



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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What's Happening?

Here we are, the solstice almost upon us. I don't know about the weather where you are, but here in the Midwest, we are solidly into summertime. Perhaps you remember that in my last newsletter I was hoping to do some landscaping at our new house. Alas, things didn't quite turn out as I thought.

First of all, the soil is in bad shape, so the few plants we did put in have not flourished. They're managing to cling to life, but it might be a while before I see a flower. To add to it, we're in the middle of a heat wave and a drought. This means we have small patches of green where we're watering the plants in a large patch of brown where the grass has slowly gone dormant -- I hope. It may be dead. We'll see.



I've done a lot of gardening over the course of my years, so this is the first year I haven't had a big garden. And you know what? I'm starting to enjoy it. I have some pots of herbs, a few pots of flowers, and that poor little patch where we're trying to grow things. If that little patch fails, well, I'll be okay with that. I don't think I want to invest a lot of time and energy (and money) in a garden anymore.

My thoughts might change if the weather improves, but I suspect this kind of hot and dry weather is going to stick with us, this year and into the future. It's been that way for the last few years with just the occasional break. I sure hope we don't have another derecho anytime soon. Once in a lifetime is enough for me!

I am still enjoying my retirement. I've had one or two boredom days, but usually days just seem to fly by. Most of all I enjoy the sense that I have ample time to explore whatever might catch my interest. So far, that's mainly reading. I'm getting caught up on fiction and some series that I used to follow, as well as dipping into non-fiction topics.

I also want to take a few small road trips this summer, now that the pandemic is starting to recede in our rear-view mirrors. I'd like to do some day trips, small jaunts around the state or neighboring states. And I've started planning my gambling getaway in the fall with my friends in Minnesota. I'm looking forward to brainstorming and playing slots!

In Other News

On the writing front, I'm almost done with my major review of the books in the Endless Dream series. I finished reviewing the 3 books in the Celestial Service series, and I've reviewed 6 of the 9 in the Dream series. Once those are done, I'll review the 2 additional books (future generations) and the 3 books in the New Human series which wraps up the entire thing.

As I said in my last newsletter, I'm using a new process for reviews, uploading a copy of my manuscripts to "the cloud", then annotating them online. I discovered I have a propensity for long sentences--I use a lot of "and" and "but". I don't know why I never noticed this before. This time, during the review, it leapt out at me.

I have a list of abused words that I keep, and I'm going to need to add those to it. There are also some other minor things I want to fix--what should be capitalized ("interstate" -- capitalized all the time or just when it refers to a specific road, like Interstate 80?); double-checking all the "facts" in the story (was she married for 6 years or 7?)

I keep track of all those facts in a Wiki I created. I think I'm going to migrate that to another system soon. I'm verifying everything then I may begin the process of moving the information elsewhere. There's a lot of design work to be done before I start to do it, things to consider for cross-referencing, indexing, and linking (not to mention just the sheer number of "pages"). It's a big move, but I have the time to do it now. The Wiki has served me well, but it is time-consuming to maintain. It's like a giant website with a lot of sub-pages, and I have to manage it all. I think if I shift it elsewhere, it might be easier to handle.

What's Next?

I sent in my Snow White book (*Mirrored*) to my editor and it was accepted for publication -- this is my Snow White and the Seven Jocks book, in which Snow becomes a target of a deranged convict. The hero, Brendan Royal, is not only an FBI agent but a gifted amateur musical theater actor. I had a lot of fun pairing a woman who loves country music with a man who sings the lead in plays like *Showboat* and *Oklahoma!* It will be out next year.

I also want to transfer some of my self-published books from one distributor (Smashwords) to another (Draft2Digital). It's all behind-the-scenes stuff for the reader but for an author, it means I'll have all my books in one place where I can manage them. Speaking of managing--

I got all of my books set up on a new site that lists all the distribution for each book (Apple, Amazon, etc.) <https://books2read.com/rl/JLWilsonReadingList>. I no longer have to maintain a list of links for each book. Believe me, it makes my life a lot easier! And I also want to do some promotions for my backlist and for *Beached* (available now!) <http://bit.ly/beachedJLW>.

In between all of that, I'd like to continue working on cover ideas for the Dream series, which I'd like to self-publish starting next year. Yep. It's a good thing I retired. Now I have the time.