



DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

Heartwarming Sunday Afternoon

Brrrrr. Suddenly, winter knocked on our door in Los Angeles. When it comes to chilly weather, Angelenos may be wimps, but seriously, the weather has been c-o-l-d! But not our hearts! On November 13, we welcomed seven guests and enjoyed four intriguing stories. Each story was unique. They made us feel motivated, laugh, and think. The Sunday afternoon warmed our hearts. Here are some snippets of the stories.

Harold Gee – *A Thoughtful Successor*

Harold Gee told us a story about an African leader who was in the last season of his life, so it was time to choose his successor. He had selected a young man who was intelligent, courteous, and had some experience with what he was doing. He seemed to be a perfect candidate, but the leader had a concern. How could he measure the young man's wisdom? So he set up two tests. He invited the young man to prepare for two meals for him; one meal with the best ingredients life can have, and the second meal with commonplace ingredients. His story told us words are important and we should try to stick to the high road and tell the truth.

Miyo Yamauchi – *T.P.O. ~ Time, Place, and Occasion*

In Japan, it's important to wear appropriate clothes for T.P.O. – Time, Place, and Occasion. **Miyo Yamauchi** knew the T.P.O. rules. She picked a dark navy blue jacket and skirt for her grandfather's funeral. "Are you color blind? That's navy blue, not black!" her mother scolded when Miyo showed her outfit to her mother and grandmother. "As an immediate family member, you need to wear an official mourning dress, which is different from a regular business suit. It has to be black. Pure black." From head to toe, her mother lambasted Miyo's clothing selections. Her story was not only about outfits but also rituals and respect.

Pieter Severynen – *The Punishment of Ane Sels*

Over a hundred years ago, Ane Sels was one of the poorest farmers in a Dutch province called Granta. His field was only 7.5 acres of poor soil, separated from his neighbor's vast field with enormous stones. Every time he saw the boundary stones, Ane felt anger. Why should his neighbor own so much land while he had only a small plot? Finally he had enough. In the middle of the night, he forced his old horse to move the stones, inch by inch. After four hours of intense labor for the horse later, Ane got 100 more acres of land. But it was obvious the border stones had been moved and his neighbor complained to the court. The court's verdict was that Ane would put the stones back to their original places, but this time by himself, without using his horse. **Pieter Severynen** always tells stories that make us ponder. He's not sure if this was a true story or fiction, but regardless, it was quite a story.

Kelly Spillman – *Optimism Breaks the Odds*

Be careful for what you wish for because you might just get it. After years of longing, **Kelly Spillman** finally lost 50 pounds within 3 months in a most unexpected way: she was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer. The cancer had already spread to her liver. Her doctor told her multiple times that it wasn't curable and chemo was her only option. To cure a cancer, you have to cut the tumors out, but she had too many tumors for a successful surgery. People tend to be devastated in the situation, but not Kelly. She was determined to beat the cancer. Then, a miracle happened. Her body went against her doctor's prediction. Only after a few months, many tumors responded to chemo and became invisible, which changed the doctor's mind. Now, the surgery came into view. Her story took us to highs and lows, but her optimism was contagious. We know she's going to beat the cancer. Kelly, you got this!

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Jon White**, General Evaluator **Cynthia Moore**, Timer **Camille Miller**, Wordmaster/Grammarians **Tina Tomiyama**, and Evaluators **Kathy Garr**, **Margaret Mitchell**, **Jill Vanderweit** and **Ashton Cynthia Clarke**.

November is the time to be thankful, a time to remember and to embrace those who enrich our community. StoryMasters is grateful to each one of you. THANK YOU! Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family!

Next meeting is December 11. (GUESTS, [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

As the holiday season approaches, there are many fun storytelling shows coming up. Check them out on [our event page!](#)

Nov 27 The 99-Second Story Slam

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/99-second-story-20221127/>

5:00 PM PT / 8:00 PM ET

Category: Storytelling Competition

Location: Online

Cost: Free - \$5.00-9.99

Yes, you read it right. All the stories are under two minutes. To be accurate, 99 seconds. When you cut your ten-minute story to 99 seconds, you see what's really important. Why don't we try it out once?

**Nov 30** Stories from Around the Table

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/stories-around-the-table/>

6:30 PM PT

Category: Storytelling concert

Location: DiPazzas (Long Beach)

Cost: Donation (\$5-10)

Speak. Easy. – a night of Storytelling & Community Conversation in Long Beach presents another fun evening with music and stories. The group will celebrate its tenth anniversary next year.

**Dec 3** Interactive Storytelling for Young Children

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/interactive-storytelling-for-young-children/>

8:00 AM PT / 11:00 AM ET

Category: Storytelling workshop

Location: Online

Cost: \$5-50

Encourage and incorporate audience participation for children specifically in the PreK-fifth grade age group, although the techniques you learn in the workshop can be applied to all ages.

**Dec 4** Revealed

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/revealed-20221204/>

7:00 PM PT

Category: Storytelling concert

Location: Glendale Room

Cost: \$5

Revealed is a true and personal live storytelling show, hosted by **Erica Blumfield**. It brings together the best storytellers of LA, who share stories that range from ridiculous to humorous, magical and heartwarming.

**Dec 4** Strong Words

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/strong-words-87/>

7:30 PM PT

Category: Storytelling concert

Location: St. Francis Center

Cost: \$10

Month after month, Strong Words gets better and stronger. They will finish their year with holiday stories and beautiful music. Wear your warm winter clothes for this live outdoor concert. It's worth it!

**Dec 15** Winter Olio

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/tell-pittsburgh-storytelling-dec2022/>

4:00 PM PT / 7:00 PM ET

Category: Storytelling concert

Location: Online

Cost: \$10

TELL: Pittsburgh Storytelling Series 2022 ends strong as usual. Their Winter Olio features Kelly Campos, Mo Reynolds, M. J. Kang, Rachel Ann Harding, Cooper Braun, and Adam Booth.



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.

STORYTELLING STUB

How to Boost Learning

Does anybody have problem with memorizing new things? Forgetting is natural, but how can we slow it down and let the memory stick? Iowa State Psychology Professor Shana Carpenter says combining two strategies – spacing and retrieval practice – is key to success.

Retrieval practice is a strategy that involves recalling what was learned previously. It can take many forms, including flash cards, practice tests and open-ended writing prompts, and helps learners recognize what they do and don't know. The paper's authors emphasize that people who check their responses for errors or get feedback right away learn even better.

In the paper, Carpenter and her co-authors describe spacing as a strategy to learn in small doses over time. It's the opposite of cramming the night before an exam. In one study, medical students who received repeated surgery training over three weeks performed better and faster on tests two weeks and one year later compared to medical students who had the same training all on one day.

If you have trouble memorizing your stories or new hobby, maybe you want to try the spacing and retrieval practice?

References:

- [Forgetting is natural, but learning how to learn can slow it down](#)
- [Spacing guide \(PDF\)](#)



EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm not a comedian! Or am I?

Are you a standup comedian? Were you a class clown?

From time to time, somebody asks me these two questions after I tell a story. If you've heard my stories, you know that most of my stories are entertaining, but my answer has been No and No. I don't know anything about standup comedy. Regardless of whether I'm in Japan or America, I'm quiet. Making people laugh constantly sounds exhausting. Comedy is not my thing. But one day I wondered what people see in my stories. Do my stories have standup comedy elements? So I asked my mentor, a storytelling/comedy luminary, [Jane Morris](#), about the difference between storytelling and standup. Her answer was simple.

Standup is a haiku version of storytelling.

Suddenly, standup comedy didn't sound exhausting or irrelevant. Rather, it seemed to be a fun challenge to see my stories from different angles. Maybe I'll get better lines! When your brain gears start turning, your world starts moving toward a new destination. That's how a door to the comedy world was opened for me.

In September, I was invited to tell a story at a new sassy theater in Santa Monica called [the Crow](#), where I saw an open mic. The emcee was a petite woman with long hair, quick, funny, and charming. Her energy was welcoming. From time to time, she shared some tips, which I found very valuable for storytelling, too. Soon, I learned she is [Nicole Blaine](#), the owner of the Crow, and her class, Standup Comedy 101, would start soon. Without hesitation, I jumped in.

The six weeks flew by. There were times I thought my set wouldn't work, but with Nicole's and my fellow classmates' wisdom and support, I was able to make a solid five-minute set in the end. And the class showcase was a big success! How successful? I was invited to perform at the [Saturday Night Comedy Club](#) hosted by [Kathryn Schorr](#)! Yeah!!!

What's next? I'm taking Nicole's comedy class 201. There will be some challenges about the timeframe and I already had a couple of doubting moments about my set, but I believe it'll work out in the end. Two heads are better than one and I have more than ten heads!

I don't know where this standup comedy journey will take me, but I do know that the knowledge and experience will lift my stories to another level. Looking forward to seeing what the future holds.

— Miyo Yamauchi

