

SLWG Member Spotlight: *We're pleased to present...*

Claire Applewhite



SLWG Member Since 2006
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The following text is from our Spring 2007 print newsletter, *The Scribe*:

Claire Applewhite may sound like a pen name but it's the real deal. Claire was born and raised in St. Louis and, though she has traveled extensively, has determined that there really is no place like home. A member of St. Louis Writers Guild for about six months, she has been writing off and on since taking a creative writing class in the 1970s as a communications major at St. Louis University. After writing a short story for the class, she first realized writing might be her calling.

"People seemed to identify with some of my characters in their situations and dialogue and told me that I should expand some of the short stories into novels," Claire said.

We all have significant people in our lives who chisel and mold us into the people we become, much the way we, as writers chisel our works. Claire mentions three members in her exclusive list of influential people.

"My husband continues to encourage me," Claire tells us. "He understands and has been tolerant of all of the various demands, time commitments and deadlines facing writers. I am fortunate. It would be impossible to accomplish anything without support at home."

Claire also credits her mother as one of her greatest cheerleaders. She passed away in 2002, but even now when she feels discouraged, Claire will look back at past e-mails her mother sent her. In one way or another they all say the same thing: "Don't stop writing."

Claire's writing instructors would likely agree, particularly John Dalton, whom she met at the Washington University Summer Writers Institute. Professor Dalton asserted that "it isn't enough to write well, because everyone writes well. The work must approach the sublime..."

This bit of wisdom has pushed Claire to continue to improve her work even when she

thought it was finished.

Claire's genre interests lie mainly in mystery, noir fiction in particular. She prefers snappy, brisk dialogue and the absurdity of the human condition. They say a writer learns most from constantly reading. Claire is doing just that, currently reading two stories simultaneously. *Angry Candy* and *The Essential Ellison* are both collections of stories written by Harlan Ellison, although her favorite author is the late Ed McBain.

Claire is hoping to be able to one day say that she sold a book. To date she has written six novels. "Four are floating in agent-land. Two are under revision."

Claire typically writes at night after everyone else has gone to bed. However, as writers know, creative inspiration can strike when you least expect it. Some of the most unusual places Claire has written are in a darkened hotel ballroom and on the back of a paper napkin when a friend needed a speech in a couple of minutes! She's written and edited newsletters for several non-profit organizations and carries an unusual addition to her resume--a collection of eulogies which she has been requested to write over the years. "They are probably my most emotional pieces ... ," she declares.

Claire's favorite quotation about writing is from *The Art of Fiction* by John Gardner.

Art has no universal rules because each true artist melts down and re-forges all past aesthetic law. ... It follows that for the great writer ... there can be no firm rules, no limits, no restrictions. Whatever works is good. He must develop an eye for what works.

Claire is currently doing research for two more books and recently had a story accepted for publication in an anthology by L.L. Dreamspell, titled *Moonlight Becomes You So* –

Way to go, Claire!