



As The Author Learns

*Bits and Tidbits about the Publishing Process
from J L Wilson, very soon-to-be published author*

What's Happening?

Duh – this is Release Month...Can you say "Busy"?

I have been rushing hither and yon, getting organized for my releases. I know, I know – I've been getting organized for months, right? Well, now Push is coming to Shove and I've got to get **really organized**.

But first, the big news: **BROWNIES!** Yep, the Brownie book (*Brownies, Bodies, and Breaking the Code*) will be out from The Wild Rose Press when you read this. It's due to be on their web site on June 15. I'll update my web site with a direct link to the exact section, so go to my web site and check it out. Better yet: buy a copy! Or buy two!

And, even bigger news: **Brownies will be out in paperback in August.** Mad, wild happy dancing! Yes, the Brownie book will be available for ordering on August 10 (again, from the Wild Rose web site initially, and at Amazon a few weeks later).

Keep an eye on my web site and when it's available, I'll provide a direct link so you can order dozens of copies for you, your friends, your family, your veterinarian, your cleaning lady, your kid's teacher, your ... You get the idea.

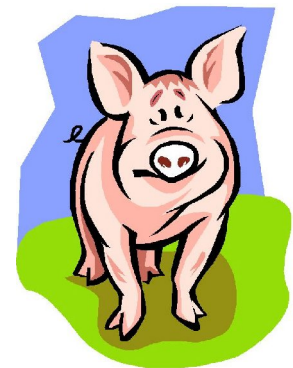
What Have I Been Doing?

Let's see, where to start ... I think I'll need subsections for this. It's been a hectic month. In fact, it's hard to believe that only a month has passed since I last penned a newsletter. It feels like multi-months have gone by.

The Pig Book

The Pig Book will not be published this year by Triskelion. Let me hasten to assure you, this is a good thing.

Here's what's happening: when I signed the contract with Triskelion, the company was planning on starting a separate mainstream division where my book would be one of the newest publications. But the company plans didn't pan out and they didn't have time to devote to this new division.



I was worried that the Pig Book might languish and not do very well, sales-wise. I had some email exchanges with a senior editor there and we decided that yes, the Pig Book should not stay with them. The company could use the Pig Slot for a different book and I could probably find another publisher where the Pig would fit better. The editor returned my rights to me (this is a publishing term that essentially means I get to shop the book around elsewhere), and lo, the Pig Book will not be published this year.



I'm going to wait to send the book on the rounds until I get some breathing space. Here's why: if I get offered a contract then the Clock Starts Ticking. I'll have to focus on edits, rewrites, cover art, and promo for a new book. I'm smack in the middle of two WIP (Works In Progress): a time travel book and another first-person mystery, which is a follow-on to one I want to shop around soon (see below: "National Conference").

So if I sell the Pig Book to a new publisher, I'd have to sort of drop what I'm doing, work on that, then come back and pick things up again. Perhaps I'm being overly optimistic, but I think the Pig Book is a winner and it will be snapped up, so I'm going to wait on it.

A New Yahoo Group is Born

I've set up a Yahoo group for folks who want to get my newsletter (this document you are reading). If you got this by email you don't have to switch to the Yahoo group. I have you in a mailing list and I can continue to mail it to you.

An online group has some advantages:

- It lets me more easily manage my mailing list, which is growing every day (yea!)
- It lets me store copies of my newsletter online
- I'll be able to easily notify folks if something exciting occurs like, say, I win the Pulitzer Prize or sign a gazillion-dollar contract (we can hope).

If you'd like to join it, you can send an email to:

JLWilsonNewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



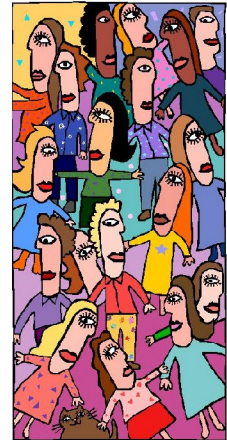
I'll process your request and sign you up. When newsletter time rolls around, you'll get a link from me and you can click on it to view my newsletter.

I mainly set this up so if someone is looking at my web site and wants a copy of my newsletter, I can easily track who they are. So you don't need to switch over unless you want to – I've got all of you 'original' folks on a mailing list already.

RWA National Conference and Pitching

Romance Writers of America is having an annual conference during the first part of July (July 11-14 to be precise), so I'll be flying to Dallas for that. I get in on the 10th (Tuesday) and come home on Saturday.

National is a huge networking event, both personal and professional (they cut off registration at two thousand people and there is always a waiting list. It's HUGE.). I've attended three so far (this is my fourth), and I've always had a good time mainly because I get a chance to see friends from all over the country. I'm in several online critique groups with people and the only time we meet face-to-face is at National Conference. Believe me, a lot of drinking, brainstorming, laughing, and commiseration is expended during National Week.



The other aspect of National is Pitching (oh, dreaded word). Literary agents and editors from publishing houses attend the conference and attendees can sign up for a Pitch Session. The sign-up process itself is a scramble because there're a thousand people vying for a few hundred slots. All sign-up is done online and is done in tiers (contest finalists get first crack, published authors second, etc.) It gets a bit chaotic.

The Pitch Session is a ten-minute block in which a person can pitch their book and hope that the agent/editor will request the manuscript for possible representation or purchase. This isn't a closed-door session—you go into a big room where a bunch of tables are lined up, at which are seated these editors and agents. It's like a cattle call, in a way.

And some pitch sessions aren't one-on-one: there are group sessions, where you and seven strangers sit there and stammer out your practiced blurb. "Argh," I hear you say. Indeed.

So there you are, pitch card in hand, and you have to sit down, introduce yourself to a total stranger and sell yourself and your book. It's a bit nerve-wracking.

Now here's a widely known not-so-secret secret: almost all people who pitch a book get asked to send in a partial (the synopsis and first three chapters). It's just good form on the part of the agent or editor. A pitch session doesn't make or break a person's career, but people *AGONIZE* over those two ten-minute blocks.



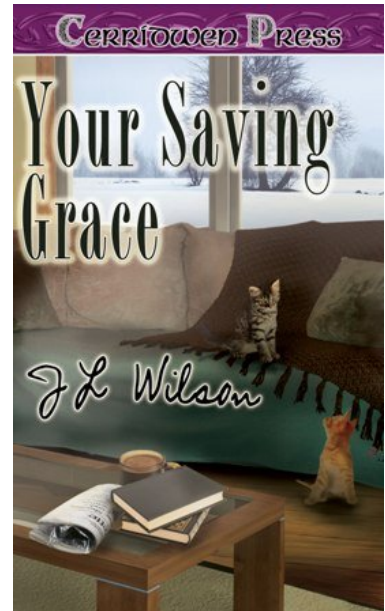
I've never been particularly nervous about pitching and am not nervous this year. I'm pitching to an agent and an editor at a somewhat new publishing house. I'll write up my pitch ahead of time (remember that little article I wrote on how to blurb? I'll use that technique to develop my pitch).

I'll probably pitch to the agent a bit differently because there I'm really trying to sell ME. With her, it'll probably be something like, "Hi, I've sold 4 books and I think it's time I have an agent to represent me. How do you feel about working with an author who writes in multiple genres?" Then we'll see where it goes from there. Wish me luck!

Cover Art

I got my covers from Cerridwen for my three books with them this year. I was starting to get worried – Grace releases in a few weeks and I hadn't yet seen a cover. I had hoped the covers would have a similar feel as the Brownie cover, but the CP covers are less dark and a little less polished.

I don't have much input on the whole cover art process. Authors are asked to fill out a form, specifying elements they'd like to see on the cover. I pointed to a couple of other Cerridwen covers I liked and asked for the things you see here: the kittens, a snowy scene, a living room. It has the elements I asked for, however, I was hoping for something a bit darker, a bit more...Brownie. My books with Cerridwen are romantic suspense whereas the one with Wild Rose is lighter in tone. I wanted the cover to reflect that. But in the end I got a dark cover for the light book and a light cover for the dark book. Go figure.



But hey – I've got killer banners for my books, so that matters a lot (remember banners? See last month's newsletter for a discussion of banners and their creation). I'll be using my banners for most of the advertising space I'm purchasing on web sites because I think banners give me more bang for the buck. So the cover really isn't that important.

What's Next?



It's June. Hmm. That must mean my books are out this month. Wild dancing in the streets (the street outside my house, at least).

I'll be doing a lot of online chats in the coming month to promote Brownies and Grace. I'll also be planning and practicing my pitches for National Conference. And let's not forget those two WIPs – I want to wrap up that time travel book and get it submitted for consideration to Cerridwen and wrap up the other book. I'm going to be pitching it and another one at National Conference, so I need to get it finished.

Busy times ahead! But you already knew that, right? ☺