

As The Author Learns

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

What's Happening?

Because this is my first issue, I don't really have much to report, except: **YEA - I sold two books!** That's the big news, of course. *Every Rose Has Its Thorn* was sold first to Triskelion Publishing. It's about 75,000 words and is told in first-person. It's a mystery/romance about a woman whose vanished husband turns up as a corpse next to the septic tank in her yard, discovered there by a marauding pig. I think you'll have fun with it. I sure had fun writing it. It will come out in November.

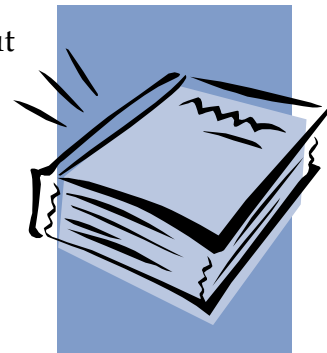
Then about two weeks after I signed the contract for the Pig Book (as "Rose" is affectionately known to my writing buddies), I got a contract with Cerridwen Press for *Closing Time*, which is a bit of a darker story. It's told in third-person and is a romantic suspense novel about a woman who is put into danger because of an event thirty years in her past. *CT* has since been renamed *Your Saving Grace*, and will be coming out in e-format on June 28.

See my web site, at <http://www.jayellwilson.com/>, for excerpts and the most up-to-the-minute information. I also have a blog at <http://jlwblog.blogspot.com> where I talk about various things that are happening in my life, in publishing and out.

What's E-Publishing?

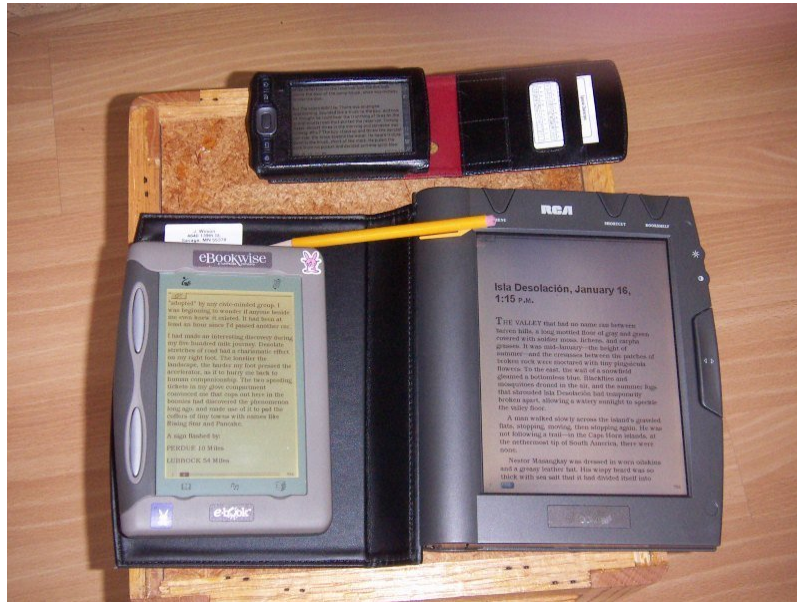
I've gotten a lot of perplexed looks from folks when I tell them I've contracted with an e-publisher. I plan to address assorted "E-questions" in future issues of this newsletter. The first question I get is, "but when will it be a real book?"

Trust me. It *is* a real book. It's just not a paper book -- yet. I will have paper books eventually, but they'll come out a few months after the initial release in e-format. An e-book can be read at your computer, or you can download it an E-book reader. You turn a 'page' by pressing a button. You can adjust the darkness and contrast, as well as the size of the font, which for those of us with aging eyes - it's great!

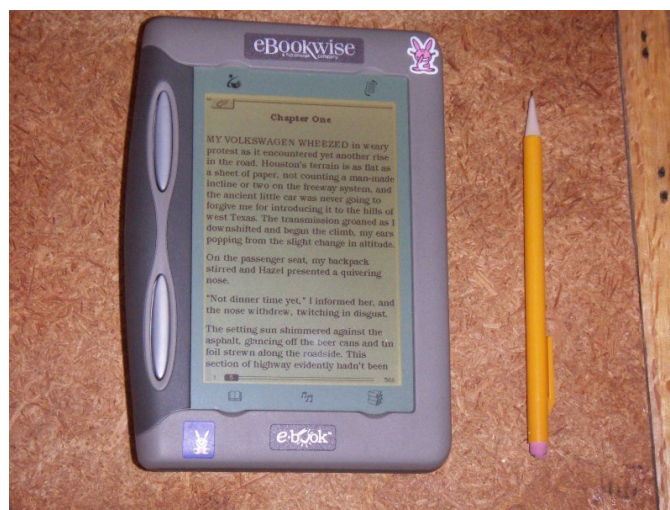


And it's especially great if you like to read in bed at night because it has a backlit screen. You can curl up with your favorite e-book and doze off if you'd like, because it will shut itself off after a few minutes.

The following pictures show three kinds of e-book readers: a Palm Pilot (at the top), an E-bookwise reader (on the left) and a REB1200 (on the right). Note the pencil for scale. The E-bookwise is about the size of a paperback and the REB is the size of a hardback. The Palm is the size of a, well, a Palm Pilot.



It runs on a rechargeable battery and the charge lasts for about 10 hours, give or take. I just keep mine plugged in all the time and ready to go. Here's a close-up of the E-bookwise reader:



I'll include some more close-ups in upcoming newsletters. I personally prefer the REB, but you can only buy that on E-bay and it takes some tweeking to get it to work with some of the download sites (I will provide instructions if anyone is curious). The other two, the E-bookwise and the Palm, just plug into your desktop computer and your info is transferred with the click of a couple of buttons. In fact, just today I downloaded a friend's book, ran it through a bit of software (a click of a button), plugged my E-bookwise into my PC, and voila - Maggie's book is ready to travel with me wherever I go.

I have more discussions about e-books on my web site and I'll be adding more information to it as time goes on. It's located at <http://jayellwilson.com/efaq.htm>.

What Brought Me Here?

I've always been a writer – always. But I could never quite figure out what genre to write in. Mystery? Science fiction? Paranormal? A few years ago, I stumbled on some books that sort of had all of those elements in it. There was a bit of romance, a bit of futuristic, some mystery in some of them. The common thread was 'romance'.



I know, I know...groan. Those 'pink' books, right?

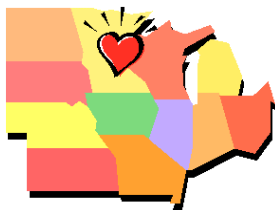
Well, I was surprised. These were good books, with lots of plot, character development, ideas. Sure, some were a bit thin, but others were really good. So I started reading, and I started experimenting with that genre, coming up with a blend that I felt comfortable with.

Then I decided to try to market what I'd written. I went to the handy *Writer's Digest* and looked at all the publishing houses and agents who handled 'romance' or 'women's fiction'. I checked the professional memberships that they listed.

A lot of them listed "RWA". Hmm. I wondered what that was? RWA. I'd never heard of it. So I yahoed it (Google was not yet ubiquitous at that time).

I discovered Romance Writers of America. I read the information on their web site then started looking for other similar organizations. What I found surprised me. You see, RWA accepts those writers who are aspiring to publication. So does the Mystery Writers of America. But a lot of other writing groups only accept people who are already published.

Well, foo. That wasn't going to help me a lot. So I decided to try RWA. What did I have to lose?



I joined in 2003 and for a while, I thought all there was to it was the web site and the monthly magazine. Then in 2004 I got an invitation to the local chapter's annual workshop and I discovered a group of about 150 other aspiring (and some published) authors. Whoa, Nellie!

The rest, as they say, is history. I started attending monthly meetings, I absorbed information, I attended a couple of RWA's National Conference (held yearly in July), I went to workshops, I took online classes ... And after about 100 rejection letters, I sold two books.

That's the summarized version. In the upcoming newsletters, I'll dig into some of the specifics about what's involved in getting published – things like query letters, the dreaded synopsis, plotting, character development, GMC (goal, motivation, conflict), the blurb, the tag ... the Bits and Tidbits that got me where I am today -- almost published.

What's Next?

I'm starting to think about promotion, and how I'll handle that. It's going to require a bit of thought because most of my promo will be done online, with various chat groups and on web sites.

In February, I'll be attending a Murder Convention – not really a *murder* convention, but a convention on how to write murder stories. It's a subtle difference, but an important one ☺ especially given our Homeland Security lives these days.

I'll be in Chicago at the *Love Is Murder/Dark and Stormy Night* conference. It'll be three days of hanging out with other mystery writers, attending workshops and hoping to buttonhole authors in the bar and talk shop with them. I'm going with my critique partner, who also writes mysteries, and I'm really looking forward to three days of discussions about murder and mayhem.



I'll update you next month on how it goes.