

Sunday Afternoon with Gregarious Stories

The weather had been dreadful. I didn't want to talk about it, but I couldn't stop talking about it. It was HOT! And humid! But the weather was not the only thing hot. So was our September meeting! It sizzled with five glorious stories. Each story was unique and touched our feelings in different ways. Here are snippets.

Margaret Mitchell – *Who Is Hattie Mays?*

It was Thanksgiving Day, 1946. When two-year old **Margaret Mitchell**, with a curious mind, sneaked into the kitchen and almost ruined the roast turkey, she was frightened and her mother was upset. But not Grandma Mays. She picked Margaret up, planted a big kiss on her fat little cheek, and held her in a tight embrace. After opening her story with this exhilarating scene, Margaret revealed more rich family history, masterfully engaging all of our senses. The photographs she shared at the end of the story were a perfect callback to the Thanksgiving anecdote and helped bring her great-grandmother to life.

Jon White – *You Gotta Get You One of These—a Tribute to David Arnold*

Weather, traffic, even his own outfit...everything was blurry to **Jon White** because he was jittery and scared. November 21, 2016 was his first appearance as a standup comedian. All his life, he'd talked about doing it, but he "hadn't done squat." Painfully aware of the fragility of life after going through a brutal divorce, he felt comedy was extremely important to him and it was, at last, time for him to act. His story was a beautiful tribute to his teacher, David Arnold, who passed away early this month. Jon, don't say you're done with standup. You have fans here!

Hiba Hamdan – *Picture Perfect Communication*

As social media use keeps growing each year, everybody is becoming a "professional" photographer, but how much do we know about DOs and DON'Ts when it comes to photo communications? With her long experience in creating and managing Social Media pages for large organizations, **Hiba Hamdan** asked important questions. Remember them as **FOCUS**: Facts, Offend anybody, Copyrights, Unanswered questions, and Safety. Does your photo offer facts or create false information? Does it offend anyone and is it respectful of others' privacy? Does it violate copyright law? Does it leave your viewers with unanswered questions? Is it safe or could it be misused by pederasts or trolls? If your photo passes all five tests, go out and post your pictures on social media!

Jill Vanderweit – *I'm Walking Here*

Here is the Savior of the Universe, **Jill Vanderweit**, treating us to a delightful tall tale! Jill told us how she saved the Earth from alien invasion with her superpowers. Well, she was supposed to meet her friends at a restaurant in the city. She *could* drive from her home in the suburbs to the train station, park the car, and take the metro, but she didn't want to do that—because she's CHEAP, which is her first superpower! She's so cheap that the thought of paying \$15 for a round trip irks her to the core. And she likes to walk, which is her second inner strength! Those two superpowers saved the Earth. Sorry, I can't tell you more—the information is classified!

Penny Post – *The Elfin Knight*

The Elfin Knight is a traditional Scottish folk ballad, of which there are many versions. After **Penny Post** shared her version of the story, she introduced 19th century folklorist [Francis James Child](#) to us, who is best known today for his collection of English and Scottish ballads now known as the [Child Ballads](#). Penny asked us, when you hear a story, what are you hearing? How does it sound to you? The way you hear it will be unique to you. Don't be shy! It's fun to create a version of your own. And don't forget to give an attribution when you do. Now, who's going to make the next version of the Elfin Knight?

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Catherine Magruder**, General Evaluator **Tina Tomiyama**, Timer **Miyo Yamauchi**, Wordmaster/Grammarian **Uche Akotaobi**, and Evaluators **Mallery McMurtrey**, **Harold Gee**, **Anna Ziss-Patton**, **Camille Miller** and **Kathy Garr**.

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

NEW STORYMASTER INTRODUCTION

Meet Debra Thurston

I adore reading, writing, a good storyteller. Mark Twain is one of my favorite storytellers. Finding groups that assist us in developing the craft of writing and telling our stories began about nine years ago, in New Haven, Connecticut. But seven years ago, I moved back to California and was advised to contact Barbara H. Clark, an excellent teacher of storytelling. I considered myself lucky to be in the company of like-minded story crafters. I enjoyed the camaraderie so much that I have remained friends with several fellow students.



Writing was and continues to be my first passion, but listening to a good story being told with vitality and immense imagery, makes writing to a close second in a New York minute.

Moving forward means a hefty commitment to mastery of this craft, as this is an addition to my currently full-plate of activities. Yet with joy and anticipation of creating even more bonds, I thank Toastmasters and StoryMasters for being available, and helping me learn to craft the stories that I want to share. Even though I am retired from working, I remain a lifelong learner and witness to some amazing life events, that I consider the fertilizer for developing my stories about family, friends and remarkable adventures.

UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

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

Sep 21 SAC Genre Storytelling Series: Folktale

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/sac-story-swap-genre-storytelling-series-folktale-092122/>

7:00 PM PT / 10:00 PM ET
 Category: Storytelling Concert
 Location: Virtual
 Cost: Free - \$15

SAC (Storytelling Association of California) Members from various Storytelling groups around California will be telling stories. The genre for September is folktales.



Sep 21 It's Funny Now!

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/its-funny-now-092122/>

8:00 PM PT
 Category: Storytelling concert
 Location: The Crow Comedy
 Cost: \$10

The best comedians and storytellers in Los Angeles tell their funniest stories that were not so funny when they happened.



Sep 24 Virtually Connected: A Workshop and Panel Discussion on Best Practices in Virtual Production

<https://storynet.org/civicrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=151>

11:00 AM PT / 2:00 PM ET
 Category: Panel Discussion
 Location: Virtual
 Cost: \$10-20

Join some of the storytelling communities' most successful virtual producers as we discuss what we have learned. From the pros and cons of platforms to the best way to set up a studio, this is for anyone interested in performing or production virtual shows.



Sep 25 & Oct 1 How To Be Japanese: Your Normal Is Not My Normal

<https://miyo.net/solo22>

9/25 @ 7:00 AM PT
 Category: Solo show
 Location: The Glendale Room
 Cost: \$10

10/1 @ 8:00 AM PT
 Category: Solo show
 Location: The Fanatic Salon
 Cost: \$15

See your world from a different perspective.
What is your normal?



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.

AUGUST MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Ashton Cynthia Clarke was on a roll again!



On August 17, Ashton Cynthia Clarke shared a moving story entitled *One Hundred to a Box, Size Large* at Storytelling Association of California’s Genre Storytelling Series. It was about taking care of her terminal ill father.

Can you guess what the genre was? That’s right. It was Personal Stories.

Oh, what a beautiful story it was! If you missed it, you can watch here.

[SAC Genre Storytelling Series - Personal Stories on August 17](#)



The emcee for the night was **Tina Tomiyama!**

When you watch the video, check out how exquisite her emceeing skills are! There is so much to learn.



On August 21, Ashton Cynthia Clarke shared another wonderful story at Sacred Storytelling organized by ASST (Artists Standing Strong Together).

[Learn more about ASST](#)



"I'm grateful for one day at a time. That just for today, I kicked depression to the curb"

New Episode Featuring
Ashton Cynthia Clarke

Telling Mental Health
 Storytellers share their experiences with mental health

Hosts: Erica Blumfield & Scott Randall

Listen wherever you get your podcasts

Ashton was also on the podcast, “Telling Mental Health.” It’s a semi-weekly podcast hosted by StoryMasters’ friend, Erica Blumfield, and Scott Randall that welcomes a new storyteller each episode to share their own mental health story and discuss it afterwards, breaking stigma around mental health topics through story and conversation.

Ashton Cynthia Clarke was invited to tell one of our many favorite stories, *Lady in Red*.

[Listen to Ashton’s story here.](#)

I saw Ashton on the stage about 3-4 years ago. She was an excellent storyteller then, but the improvement she has made over the years are beyond impressive. It’s truly honor to watch her grow and call her my friend.

Ashton, keep thriving! Keep inspiring us!

STORYTELLING STUB

What Is the Tetrad?

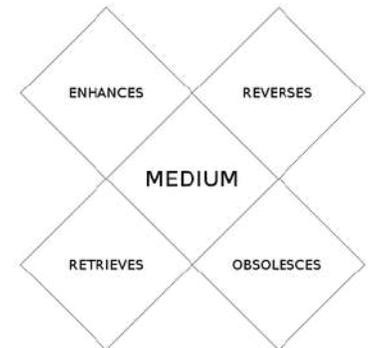
The Tetrad method was developed by Marshall McLuhan. It's an idea of using tetrads to apply a consistent mode of analysis to different media. The idea behind them is simple: to make sure that you ask the same questions in the same way about different media. Media can be anything like cellphone, car, love, hate, philosophical questions, and concepts.

The tetrad consists of four questions.

1. What does the medium enhance?
Netflix enhances entertainment.
2. What does the medium make obsolete?
Netflix makes movie theaters and local TV programs obsolete.
3. What does the medium retrieve that had been made obsolescent earlier?
Netflix retrieves old TV shows and movies that may have been forgotten.
4. What does the medium reverse or flip into when pushed to extremes?
Netflix flips into addictions, loss of connections to reality or human contact.

These questions may give you different perspectives or ideas when you craft a story. If you're writing jokes, the last question is the best one. It won't write jokes for you, but it'll help you find one.

Now, enlighten me. What's your media? What are your answers?



A blank tetrad diagram from Wikipedia

EDITOR'S NOTE

What Is Art?

Last month, an AI (Artificial Intelligence) generated art titled *Théâtre d'Opéra Spatial* won the first prize in the annual Colorado State Fair's digital arts competition. The image is a futuristic but also Renaissance style scene with three women in traditional dresses in an ornate room with the large circular viewport to the outside of world. The 150-old contest doesn't have a rule about AI-generated art and also, the artist was open about using AI when he submitted his work, so his win was totally legit, yet it did stir up a debate. Some said, "We're watching the death of artistry unfold right before our eyes."

Is it though? I understand people's frustrations. Yes, I've raised my concerns about the creative world being supplanted by AI before, but I have mixed feelings about this because I know how much effort the artist invested to create it. He spent 80 hours, feeding texts to AI, choosing one out of hundreds of iteration of the art, upscaling the image with Gigapixel AI, and printing it on a canvas. You may think you'll get a winning art piece if you use AI, but it's not that simple. You can't tell AI to create a piece of art and expect to win the contest. You need to do the work, too. Feeding texts requires fine tuning. In fact, he kept trying different words until he found the image he liked. More than 900 iterations of the art have been generated. Honestly, I don't know what words would make outstanding art, how many words are too many or too few, or how to choose a winning piece.

What is art? Do you remember the bananas being taped on the wall at the Art Basel Miami Beach? They sold for \$120K each. What about the pair of glasses left on a gallery floor? It was mistaken for art and has beaten artists. If they're considered art, can we welcome AI generated art, too? Andy Warhol once said "Art is what you can get away with." Maybe art is made out of extraordinary ideas. Maybe art comes from accidents or maybe when rules are broken.

But if we accept it as art, I still have many questions. Where do we draw a line of plagiarism? Obviously, AI creates unique art inspired by a massive amount of artwork from the past, but isn't that what artists do? Get inspired by other artists? Who owns it, AI or the artist? According to the US Copyright Office's report, only "original works of authorship" are considered. "To qualify as a work of 'authorship' a work must be created by a human being," which means AI-generated art cannot obtain copyrights. If an artist paints based on the AI-generated art he worked on, can he get copyrights? Did I tell you that I have mixed feelings?

Hey, if I have AI write original content, would you be interested in reading it? Do you think you can tell who wrote it?

— Miyo Yamauchi



from Wikimedia Common