

THE ST. CHARLES WRITERS GROUP

The St. Charles Writers Group, sponsored by the St. Charles Public Library, is a creative writing workshop that meets the second and fourth Saturday of each month from 9:15 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted in the library newsletter). The group is open to all those 18 years of age or older looking for a community of writers and seeking to improve their writing. The group was founded in 1995 after the St. Charles Library sponsored an Illinois Arts Council's Short Term Artists Residency (S.T.A.R.) in poetry, which was led by Rick Holinger. In 2017, Holinger retired from the Writers Group after 21 years. The group is facilitated by Lisa Macaione.

Prospective members are encouraged to visit. The public is encouraged to come to our semi-annual readings. There is no fee for membership; the only requirement is a commitment to writing and a commitment to support your fellow writers. Our website address is: <http://www.stcharleslibrary.org/st-charles-writers-group>

Structure:

Upon arrival, members with a manuscript submission should place (at a minimum) 25 copies on the counter for pickup at the break. *Only those members expecting to attend the next session should pick up copies.* Members should read each manuscript carefully, editing and writing comments, focusing on any and all aspects of the text they feel comfortable commenting on, from grammatical and usage problems to larger issues such as theme, character motivation, style, point of view, etc. *Readers should write their first and/or last names on the manuscripts when finished critiquing them.*

After announcements and new member introductions, the first part of the workshop (approximately 45 minutes) is devoted to a discussion, lecture, book discussion, or writing exercise that relates to the writing process. Participants are encouraged to contribute their own ideas, questions, and insights. Topics include everything from publishing tips to novel plots, from poetic forms to writing good dialogue.

After a 10-minute break, the group critiques manuscripts submitted by members at the previous meeting. *Because the quality of a writing workshop depends on the participation of its members, all are encouraged to comment on the work being discussed.* What we are looking for is not what is done "right" or "wrong" in a manuscript, but what works and what doesn't, pointing to the manuscript for supporting evidence. To say only positive things about a manuscript helps the author as little as harping on its negatives. *In critiquing a manuscript, members should refer to the manuscript, not the author.* Instead of saying, "You didn't start the story well," one might say, "The story might involve the reader more effectively if it begins with an action scene...."

While the group is discussing a manuscript, its author should remain silent; the idea is to let the author know how the manuscript affected its readers, not for the members to be influenced by the author's intentions. After the group finishes its discussion of the work, the author may ask questions about the piece that were not addressed, or respond to questions the group has raised. *All discussion should focus on the manuscript;* authors should avoid giving a personal history of how you wrote the piece or what your intentions were.

For questions on the guidelines, contact Lisa Macaione at lmacaione24@gmail.com.

To be added to the hard copy member list or if you have programming or calendar questions, contact Denise Blaszyński, Programs and Public Relations Coordinator, extension 240 or dblaszyński@scpld.org. See Lisa for information regarding the SCWG email.

Manuscript guidelines:

The writers group limits the number of words and manuscripts submitted for review. Please stay within these guidelines. If you have a submission you would like critiqued that is longer than these guidelines, you may double the length, but the manuscript will then be critiqued not at the next session, but the one following, to give the members more time to read it. Only one manuscript should be submitted to the group at a time.

PLEASE CAREFULLY PROOFREAD AND EDIT YOUR MANUSCRIPTS FOR SPELLING, GRAMMATICAL AND USAGE ERRORS. The purpose of the workshop is to give the writer guidance after he has written work he considers the best he can write on his own. We are not proofreaders. *Please submit only polished manuscripts that have been revised at least one or two times.*

Manuscripts must be typed on 8 1/2 X 11 paper, 12- or 14-point font, in Times New Roman or other standard font.

Line spacing: double (except poetry—see below).

Copies: either double or single-sided.

All pages should be numbered and stapled.

A COVER LETTER OR COVER PAGE SHOULD BE AVOIDED unless the writer is expressly asking the group to focus on a particular part of the writing or is supplying a brief plot summary of event up to the chapter submitted (which all novelists are asked to do).

For PROSE, the manuscript should be limited to **2,500 words**. (Manuscripts may run up to but not exceed **5,000 words, which will be critiqued the second session** after submission.)

The top of the first page should include:

--Your name

--Genre: "Short story," "Prose Poem," "Nonfiction," or "Novel chapter"; feel free to designate the genre as accurately as you wish, however, i.e., "Thriller," "Novella," "Historical fiction," "Memoir."

--Word Count

--Date of submission and date to be critiqued

--The working title (and chapter number or title if applicable)

Each page should include **page number** and, if possible, the title and/or the author's name.

Up to **three short stories, prose poems, flash fictions, sudden fictions and/or micro-fictions**, total word count not exceeding **2,500 words**.

For POETRY, the manuscript should be single-spaced, using a space and a half or double-spacing between stanzas. Up to **three short poems or one long poem up to 200 lines total** may be submitted. The top of the first page should include: Name, submission dates, and type of poem (free verse, sonnet, villanelle, etc.).