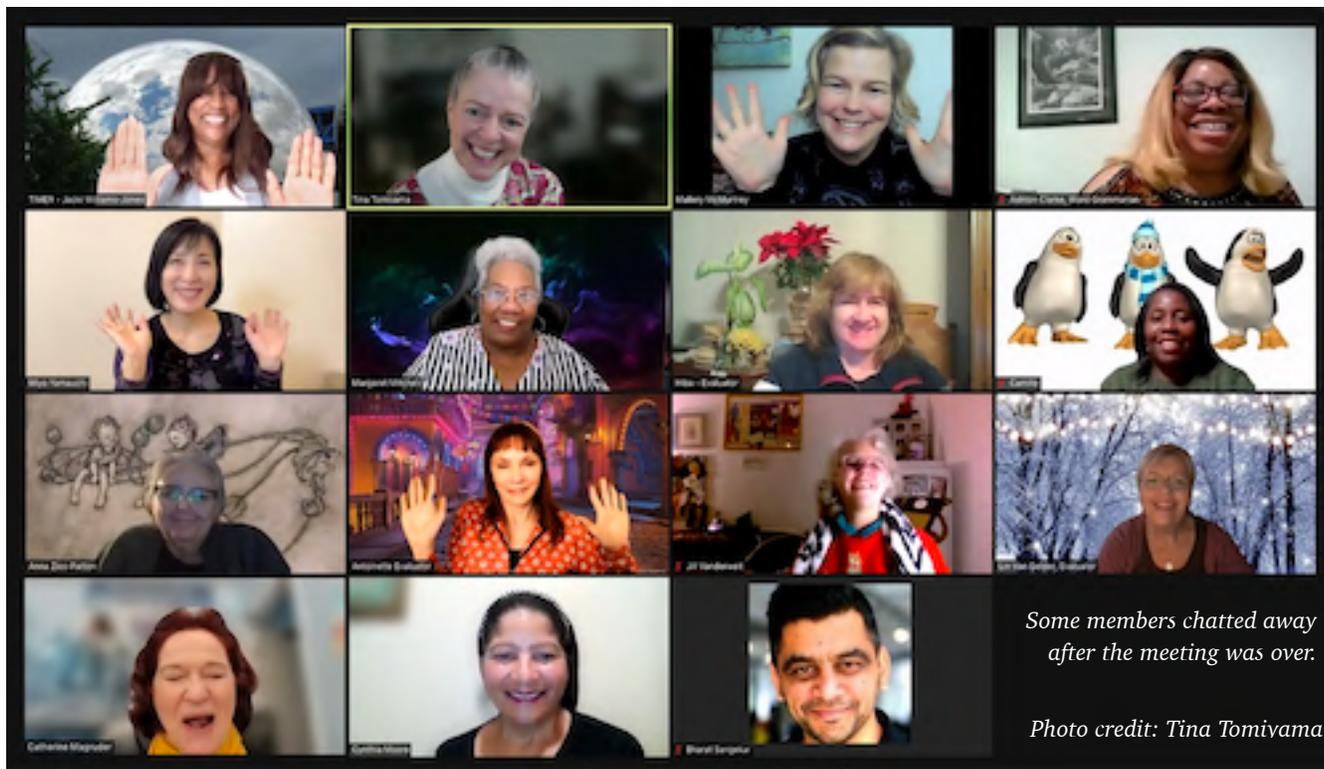




DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

Utterly Happy Holidays from StoryMasters!



It's been a blessing year for StoryMasters. Marking our ten-year anniversary, 111 guests visited us from all over the world, and we welcomed ten new and returning members this year. We are grateful for you! Yes, YOU! Thank you for reading our newsletter. Your continuous support is our driving force. Your compliments and encouragement are the cherries on the top.

THANK YOU!

Okay. Now, let me tell you about the five stories at our last meeting in 2021...

Tina Tomiyama – *Hired over the Phone*

This story used to be an anecdote for a show about interracial marriage, but with **Barbara H. Clark's** guidance, **Tina Tomiyama** developed it into a delightful stand-alone story. The story took place in the 1970's when Tina applied for a job at a publication company through a classified ad in a daily newspaper. The phone interview went smoothly and she was hired on the spot. Being newly married, she was tickled to spell her last name, T-o-m-i-y-a-m-a, on the phone. Well...what she didn't know at the time was her last name would bring surprises.

David Chittenden – *The Story of Billy Joe*

Billy Joe was David Chittenden's childhood friend. They always played in BJ's backyard because his parents loved him so much that he had to stay and play in his own yard. Otherwise, his parents' shouts of, "Billy Joe, where are you?" would echo throughout their neighborhood. But David didn't mind playing at BJ's place because the backyard had big trees and a wide range of native plants. They could even dig holes to China! Listening to his childhood memory of catching earthworms and playing with fireworks brought back a sense of nostalgia to the audience.

Margaret Mitchell – *The Real Santa Claus*

As a 7-year-old girl, **Margaret Mitchell** believed everything her parents said—the department Santas were the real Santa’s helpers, and Santa was coming through their front door because their new house didn’t have a chimney. Although big kids insisted that he was a fake, Santa Claus was a real deal to little Margaret. Looking back, she appreciates her parents who helped her cross the bridge from childhood to womanhood. Her enthusiastic delivery and exquisite word use painted her story masterfully and left the audience with smiles and feelings of comfort. A perfect story for this time of year!

Miyo Yamauchi – *Don't Put Trash in the Trash Can*

Doing the right thing sounds easy, but what is right when it comes to recycling? How much do you know about it? Plenty! That’s what **Miyo Yamauchi** thought...until she visited her mother in Japan in 2014. The little city took a serious stance against recycling and created intense garbage rules. The conversations between Miyo and her mother were comical yet educational. Who knew a humdrum subject like recycling can be such an enchanting story?!

Lee Amatangelo – *Lessons from Dad*

Lee Amatangelo retold **Randy Harvey’s** World Championship of Public Speaking 2004 first place speech titled "*Lesson from Fat Dad.*" Fat Dad was a beloved nickname that had been handed down through four generations. Lee left off the “fat” part, and shared an important lesson about love that he learned from his father.

You can watch Randy’s original winning speech here: <https://youtu.be/ddjNwIFba84>

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Mallery McMurtrey**, General Evaluator **Anna Ziss-Patton**, Timer **Jacki Williams-Jones**, Wordmaster/Grammarians **Ashton Cynthia Clarke**, and Evaluators **Hiba Hamdan**, **Jon White**, **Lin Van Gelder**, **Antoinette Byron**, and **Cynthia Moore**.

Happy Holidays, everybody! Looking forward to hearing more of your story in 2022!

Next meeting is January 9. (GUESTS, [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

Many intriguing storytelling events keep coming up. Check them out on [our event page!](#)

DEC 19 Little Women – The Christmas Chapter

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/little-woman-the-christmas-chapter/>

1:00 PM PST / 4:00 PM EST

Category: Storytelling concert

Location: Zoom

Cost: \$22.50

National award- storytellers Carol Birch and Megan Wells team up to bring Louisa May Alcott’s novel to vivid Christmas Light!



DEC 26 StoryMasters Storytelling Café

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

3:00 PM PST / 6:00 PM EST

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 a work in progress or a finished product. Everybody is welcome!

You’re welcome just to listen, too.



DEC 28 -29 Claim Your Joy for 2022: Writing Ahead

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/claim-your-joy-for-2022-writing-ahead/>

5:00 PM PST / 8:00 PM EST

Category: Writing Workshop

Location: Zoom

Cost: \$79

It’s time to celebrate 2021, look ahead to 2022, and ring in a whole new year of writing! Get excited about your story ideas, elevate your view of your future, and spend time with other writers who will cheer you on.



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.

JUST FOR FUN

When Grammar Walks into a Bar

These jokes are too funny not to share. If you come up with a new one, please drop us a line!

- An Oxford comma walks into a bar, where it spends the evening watching the television, getting drunk, and smoking cigars.
- A dangling participle walks into a bar. Enjoying a cocktail and chatting with the bartender, the evening passes pleasantly.
- A bar was walked into by the passive voice.
- An oxymoron walked into a bar, and the silence was deafening.
- Two quotation marks walk into a “bar.”
- A malapropism walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.
- Hyperbole totally rips into this insane bar and absolutely destroys everything.
- A question mark walks into a bar?
- A non sequitur walks into a bar. In a strong wind, even turkeys can fly.
- Papyrus and Comic Sans walk into a bar. The bartender says, “Get out—we don’t serve your type.”
- A mixed metaphor walks into a bar, seeing the handwriting on the wall but hoping to nip it in the bud.
- A comma splice walks into a bar, it has a drink and then leaves.
- Three intransitive verbs walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.
- A synonym strolls into a tavern.
- At the end of the day, a cliché walks into a bar—fresh as a daisy, cute as a button, and sharp as a tack.
- A run-on sentence walks into a bar it starts flirting. With a cute little sentence fragment. Falling slowly, softly falling, the chiasmus collapses to the bar floor.
- A figure of speech literally walks into a bar and ends up getting figuratively hammered.
- An allusion walks into a bar, despite the fact that alcohol is its Achilles heel.
- The subjunctive would have walked into a bar, had it only known.
- A misplaced modifier walks into a bar owned by a man with a glass eye named Ralph.
- The past, present, and future walked into a bar. It was tense.
- A dyslexic walks into a bra.
- A verb walks into a bar, sees a beautiful noun, and suggests they conjugate. The noun declines.
- A simile walks into a bar, as parched as a desert.
- A gerund and an infinitive walk into a bar, drinking to forget.
- A hyphenated word and a non-hyphenated word walk into a bar and the bartender nearly chokes on the irony.



Disclaimer: These jokes swarmed around the web for several years and probably have numerous authors. If you need explanations, please check [Linda K. Sienkiewicz's website](#).

OPPORTUNITY

Write and Get Paid

Do you like writing? Do you like puzzles? Do you like get paid? If you say yes, *The New York Times* wants your personal essay! Wordplay is interested in exploring how puzzles, games and language connect us to each other, how they fit into our daily lives and what we can learn about ourselves from them. (Reference: [Guidelines](#))

Solver Stories, a feature of Wordplay, welcomes submissions of personal essays on a variety of topics, such as:



- An issue the writer has faced in life, and how solving puzzles (of any kind) has helped them resolve that issue.
- A feel-good story or good news from the worlds of puzzles and games, such as Nancy Pfeffer’s “[Flight of the Spelling Bee Player](#).”
- How solving puzzles has affected a relationship in the writer’s life.
- How puzzles, games or use of language have been agents of cultural change.

If this is not your cup of tea, but you’re still interested in knowing the paying market, check these submissions.

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2021/11/87-calls-for-submissions-in-december.html>

Don’t forget to let us know if your stories get published. We love bragging about you!

MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Bharat Sangekar Sweeps to Victory!

Although contest season hasn't arrived for District 1 Toastmasters yet, it is in full swing in District 73 Toastmasters in Melbourne, Australia! Our own **Bharat Sangekar** won first place in the Area I47 Humorous Speech Contest on November 30—and another first place in the Area I47 International Speech Contest on December 1.

If you heard his humorous contest speech at our November meeting, you'd have been blown away with all the improvements he made. Because I was! The storyline was straightened up and focused. Jokes were sharp and clever. Timing and his body gestures were impeccable. Honestly, that was my favorite humorous speech in his entire collection. It was worth staying up late.

Hilariously done, Bharat! Can't wait to root for you again in 2022!

**Miyo Yamauchi and Erica Blumfield at True Tales Live**

Miyo Yamauchi and StoryMasters' friend, **Erica Blumfield**, were invited to share their personal stories on *True Tales Live* on November 30. *True Tales Live* is a first-person storytelling program from the Seacoast area of New Hampshire.

The show ended with a fun interview segment called "The Back-story Conversation" at which Erica was interviewed by the program host, David Phreaner. The audience was treated to stories about her acting career in NYC and her storytelling journey.

**Ashton Cynthia Clarke at Storytelling Association of California (SAC) Genre Storytelling**

The theme for the SAC Genre storytelling for the month was Sacred & Inspirational Stories, and **Ashton Cynthia Clarke** shared an alluring story entitled "Give Her a Crispy One."

Ashton's mother used to put a brand new, unblemished one-dollar bill in Christmas cards. She called them Crispy Dollars. When Ashton was distraught after her father passed away, her friend sent her crispy dollars and reminded her of the gift her mother offered: *I have faith in you*. Beautifully told, Ashton!

Check her story here: <https://youtu.be/FFdfcFyhO-A?t=1459>



Friend, that's a wrap for 2021. Keep writing. Keep telling.

FOOD FOR THOUGHTS

Emotions Behind Kids' Stories

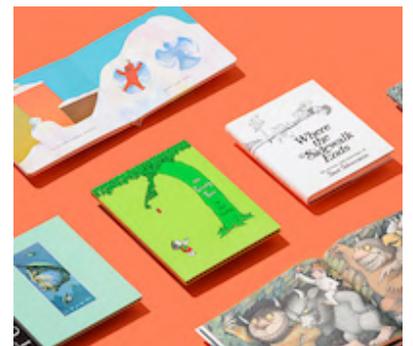
Do you remember books you read when you were kids? Were they mostly happy stories? Or did they evoke different emotions?

A recent study highlights how cultural differences in socializing emotions begin before children even start attending school. Specifically, the research found that Russian parents are more likely than U.S. parents to read stories to their children that feature negative emotions, such as fear, anger and sadness.

In the U.S., there's an emphasis on the value of positive emotions, such as happiness or pride, while Russian culture seems to value all emotions—including negative emotions—and believe it is important to learn from them. Because the stories we read and hear as children often inform which emotions we value, we wanted to see how those stories might differ across these two cultures. The researchers found this cultural contrast even when they accounted for differences in the length of texts and the number of illustrations featuring facial expressions.

Isn't it intriguing? Now, tell us your favorite books from your childhood!

Reference: [Science Daily: Studies of children's stories shows differences in Russian, US approaches to emotion](#)



STORYTELLING STUB

Fight Against a Growing Nuisance

When Zoom meetings became our new normal, a new word joined our vocabulary—Zoom-bombing. It means an unwanted, disruptive intrusion, generally by Internet trolls, into a video-conference call. Many classes and events were Zoom-bombed in 2020. Then, we didn't hear about it for a while. Whether people got smart or Zoom-bombers got bored, either way, it seemed like Zoom-bombing was on its way out. But lately, they've started appearing again.

The most recent one that I witnessed was disturbing. The Zoom-bomber kept changing his identity and his status so that he wouldn't get caught easily. As an observer, I was able to identify and predict the Zoom-bomber's next actions, but it took a really long time for the poor Zoom hosts to resolve the issue.

I hope nobody encounters such a disturbance, but as a precaution, let's review what to do when it happens:

As a Zoom host:

- Stop unwanted screen sharing: Share your own screen. As a host, you can take it over.
- Suspend participants' activities: You need to identify the Zoom-bomber first before doing this.
- Kick the person out: By default, an ousted guest cannot rejoin.

As audience:

- Mute and disable your video so that the Zoom hosts can identify the Zoom-bomber easily.

Tip for hosts: after the issue is resolved, don't rush back to the event agenda. Take a moment with the audience to ease their anxiety. Encourage them to take a couple of deep breaths and shake their arms and legs together. Happy Zoom meeting!

Reference: [Zoom-bombers: suggested preventive measures](#)



EDITOR'S NOTE

Reality Check — Am I Aging or ...?

This story is not working. I thought recycling was a good topic, but I was wrong. It doesn't excite me at all.

When I was about to toss it out, I had second thoughts.

Maybe I need to see it from another angle, like my back pain?

Six months ago, back pain attacked me without any notice. I felt like my body had started falling apart. The pain was excruciating. Considering my posture was relatively good and my abs and spine seemed decent enough to support my back, I've never dreamed that I would get this type of pain. How did it happen? It had to be aging. It must be.

I could blame on aging all I wanted, but I needed to do something about the pain because I couldn't function at all. Even brushing my teeth was challenging. I went to a chiropractor, but a CT scan didn't find anything wrong. After two weeks of treatments, they concluded that there must be something terribly wrong with my spine and I needed a serious treatment plan.

I agreed that something was wrong, but I didn't think my body could have worn out so suddenly, even if I was aging! So I went to an acupuncturist next. She said, "If you feel a difference after one treatment, your spine is fine without their suggested plan." And it was! A few weeks later, the pain was gone and I went back to my normal life.

I was good for a month or so...until the pain came back. It wasn't as bad as the first time, but bad enough to carry on my routine. For the second time round, acupuncture and a holistic treatment saved me, but even when I recovered, I had a feeling that the next pain was on its way. I just knew. I couldn't concentrate on my work or writing for months.

Do I need to repeat this pain and recover routine for the rest of my life? Aging is too hard to deal with!

Then, I pondered...what if my age wasn't the factor? Any external cause? Could it be the mattress? I changed my sleeping location. Voila! I became a new me the next morning. Who knew an old mattress could cause such pain? Okay, maybe you do. In Japan, I didn't use a bed, so I've never thought of its lifespan. Reality was different from my assumption.

After taking a long look at the not-working story, I realized explaining the facts and lessons made the story boring. Even reading it bored me. There should be another way to pass the information. I need to *tell* it, not explain. So I rewrote it until I could enjoy telling it. That's how my recycling story was born. If something is not working, probe it from a different angle. You may find a jewel there.

— Miyo Yamauchi

