



# Hampton Roads Writers

## Where Characters Connect

October 2012

### Our Conference in a Word: Fabulous!

By Susan Okaty

A few weeks ago we held our 4th annual [Hampton Roads Writers](#) conference here in Virginia Beach. It was fabulous! In fact, I talked to several people who have attended many writing conferences, and they agreed that ours was one of the very best they've ever been to. In fact, even our presenters were impressed with the quality of our program.

It seems appropriate that we reflect on the conference just past before we start planning next year's event. Every year we say, "This was the best one yet!" The truth is they have all been good ones, they have all excited us, they have all spurred us on to be better writers. Our enthusiasm stems from our recent immersion into the writing community in a deeper way than we are at other times of the year. At the conferences we not only get to listen to the wisdom of best-selling authors and professional agents and editors, we have the pleasure of meeting and networking with a talented pool of local established writers and aspiring writers. Every year it seems new and fresh, and that's what makes it feel the best. That and the fact that after four years, we're getting the knack of what makes a great conference!

What stands out for me about this conference is the image of Rick Mofina giving his keynote address, and telling all of us that he was shocked when he got the call that we wanted him for our keynote speaker. He is an award-winning novelist with fourteen published books, and he said, "Why would you want me? Who am I?" This humble, well-spoken man from Canada, expressed the insecurities of so many of us writers. Who are we that we would think anybody would want to listen to us? It was refreshing to hear this from such a prolific and well-respected novelist. It made us feel like he was one of us, that he understood how we felt. It gave us hope that we, too, could be successful writers one day, if we are willing to put in the effort and not give up.

One thing that struck me as I talked to some of the conference attendees was the diversity of writers who attend. I sat next to Patricia who has been working on a piece for a year. She recently retired from nursing and is pursuing her dream of writing. She came to learn some new skills that will enable her to finish her piece. She tried a correspondence writing course, but she missed the personal connection.

I spoke with Alison who writes memoirs. This was her first conference. She told me she loved to be in the company of other writers because she doesn't have that connection in her daily life. She particularly liked that she could learn so much about different aspects of writing, both the craft and the business. She went to one of the 10-minute pitches with an agent and received positive feedback. Though her work is "nowhere near finished," she now feels she is on the write...er, right track.

I also met a father who came with his daughter, Jaclyn, a sophomore in high school. Jaclyn likes to base her characters on Greek mythology, he told me. "She's the writer," he said. "I'm just here to support her." Watching him interact with the conference speakers, I suspect that he might be doing some writing of his own soon.

The aftermath of attending a writing conference, of course, is that it makes you so pumped up, you want to work harder. You want to sit your butt in that chair and get busy on your dream. Conferences renew your writing passion. They can be the boost you need to pick up that pen and stop procrastinating.

And that's what we are here for: to support you. Not just with the conference, though that is such a great way to jump-start your writing, learn something new, meet awesome writers, and gather new ideas for your current project or a new one. We are here all year with Open Mic nights, Show and Grow Your Prose events, and our Traveling Pen series of workshops. We are here to put you in touch with resources in the community that can help you reach whatever writing goal you have set for yourself. And as much as we support you, you can support us with your membership so we can continue our mission of promoting the craft and passion of writing and the love of reading and literature.

Every year I see some of the same faces and many new ones. I hope you were one of them. If not, how about next year? I have a feeling it will be the best conference yet!

*There is the risk you cannot afford to take,  
[and] there is the risk you cannot afford not to take.*

Peter Drucker

# Hampton Roads Writers Loses One of its Own



This spring, Joy Lezon, a member of Hampton Roads Writers, died and left a hollow in the hearts of all who knew her and whose lives she touched. Here is the tribute to Joy, written by her husband, John:

## Definition of *JOY*

*a*: the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires : **DELIGHT** *b*: the expression or exhibition of such emotion : **GAIETY** 2: a state of happiness or felicity : **BLISS** : a source or cause of delight

## Origin of *JOY*

Middle English, from Anglo-French *joie*, from Latin *gaudia*, plural of *gaudium*, from *gaudēre* to rejoice; probably akin to Greek *gēthein* to rejoice

First Known Use: 13th century

## Related to *JOY*

**Synonyms:** BEATITUDE, BLESSEDNESS, BLISS, BLISSFULNESS, FELICITY, GLADNESS, HAPPINESS, WARM FUZZIES

**Meaning of "Joy"** *English name* In English, the name Joy means- Joy. Rejoicing.. Other origins for the name Joy include - English, Latin-American, French The name Joy is most often used as a girl name or female name.

**English Name Meaning** - Joy. Rejoicing. **Origin** – English **Alternate Origins** - Latin-American French

**Joy Bridget Lezon** passed away with dignity and peace on March 8, 2012 at home. She was born Dec 27, 1950 in Statesville, NC as Joy Bridget Pope to the late Clyde R. Pope and Barbara L. Patterson Pope. She was preceded in death by sister Paulette Koontz of Salisbury, NC, Ms. Minnie Pope and grandfather, Paul Patterson both of Statesville, NC. She was devoted to and survived by her husband and true love, John L. Lezon, Sr. She has a son David Cox and wife Tina of Statesville, NC. She considers Christina (Lezon) Spurgers and husband James, and John Lezon Jr. and wife Amanda her family as well. She has two grandchildren, Megan and Brandi and three great-grandchildren in Statesville, NC. She has eleven more grandchildren through extended family. She is also survived by numerous brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces.

Joy was extremely proud of her educational accomplish-

ments receiving her Associates in Arts from Mitchell Community College; Bachelor of Science (Education) from Gardner Webb College; Master of Arts (Education) and Specialist in Education from Appalachian University. She was also pursuing a Doctorate in Divinity. Joy enhanced the education and lives of so many children in her 30 plus year teaching career in North Carolina and Virginia. Joy never passed up the opportunity to sing. She was a devote Christian and member of numerous church choirs in North Carolina and would be called on to perform as a soloist. She sang in the St. Mary's Church (Bowers Hill) choir and was a member of the Daybreak Singers.

Joy had a burning desire to write and publish books, had numerous scripts in progress and was a member of the Hampton Roads Writers. Joy's life was filled with . . . JOY! Her radiant smile and full of life personality won the hearts the people she met. She will be remembered as an outgoing person who would also be there to lend a hand. She truly influenced many children in teaching and touch the hearts of many others.

Read more about Joy's life by visiting her web page at <http://www.hamptonroadswriters.org/joylezon.php>.

## Traveling Pen Series

We have one last Traveling Pen workshop scheduled for this year. It will be held on Saturday, November 3, 9:30 A.M. to Noon at Tidewater Community College in Virginia Beach.

**WORKSHOP TITLE:** **Healing with Language** presented by Shonda Buchanan, English professor at Hampton University.

The first workshop of the new year will be held on January 26, 2013 from 9:30 A.M. to Noon.

**WORKSHOP TITLE:** **Show, Don't Tell: When and How to Do It**, presented by Luran Strait, president of Hampton Roads Writers.

For more details on these workshops, including how to register, please visit our [website](#).

## Getting *Myself* Right

By: Lauran Strait

How many times have you heard someone misuse the word *myself*?

If you're like me, it drives you so batty you might be tempted to hurl a grammar book at the offender, while shouting, "Read it, or else."

Just the other day, when a writer friend was addressing a group of other writers and reminding them to return any pens they had borrowed, she said, "You can give them to myself or ..."

I was able to hold myself back only because I hadn't brought along my copy of the Chicago Manual of Style. Be warned friends, a handbag, large enough to accommodate the style guide, is now on my holiday wish list.

In all seriousness though, do you know how and when the word *myself* and other reflexive and intensive pronouns should be used?

Reflexive and intensive pronouns include the words *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*, *themselves*. Reflexive pronouns refer back to the subject of a sentence. Intensive pronouns are used to emphasize the subject of the sentence and usually appear right near the subject of the sentence.

### Reflexive pronouns:

- I gave *myself* plenty of time to get to work.
- You should let *yourself* into the house.
- Jim bought *himself* a shirt.
- Jill read to *herself*.

- The dog scratched *itself*.
- We treated *ourselves* to pizza.
- You can make *yourselves* at home.
- The children are able to dress *themselves*.

### Intensive pronouns:

- I *myself* am sick of the heat.
- You *yourself* are responsible for this mess!
- The president *himself* appeared at the rally.
- The actress *herself* wrote those lines.
- The cat *itself* caught the mouse.
- We *ourselves* made the meal.
- You *yourselves* can win this game.
- The troops *themselves* helped the people escape the burning building.

Think of it this way, writer friends: "Me hit I in the head with a grammar book when myself misused this word."

*Myself* is only correctly used when it is the object of the sentence's verb, which in this case is HIT.

Now that you know, go forth, spread the word and, of course, sin no more.

## Literary Trivia

After reaching age 40, this housewife and mother of five began writing her first books—the Earth's Children fictional saga. The series has gone on to become one of the best-selling in publishing history. Who is she? Answer on page 4.

Looking for a local writers' group to join? Take advantage of one of the many that are offered in our area. For a list of writing group opportunities, take a look at our [website](#). It's a great way to work on a piece and get feedback before you present it at one of our Show and Grow sessions.

# When Opportunity Knocks, Do You Open the Door?

## By Milt Saunders

Opportunity is a positive thing, not a threatening bogeyman. So whether you're an accomplished writer, new to writing or have always wanted to write but "never got around to it," for goodness sakes, when opportunity knocks, open the door! New horizons and the joy of creative writing are waiting for you on the other side.

That's what Hampton Roads Writers brings to you from 9:30 AM to Noon, eight Saturday mornings a year at the Meyera Oberndorf Central Library in Virginia Beach. It's called "**Show and Grow Your Prose**" **Workshop and Critique**. These learning and listening opportunities are designed to help established writers hone their art, beginning writers to learn the fundamentals of excellence in writing and to encourage those who are just getting their feet wet, to feel confident about getting into the water and swimming. Guess what...**It's Free And Open to Everyone!**

The word critique is frightening to some, since it is derived from the word criticism. But this is constructive criticism, delivered in a caring and helping manner by recognized professionals who contribute their expertise for the benefit of the Hampton Roads writing community. No one need fear that they will be embarrassed or made to feel inferior. As a matter of fact, the experience of those writers who have read their works and had them critiqued has been universally positive. Every one of them came away from the experience feeling better off for it and ready to improve their writing.

Do you have to be a writer to attend the "Show and Grow Your Prose Workshop and Critique? Absolutely not! We welcome all who are interested. The birth of writers always starts with reading. What better place to find readers than the library? So we welcome all readers of prose as well as writers. Don't forget your spouse, significant other and friends and neighbors. They certainly will be interested to hear what you are doing with your writing adventure.

Last but not least, Show and Grow Your Prose Workshops and Critiques are an opportunity to socialize and network with other like-minded colleagues who are also trying to improve their creative writing, whether it be fiction, nonfiction, memoirs or other forms of prose. Many participants have found new writing friends and developed mutually beneficial writing relationships.

So act now! Go to [www.Hamptonroadswriters.org](http://www.Hamptonroadswriters.org), for more information on how to submit your ten minute reads in Word or PDF format to Lauran Strait at [HRWriters@cox.net](mailto:HRWriters@cox.net) and review all the opportunities available for writers. Please make note of and schedule the following sessions of Show and Grow Your Prose workshops and critiques, all held at the Meyera Oberndorf Central Library, 4100 Virginia Beach Blvd. in Virginia Beach.

January 12; February 9; March 9; April 13; May 11; June 8; July 13; and August 13

You'll be glad you did! Hampton Roads Writers welcomes you. See you there.



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Answer to Literary Trivia question:

Who is Jean Auel?