



DISTRICT ONE StoryMasters

Vignettes, Visions and Variety at StoryMasters

April has been a great month for storytelling! The highlight was **Barbara Clark's** brilliant one-woman show, "Who Am I?" on April 8. We also enjoyed SAC's Historical Stories on April 19, featuring **Lin Van Gelder** as one of eight storytellers, with Tina emceeing. Between those two events, StoryMasters' April 16 meeting (as week later than usual, due to Easter) satisfied our craving for good stories.

More fine storytelling events coming up fast! See "Coming Events" on page 2.

Lee Amatangelo – *A Science Fair Moment*

Lee Amatangelo's contest speech is both a promotion for the benefits of Toastmasters, and a clinic on how to liven up your next speech, all wrapped up in a very funny story. Watch "Preacher Lee" bring his State Science Fair audience, bored to tears by dreadful earlier speakers, to their feet.

Catherine Magruder – *The Decision*

In this carefully researched story, Catherine Magruder searched the Magruder family tree with her father to find the only other "Rachel" (her daughter's name). Catherine then wove a haunting tale of the history and choices that 1765 Rachel, newly widowed and alone, was forced to deal with.

Tina and Jiro Tomiyama – *Meatloaf*

Tina Tomiyama read a short story that she and her husband Jiro had written in six alternating sections, as each of them presented her (or his) point of view about a particular event early in their marriage. This was an experimental project and clearly needed more work, but StoryMasters is always a fine place to try something new and get helpful feedback.

Jon White – *The Search to Have It My Way*

Back in 2015, Jon decided to look for faith (and, of course, girls) in a mega-church. But finding a good woman in church can be hard! What does a man do when the women are so good, so fearfully friendly, that they want to pray the about-to-be-divorced Jon back into the arms of his estranged wife?

Rebecca O'Brien – *Team Dorothy*

In this touching tale from a cancer survivor, our guest Rebecca O'Brien brought "Dorothy," a chance acquaintance from the cancer wing of the hospital, to life. Rebecca's re-creation of Dorothy's initial struggle to deal with her diagnosis was pitch-perfect, and we cheered to hear how, with Rebecca's guidance, Dorothy learned to ask her friends to help her get through her treatment.

Meeting functionaries included Toastmaster **Miyo Yamauchi**, General Evaluator **Jill Vanderweit**, Timer **Jacki Williams-Jones**, Wordmaster/Grammarians **Anna Ziss-Patton**, Videographer **Miyo Yamauchi**, Evaluators **Jill Vanderweit**, **Pieter Severynen**, **Hiba Hamdan (x2!)**, and, for the final evaluation, all our members and guests.

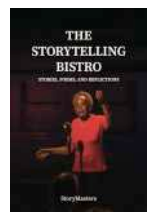
Next meeting is May 14, 2023 — Mother's Day. (GUESTS, [RSVP FROM HERE](#))

STORYMASTERS BOOK

The Storytelling Bistro

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!

Copies are available on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/7XPoTcT>



STORYMASTERS NEWS

So Long, Janine Burke...

“Hullo Sweetie...” I can still her voice.

Our friend, a founding member of StoryMasters, Janine Burke, passed away in her sleep during the early hours of Monday, March 20. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer of the esophagus last December. Coincidentally or not, her last story in 2019 with StoryMasters was about death. She gave us all the rules about what we can do and cannot do at her funeral and cracked us up. She always made us laugh on any topics with her sharp and clever jokes.

Regardless of her speech, she decided not to have any funeral service. But during her illness, Janine dictated the exact words she wanted to tell everyone:

“As you know this has been a difficult process for Janine. She has expressed gratitude many times for her friends’ love and support. She acknowledges and appreciates the understanding and patience you all have shown.

PS. Don’t get cancer. Keep your friends close and your painkillers closer. Get good insurance!”

So long, our smart, funny, and vibrant friend, Janine Burke! We miss you dearly...



UPCOMING STORYTELLING EVENTS

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

Apr 23

Tales by the Sea: Temptations

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88645742502>

5:00 PM PT

Category: Storytelling Concert

Location: Virtual

Cost: Free

We tell, says Eduardo Galeano, “Because every single one of us has something to say to the others, something that deserves to be celebrated or forgiven by another.”



Apr 29

Division F Tall Tales & International Speech Contests

<https://district1toastmasters.org/events/save-the-date-division-f-tall-tales-international-speech-contest/>

7:30 PM PT

Category: Speech Contest

Location: Virtual

Cost: Free

Lee Amatangelo will be competing in Division F’s International Speech Contest. Stay tuned for more information.



May 6

The 37th Annual Southern California Story Swap Festival

<https://inlandtellers.org/37storyswap.html>

9:00 AM - 4:30 PM PT

Category: Storytelling Festival

Location: Claremont

Cost: \$10-20

This year, the festival is hosted by Inland Valley Storytellers and there is something for everybody! The festival includes storytelling swap, workshops, and storytelling concert. **Miyo Yamauchi** will represent StoryMasters at the closing concert at 2:30pm.



June

2-24

Getting There by Rebecca O’Brien

<https://www.hollywoodfringe.org/projects/7059?tab=details>

6/2 @ 8:30pm, 6/4 @ 4pm

6/11 @ 8pm, 6/15 @ 8:30pm,

6/18 @ 1pm, 6/24 @ 3pm

Category: Solo show

Location: Hudson Theatres

Tickets go on sale May 1

Rebecca O’Brien is a survivor, and she’s back! Now in full remission from a bout with cancer, the writer-performer re-enacts her healing encounters with strangers as she and her little dog rode the bus to and from her treatments at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.



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

Am I on the AI Naughty List?

A few months ago, I wrote an article about my mother's complex feeling toward Alexa. It seems like it's not only my mother.

The other day, a blog article about "How To Write a Blog with ChatGPT" caught people's attention. The focus was not about the article itself though. It was about his friend's comment after seeing the screenshot he posted in the article.

"You're a jerk. You've never used 'please' to us. Why are you nice to AI?"

The author's "excuse" was he wants to be on AI's good side. Wait! Is AI a new Santa Claus??? When something happens to us, not our friends but AI will help us?

A new study from Duke developmental psychologists tried to gauge 4 to 11-year-old kids' empathy towards Alexa and Roomba. Although they understand robots don't feel pain, they also think robots don't deserve to be yelled at or hit. As they get older, they understand humans do have the freedom to harm robots although they still think it's not great.

On the other hand, a new University of Michigan study shows humans are less forgiving of robots after multiple mistakes—and the trust is difficult to get back, no matter how the robots apologize and promise that the mistake will never happen again.

So...do you use "please" when you ask AI to do something?

References:

- [Kids Judge Alexa Smarter than Roomba, But Say Both Deserve Kindness](#)
- [Robot: I'm sorry. Human: I don't care anymore!](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

When Do You Draw a Line?

A long time ago, somebody told me that the more keys you get, the more your life gets complicated and busy. Fortunately, the number of keys I have to hold hasn't increased much. Two for my apartment, two for my work, and my car, but somehow my life is getting busier and busier. These days, I sometimes feel like I'm drowning.

As I see it, most of my "to-do" items don't take much time or effort. So when somebody asks me for something, I say "sure!" and add it to my calendar. When I see that my friends are performing and my calendar is open, I attend. Oftentimes, I find myself running a minute-by-minute schedule. Most of these things are easy peasy and fun, but it all adds up and to a degree, it drains my energy. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy those activities and supporting my friends and also I have FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), but I'm not a social butterfly. I'm an introvert who recharges by "Me Time." A packed schedule gives me anxiety.

The other day, my friend threw a question at me after seeing me being volunteered for various tasks.

"Hey, you know you can say NO?"

Yes, I do. I do know that I can say no. But do I know when I should say no? Do I know which request to take and which one to turn down? That's the question. Maybe I can cut some charity work. What about the websites' maintenance? I can eliminate some of the features. And maybe I should cut some workshops that do not give me much value. But I love the people in the groups! What about StoryMasters' newsletter? Considering the time I spend every month, the cost-effectiveness is pretty low. But at the same time, I know some of you read it (yes, you! You're actually reading it right now). And some of you send me nice emails from time to time. Thank you! But don't you think distributing newsletters for over 4 years can give me a nice farewell as well as a pat on the back?

Okay, I can do this. I know how to prioritize events and say no.

A phone buzzes. My friend invites me to a show. I'm busy, so I decline. "Sorry, I have another commitment that day."

See? I told you that I could! I'm so proud of myself. Then, she says, "Thank you for getting back to me. The show is on other dates, too. When are you available?"

S@#! I don't know. Honestly, I don't. I thought I knew how prioritize tasks and cut things down, but I guess I don't. Besides, they're all important to me. Well, at least I know I don't know what I don't know...

— Miyo Yamauchi

