



## **Speaker Information**

St. Louis Writers Guild is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to further our regional literary heritage by supporting, promoting, and connecting writers and literary organizations. The organization was established in 1920, making it one of the oldest writers' organizations in the country. We have approximately 350 members and are open to writers of all genres and experience levels.

St. Louis Writers Guild hosts a workshop every month and a lecture every other month that features accomplished authors and experts in the publishing industry.

We receive many requests from authors who wish to speak at our events. Many of our members are also prominent authors that offer their services to us as speakers. We give preference to St. Louis Writers Guild members if they can offer a needed and valuable program. For this reason, we invite authors to join us and take advantage of the opportunity to speak at our programs and all the other promotional opportunities we provide to our members.

Often, our membership requests particular speakers and topics, in which case, we initiate contact with selected speakers.

We are interested in featuring speakers who can offer valuable insights and tips to our membership. While the promotion of books is certainly something we do well for our speakers and other members, and we both hope and expect readings and book signings to be part of any program that features a book author, SLWG programs are intended to *offer valuable insights on writing, literature, or the business of writing*. Therefore, we require that all speakers offer a presentation that includes information aimed at helping writers succeed.

All SLWG speaker events are open to the public and heavily promoted in local media and through our affiliations with the chapters of the Missouri Writers Guild. Our typical audience is composed of members and non-members, representing writers of all genres and experience levels. Often others attend our programs because they are interested in the speaker, his/her body of work, the topic, or in writing and/or literature, in general.

### **Program Format**

The ideal SLWG lecture or workshop provides substantive insights on writing, drawing from the speaker's own background and body of work.

SLWG's workshop and lecture programs generally follow the same format, although we are flexible and the timeframes sometimes vary. Workshops are usually two hours long; lectures are one hour long. Here's the typical format:

- I. St. Louis Writers Guild: Welcome, Announcements, and the Introduction of the Speaker by St. Louis Writers Guild (10-15 minutes);
- II. Speaker's Presentation: For lectures, 20-30 minutes; for workshops, 60-80 minutes for workshops.
- III. Speaker's Reading: Authors Read from Their Personal Work (10-15 minutes);
- IV. Questions and Answers (10 minutes for lectures and workshops);
- V. Book Signing (follows program with no time limitation).

The speaker should plan their program to include all five components above, but SLWG is flexible about the order and actual time spent in each aspect of the program.

We ask that speakers provide handouts to reinforce the principles of their lecture or workshop topics. If the handout materials can be provided in an electronic format two weeks in advance of the event, SLWG can provide the copies for attendees. SLWG will also make the handouts available to attendees and members who were unable to attend on its website after the event (showing the author's attribution and copyright), unless a speaker specifically requests in writing that the handouts are not to be made available online.

Attendees should be expected to number from 30-65 people, depending on many factors, such as the broadness and appeal of the topic, the speaker's notoriety, the weather, and competing events in the community. Speakers are encouraged to promote their SLWG event themselves and also to invite guests.

All SLWG events are open to the public. The lectures are free of charge. We charge a \$5 fee for attendance of our workshop events. The speaker and one guest are admitted for free to the workshops. All other attendees are required to pay the modest fee though, regardless of whether they are invited guests of the speaker. The speaker should make his/her guests aware of the \$5 charge to avoid any confusion.

Speakers are welcome to bring promotional information about their book(s) and/or other relevant literary offerings, such as upcoming performances, community activities, writing and editing services, etc. These materials will be distributed to attendees at the event by our Membership Committee, or they can be offered to the audience during the presentation.

Speakers are also invited to submit a 1000-word article relating to their topic, which may be published in our quarterly print newsletter or on our website, depending on the newsletter's publication schedule and other factors. Final editorial authority over SLWG's newsletters and website content remains with SLWG.

## **Regular Speaker Events**

Our regular speaker events include a two-hour workshop that usually takes place from 10 AM until noon on the first Saturday of every month. It is held at Barnes & Noble, 9618 Watson Road, Crestwood, MO 63127. They have a meeting room.

We also host a one-hour lecture event that takes place at Barnes & Noble, 8871 Ladue Road, Ladue, MO 63124. It takes place on the third Thursday of the month from 7 to 8 PM.

The addresses, maps, and directions for all St. Louis Writers Guild events are on our website Calendar at: [www.stlwritersguild.org](http://www.stlwritersguild.org) Regular events are booked many months in advance, so interested speakers should contact us as early as possible to discuss potential program offerings for any calendar year.

## **Booking a Program**

The first step involved in booking a speaker for a Guild event is settling on a program topic. We seek fresh topics that offer benefits to our diverse group of writers. We must avoid repeating the same topics too frequently. We often assist speakers in determining their topics.

The next step is to develop a presentation title, and brief description of the event. We find that topic titles that sell benefits attract the largest audiences.

Here are some examples of successful “benefit” titles:

- "How to Get the Most Out of Writing Conferences, Contests, and Critique Groups."
- "Jump-starting Your Novel"
- "Beginnings: The Essential Qualities of a Good First Chapter"

Once we nail down the topic’s title, we will need a brief description of the planned program (3-6 sentences) and a brief biography for the speaker. This information is needed for our website as soon as possible following a program booking. As soon as the event is posted to our website’s Calendar, we begin to receive inquiries about it. Also, this information is used by our Publicity Committee to promote the speaker’s event.

## **Ordering the Speaker’s Books**

The next step following booking is for SLWG to arrange to have the speaker’s books on hand for sales and signings at the event. Books are usually obtained from the bookstore that hosts the event if they are in print and available in the bookstore’s online inventory. To place an order, SLWG will need a list of all titles that can be obtained from the bookstore with their ISBNs. As soon as this information is received, the order will be submitted by SLWG to the bookstore. We must allow a minimum of 30 days prior to the event to order books.

If the bookstore provides the books, they will also handle sales at the event. If there are unsold copies following the event, we ask that the speaker kindly autograph some of them for the store.

Sometimes speakers' books are out of print or unavailable from our bookstore, in which case, we can arrange for the speaker to bring in his/her books to sell at the event. In that case, SLWG must obtain permission from the bookstore in advance and the speaker will be required to handle his/her sales transactions (bring cash to make change and have a check acceptance policy). Naturally, the bookstores do not want to assist with sales of books that are not their own stock. We ask that speakers provide a listing of titles with their ISBN numbers for books they want to sell at a SLWG event.

### **Publicizing the Event**

The foundation of SLWG's publicity effort is its website. Prior to the event, we prepare a Spotlight feature page for the speaker that includes the following information:

- The speaker's photo
- Image(s) of book cover art, if applicable, and ISBNs. Books must be currently in print. We prefer to make them available online through Barnes & Noble or Left Bank Books because they support our programs and SLWG earns a 5% commission on sales made through our website's affiliate links. If a book is unavailable through our affiliate bookstores, the speaker may provide an alternative source for purchases.
- Body text for the speaker's feature article, which may be an interview, an article about the speaker (either authored by the speaker or used with permission), a personal essay from speaker's point of view, or a biography, resume, or CV
- Excerpt(s), poem(s), or other original work samples authored by speaker.
- Links to the speaker's website or other websites where relevant information is maintained.
- Contact information for interested persons to reach the speaker or his/her publicist.

Speakers who need ideas for their Spotlight page content are encouraged to visit the SLWG website ([www.stlwritersguild.org](http://www.stlwritersguild.org)) and browse the existing Spotlights and Spotlight archives.

Although we are happy to take media information off the speakers' websites, we try to include information on our website that is not available elsewhere. We can provide a list of questions that the speaker can respond to as an interview. This will accomplish our needs for unique information on our website.

As soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the SLWG event, the speaker should send their media information (as stated above) to: [programs@stlwritersguild.org](mailto:programs@stlwritersguild.org) in digital format, using Word for text documents and .jpeg format for photo images.

St. Louis Writers Guild requests that submitted excerpts and articles for the Spotlight page bear the owner's copyright.

The Spotlight page on the SLWG website always displays the next two upcoming speakers. If all information is submitted to us in a timely manner, new Spotlights are added to our website on approximately the day following the prior speaker event. Our webmaster notifies the speaker when his/her Spotlight page has been posted.

### **Media Notifications**

When the Spotlight is up on our website, St. Louis Writers Guild will commence to promote the speaker's event in all local media, including the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *St. Louis Suburban Journals*, various St. Louis area community newspapers, on local St. Louis radio stations that support PSAs, various online arts calendars, and statewide to the chapters of the Missouri Writers Guild.

### **SLWG's Newsletters**

St. Louis Writers Guild publishes a free, community, electronic newsletter, *Here's News!*, which currently has more than one thousand subscribers, including members and non-members. The e-newsletter helps us drive Internet traffic to our website and, specifically, promote our speakers' Spotlight pages. Speakers are encouraged to subscribe to *Here's News!* if they want to see their own newsletter promotional information. A subscribers' box is located on the SLWG website's Home page beneath the left sidebar of links. Anti-spam regulations prevent us from subscribing persons.

SLWG also publishes a quarterly print newsletter, *The Scribe*, for our members only. To encourage events' attendance, a Calendar page is in every issue and we also recap previous events with photos and/or articles.

As mentioned above, we also like to offer our members valuable written information from the viewpoint of the speaker. For this purpose, we invite speakers to share their articles and papers on topics that are related to their work or presentation to SLWG for this newsletter. Space and funding forces us to limit the number of articles we can publish and the space for each article. We seek articles of approximately 1000 words, although we can occasionally accommodate longer ones.

### **Bookstore Publicity**

If a speaker's books are available through Barnes & Noble and the media information is received by SLWG at least two months in advance, the speaker's event may also be publicized by Barnes & Noble with signage and a newsletter article. SLWG will make every effort to maximize its speakers' publicity, but cannot guarantee that the bookstores and our media sources will always come through as requested.

## **SLWG's Online Bookstore**

Books that are available from the speaker can also be added to our online bookstore for sales prior to and after the event if information is provided to facilitate sales and orders. As mentioned before, books are usually linked to our two affiliate Internet bookstores, Barnes & Noble and Left Bank Books, for sales. Other links are possible if the books are not available from either affiliate.

## **Website Publicity**

Our website features all SLWG upcoming events in several areas, including on our Home page, Calendar page, Spotlight page, Blogs, and in our Discussion Board forums. SLWG ensures that all our events are heavily publicized on its website.

## **Speakers' Compensation**

As a general rule, speakers who participate in SLWG's regular events programs offer their presentations free of charge as a charitable donation. For this reason, we take our job to publicize the event and provide book sales very seriously. We want our events to be a success for our speakers.

The contributions of our former and present local authors go a long way toward helping SLWG and the literary community at large. Most speakers find that donating their services to SLWG is personally profitable to them in terms of increased exposure and/or book sales that occur before, during, and after our events.

If St. Louis Writers Guild contacted you regarding a speaking engagement, we will typically ask about any specific compensation requirements. We make every effort to bring in the speakers our members request and, on a funds available basis, will consider travel reimbursement and coverage of other expenses.

SLWG will make copies of handouts for our audience if the speaker provides them electronically to us at least one week before their scheduled event.

Speakers who are not current members of St. Louis Writers Guild are offered honorary membership in the organization through the end of the current fiscal year following the year in which their event took place. Our fiscal year runs June through May. Membership in SLWG entitles the speaker to take full advantage of all member benefits, including our services to promote our members' work, accomplishments, and events. We work hard to be of significant value to our members and always hope they will elect to renew their memberships every May.

Occasionally, SLWG hosts or co-hosts special events, such as community book readings and signings, exhibits, and educational workshops. Special events that feature speakers usually offer further opportunities for the speakers to promote themselves and sell their books. Occasionally, SLWG will charge members and the public to attend a special

program in order to raise funds to compensate our speaker(s). The speaker(s) and/or program(s) must be in high demand by our members and SLWG may retain some portion of the total fees for any event we host.

Speakers are rarely booked for more than one event in a two-year period because of the diverse membership of SLWG and our need to offer a wide range of programs and experts.

### **Contact Information**

Interested authors and other literary or publishing experts who are interested in offering a program to St. Louis Writers guild should submit details on their backgrounds, the types of programs they offer, and their fee requirements, if applicable, to:

**St. Louis Writers Guild  
Attention: Programs Chairperson  
P.O. Box 724  
St. Louis, MO 63026**

Inquiries may also be made by emailing [programs@stlwritersguild.org](mailto:programs@stlwritersguild.org) or calling 314.821.3823.