

# The Buk Buk Buk Festival

*A conversation with creators  
Mary Jane and Herm Auch*



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*Thrilled to have her picture book published, Henrietta is all aflutter with excitement when she's invited to a local book festival. However, the event organizers did not count on having a chicken show up to sign books. Luckily, just when the festival director gives chase, Henrietta comes up with a clever plan to make herself heard and be respected. As Henrietta's loyal local children's librarian explains, "A chicken who can write books is a national treasure."*

**Mary Jane and Herm, please tell us about your new book, THE BUK BUK BUK FESTIVAL.**

**Mary Jane:** The main character is Henrietta, who taught herself to read in *Souperchicken* and learned to write in *The Plot Chickens*. THE BUK BUK BUK FESTIVAL is a logical progression in Henrietta's writing career. She sees a book festival poster and notices that none of the authors are chickens. So she writes a new story based on her chickhood memories and sends it off to a publisher without mentioning her poultry heritage. When the book is published, Henrietta is thrilled to be invited to the book festival, but devastated when she realizes that chickens are not welcome.

**We have seen Henrietta develop her love of reading in *Souperchicken* and sharpen her writing skills in *The Plot Chickens*. Where did you get your inspiration for Henrietta's new adventure?**

**Herm:** One of the best perks of being an author or illustrator is meeting the children who read our books. We love attending book festivals where we have time to carry on conversations with readers, so we decided to give Henrietta the same experience.

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### How was your process of writing and illustrating different or the same for this new story?

**Mary Jane:** The writing process was pretty much the same as our previous books. I write the story then Herm adds his ideas, often coming up with some of the puns.

The illustration process was quite different for me this time. I always concentrate on how the characters will look, but in the past I have either painted them with oils, or made 3-D sculptures for Herm to scan or photograph. He then combined everything in the computer, adding his special effects to create the spreads. This time I worked digitally right from the beginning, creating each character in the computer and giving Herm digital files.

### What do you hope readers learn from this story?

**Herm:** If you have a dream, work hard to make it come true. Don't let others discourage you and make you give up.

### What made you decide to become authors and illustrators?

**Herm:** Drawing is something I have enjoyed since I was a child. My first-grade teacher told me I would become an artist when I grew up. Today I enjoy working digitally because I feel the final image is more important than mastering the technique of watercolor, oil or some specific medium.

### What advice would you give to young authors/illustrators?

**Mary Jane:** Read! Read! Read not to copy books, but to develop your imagination and learn what makes a good story. Study the illustrations in books to see the world through many different artists' eyes. Then fill notebooks and sketchbooks with your own ideas and drawings.



**MARY JANE AUCH** and her husband, **HERM AUCH**, have collaborated on many hilarious picture books, including *The Princess and the Pizza* and the first two books about Henrietta, *The Plot Chickens* and *Souperchicken*, which were both IRA Children's Choice selections. They live in New York State.