



# DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

## Sunday Afternoon with Enchanting Stories

How's the weather in your city? Believe it or not, Los Angeles just had some rain (or should I say drizzle?) and it cooled down. The leaves have started changing color. That's right. Fall is here! On October 9, we listened to five somewhat nostalgic, somewhat inspiring, and overall wonderful stories. Here's the recap.

### Jacki Williams-Jones – *Unicorn*

**Jacki Williams-Jones** was a unicorn, studying French at Stanford University. It was an interesting time to be a student—Title IX had recently been enacted and many college traditions that we today consider coed were all male, including cheerleading and marching bands. On her first day, Jacki brought her own “bodyguard” and joined the Leland Stanford Junior University Marching Band. That was the day when her destiny as a unicorn was sealed. She was also the first female in Dollies and the first (or maybe only) Black sweetheart hostess of Sigma Chi. Being a unicorn is to be rare and highly valued, but we all have been unicorns sometime, Jacki said.

### Cynthia Moore – *Memories of the South*

You're in the South, girl. Don't take those city attitudes with you. Don't you dare speed. You'll say “Yes, Sir” or “Yes, Ma'am.” Those memories crept in while **Cynthia Moore** was driving from Atlanta to Tuskegee, Alabama, to visit her grandmother's youngest sister. Cynthia's family migrated from Tuskegee to LA in the 1940s, and when she was small, she heard all the racial stories. At the time they were *mumbo jumbo* [Word of the Day] to her, but they still stuck in her head for decades: stories such as someone getting killed because of his city attitude. She sat straight up, gripped the wheel and lowered her speed to 25 mph.

### Anna Ziss-Patton – *Life Worth*

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” **Anna Ziss-Patton** knew exactly what kind of life she would have. She would have long black hair and red lipstick, live in Greenwich Village, drink and share stories with her writer and artist friends, but she didn't know what her job title would be. She just knew she wanted to be “creative,” so she just tried various artistic activities and landed on random jobs. When she wished she had had a smart career path, she learned a Japanese word, *ikigai*, which means reasons for being. America adopted a career version of *ikigai* that includes what you love, what you're good at, what you can get paid for, and what the world needs. Anna invited us to reframe our career path in *ikigai* learning.

### Kathy Garr – *On a Journey*

**Kathy Garr** was horrified when her friend said she'd pick her up at Kathy's house, where six people crammed into a two bedroom apartment. Kathy planned to wait on the driveway, but the friend came early and met her dad (who, thankfully, was sober and charming that morning). Regardless of her concerns, they bonded over cigarette, music, and talk. Kathy's story of her high school days was written for a workshop, “*The Story of You*,” which our StoryMasters member, Mallery McMurtrey, conducted. During her story, Kathy invited us to unmute ourselves and sing *Lights by Journey* (a song she sang with her friend that day) together.

### Lee Amatangelo – *Marriage and Children*

Marriage is not a word. It's a sentence. **Lee Amatangelo** told a humorous tale about marriage. We may say that communication is the key for a successful marriage, but Lee disagreed. Less communication is better, he claimed because marriage is a serious business. What we don't want is miscommunication. Less communication, less miscommunication. He also advised not to interrupt your wife when she's talking because she'll start over again. One after another, Lee shared a funny quotes and anecdotes about marriage and children. For those who are or were married with children, did you see yourself?

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Miyo Yamauchi**, General Evaluator **Catherine Magruder**, Timer **Harold Gee**, Wordmaster/Grammarian **Camille Miller**, and Evaluators **Margaret Mitchell**, **Hiba Hamdan**, **Jon White**, **Jill Vanderweit** and **Pieter Severynen**.

Next meeting is November 13. ([GUESTS](#), [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

## UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

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

### Oct 18 RISK!'s live show in LA and online

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/risks-20221018/>

7:00 PM PT / 10:00 PM ET

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Hybrid

Cost: Free - \$15-20

Join David Crabb and a fantastic crew of storytellers for RISK!'s in-person and livestream show! Attendees can see the show in person at The Hotel Cafe in LA, or watch the show online via livestream.



### Oct 21 How to Make Your Message Memorable with Personal Stories

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/how-to-make-your-message-memorable-with-personal-stories/>



6:30 PM PT / 9:30 PM ET

Category: Storytelling Workshop

Location: Online

Cost: Free / rsvp: lewis.joan@hotmail.com

What makes your message memorable with personal stories? Our own **Margaret L. Mitchell** will tell us how. Join us for this invaluable workshop!

You will learn:

- ❖ What are personal stories?
- ❖ Why are you telling this story?
- ❖ Why stories are powerful communication tools.
- ❖ What is the difference between stories and narratives?
- ❖ How and when to use your stories in presentations.
- ❖ What are the essential story elements?

The workshop is sponsored by a Toastmasters club, Praisemasters, but guests are welcome! And it's free!

### Oct 30 What's Your Story, California?

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/whats-your-story-california-202210/>

3:00 PM PT

Category: Storytelling competition

Location: Santa Monica Playhouse

Cost: \$20

Stories help us understand each other and relive significant moments in time. They remind us that despite our differences, we're basically the same and this is the foundation of building stronger communities.



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.*

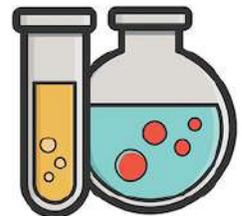
## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### When You Believe...

A new study by Yale University had 240 children, ages 4-7, predict if an object would float in water. The subjects were divided into three groups. The first group was told they were scientists before the game started. The second group was told the same thing, but the girls were told stories about Marie Curie, and the boys were told stories about Isaac Newton. The third group was asked to *become* Curie or Newton. During the game, they were referred to not by their own names but as Curie or Newton like "What do you think, Dr. Curie?" Boys and girls both scored about 70%. Boys played 12 times and girls played 6 times, except for the last group. The girls in the third group becoming Curie played 12 times, matching the boys' number. The study also showed the girls in the second group, who heard the stories, showed interest in science more than ones in the first group.

It is said that some kids start getting stereotyped as early as six years old—with people believing boys are better in science and math than girls. It seems boys believe in their abilities without needing to pretend to be a scientist. Girls tend to give up, thinking those science and math are boys' subjects, but this study shows that a little mindset impacts the outcome.

Why don't we try something you believe you're not good at, pretending to be the expert? Paint, play instruments, or dance? Maybe write a story, pretending to be one of the best novelists like Jane Austen, Mark Twain, or your favorite? You may be surprised by your potential. Or you may find your calling!



## STORYTELLING STUB

## How To Say It

Do you read contracts? Who does? Why is legal language so incomprehensible for general public? This year, a paper titled “Poor writing, not specialized concepts, drives processing difficulty in legal language,” won the Ig Nobel Prize, which is a satiric prize awarded annually since 1991 to celebrate ten unusual or trivial achievements in scientific research. They focus on discoveries that can make you laugh and think.

It is said that legal documents are hard for us to read because we don’t understand legal concepts, but this research proves that wrong. Check the following example.

*A) In the event that any payment or benefit by the Company (all such payments and benefits, including the payments and benefits under Section 3(a) hereof, being hereinafter referred to as the ‘Total Payments’), would be subject to excise tax, then the cash severance payments shall be reduced.*

*B) In the event that any payment or benefit by the Company would be subject to excise tax, then the cash severance payments shall be reduced. All payments and benefits by the Company shall hereinafter be referred to as the ‘Total Payments.’ This includes the payments and benefits under Section 3(a) hereof.*

B is much easier to comprehend than A, isn’t it? A includes low-frequency jargon, center-embedded clauses (leading to long-distance syntactic dependencies), passive voice structures, and non-standard capitalization, relative to nine other baseline genres of written and spoken English. When there are synonyms, legal documents tend to choose less popular words. So when they are rewritten in plain texts, comprehension is improved.

Please read the [full report](#) if you have time, because it’s really fascinating. It may help you understand [Hemmingway Editor’s](#) suggestions better or make you take a second look or another approach when you craft a story or prepare for a presentation next time.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

## Thank You!

*Oh gosh! He thinks an alien is coming out of my body!*

That’s what I thought when I noticed an audience member’s gaze. He must know that something is wrong with me. I was on the stage of my solo show, “How To Be Japanese: Your Normal Is Not My Normal” at the Fanatic Salon Theater. After 10 minutes in, my prop, which was tucked in my top, started falling down...like an unknown creature. Every time someone’s gaze became fixed on me, I thought they “knew.” I kept asking myself how to solve the problem.

*The fake glasses are already down to my belly. It’s only a matter of time till they’re going to fall on the floor. Should I take them out? Then what? There is no where to hide them on the stage. How many people know that something is going on? Everybody!*

Eventually, I found an opportunity when I sat on the black cube. I leaned forward, took the glasses out, and placed them on the cube. I was proud of myself, thinking my movement was so smooth that not many people had noticed. Then, there came the next problem. The prop was sitting on the cube...like an elephant in the room! I was horrified with the thought of everybody wondering where it came from and what kind of role it would play in my show. Distractions were the last thing I wanted to create. I needed to lose that prop fast without making a scene. But where and how?

Then, a solution popped into my head! I can drop it to the hole of the black cube. To make sure, I simulated different scenarios in my head and analyzed them from different angles, but it seemed as perfect as it could be. There was no time for hesitation, so I executed the plan. Fortunately, everything worked out as I envisioned.

All the crazinesses happened while I was performing on the stage as if everything were going perfectly. I’ve had 3 in-person solo shows so far. Visual, sound, content, and interactions—each show had something different. And every time, big or small, there were unexpected surprises like this prop incident, which were nerve wracking at the time, but now, they are fond memories because of you. My storytelling journey wouldn’t have been this much fun without your support and love.

So...THANK YOU! (mic drop)

— Miyo Yamauchi

