

## Get to Know the Storytellers of *True Stories 2016*

**Adam Ruben** is an outstanding storyteller, writer, stand-up comedian, comedy educator and TV personality. He has performed as a storyteller at venues across the country and has appeared on *The Food Network*, *The Discovery Channel* and *NPR* and can be seen in the current series *Outrageous Acts of Science* on the *Science Channel*. He has won multiple storytelling contests, has performed in his own one-man show on The Capital Fringe, is the author of a humorous book, *Surviving Your Stupid, Stupid, Decision to Go to Grad School*, and produces the DC chapter of a performance series, *Mortified*. He teaches a course in comedy at Johns Hopkins University.

**Anne Thomas** is an extremely talented storyteller and is the 2013 *National Storytelling Festival Slam Champion*. Her storytelling has been featured on *The Moth*, *Storycorps*, *Story District*, *Better Said Than Done*, and *True Stories*. She is a coauthor of the book, *Sucker For Love*. Before becoming a sought-after storyteller, Anne worked in the oil & gas industry, in the legal field as an employment civil rights attorney, conflict resolution expert and leadership development innovator.

**Sam Kean** is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons*, *The Disappearing Spoon*, and *The Violinist's Thumb*. Each of his three books were named Amazon top science books of the year, and his work has been featured on NPR's *Radiolab*, *All Things Considered*, and *Fresh Air*. Sam is a popular storyteller on the local storytelling circuit and has told his stories at *Story District* and *True Stories*. His offbeat humor style has served him well in his storytelling and writing careers.

**Melissa Leebaert** is a well-respected and celebrated voice-over actor, performer, coach, and demo producer, and is the winner of a prestigious Emmy Award for narration. She has done narrations with the likes of Paul Newman, Martin Sheen, James Earl Jones, Helen Hunt and Hank Azaria. She has appeared in *Motives and Murder* on *The Discovery Channel*, *Pizza in Washington* and *Burgers in Washington* both for *WETA*. She has done documentaries for *The Discovery Channel*, *PBS*, and *National Geographic Channel*, was the female voice for the Obama '08 Campaign and has had extensive improv, and acting experience, as well as solo performances and storytelling.

**John Melmed** is one of the funniest storytellers you will see. He has won the Greater Washington DC Toastmasters *Best Humorous Speech Competition* three times and went on to win the Toastmasters *Best Humorous Speech Competition* for

the East Coast of the US and Canada. He has also won the Toastmasters *International Speech Contest* once. He has been a popular storyteller on the local storytelling circuit and has performed at *Story District* and *StoryFest*, where he was voted best storyteller. John has also been a speaker in his professional career for many years.

**Kylie Jia** was the winner of the Greater Washington DC Toastmasters International *Best Humorous Speech Competition* for 2015, beating out about 1,000 other competitors in this knockout competition. She makes her debut as a storyteller at *True Stories*, reprising the story with which she won the Best Humorous Speaker trophy in November. An immigrant from China, Kylie has made a name for herself as a TV Producer for *Montgomery Communications Media* and other local cable television stations.

**Vijai Nathan** is an innovative, talented, and funny stand-up comedian. She has performed her comedy routines at venues around the country and is always a crowd favorite at *Story District*. She makes her debut appearance at *True Stories*.

**Leigh Hamilton** has over 25 years' experience as a professional major market radio personality, voice-over actor and mistress of ceremonies. She has done everything from radio commercials to promos, and radio imaging to audiovisual presentations. Leigh manages her own private studio from which she runs and produces her radio business activities. She is also a highly regarded storyteller and has performed at *Story District*.

**Mike Baireuther** is an acclaimed and energetic storyteller on the local storytelling circuit. His enthusiastic style and infectious humor make him a favorite amongst all audiences. He is a frequent performer at *Story District* and has been one of their award-winning storytellers, performing at *Story District's Top Shelf*, which features the 10 best storytellers of the year. Mike has been the host at *Story District's Sucker For Love* storytelling show for the past five years.

**Geraldine Buckley** is a semiprofessional storyteller, public speaker, writer and educator. She has told stories at the prestigious National Storytelling Festival, which is held annually in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Geraldine frequently tells stories on the local storytelling circuit at *Story District* and has won the best storyteller award at *StoryFest*. She makes her debut appearance at *True Stories* in 2016. Professionally, Geraldine is a Chaplain.