



# DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

2023 happy new year

## Happy 2023!

What a beginning! Our first meeting in 2023 was beyond fantastic with a series of rich stories and insightful feedback. As well, we enjoyed the company of our regular guests and new friends. Here are some recaps of the stories.

### Lin Van Gelder – *Time Travel*

Welcome to Auntie Lin's eponymous Tiki Bar! In front of a tropical Tiki bar background, **Lin Van Gelder** welcomed the audience with a big smile and explained the biggest difference between humans and other intelligent creatures. Humans perpetually and automatically time travel while other species seem to stay in the present moment. She became acutely aware of this time travel experience when she took a trip to her hometown, Kenmore, New York for her 50th high school reunion. During the thousands of miles traveling by Amtrak, her mind leapt through time until she became 18 when she dreamed about her future. When you time-travel into the future, dream big because it's all imagination.

### Jon White – *I Thought This Was Going to Be Funny*

It was the spring of 2016. Love was in the air, but not for Jon White. As a newly divorced man, he was concerned about his dating future. He was older, his career wasn't going well, and his finances were depleted. He didn't look good on paper. To save him from the depths of despair, his friend, Peter, introduced him to a beautiful woman. When Peter said, "Jon is funny," she looked at him up and down and said, "Funny? Hah! Say something funny, Jon!" Jon is a standup comedian, but if you know Jon, you know he's not a one-liner. He didn't know what to say. While he froze, she turned around and left. Fifteen minutes later, she marched back, violated his personal space, sneered, "Jon, you ain't said a damn thing funny!" and left for good! (The audience's inner voice: Good riddance!)

### Ashton Cynthia Clarke – *Date Night*

Three months after she lost her father, **Ashton Cynthia Clarke's** 13-year marriage ended in divorce. That was bad enough. Five years later, she lost another beloved person and really sank into a dark sad state. After 3 months of 5-hours-a-day, 4-days-a-week therapy, she was ready to go out and test drive her new stability. That's when she met Crystal, whose confidence and energy were intoxicating. To impress Crystal, Ashton signed up to buy a frequent vacation timeshare Crystal was selling. At first she was happy with her expensive purchase ... but late that night she realized what she had done and went into a panic state. Don't worry. Ashton canceled the ridiculous contract in the end. Oh, she is a master of storytelling! What a captivating story!

### Miyo Yamauchi – *Untitled*

Last December, **Miyo Yamauchi** dropped everything and flew from LA to Japan when her mother was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer, but she wasn't able to see her because of the pandemic. (Hospitals in Japan still prohibit visitors.) Miyo shared her fears about dealing with those who are terminally ill and also her losses of loved ones. Unlike her other stories, this tale started seriously, but when the audience was nearly on the verge of tears, the tone shifted to funny and she ended on a light-hearted note. Miyo, sending prayers to your mother and family!

### Vicki Juditz – *Where Do Babies Come From?*

**Vicki Juditz** and her husband were sitting at Marie Callender's with another couple. After several miscarriages and the discovery of Vicki's malformed uterus, they decided to have a baby with a surrogate. It was their first time to meet a potential surrogate couple, but it wasn't their choice to pick a couple. Surrogate couples have the right to choose whose babies they want to carry. Thankfully, the couple chose them. The surrogate mother, Megan, got pregnant. Everything seemed to go smoothly until Megan started having one complication after another. After an intense roller-coaster ride, the ending was rich and satisfying!

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Cynthia Moore**, General Evaluator **Aprille Isham**, Timer **Harold Gee**, Wordmaster/Grammarian **Camille Miller**, and Evaluators **Anna Ziss-Patton**, **Jill Vanderweit**, **Jacki Williams-Jones**.

Next meeting is February 12, 2023. ([GUESTS](#), [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

## STORYMASTERS NEWS

**The Storytelling Bistro Is Out!**

Yes, the rumor is true! Our book, [The Storytelling Bistro](#) is finally out!

Fifteen diverse StoryMasters offer true personal stories, fanciful fiction, poems, and thoughts in this captivating collection of short works, perfectly sized for tossing into your bag to read at the beach, park, waiting in a business lobby, or enjoying a few quiet moments at home. We hope you enjoy these stories as much as we do!

Stay tuned for our online book launch party!

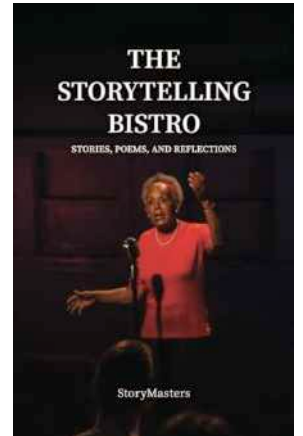
**Sunday, January 29, from 3:00 to 4:15 pm.**

If you'd like to get notifications, please email us at [love@thestorymasters.org](mailto:love@thestorymasters.org).

It'll be a P-A-R-T-Y!!!

Want a book in advance? Get a copy today!

<https://a.co/d/7XPoTcT>



## UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

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

**Jan 13** Best of the Best**& 14**

<https://lbplayhouse.org/event/best-of-the-best-show-behind-the-mask/>

8:00 PM PT

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Long Beach

Cost: \$20

It's the beginning of Season 10 for the Long Beach Community Theater. To celebrate, they picked their favorites from hundreds of participants in the past nine years—and **Miyo Yamauchi** was invited!

**Jan 16** RISK! Live in LA

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/risk-20230116/>

7:00 PM PT

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Hybrid

Cost: \$15-20

Join David Crabb and a fantastic crew of storytellers (Frank Traynor, Melanie Maras, Vicki Juditz and Kevin McGeehan) for RISK!'s in-person and livestream show!

**Jan 18** SAC Genre Storytelling Series: Tall Tales

<https://thestorymasters.org/event/sac-tall-tales-20230118/>

7:00 PM PT / 10:00 PM ET

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Online

Cost: Free - \$15

SAC Members from various Storytelling groups around California will be telling stories at these events, held once each month on the third Wednesday of the month. This month, **Lee Amatangelo** and **Camille Miller** will be telling tall tales!

**Jan 21** Our Lips Unsealed

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/our-lips-unsealed-tickets-502710228827>

7:00 PM PT

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Tom Bergin's (LA)

Cost: \$10

This month's lineup features some of LA's most notable storytellers and industry insiders, sharing stories of working with, playing in, meeting, and falling in love-crush-lust with bands and artists across the rock 'n roll spectrum!



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 to Stop Editing?

I don't know about you, but editing is a joy and also a nightmare for me. I enjoy editing. I love editing. Every time I perform, I find something to improve, so I edit. Whenever I edit, I want to try my story out on the stage, so I do. Then, I find something to improve... and I repeat the process. Audiences may not notice the changes I make because they are subtle, but those little changes like taking one more second pause, replacing words, deleting one word, or switching sentences make huge differences. They can change audience's reaction completely. It's truly fascinating. But at the same time, it's daunting because editing is endless! And also, you constantly doubt your judgement.

The other day, I had a standup comedy show. After having endless edits for weeks, I was done. From writing to choreography, there was nothing I needed or wanted to change. If I do more editing, I will ruin it, I thought. Then, my mentor, [Nicole Blaine](#), and fellow comics asked me to do my set for them a few days before the show. What's the harm? So I did. But that last rehearsal gave me golden feedback, which took my set to the next level. Now, I wonder what else I can change. See? Editing is endless!

When do you stop editing? How do you know when you're done? Share your secrets!

Related articles:

- [Enough Is Enough: When to Stop Editing](#)
- [3 Signs It's Time to Stop Editing That Manuscript](#)
- [Stop Editing Already: When It's Time to Put Down the Pen and Submit](#)



## EDITOR'S NOTE

### I've come a long way...

*"For the first few years, just focus on getting comfortable, writing as much as you can, trying out a bunch of different things, going to open mic, and finding your community."*

My fellow comic friend shared her takeaway from a standup comedy panel discussion she attended. And I can totally understand what her journey would look like because that's exactly what I've been doing in my storytelling journey.

Looking back, I've come a long way. Much longer than a few years. I joined Toastmasters at the end of 2009 just to improve my English speaking skills. At that time, I didn't value speech delivery all that much. I thought, "If the writing is good, body gestures and vocal variety don't matter." I found repeating a story boring. Editing didn't exist for me. Right. I didn't believe in anything I advocate and enjoy doing right now.

Even after I started telling my personal stories in 2018, there were times I had so many whys. Why can't I make my stories as effective to my audience as I envisioned? Why am I not invited to tell at any storytelling shows? Why can't I move naturally like other storytellers? Why, why, why? What do other people have that I don't? What am I missing? I didn't understand why or what, but I stood my ground and kept writing because storytelling fascinates me. I enjoy everything about it...writing, editing, performing, and even just watching, but what I cherish the most is my friends. They enhance my journey and multiply joy. They boost my excitement with their enthusiasm. My storytelling journey wouldn't have been this much fun without them. They're my tribe, my community.

A few months ago, I received an email from the Director of the Long Beach Community Theater.

*"I would love to invite you to be a part of the cast and perform your piece from our last Speak. Easy. where you shared your scary experience in the most brilliantly funny way! I think we all fell in love with you and your unique style of storytelling. Phenomenal."*

She invited me to perform for the "Best of the Best" show at the Long Beach Playhouse, one of the oldest continually running Community Theaters in the western United States. Celebrating the Long Beach Community Theater's 10th season, they picked some of their all-time favorite stories and performances from their first nine seasons and I became one of them. What a pleasant surprise! What an honor!

I've come a long way...

— Miyo Yamauchi



Photo credit: [Anne Carmack](#)