaching sessions on an online auction. I didn't know if any of them was good as a coach, so I picked two of them I've seen before and placed bids. Luckily, I won them both. Let's call them person A and person B here.

I sent a short introductory email to them first. Because both of them are professionals, scheduling sessions would be pretty much the same, I thought, but person A blew me away while person B disappointed me. Person A took time to get to know me and explained everything I needed to know prior to the session. I was going to send her a reminder email before the session, but she beat me to it. There was nothing I needed to do other than being a student. Needless to say, her session was fantastic. I could tell she had studied my material thoroughly beforehand. Her awe-inspiring professionalism was an eye-opening experience. I learned so much just by looking at what she did and how she did it. As for person B, I'm still trying to get hold of her as I write. Because it's my first time interacting with her, I cannot tell this is her "usual" work ethic. Maybe she's been busy. Or the priority may be low to her because it's not a paid gig.

The experience changed my perspective completely. Before all of this, I was exuberant about winning person B's session because I admire her terrific storytelling skills. Whenever she speaks, I'm immersed in her captivating stories. I still think she's an outstanding storyteller, but I'm not interested in hiring her in the future. I don't want to chase her to do her job. On the other hand, I'll definitely hire person A again and endorse her sessions to anybody.

Show your excellence every time, whether the task comes with pay or not, big or small. You never know what or who will take you to your dream project.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT IN RECENT EVENTS

Pieter Severynen in the Storytelling Association of California (SAC) Genre Storytelling

Growing up in a storytelling family in a rural area in Netherland, Pieter Severynen thought everybody naturally told stories all the time. (Yep, that's our Pieter!) Celebrating SAC's Genre Storytelling Series' Folk Tales night, Pieter shared a fun folk tale about hares in the dense forest near the Amur River, the world's tenth longest river, forming the border between the Russian Far East and Northeastern China. Like many other stories he has shared with us one the years, his tale was full of the beauty of nature, wild animals, and funny bits.



This is a must-see show filled with enchanting folk tales. Even if you're not a folk tale fan (who isn't though? Seriously!), you will appreciate the storytellers' techniques — character building, vocal variety, and body language.

The show is available on SAC's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/tuVDeWugzTY>

Tina Tomiyama and Miyo Yamauchi at the Implementing Successful Zoom Events Workshop



On October 2, SAC presented a lively and fruitful workshop defining the roles and responsibilities of Show Hosts, Emcees and Event Techs at online and hybrid events.

Tech support person Claire Hennessy (the left panel of the third row) handled all the technical stuff including fielding the audience's questions.

The panelists: Ty Fance, Sheila Arnold, and Miyo Yamauchi (the second row and right panel on the third row) shared their experiences, lessons learned, and tips. Miyo's upgraded *Technical Tips* handout and advice about how to remove glare from glasses were pearls of wisdom.

The producers/emcees: Sara Armstrong and Tina Tomiyama (the first row) worked meticulously. They informed each of us (not only the attendees but also the participants) about what we would get, making sure each segment would flow flawlessly while creating an engaging environment.

It was truly a collaborative work, showing how an event should run. From the planning to execution and follow-up, everything ran as smooth as silk.

During the Q&A, the audience members not only asked questions but also shared their knowledge and tips. Compliments and appreciation are still coming in although the workshop was two weeks ago, which proves it was a big success!

Miyo Yamauchi at the ASST (Artists Standing Strong Together) Adults-ONLY Storytelling Show

If you're invited to attend an adults-only storytelling show, you need to acknowledge the risk you're taking beforehand. The protagonist in a folk tale you're rooting for may be murdered brutally. A personal story may give you too much information which you don't ask for (and you cannot unknow!).

On the other hand, if you're invited to tell a story for an adults-only storytelling show, you have 100% freedom! You can tell any story: a tale that even kids think too cheesy, a cruel story that makes the audience cringe, or a story that surprises them with twists and shocks. As long as the story doesn't hurt or insult anybody, you have 100% freedom!



But when the title capitalizes "ONLY," how far – how *adult* – do we need to expect???

On October 9, six storytellers shared stories at ASST's late evening program...from personal stories to folk tales. Fortunately (or unfortunately depending on how you look at it), no story made us cringe or frown. Each story was uniquely and cleverly crafted. Some stories gave the audience thought-provoking perspectives.

Oh, which story did Miyo share that night, you ask? What was told in the adults-only show stays in the adults-only show.

STORYTELLING STUB

How to Describe Physical Appearance

How many words do you have in your physical appearance vocabulary? You may not need too many details to describe characters in your story, but it's imperative to convey their physical features enough that your readers or listeners can envision and engage them.

A protagonist in a Japanese book I read in junior high school had distinctive eyes—Sanpaku (three white) eyes, which are the eyes with visible white between the iris and the lower eyelid. (*Does English have such an expression?*) Personally, I've never noticed anybody with Sanpaku eyes except for cats, but the imagery was so vivid that I could picture her eyes every time she appeared in the story.



Now, let's see how we can describe eyes. It's a tiny area, but when we think of the entire eye, there are so many ways to describe them and it can be impactful because the eyes are the windows to the soul.

Are the eyebrows rounded, soft angled, hard angled, flat, s-shaped, or straight? What about the shape of eyes? Almond, hooded, or downturned? What about eyelids, color of eyes, shape of eyeballs?

If all the characters look similar in your stories, you may want to explore other options.



References:

- [The Ultimate Guide to Mastering Character Descriptions](#)
- [Examples of Physical Characteristics in Humans](#)
- [8 Ways to Describe Character Features in Writing](#)
- [Physical Feature Thesaurus](#)
- [Words used to describe skin color](#) or [Words describe hair](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Craft a Story That Changes People's Minds

Inspiration4, the world's first all-civilian human spaceflight mission to orbit, returned to Earth Saturday, September 18, 2021, after spending 48 hours in space. To be honest, I like space in general, but I didn't understand those who want to go to space. We have the Earth to enjoy. So I wasn't following the news, but when I heard a newscaster saying "They went outside of everything," it hit me...Am I *that* person???

From time to time, I hear people saying "We have everything—mountains and oceans—here in California. Why do we need to travel outside of the state?" Whenever I hear that, I feel sorry for them. Yes, that's true. We have nice mountains and oceans, but does it mean we have seen everything there is? Nature is unique depending on the location. Mountains have different trees, flowers, animals, and insects. Oceans have different colors, waves, sand, and sea creatures. You don't know your city, state, or country until you see it from outside.

Okay, I may not go to space anytime soon, but at least, I need to learn what they're talking about, so I checked them out. "Inspiration4" was named to commemorate the four-person crew and their four associated "pillars" of support for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee: leadership, hope, generosity and prosperity. The more I learned about each crew member, the clearer it became why they were chosen. They were not just lucky civilians. For example, the youngest crew member, Hayley Arceneaux, didn't even apply for the spot herself. As a young kid, she was diagnosed with bone cancer and she got a prosthetic—a rod in place of her left femur—at St. Jude. She never thought she'd be an astronaut because of that, but when SpaceX was looking for a crew for the Hope pillar, St. Jude suggested their physician assistant, Hayley, might be a perfect candidate.

The documentary captured each crew member's story beautifully—not only the perspectives of the crew but also their families. Hayley's mother thought she had lost her daughter when she got cancer. When things seemed to have gotten back to normal, her daughter's life was imperiled once again, but she couldn't do anything other than to support her. That's something I've never thought of. I've never looked at their situation from a different angle. For the first time, space became relevant to me.

SpaceX didn't focus on the company or Elon Musk when they conveyed key messages. They were not the hero in the story. They convinced us that a visit to outer space was not an ego trip but a trip for all of humanity. They let us all into the journey emotionally and acted for a great cause. Because of that, the mission raised over 200 million dollars for St. Jude.

Now, I'm more open to go to space when an opportunity arises. Remember, stories can change people's minds if you craft them right.

— Miyo Yamauchi

