



# The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

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## Preparing to attend a writer's conference:

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 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....

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### From the editor's desk

September is a good time for writers to consider what we can do in the way of professional development. There are two opportunities available to writers that never disappoint.

First, about six weeks from now (Oct 17-20) about 500 delegates will gather for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Surrey International Writers Conference in British Columbia, Canada. It promises to be the best ever with a record 46 presenters, agents, and editors whom writers can meet and learn from. For the first time, master classes are available for advanced writers on the afternoon before the main conference. I've already registered for one of these. The program of workshops and events is impressive and you can view it at [www.siw.ca](http://www.siw.ca). Register quickly - it will be a full house this year.

Second, the Surrey Creative Writing Diploma Program starts taking registrations after Labour Day and offers marvelous value for money with a variety of stimulating workshops for writers of all kinds. Call 604-589-2221 for a brochure and sign up...!

Julie H. Ferguson

## E-books are selling...

Many more people are buying e-reader software and e-books than before, so the industry is showing steady growth. Today 450 publishers offer a commercial e-book list, including some very big companies. Here are a few current stats:

- ✂ Random House's revenues from e-books doubled in past year;
- ✂ Simon & Schuster enjoyed double-digit growth in e-sales in 2001-02.
- ✂ McGraw-Hill's professional e-book sales have risen 55% in the same period;
- ✂ Palm Digital Media sold 180,000 e-titles in its format in 2001 – a 40% increase;
- ✂ 5 million copies of MS Reader, one of the free e-book readers, have been downloaded;
- ✂ Downloads of Acrobat E-reader software have risen by 70%.

Aspiring authors need to realize the view that "e-books are not selling" is a misconception. (I know this to be true – my three e-books are selling well...)

You can download a March 2002 survey on e-books completed by readers and authors from Open an Ebook at [www.openebook.org](http://www.openebook.org). This document makes informative reading for those who need to understand more about the formats and features available in electronic books today.

## Forthcoming events

- Sep 24:** **Writing with Power!!** for SD 42 teachers' professional development session, 4-7pm, Resource Centre, Brown St., Maple Ridge.
- Sep 29:** **Word on the Street**, 11am-6pm, around the Vancouver Public Library. Free for writers and readers. [www.canada.com/national/features/wots/](http://www.canada.com/national/features/wots/)
- Oct 17-20:** Tenth annual **Surrey Writers' Conference**. Join Julie again in the Blue Pencil Café for an encouraging talk about your career and work-in-progress, as well as her discussion groups in the evenings.
- Oct 26:** **Writing with Power!!** available through Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma program, 9-noon. \$32.00. Call 604-589-2221 to register after Labour Day.
- Nov 23:** **Writing Online** through Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma Program, 9-noon. \$32.00. Call 604-589-2221 after Labour Day.
- Nov 30:** **How to Write Irresistible Query Letters** through Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma Program, 9am-4pm. \$63.00. Call 604-589-2221 to register after Labour Day.
- 2003**
- Jan 21:** **Writing for Success: Essay Planning and Self-editing** for SD42 grade 5-12 teachers' professional development session, 4-7pm Resource Centre, Brown St., Maple Ridge,
- Feb 21:** **Writing with Power!!** (9:30am) and **Essay Planning and Self-editing** (1:30pm) for SD 43's teachers' Professional Development Day, Coquitlam

## Writers' Tools

While we're on the professional development theme, I remembered listening to Lorraine Brown, the author of *The Handless Maiden*, deliver a keynote at a mini-conference a few years back. She said if writers chose to do one thing only to become better at their craft, it was to read. My offering is that we all should belong to writers' groups – locally, if possible, and on the internet, if not.

Three downloadable booklets from Beacon Publishing can help writers too:

- † *How to Craft Irresistible Queries that Result in Publication;*
- † *How to Write for Online Markets and Build Your Publishing Portfolio;* and,
- † *Speaking and Writing: the Indivisible Twins.*

These titles are also available as fully-narrated and illustrated workshops on CD-ROM for those who cannot attend the sessions in person or want a permanent reference. To take a look at the details, please visit:

[www.beaconlit.com/beaconli/writerstools.htm](http://www.beaconlit.com/beaconli/writerstools.htm)



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