



As The Author Learns

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

What's Happening?

Well, I survived Sleuthfest, not a small feat when you consider I was stranded in Florida, in a nice hotel on the beach. Oh, yeah, it was tough. The location was great. We had a view of Biscayne Bay on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. White sand beaches, beautiful people, sunshine and a conference ☺.

The conference was good, full of mysterious stuff and some good promotional information. I didn't learn a lot, but I made a few contacts and I got some pointers to more information on the Internet, so all in all, it was a positive experience. Since I've never been to this conference before, I wasn't sure what to expect. I usually go to much larger conferences, so these smaller conferences have been interesting.

Speaking of larger conferences, my next conference event will be the RWA National Conference in Dallas, in July. That one will be fun because I'll meet up with writer friends, spend five days gabbing about writing, and hopefully meet with my editor(s) and other writers from my publishing houses. I'll also be pitching my unsold books to a new editor and an agent in a face-to-face 10-minute "here's why you want to buy my books" session. I know, I know - I'm a sucker for punishment. I'll have more to say about 'pitching' in an upcoming newsletter (and I may even practice my pitch on you if you're not careful).

Until then ... write, write, write, promo, promo, promo. I'm still working on my Dillinger book. This one is a paranormal book, part of my History Patrol series. In these books, one person is always a shapeshifter, unable to be in human form until certain events occur.

In all of my books, the shapeshifter often chooses forms that are comfortable for him/her (dog, wolf, cat). Well, in this one the heroine decides she prefers bird-form, which means I've been doing a bunch of research about birds. It's a lot of fun to come up with dialogue between my heroine and other birds, or between her and other animals when she assumes different animal forms.



If you've been reading my blog (<http://www.jlwblog.blogspot.com>) you'll see that I finally came up with an ending for my Dillinger book. I've been sweating it, trying to figure out where this story was going. But I had a burst of inspiration last week and now I know how I want it to end. So it's just a matter of getting the front end to meet the back end. It's a lot trickier for my time travel books because they're more complicated than a murder (I can't believe I said that). But now that I know how I want it to end ... I can figure out where the middle should be!

And, of course, I have to gear up for my June promotions. I don't have a firm release date for the Brownie book, but I'm still hoping it's in June. All of which brings me to ...

Banners, Blurbs, and Backgrounds... Oh My!

Here's a secret web link, only available to those of you who subscribe to my newsletter ... are you ready?

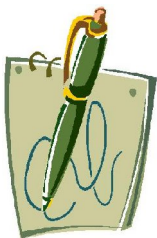


<http://www.jayellwilson.com/banners.htm>

Go there to see what my animated banners look like! I am so happy with them. I worked (online) with a person who does banners, bookmarks, and other promo items. I had no idea what I was doing, but Jo stepped me through the entire process, making it very painless. And she gave me a great deal on the pricing because I did five of them at one time.

Here's how it works: remember taglines and blurbs? (See my April newsletter for a refresher). I had to come up with snappy, catchy, SHORT phrases to describe my books. I had already decided I wanted a three-frame banner. What that means is the banner will rotate three times, with the 'punch line' being the middle banner and the ordering info being the final banner.

Okay. Hmm. I had to put on my thinking cap and come up with catchy phrases for five books and make sure that the phrases matched the tone of the books. One of the books was sort of dark and mysterious, two are light and sort of funny, one is serious, one is half-serious and half-fun.



Scribble, scribble, scribble. Erase, erase, erase.

I *finally* came up with my catchy little phrases. Next I had to find the pictures to go with them. Jo (at Glass Slipper) and I went back and forth in email, discussing picture possibilities. Finally she pointed me to a web site (istock.com) where I could purchase photos for use. So I took a few hours to learn how to search their gazillion-and-one-images database and find the pictures I thought would work.

I narrowed it down to about five pictures for each book and I stored them in an online scrapbook where Jo could examine them. She went through and eliminated a few because they wouldn't work with the type of banner I wanted. I was more than happy to take her advice - she knows a **lot** more about this stuff than I do!



Next I figured out what fonts and colors and backgrounds I wanted to use. I have a lot of fonts loaded on both of my computers, so I messed around with design and then bundled the whole mess up and sent it off to Jo. And she did her magic and in about a day (I am not kidding, it took her about a day), she presented me with BANNERS!

Promotion Hits and Misses

One of the more interesting aspects of this whole publishing ride that I'm on is to see who is interested in my activities and who isn't. I'm not saying that the world needs to drop what it's doing and pay attention to me. But I've found that some folks have been noticeably absent in their response to my little flurry of publishing news. And some of these have left me scratching my head and saying, "What the ..." because I really can't figure it out.

Case in point: newspapers. My home town has two newspapers, and I've contacted both. Neither has gotten back to me about running a story or helping me promo in any way. The same is true with my local paper, here in Minnesota. I've contacted them twice and ... nada.

On the plus side, though, another local paper (*This Week*) did a nice front page story about me and it appeared in all the neighborhoods around here. So *that* was fun. The reporter called me up and we chatted for about 45 minutes. The story came out pretty much as I told it, with just a couple of small differences (he said folks can order my books from my web site: yikes. Nope, you can't. But you can find out *where* to order them from my web site). A minor thing and one that I am willing to overlook because he at least CONTACTED me.



Another disappointment is the local bookstore. I had hoped to do a "Meet the Author" evening at the local Barnes & Noble, but when I contacted the manager, I got a form letter and a request to fill out a questionnaire from the headquarters in New York, explaining why my books were worthy to be carried in a local bookstore. Discouraging, but I'm not really thinking about print book promo at this point. I'd like to get the promo for my ebooks all solidified, because that's where I make the most money (and where my publisher makes the most money, too).

When the time comes, I'll contact some smaller bookstores and see if I can set something up with them. If you know of anyone who can help me, drop me a line at jaye@jayellwilson.com. I'd also love to hear any promo ideas, contacts, or other ways to help me get the word out about my books – ebook and otherwise.



What's Next?

What month is it? May? I'm losing track of time. I don't think I have any conferences in May, but I do have a retreat planned.

What's a retreat, you ask? It's where a bunch of friends and I go off to a casino and gamble, brainstorm books, and talk about writing. I think I will be far enough long in my paranormal book (see previous discussion of a person who changes her shape and goes about as a bird) to take a break from it and start to brainstorm a new murder mystery. I'm trying to decide ... Murder on the Beach? Or Murder at the Casino? Or both?

And lastly, and not leastly, here's my FIRST BOOK COVER! I'm pleased with how it came out. It's got all the clues from the book: the brownies, the computer, the paper snowflake art ... and, of course, MY NAME!

Another exciting thing is that the print version will be out at Christmas time. I had originally thought it would be out in August, but Christmas is actually so much better because it *is* a Christmas book, set at Christmas and with Christmas themes. So I'm hoping this will help sales. It will be available at a bookstore near you (I hope they will, at least. See above for my whine about bookstores).

Until then, enjoy your spring and stay tuned for more details about Life in the Publishing Lane. I should have two books coming out next month, but I don't count on a book until it releases (publishing schedules can and do change). But believe me, if I get a release date, you'll be the first to know.

Stay tuned to my web site for all the details. It promises to be *very* interesting.

