



**Susan McBride**



**Sharon Shinn**



**Judy Larsen**

### **THE WRITERS BLOCK: Get to know these wonderful women writers**

On Wednesday, October 12 at 7 pm in the lower level meeting room of Kirkwood Public Library, local women writers, [Susan McBride](#) (SM), [Sharon Shinn](#) (SS), and [Judy Larsen](#) (JL) will discuss their lives, their readers, and most of all, their writing. KPL thought it would be fun to introduce these talented writers to our patrons by asking each of them questions you might not think to ask at their panel discussion.

#### **KPL: What book(s) is on your bedside table right now?**

**SM:** [Secret Daughter](#) by Shilpi Somaya Gowda, [Escape](#) by Barbara Delinsky, [Saving Cee Cee Honeycutt](#) by Beth Hoffman, [Sarah's Key](#) by Tatiana de Rosnay....and dozens more! My bedside table has books on top of it, on its shelf, and stacked beneath it on the floor.

**SS:** *The Autumn Castle* by Kim Wilkins. It's an urban fantasy about all the chaos that ensues when the faery queen visits the Real World...a dark and beautiful story. Next up, Louise Marley's [The Brahms Deception](#), about a music student who goes back in time and has an affair with the composer.

**JL:** [State of Wonder](#) by Ann Patchett, *The Lakeshore Limited* by Sue Miller, [The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb](#) by Melanie Benjamin

#### **KPL: What do you like to do when you are not writing?**

**SM:** Read, watch DVDs or go to movies, work in the garden, hit the antique malls, play with my niece and nephew in *Tilles Park*, or anything with my husband!

**SS:** It feels like I'm always writing! But when I'm not, I'm usually doing something wholly mindless and nonproductive, like watching television or playing *Scrabble* against the *iPhone* (it usually wins.) I tell myself it's important to have down time so that my brain can start working on the next plotline, but I think that's just an excuse so I don't feel bad about watching reruns of "*Hawaii Five-O*."

**JL:** I love to cook, read and travel. Right now, I'm busy planning my first ever trip to Italy.

**KPL: What was your “day” job before you became a published author?**

**SM:** I majored in public relations at the University of Kansas, but I ended up learning medical transcription on the job and doing that for years. I was always a very fast typist, and I was quick to pick up on terminology, plus the hours were flexible. So I could write everyday and still pay my bills. I did that for about a dozen years (and nearly as many manuscripts) post-college until I was published.

**SS:** I still have a day job! Currently, I'm an editor for a magazine that's read by deans and professors at business schools. In the past, I've worked for magazines that went to small retailers. I like the IDEA of being a full-time writer, but that can be an uncertain life with paychecks that don't come at regular intervals. Having the security of a day job keeps me relaxed enough to be able to write in my free time.

**JL:** I taught high school English for 15 years. I loved it.

**KPL: What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?**

**SM:** I think it's a tie between surviving breast cancer and marrying Ed.

**SS:** I love the fact that three of my books have ended up on the American Library Association's lists of Best Books for Young Adults (now Best Fiction for Young Adults). I think that the books you read when you're in your teens are the books that stay with you for the rest of your life, and I'm really moved and honored to think any of my books might make a profound impression on young readers.

**JL:** Without question, my best accomplishment is raising my two sons to be really kind, funny, smart men. They are now 23 and 25 and two of my favorite people to spend time with. I'd like them even if I wasn't related to them!

**KPL: What is your favorite possession?**

**SM:** I don't place a whole lot of importance on possessions. But there are two things that do hold deep meaning for me. One is an antique garnet and diamond ring that my grandfather bought me when I finished writing my first grown-up manuscript when I was 19. It was a big validation of what I was doing, and I will never forget it. The other is my engagement ring from Ed. It's an antique that we picked out together. He proposed on Christmas Eve right after I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006 so it truly symbolizes the strength of our relationship. Nothing like going through the “for worse” before you even say your vows, eh?

**SS:** A stained glass lamp that a friend made for me. It's adorned with stained glass butterflies in several different kinds of glass. We spent HOURS at *Preston Art Glass* on Chouteau picking out the colors.

**JL:** Hmm, this is a tough question . . . my husband might say my favorite possession is my *iPhone* or *iPad*, but I think anything that can be replaced can't be my favorite . . . so I'd have to say it's pictures and letters I've collected over the years.

**KPL: What's your favorite neighborhood restaurant?**

**SM:** *Frank Papa's* is wonderful. You could not have a bad meal there if you tried. And the chocolate mousse is to die for.

**SS:** *Farotto's* on Manchester Road.

**JL:** I'm a big fan of *One Nineteen* on Kirkwood Road, *Pi Pizza* over on Manchester, and for special occasions, *Citizen Kane's*.

**KPL: Some of the world's greatest writers ate and/or drank unusual cuisine. For instance, Lord Byron drank vinegar as an appetite suppressant and the novelist Vendela Vida swears by pistachios. What do you like to eat or drink when you write?**

**SM:** Well, I don't actually eat or drink while I'm writing (I'd probably drip stuff on my keyboard!). But I do go for comfort foods during deadlines so it's usually wheat bagels with crunchy peanut butter for breakfast, mozzarella and tomato pesto sandwich with a banana for lunch and Amy's broccoli pot pie with extra broccoli for dinner. Not very exciting, but it works!

**SS:** Chocolate! Cake, cookies, candy, gelato, you name it. I've always loved the milk chocolate malted milk balls from *Bissinger's*, and lately I've discovered the sea salt caramels at *Kakao* in Maplewood. Heaven.

**JL:** I'm a coffee drinker. I start with one or two cups first thing in the morning just with sugar, and then when I start the heavy-duty writing, I like to use the different flavored creamers . . .