



## Greater St. Louis Chapter

Website  
[www.SincSTL.org](http://www.SincSTL.org)

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### January 2008 Newsletter

#### News

**Dues Are Due by February 29, 2008:** Just a friendly reminder, both National and the SINC-StL 2008 dues are due. You must belong to National to belong to SinC-StL. Forms have been mailed to all 2007 members for the SinC-StL dues. Your \$20 dues must be received by February 29, 2008 to be considered a renewing member. On March 1, 2008, if your dues haven't been received, you'll pay \$25 which is the same as the dues for new members. After March 1, 2008, non-members will be charged a \$5 meeting fee for all regular monthly meeting and an additional extra amount for special meetings.

If you have any questions, email our Chapter Treasurer at [sincstlouis@gmail.com](mailto:sincstlouis@gmail.com)

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#### Message from Our President

##### Selfish is Good

A couple of years ago, when we were in the midst of a Brew Ha-Ha, my husband said to me, "Why are you bothering with this? You don't need this hassle."

He was right. But I told him that I thought this group offered tremendous opportunities.

I still believe that.

Call me silly, but I think we've each joined because we have something to contribute and perhaps, something selfishly we hoped to gain. And selfish is good. We're all tuned to the same radio station in life: WII-FM...that is "What's In It -- For ME?"

So when I'm thinking about our organization, I think in terms of opportunities. Opportunities to encourage the reading of mysteries, to network with and support our libraries and booksellers, to gain personal recognition, to learn our craft, to improve our skills, and to write and eventually sell mysteries to the public.

My job, as I see it, is to create more opportunities for each and every one of us.

## What's Up for This Year?

As you might have guessed, I have a robust "agenda" for us for the year--subject to your approval. This includes:

1. A bigger presence at The Big Read—Saturday, October 11, 2008
2. A presence at the Jewish Book Festival—Sunday, Nov. 2 through Wednesday, Nov. 12
3. Another great WritersFest-- Mark your calendars for Sept. 6, 2008
4. A possible presence at the Midwest Booksellers Association meeting—September 25-27
5. A proposal to host another Forensic University in 2009.
6. And of course, a biggie, getting us organized.

To accomplish BIG THINGS this year—in fact, I think we ought to nickname this the "BTY" or Big Things Year-- **we're all going to have to pitch in.** I have a book to sell, another to rewrite for an editor as a "maybe," a kid to get to college, and so on. My one-word New Year's Resolution is "selfish," and I need to be. So do we all. It's easy to get derailed from our writing time. Those moments you spend looking off into space are writing moments even if the folks around you don't appreciate that there's really hard work going on even if your eyes are glazed over. So we need to safeguard our creative energies and our writing time. We need to work smarter not harder, and organization will help this chapter do just that. Already we've had our first board meeting, five hours long. We got a lot accomplished--and documented so that NEXT year, the board won't have to re-invent this particular set of training wheels.

## Got a Terrific Idea?

So you have a terrific idea? Something you'd like to see our chapter doing? Atta boy or girl! You go! This year we're going to ask that you fill out a Proposal Form, which is modeled on the Grant Application that we fill out when we ask for support from National. Then share your idea at any board meeting. (Our meetings are ALWAYS open to you, and we've decided to ALWAYS keep a spot on the agenda for any concerns our members have.)

## Proposal Form

1. What is the name and a description of the initiative. Why should we do this? What's the general benefit? Who will be "in charge"?
2. What "market" will this reach?  
Readers/fans/libraries/booksellers/bookbuyers/authors/would-be-authors. How many people from each group? (Just an estimate.)
3. What is the proposed date? How long would this take and how often would we do this? (annually? once?) What's the timeline?
4. What resources will this initiative take? How much \$ (in other words, a budget)? How much estimated time? How many people doing what jobs? If we are bringing in someone from out of town, who will be our guest's escort/main contact? What are our guests' projected expenses? What's the projected total cost/or the possible money to be made? How much could we lose? What are our options? Is there a scaled down version and a more expansive version of the project? Can we find a partner to help defer our expenses? Is there a partner to help us promote this or do some of the jobs?
5. How many new members might this bring in? How and why? How will you share membership info?

6. How does this improve our chapter? In terms of public relations? In terms of relationships with other groups in the community? In terms of opportunities for our members? In terms of charity for projects with similar interests?
7. How will we know if we're successful?

### **A New Regular Meeting Routine**

I'm a creature of habit, and I bet most of you are, too. I like routine because it frees up my brain to work on other stuff like how the heck to solve the P.O.V. problem in my book or how to get a certain character to toe the line.

So...with this New Year, we're going to establish a new habit: A new Meeting Routine. Here's how it goes:

**6 to 6:30 p.m.** Brief business meeting for the Steering Committee. (Again, it's open for all to attend.)

**6:30 to 7 p.m.** Registration for our Monthly Meeting and Social Time. Members will pick up their name badges so they can be identified. Guests will sign in. Any fees for the meeting will be collected. Starting in February, non-members will pay \$5 to attend our meetings. If there's a special program, the non-member fee will be \$20 more than members pay and that \$20 will include membership to the local chapter.

**7 to 7:15 p.m.** Welcome by the President. Standing Committees will be asked if there are any announcements. Introductions of guests and new members. The meeting will be turned over to the Program Chair promptly at 7:15 p.m.

**7:15 to 9:15 p.m.** Program Chair announces upcoming programs and events, introduces the evening's program, concludes the program promptly at 9:15 p.m. Program Chair turns the meeting back over to the President.

**9:15 p.m.** The President adjourns the meeting. Members return their badges to the Membership Chair.

### **Meeting Location**

Unless otherwise noted, our meetings will be at the Steinway Piano Gallery Recital Hall, 12033 Dorsett Road, Maryland Heights, MO. Take 270 NORTH and EXIT at Dorsett Road. Get in the MIDDLE lane of the exit because you'll turn LEFT about three blocks down Dorsett. (If you pass the White Castle, you've overshot the building) The Steinway Piano Gallery is on the NORTH side of Dorsett Road. The Recital Hall is on the WEST side of the building.

### **Make Sure to Say, "HI!"**

I look forward to meeting each and every one of you at our next meeting. I'm sure that **Jason Heisserer's** presentation on The Hero's Journey will be of tremendous help with your (and my!) plotting. Remember: I'm YOUR president. If you have something on your mind, let me know. I'll be glad to answer any questions and consider any requests. I work for you.

Let's make it a great 2008—

**Joanna**

Questions? Concerns? Ideas? Contact me at [joannaslan@aol.com](mailto:joannaslan@aol.com)

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## December Meeting Recap

### **Karen Witmer-Gow (writing as Elizabeth Grayson)**

On December 13, 2007, multi-published and multi award-winning author Karen Witmer-Gow gave splendid advice on beginnings, middles and ends.

She stressed the importance of a wowser first two paragraphs, told us how to avoid the sagging middle and helped us learn to create a truly black moment--and the final payoff the reader longs for.

## January Meeting Recap

**Regular Monthly Meeting: There was no January regular monthly meeting.**

### **Steering Committee Meeting**

From the Recording Secretary - A brief summary of the transitional steering committee meeting follows. (Official minutes will be available after approval at the next meeting.)

The Steering Committee met January 13, 2008 at 1 p.m. In attendance were Joanna Slan, President; Claire Applewhite, Vice-President; Judy Moresi, Corresponding Secretary; Gloria Bratkowski, Recording Secretary; Tony Hooper, Treasurer; Donna Ross, Membership Chair; Kelly Hackel, Web Guru.

The afternoon was spent in discussing various organizational issues including officer and standing committee duties, membership forms and dues, new e-mail and snail mail addresses, and possible programs and activities for the coming year. Starting in February, there will be a \$5 fee for all non-members to attend our regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

The anthology planned last year has been canceled as National has new rules for SINC anthologies. Various alternative ideas were discussed. The microphone previously purchased will become a library resource available for members to borrow for a refundable \$25 security deposit.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be January 27th at 1 p.m. at Barnes and Noble, 721 Gravois Road. The next meeting after the January 27<sup>th</sup> one will be at 6 p.m. before the regular February Chapter meeting, February 13. Meetings are open to all members.

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## Mark Your Calendar

**1 p.m Sunday, January 27, 2008:** Greater St. Louis Chapter Steering Committee Meeting at the Barnes & Noble (in the Café), 721 Gravois Road, Fenton MO. All are welcome.

**7 p.m. Wednesday, February 6, 2008:** Make Mine Mystery meeting at Main Street Books of St. Charles, 307 South Main Street, St. Charles MO. The book is *Blood of the Wicked* by nationally touring author Leighton Gage. (More information is below.)

**6 p.m. Wednesday, February 13, 2008:** Regular monthly meeting. Session I of The Hero's Journey with Jason Heisserer at Steinway Piano Gallery Recital Hall, 12033 Dorsett Road, Maryland Heights, MO. (See Meeting Routine above for specific times. More information about the program is below.) Non-members will be charged a \$5 meeting fee.

**Hold this date--Sunday, March 2, 2008:** Jon and Ruth Jordan of CrimeSpree Magazine will be in town. We are trying to arrange an informal get-together so we can all learn more about their publication including possibilities to write for it and to be reviewed in it.

**6 p.m. Wednesday, March 12, 2008:** Regular monthly meeting. Session II of The Hero's Journey with Jason Heisserer at Steinway Piano Gallery Recital Hall. (See Meeting Routine above for specific times. More information about the program is below.) **Remember: Non-members will be charged a \$5 meeting fee for this regular monthly meeting.**

**Hold this date--Wednesday, April 9, 2008:** Regular monthly meeting. Stay tuned for exciting details. Here's a hint: Harry Dresden. (Yeah, it's THAT cool.)

**6 p.m. Wednesday, April 23, 2008:** The Newbie's Guide to Publishing and Promoting with author JA (Joe) Konrath To get a sense of Joe's stunning expertise and humorous delivery go to <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/> Note: There will be a charge (to be announced) for this meeting. Non-members will be charged an amount higher than members. **The program will start at 6 p.m.**

## February Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008: The Hero's Journey with Jason Heisserer, Session I.** The Hero's Journey is a basic pattern found in many narrative forms in many cultures. Learning about the **Hero's Journey** will help you build characters, add suspense, create dynamic plots, and develop both internal and external conflict. If you've wondered why some movies and books touch a deep core within us, and some totally miss the mark—now you'll learn why. To learn more about **The Hero's Journey**, go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monomyth> We suggest you "google" The Hero's Journey to get an idea of how potent this information is.

### Description of Session I:

In our first session, we will look primarily at the three general themes of the hero's journey: separation, initiation, and return. We'll also look at character archetypes that play a role in the drama of the hero's journey.

### Homework:

To get the most out of these two sessions, you should do your homework. We suggest you view the following movies: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, and/or *The Golden Compass*. Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* offers a hero's journey in broader strokes, so that might be a good one to review as well. The musical *Wicked* offers a

more ironic and subtle look at the hero's journey as well, in addition to being just a very clever 'anti-story' to *The Wizard of Oz*.

Any of the classic Greek hero stories might be reviewed as well: Oedipus, Orestes, Achilles, Jason, Perseus. Those writers who have adolescents in their lives and thus have access to adolescent literature might enjoy reading the Olympian series.

**Session II will be held on March 12, 2008.**

In our second session, we will focus on each theme, expanding and examining ways in which each theme is developed and ways in which transitions are made from separation, initiation, and return.

**Jason Heisserer** holds degrees in English and Education from Southeast Missouri State University and a Masters and Doctorate of Education from Maryville University. In addition to being a middle school assistant principal, Jason holds a post-doctoral appointment at the University of Missouri--St. Louis in Social Justice and Education. Jason has taught literature, mythology, and composition at the high school and junior college levels; at the graduate school level he has taught teacher education courses. As a public speaker, Jason has presented on topics of diversity and equity in education and to audiences of writers on topics of archetypal literary criticism, character development, and memoir and poetry. Jason is a memoirist and poet, although his current writing project is a text on Tarot based on his Tarot classes at Pathways Books and Music where he also reads tarot and teaches meditation classes.

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### Your Chapter Needs You!

We're seeking a volunteer for an important job: **Chapter Librarian**. All it takes is a little organizing and a bit of promotion--and it's a great way to get to know the members--not to mention learning more about the business of writing.

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### Make Mine Mystery Book Club

**Make Mine Mystery** meets on the first or second Tuesday (except when mystery authors on tour are featured) of the months January through November at 7:00 PM at:

Main Street Books  
307 S. Main Street  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
636-949-0105  
msbstchas@sbcglobal.net  
Owner and Co-Sponsor, Vicki Erwin

SinC members are always welcome. Cancellations/postponements on account of weather will be determined by Main Street Books.

Reviewers say Mr. Leighton Gage's debut novel, BLOOD OF THE WICKED has already been called "terrifically written, intelligent, and powerfully evocative," as well as "a book that makes you care...a novel as rich and complex as Brazil itself."

### Upcoming MMM events in 2008

February 6 (Wednesday--National Tour)  
Leighton Gage - *Blood of the Wicked*  
March 4 or 11 Ryan Jones - *Datashark*  
April 1 or 8 MMM pick of the past - TBA  
May 6 Jo Hiestand and Paul Hornung - *Horns of a Dilemma*

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## News of Our Sisters and Mistrs

### Condolences

Our sympathy to **Tom and Claire Applewhite** on the death of Tom's aunt. She must have been a wonderful lady, Tom!

Our sympathy to **Luci Zahray** on the death of her dog Jolly. Those of us who've lost a pet understand the special heartache that comes from saying goodbye to a beloved companion.

### Congratulations

To **Vicki Erwin** on being elected to the board of the Midwest Booksellers Association.

### Thank You

A big thank you to **Claire Applewhite** for graciously opening her home and providing lunch and snacks for a day-long board meeting.

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## Conferences, Workshops, and Seminars

**Love Is Murder on Dark and Stormy Nights**, Feb 1-3, [www.loveismurder.net](http://www.loveismurder.net)

**Murder in the Magic City**, Feb 9, <http://webpages.charter.net/southernsisters/mmc.html>

**Sleuthfest 2008**, Feb 28-March 2, [www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm](http://www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm)

**Left Coast Crime: Murder on the Rocks**, March 6-9, [www.leftcoastcrime.org/2008](http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2008)

**2008 Missouri Writers' Guild Writers Conference**, April 11-13, Columbia, Mo, [www.missouriwritersguild.org](http://www.missouriwritersguild.org) (All genres)

**Spring Fling Writers' Conference**, April 25-26, [www.chicagospringfling.com](http://www.chicagospringfling.com) (This is a romance writers conference, but will have agents and editors interested in mysteries and suspense novels.)

**Mayhem in the Midlands**, May 22-28, [www.omahapubliclibrary.org/mayhem/](http://www.omahapubliclibrary.org/mayhem/)

**2nd International Mystery Writer's Festival**, June 12-22, [www.newmysteries.org](http://www.newmysteries.org)

**Hardboiled heroes and Cozy Cats**, June 13-14, <http://mwasw.org/conf.html>

**Magna cum Murder**, Oct 24-26, 2008, [www.magnacummurder.com](http://www.magnacummurder.com)

**Great Manhattan Mystery Conclave**, Oct 31- Nov 2, 2008, [www.manhattanmysteries.com](http://www.manhattanmysteries.com)

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### Contests and Special Offers

**Criminal Pursuits:** BreakThrough Promotions and the SW Region MWA are co-sponsoring a series of writers' workshops for 2007 called Criminal Pursuits in the following dates/locations in 2008: Lafayette, Louisiana, **February 15–16**; Lubbock, Texas, **April 25–26**; and Little Rock, Arkansas, **August 15–16**. Details can be found at [www.criminalpursuits.com](http://www.criminalpursuits.com)

#### **WIRED ART WRITING CONTEST OFFERS PUBLICATION AND PUBLIC READING OF WINNING ENTRIES!**

In a unique collaboration, St. Louis Writers Guild, Art World Association, South County Times, and the Wired Coffee café are co-hosting Wired Art, a writing contest for art-inspired poems, stories and essays. The artwork was created by members of Art World Association and is currently displayed at the Wired Coffee café, 3860 S. Lindbergh, Sunset Hills. The public is invited to visit the cafe, enjoy great food and drinks, enjoy the art, and select one work on which to base a poem or short story or essay of up to 500 words. Nine writing entries will be chosen by judges who are members of St. Louis Writers Guild as winners. Beginning in March, one winning writing entry and the art that inspired it will be published by South County Times.

Also, on Tuesday, March 11, SLWG's regular Open Mic Night at Wired Coffee, from 7 to 9 p.m., will begin with live readings of the Wired Art writing contest winning entries.

**Contest deadline: February 26.** For complete guidelines, including the printable contest entry form, visit: HYPERLINK <http://www.stlwritersguild.org/wordpress/?p=297>

St. Louis Writers Guild's Wired Coffee Open Mic Night takes place every 2nd Tuesday at Wired Coffee in Sunset Hills. It is free and open to the public. Register to attend or read.

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## Websites of Interest

**World Vital Records** [www.worldvitalrecords.com](http://www.worldvitalrecords.com)

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## Information of Interest

### Happy Birthday, Wilkie!

Wilkie Collins was born January 8, 1824. *The Moonstone* was described by T.S. Eliot as "...the first, the longest and the best of modern English detective novels." Published in 1868, it set the tone as well as many conventions of the detective story including the brilliant detective, the hazardous place and the revenge motive. ---**Donna Ross**

### Great Quotations

Don't say the old lady screamed. Bring her on and let her scream.—**Mark Twain**  
(Great authors have been "showing, not telling" for a long time.)

Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't.—**Mark Twain**  
(Just make fiction sound like the truth.)

Familiarity breeds contempt - and children.—**Mark Twain**  
(Okay, that has nothing to do with writing. I just liked it.)

**--Your Editor**

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Disclaimer: Conferences, workshops, seminars, contests, websites, businesses, services, etc—or anything else we have no control over—are not endorsed by the Greater St. Louis Chapter—SinC or your editor. Also, many of the entries in this newsletter are copied verbatim from contributors without correction.

This month's contributors: Claire Applewhite, Gloria Bratkowski, Tony Hooper, Donna Ross, Joanna Campbell Slan.

New? Interesting information to share? Send it by the 20th of the month to [tjmore232@charter.net](mailto:tjmore232@charter.net) **On the Subject line put SinC Newsletter.** Thanks.

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From the **Treasurer:**

Greater St. Louis Chapter - Sisters in Crime						
2007 Statement of Profit & Loss						
		INCOME		EXPENSE		NET INCOME (EXPENSE)
Big Read			-		181.06	(181.06)
Chapter Library			-		40.00	(40.00)
Forensic University						
	Auction Donation				109.80	
	Bulls Eye Range	1,750.00			1,652.50	
	CLP Dinners	800.00			800.00	
	Photos	348.00			85.26	
	Registration	175.00			175.00	
	Supplies				47.36	
	Other				(18.15)	
	Sub-Total Forensic U		3,073.00		2,851.77	221.23
	Fund Raising		1,171.43		1,608.60	(437.17)
Historian			-		37.82	(37.82)
Miscellaneous			-		5.28	(5.28)
Meetings						
	Library Meeting Room				120.00	
	Meeting Expense				575.07	
	Speaker Expense				691.03	
	Make Mine Mystery				963.24	
	Wine & Cheese				69.84	
	Sub-Total Meetings		-		2,419.18	(2,419.18)
Kennett Workshop			340.00		352.70	(12.70)
Membership Dues			690.00		120.00	570.00
WritersFest						
	Book Commission	77.13				
	Registration	4,310.00				
	Other	250.00				
	Sub-Total WritersFest		4,637.13		2,774.99	1,862.14
<b>Total</b>			<b>9,911.56</b>		<b>10,391.40</b>	<b>(479.84)</b>