



Preparing to attend a writer's conference

by
Julie H. Ferguson

Freelance writer and author of two non-fiction books, Vancouver-based Julie H. Ferguson leads workshops for writers' conferences and groups, as well as a community college, that provide writers with the knowledge and confidence to approach publishers with their work. For more information, contact Beacon Literary Services at info@beaconlit.com or visit www.beaconlit.com.

It doesn't matter if it's your first or tenth attendance! All delegates to a writers' conference need to arrive willing and able to get the last drop of value from the event. Here are some ideas on how to prepare yourself ahead of time and how to benefit once there:

Before you leave for the conference:

- ✍ Identify what you most need to learn; then,
- ✍ Choose the workshops in the program that provide it;
- ✍ Pick the editors and/or agents you wish to meet and submit requests for appointments with your registration – early;
- ✍ Prepare a short list of questions to ask editors and agents, in case you are struck dumb;
- ✍ Develop a terrific one-sentence description of your book/work ;

Take with you:

- ✍ Layered clothing – it can be hot in the breakout sessions;
- ✍ Samples of your best writing, properly formatted;
- ✍ Masses of paper and pens;
- ✍ Business cards (very important);
- ✍ Money/credit cards with which to buy books, etc;

Once there;

- ✍ Accept fatigue – you can sleep afterwards;
- ✍ Separate from your friends and move out of your comfort zone;
- ✍ Take full advantage of the social events and groups;
- ✍ Talk to everyone you can, not just those you know – many are attending alone and feel awkward too;
- ✍ Collect all the handouts, even for workshops you don't attend.

If you do these things you will be guaranteed to have a very valuable conference experience. And, you'll be panting to return....