

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

### Jud Miner



SLWG Member Since 2003

2009 SLWG Member of Distinction

#### **Jud Miner - In His Own Words:**

I've always been interested in writing, starting with poems in grammar school. Later came company newsletters and professional articles. But it wasn't until I retired and trained to be a Presbyterian Lay Pastor that I became interested in writing fiction.

As a lay pastor, my primary mission was outreach to many small churches in Missouri. For me, preparing for times with children was as challenging as preparing uplifting, thought-provoking sermons for adults. How do you connect kids with Biblical ideas and concepts in less than two minutes time and capture their interest so they leave smiling and thinking?

Other than my numerous articles in trade journals, my only published writing had been a book on first aid and safety awareness, based on my experience as a Medical Corpsman in the U.S. Army and my certification as an Illinois Emergency Medical Technician. So when I launched into writing short stories for kids I was in for a rude shock - and many rejections. I quickly realized that thinking I could write fiction because of my many successes writing technical articles was like Michael Jordan thinking he could be a major league caliber baseball player just because he had been an outstanding basketball star.

Two Institute of Children's Literature correspondence courses later I was beginning to get the hang of it. My first short story success came in October of 2002, when *Guide* magazine,

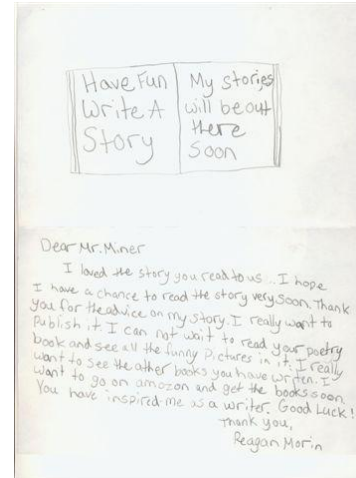
a weekly Christian children's publication, published "Halfback Down." It was then that I started looking for writing workshops or organizations that would allow me to continue my education and to network with local authors. The St. Louis Writers Guild was the logical choice.

The Writers Guild spurred on my writing adventures with kids. After I conducted a workshop for children planning to enter the SLWG Big Write Contest, the managers at Barnes & Noble, Chesterfield asked me to continue giving monthly writing classes. So began my Have Fun - Write a Story workshops for children from 8 to 14.

Kids come up with imaginative and sometimes hilarious ideas. A couple of the comments from kids who've attended these workshops make the point:

Maddie, age 11: "I liked when you told us to make word pictures. I really like to do that. I also liked it because I love learning and listening to stories and learning new ways to write. Thanks for teaching me!! I will send you one of my stories!"

Grace, age 12: "What I like most about this workshop is the level of interaction and imagination, and the care put into it."



In addition to the classes at Barnes & Noble, I've taught workshops at Chesterfield Arts, Chesterfield Library and for local school groups. I even conducted one recently for sixteen fourth graders at Killingly School in Connecticut, where my granddaughter Meg teaches. Now that I'm a resident of Carol Stream, Illinois, I'm exploring how I can bring these fun, idea-filled workshops to a whole new group of kids.

What is next? My two books, *Amos and the Wild Welshman* and *The Search for the Sangreal* are out and receiving good reviews, and I'm at work on the third book in the series. Simon & Schuster's acquisitions editor saw the partially completed *Read, Smile, Think A to Z Book of Poetry*, and expressed initial interest. When my illustrator Jessica Greer, one of my workshop attendees, completes her last couple of illustrations, we'll begin our marketing effort. My submissions and query letter program is being launched for three completed short stories and the *Have Fun - Write a Story Workbook*, which was written in response to suggestions by parents and teachers of kids who've attended my workshops. In the first draft stage is *They Didn't Mention That In Sales Class*, memoirs about my life in the selling profession.

I'm keeping my membership in St. Louis Writers Guild active, and plan to be down Missouri way for the next Missouri Writers Guild Conference. SLWG has been a great experience - fun, educational and inspirational!

### **Praise for the *Have Fun - Write a Story* workbook:**

"*Have Fun - Write a Story Workbook* provides the perfect tool chest for young authors. Jud Miner creates delightful, easy exercises to facilitate learning each narrative tool. Young

writers explore ways to create characters, settings, plots, metaphors, beginnings and endings, and much more. Miner encourages the use of the senses, and suggests a variety of ways stories can be energized by enigmas or mysteries as they develop. Best of all, *Have Fun - Write a Story Workbook* encourages young writers to develop, trust, and use their imaginative powers. This book receives my highest recommendation for teachers or parents working with young writers."

- John McClure  
Chair, Graduate Department of Religion

- Charles G. Finney Professor of Homiletics  
The Divinity School  
Vanderbilt University

*Write a Story Workbook* is a long awaited and much needed book guiding us to have fun with writing. I love it and as a former English teacher, know how valued it will be in school systems across the globe. Thank you Jud, for your easy-going manner and your relaxed writing voice, that makes us feel like you are right with us as we work through the book. You make us feel as if, this won't be hard at all as long as we follow you. This book will be so exciting for kids, because they will see how they can write a great story and Jud touches on all the genres. Jud gets it, that learning is all about doing and the workbook has the writer practicing from the beginning of their written piece to the end."

- HRH Princess Carroll Ayo Durodola  
Author, Storyteller & Education Consultant