



DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

Superb Stories from Our Stalwart Speakers

We lost an hour because of daylight saving time, but we didn't lose any of our story time. Oh, what a delightful afternoon it was! Here are bits of the stories.

Cynthia Moore – *For the Love of Family*

My house, my rules! When **Cynthia Moore** left home at 19 years old, she wrote her own house rules. When she ate, everybody ate. When she slept, everybody slept. But when she went back to live with her mother, the table was turned: she had to follow her mother's rules. Then, her mother started asking an uncomfortable question, "Cynthia, how much do you weigh?" The question sprang from love—and fear—because Cynthia's mother had lost a son to morbid obesity. Now that Cynthia has lost weight during the pandemic, her mother asks what Cynthia is going to wear when she goes out, and Cynthia walks the hallway like a model and spins for her...

Hiba Hamdan – *A Short Trip to France in America!*

Bonjour! Multilingual, **Hiba Hamdan** took us on a digital trip to the French-speaking province of Quebec, Canada. Her video clips were filled with beautiful pictures from Quebec City and Montreal: architecture, sidewalks, uptown/downtown, cafes, panoramic views, just to name a few. Oh, what gorgeous cities! And the ice hotel, the *Hôtel de Glace*, was something we don't see anywhere else. At the end, Hiba shared personal pictures—including her wedding photos—and reminisced fondly about her second home.

Pieter Severynen – *Potato Blight and Orphan Train*

Back in the day, it was said, Irish families could survive on one acre of potatoes and the milk of one cow, so when the potato blight struck Ireland in 1845, the country lost half its population. A million people died of starvation and two million emigrated, many to the United States. But life in the U.S. was tough for the new immigrants; some died, and their children became overnight orphans. Between 1845 and 1929, 250,000 children were shipped from East Coast to the Midwest by orphan trains. **Pieter Severynen** connected two seemingly-unrelated historical events together beautifully. His recommended book: <https://christinabakerkline.com/novels/orphan-train/>

Jon White – *Fan or Father?*

Jon White was never much of a baseball fan until his son, Austin, showed talent. At age 6, he was out on the field impressing observers. When his ball hit the glove, the whole place got quiet. *Who is that kid?* Austin was gifted. He received a Division One baseball scholarship to Fresno State. Jon was a proud dad, and baseball had become the foundation of their relationship over the years. But when Austin started struggling with baseball, their relationship started struggling too. After his baseball career ended, father and son needed to develop a new way of relating to each other. Now, they play catch with conversational balls.

Camille Miller – *Sit for a While*

If you think **Camille Miller** told the same story as last month, you'd be wrong! She made a major change in her contest speech after our last meeting and we had the privilege to hear her rehearse it. Since it's a contest speech, I don't want to give it away, but I liked the new version. What about you?

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Miyo Yamauchi**, General Evaluator **Tina Tomiyama**, Timer **Aprille Isham**, Wordmaster/Grammarians **Camille Miller**, and Evaluators **Ashton Cynthia Clarke**, **Anna Ziss-Patton**, **Lin Van Gelder**, and **Mallery McMurtrey**.

Next meeting is April 10. (GUESTS, [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

Michael S. Jones Celebration of Life

On March 12, family and friends gathered and celebrated the estimable life of Michael S. Jones in-person and virtually. Listening to the beautiful tributes, we felt honored to know him even better. Our hearts go out to his wife Jacki. The streaming video is available here: <https://youtu.be/TXSNoMf3rM8>



UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

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

MAR 23 Telling Favorites: Photographs

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/telling-favorites-20220323/>

5:00 PM PT / 8:00 PM ET
 Category: Storytelling concert
 Location: Zoom
 Cost: Donation

Telling Favorites is a storytelling show about our favorite things. Each month they pick a category of favorite things and all stories will somehow relate to that category. The theme for this month is Favorite Photograph!



Mar 27 StoryMasters Storytelling Café

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

3:00 PM PT / 6:00 PM ET
 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!



MAR 30 Haunting Tales about the Galloway Glens with Mostly Ghostly

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/haunting-tales-about-the-galloway-glens-with-mostly-ghostly/>

11:30 AM PT / 2:30 PM ET
 Category: Storytelling concert
 Location: Online
 Cost: Free

Mostly Ghostly are delighted to be taking part in a special online talk for the Can You Dig It project, exploring the dark history and haunting tales of the Galloway Glens.



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.

SPEECH CONTESTS

Area F1, F2 & F5 Evaluation & International Speech Contests

Contest, contest, contest! It's the contest season! Please come down and support our own Hiba Hamdan and Camille Miller!

Registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlvc-CtqTkrGNDZ2etVVLfENGBVSYqRzsyz>



March 19, 2022

Gavel Down @ 9 AM Pacific Time



Hiba Hamdan



Camille Miller

- Area F1**
- C.I.T.I.E.S. Club
 - Carson Communicators
 - Southwest Toastmasters
 - StoryMasters**
 - Strengthening Voices
 - And The Winner Is...

- Area F2**
- Compton Elite Communicators Club
 - Culver City Toastmasters Club
 - Celebrations of Life Toastmasters
 - First Class Communicators
 - M.E.G. Talks
 - Hope Masters

- Area F5**
- Agape Toastmasters
 - Funny Bones Toastmasters
 - Ladera Toastmasters
 - JusticeMasters
 - Life Stages
 - West Adams Toastmasters

MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Love was definitely in the air in February! A few of StoryMasters shared the colorful limelight in the storytelling community.

Miyo Yamauchi at Turbine Arts Collective

On February 13, **Miyo Yamauchi** and eight artists (storyteller, singers, violinist, beatboxer) shared their artwork at Turbine Arts Collective's Pre-Valentine Montage. As the name, Montage, suggests, the evening combined a series of short artistic pieces into one sequence.



Camille Miller at SAC's Genre Storytelling Series

On February 26, the Storytelling Association of California (SAC) held another delightful Genre Storytelling Series concert. February is known as a romance month, so the genre for the night was, of course, Romantic Stories!

As StoryMasters' representative, **Camille Miller** kept the audience in stitches. Her story was smart and F-U-N-N-Y with some twists!!! Seeing the audience's reaction was another hilarious part. People were laughing uncontrollably. Camille, cleverly done!

StoryMasters, [check out the upcoming themes](#) and start writing a story!



Ashton Cynthia Clarke at Italo's Blog Talk Radio

Ashton Cynthia Clarke was invited to read Aphrodite's Poem. She delivers it with finesse and self empowerment like only a goddess would. Please check out her beautiful poem read here.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8mOf2_zsA8



PRAY FOR UKRAINE

What Can We Do?

The recent news has been heart-wrenching. Some of my friends will be leaving for Poland soon to help the refugees, but not everybody can pack and go. If you're looking for a way to help, here are some options.

- **Americares** is delivering medicine, medical supplies, and emergency funding to help families access essential health care services.
<https://www.americares.org/emergency-program/conflict-in-ukraine/>
- **The International Rescue Committee** is working to rush critical aid to displaced families.
<https://www.rescue.org/>
- **World Central Kitchen**, headed by chef and humanitarian José Andrés, is in Poland providing meals for the many refugees pouring into the country.
<https://wck.org/>
- **The International Fund for Animal Welfare** is a worldwide leader in animal rescue and emergency care. IFAW partnered with animal shelters in Ukraine following the 2014 Russian invasion and is providing emergency aid while the shelter's staff have remained in place to care for their animals.
<https://www.ifaw.org/action/ukraine-emergency-aid-update>
- **Save the Children's Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund**: is working in Romania, Poland and Lithuania to make sure services for children are immediately available including safe places to play and learn, physical and mental health support, child-friendly information, and family tracing and reunification.
<https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/refugee-children-crisis/ukrainian-refugees#response>
- **Razom for Ukraine**: providing tactical medical and hospital supplies within the country of Ukraine. Their partners on the ground in western Ukraine are warehousing, sorting, and distributing their humanitarian aid to various hot spots across the country. The first shipment of tactical medicine is now arriving for the civilian territorial defenses in Kyiv and Zhytomyr.
<https://razomforukraine.org/>

STORYTELLING STUB

How Can I Shorten a Story?

The other day, I was booked for a storytelling show, which was great. The not-so-great part was I had to cut my story by one third. To be more specific, 550 words. I spent considerable time in denial, dreaming that the problem would go away magically.

For a few days, I didn't even look at my script, thinking...*Every sentence, every paragraph is important. This story is meant to be at least 10 minutes long. If I make it short, it will lose the essence that I try to convey. It's not going to work!*

Then, I remembered the article, "Word Diet," which I wrote about four years ago. In the article, I asked the following three questions to operate a serious surgery.

- *Is this dialogue relevant to my story?*
- *If I lose this scene, does my story change?*
- *What do I want to tell in this paragraph?*

Finally, I took the bull by the horns. Surprisingly, the challenge wasn't as hard as I thought it would be. When I kept asking those questions, the answers were clear. And I had a fun time finding better verbs to replace adjectives and adverbs. Within an hour, I was able to cut it down to what it needed to be. And when I read it to the writers who had heard the long version before, they agreed that the short version still has the same story beats and emotional arc as the longer one.

If you haven't tried the Word Diet, try it at least once. You may see your story from a different perspective.

Reference:

- [12 Secrets To Help You Shorten Your Short Story](#)
- [5 Simple Ways to Trim Down Your Writing](#)
- [How to shorten your wordcount](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Right People, Right Place

Not everybody has the skill set.

Said a senior technician at a dental lab. I was taken back by his statement. It sounded harsh and arrogant, contrary to his benign demeanor. Without consideration for my wince, he smiled and continued,

Everybody has a different skill set. They may not be good at identifying colors, but they are good at something else.

That reminded me of the Peter Principle, "people in a hierarchy tend to rise to a level of respective incompetence." It means employees are promoted based on their success in previous jobs until they reach a level at which they are no longer competent, as skills in one job do not necessarily translate to another.

Now, why was I at the dental lab in the first place, you ask? I was there for a custom tooth shade match. I didn't realize that my tooth color shade was unique until I needed a crown. To make one, my dentist sent me to a dental lab where a technician sketched my tooth with color pencils. Three weeks later, without going back to the lab, I received a perfect temporary crown. Seriously, it was the best quality I've ever seen. Six months later, the time came to create a final crown. When I drove back to the lab for another color sketch and saw a different technician, I wondered if his skills would be as good as the first technician's. I scratched the thought out immediately. Technicians are technicians. They know what I don't know.

For the final crown, I had to go back to the lab for the actual coloring. It was intriguing to watch the technician painting the crown with inks, mini palette, and brushes. Detailed and delicate work. Now I know why their products are top-notch, so when the finished product missed the mark completely, it was beyond incomprehensible. How did it happen? Unfortunately, it wasn't the last time. After going back and forth between the lab and dental office, my dentist and I demanded that the lab bring their A game; otherwise, we'd go to another lab. They restructured the team, started my case from scratch, and assigned a senior custom color shade technician to it.

After explaining the difference of materials, process of making a crown, and how mistakes happen, the technician smiled, "It's never going to be perfect as we are trying to copy a natural product."

A week ago, my dentist placed the final crown in my mouth. It's as perfect as it can be, which makes me even more unique.

The Peter Principle can be applied not only to people in hierarchy, but also to most people in general. Everybody has their own strengths and weaknesses. Some storytellers may not be good with story structures, but they may excel at delivery. I enjoy listening to folktales, but telling them is a different story.

Now, let me ask you. What are your skill sets?

— Miyo Yamauchi

