

Spotlight: *We're Pleased to Present...*

Mary Menke



Writer, Editor, Trainer, Business Owner

Workshop: "5 + 5: Critique Session for SLWG Members"
Five minutes of reading, followed by five minutes of written and oral feedback.

Saturday, August 6, 2005, from 10 AM to noon.

Barnes & Noble, 9618 Watson Road, in Crestwood.

Come see us at 9:15 AM to 10:00 AM in the cafe for socializing and networking.

For a map, driving directions, and more, visit [Workshops](#).

Workshops are FREE to SLWG members; cost to non-members is \$5.

Mary Menke is a life-long St. Louisan and independent contractor who teaches business writing for a public seminar company. She also owns and operates a writing and editing company, WordAbilities LLC (www.WordAbilities.com).

Mary worked as a secretary for a number of years early in her career, and learned that being able to perform one's job duties doesn't necessarily translate into being a good writer. In fact, some of the most intelligent people she knows can't write worth a darn!

"I was a secretary back in the dark ages (before computers). We were lucky to have electric typewriters. One of my most important responsibilities was to make my

bosses look good; I had their blessing to edit or rewrite everything they wrote or dictated to me," Mary says. "Since I've always loved to write, that was my favorite part of the job."

It's a different world today. Due to the advent of computers and email, and the changing roles of secretaries and administrative assistants, most managers and supervisors do their own writing; no one else looks at the document before it is sent. A mistake-riddled document sent to coworkers can damage the writer's credibility. The same document sent to readers outside the company will damage not just the writer's credibility, but the company's as well.

That's why Mary started WordAbilities. "I see so many business people who freeze when faced with a writing project. They're so afraid they'll do something wrong, break some grammar rule or use the wrong word, that they can't write anything! I think if a study were conducted of time lost procrastinating over writing, people would be unpleasantly surprised. My goal is to help people become more comfortable with writing and to provide assistance when needed."

In addition to her business writing endeavors Mary also writes poetry and personal and humorous essays. Her essay, "Jenny's Blessing," won second place in the St. Louis Writers Guild's 2003 James Nash Memorial Essay Contest. Her humorous essay, "In Pursuit of a Pie Pan," was published in the June 2005 edition of Writers Post Journal. You can read another humorous essay of Mary's on the SLWG Blog. It's called "It's My Party and I'll Cry if I Want To" (<http://www.stlwritersguild.com/wordpress/>)

An avid reader (when time allows), Mary also writes book reviews. Many of her reviews have been published in January magazine (www.januarymagazine.com), an online literary magazine. She is unflaggingly persistent in her attempts to have her reviews printed in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, but hasn't had any luck so far.

Besides being a member of the St. Louis Writers Guild, Mary also belongs to the National Association of Women Writers, Erma Bombeck Humor Writers, and South County Toastmasters. She earned a degree in Communications/Journalism from St. Louis University, a Certificate in Broadcast Journalism from Maryville, and an MBA from Lindenwood University.

She lives in South County with her husband, one or two of their four sons (depending on their current financial situations), and two dogs.