

Christine Lemmon is the author of three novels -*Sanibel Scribbles*, *Portion of the Sea*, and *Sand in My Eyes*, and the gift book, *Whisper from the Ocean*. She has lived all over the country writing for radio, newspaper, television and magazine.

She currently lives with her husband and three children on Sanibel Island, a subtropical island off Florida's Gulf Coast, which is the setting for her novels. She gets most of her inspiration while biking, kayaking or walking around the island, and watching sunsets with her family, but then she must hold her ideas until night, when her children are sleeping and she can write.

Christine is a frequent speaker at luncheons, book clubs and women's groups where she discusses writing and creativity. She is writing her next novel.

According to Christine

I had a unique childhood and I believe it has greatly influenced my love of writing. From an early age, I couldn't help but view life as adventurous-and every day I felt compelled to write it all down in my diary.

I grew up in Saugatuck, Michigan, in a house attached to our family's ice-cream shop. All I had to do was run through the kitchen, then a bathroom and open the door into what to me, was a "magical kingdom of sorts," this charming, old-fashioned pink ice-cream shop with fifty flavors. Saugatuck was a thriving tourist town and in the summers there were wild festivals and customers lined outside our door until midnight. I worked beside my family, at first standing on an upside bucket so I could reach the ice-cream flavors. When I needed a break I would sit with my diary under the cash register counter, or in the sugar cone closet, writing about my adventures living in this exciting place.

My parents also owned the bed & breakfast above our house and in season, my sister and I, together with our mom would clean the rooms first thing every morning. Come winters we had slumber parties in the rooms, and I would scare my friends as I fabricated stories about the rooms I believed were haunted.

We moved into an old farm house on the outskirts of the village, turning what had been our home into a restaurant. It was odd serving lunch to customers who were eating in what used to be my parents' bedroom. My dad loved John Wayne so we decorated that room with memorabilia and called it the John Wayne Room.

My father also started a horse ranch and when not scooping ice-cream, waiting tables in our old house, or cleaning the bed & breakfast rooms, I would lead customers on one-hour horse rides along the woodsy trails. Cantering amidst the trees on my horse, I never felt so carefree in all my life. My father also kept horses in the backyard of our farm house and I would jump off the school bus and hop onto one of them bareback.

Our farm house neighbored the popular Red Barn Theatre. We awoke every morning hearing through our windows the actors rehearsing for musicals like *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Camelot* and so forth. One summer I got a role as poor old little Eva in *The King and I*, in which I danced, then died in a man's arms as he carried me off stage. Our sheep dog also had a role in one of the

plays. Come winter, the theatre was abandoned, but my sister and I would sneak in, dress up in costumes and swing from a rope across the darkened stage.

SCHOOLING

My schooling was in Holland, Michigan, a Dutch community a short drive away. It was in Holland that I wore the wooden shoes and danced in the Tulip Time Festival each spring, and in Holland that I started viewing everything, even the tulips, as beautiful creations pointing me to God. To this day, I am grateful to this community for the world view I hold.

I loved high school, overly-scheduling myself, participating in everything-student council, year-round sports, cheerleading, clubs galore. The most memorable was a snow-removal program I started together with the mayor of Holland in which I recruited students to shovel snow for the elderly. I called it "Ice-Busters" (yes, it was around the time the movie, Ghostbusters released) and it gained, crazy as it sounds to me now, national attention. Radio stations were playing the infamous song while voice-overs were promoting my program. My grandparents in Chicago saw me on the evening news out shoveling a senior's driveway. After shoveling her drive, and conducting that interview, my car then died and the news crew drove me to my honor society banquet, to which I was the vice president and supposed to be opening with prayer. I went running into the ceremony with moon boots on and icicles in my hair as the principal handed me the microphone. I loved the adrenaline rush and that was the day I knew I wanted to become a news reporter. I started writing shortly after for the student section of the local paper.

COLLEGE

By the time that college came around, I learned something about myself. I never wanted to be as busy as I was in high school, but rather, I longed to live more contemplatively. I went to Hope College, a liberal arts college in Holland, Michigan, and majored in Spanish and communications. I spent one semester studying in Madrid, Spain, and another living in downtown Chicago doing an internship at WLS (ABC TV News). There I worked for an investigative reporter specializing in organized crime.

The summer of my freshman year I came down with mononucleosis and was confined to my room. That was the summer I wrote my first novel (unpublished), typing all hours of the night on an old noisy typewriter that kept my sister in the next room awake. There was a frustration to me, as I wrote it, like I didn't know the process, didn't know how to write a novel, but there was also an unexplainable pleasure I felt and it's all I wanted to do with my time.