

LeAnn Lemberger

Even though she's been a full-time writer since 1983, LeAnn Lemberger still has plenty of plans for new writing projects. Writing as Leigh Michaels, she has had 80 contemporary romance novels published by Harlequin, along with several nonfiction titles published by Writer's Digest Books. The most recent, "On Writing Romance," is about how to write romance novels.



Lemberger, who has a B.A. in journalism from Drake University, also teaches online classes for a writers' workshop and moderates a book club discussion. A grown-up Iowa farm girl from Audubon County, Lemberger now lives with her husband near Ottumwa. She composes everything at her computer.

"I've always been a writer – always defined myself as a writer," she says of getting started in the field. "I wrote my first book when I was a teenager and mercifully was sensible enough to burn it. Then I wrote and burned five more before my first book was published.

"I like puzzles, and writing a book is like figuring out a puzzle – what pieces go where and when to make the picture work for the reader. Though

I'm taking a break right now from writing fiction, I'll go back to it eventually because I can't *not* write."

Lemberger's advice for startup writers?

"Learn about everything you can. You never know what bit of unusual knowledge is just the thing you'll need for a character or a story. Then write a lot. Expect to practice the craft. Violinists practice. Bicycle racers practice. Baseball players practice," she concludes.

